

The New Dad: The Career-Caregiving Conundrum



Brad Harrington

1 Introduction and Research Overview

Over the last decade, the Boston College Center for Work & Family has completed a series of research studies on the changing face of fatherhood in the United States of America. We began our series in 2009 to fill the gap we observed in high quality, in-depth research that existed on American fathers. We saw that this dearth of research had led to many unfortunate misconceptions, including:

- Outdated workplace assumptions about the caregiving roles that fathers play
- Employer work-family programs targeted, explicitly or implicitly, at women, making men reluctant to take advantage of these offerings
- Increased work-family conflict for fathers that is not widely recognized or understood
- Inaccurate portrayals of fathers in the media

Perhaps the most troubling problem was that fathers' voices were often absent from, or even seen as irrelevant to, work-family conversations. In an effort to address this, we began our journey with a relatively small sample, a qualitative study of fathers of very young children to better understand their experiences transitioning to fatherhood. We titled our first report *The New Dad* for the obvious reason that the men in the sample were all new dads. But we did this also because we were trying to explore whether the role of fathers was, in fact, changing and a new model was emerging. This report became the first step in a 10-year journey, with a new

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publication each year, exploring different perspectives of the role today's father play at work and in the home.

Not surprisingly, we have observed that fathers' roles are indeed in a state of transition in the U.S. Also, not surprisingly, this period of change brings with it accompanying dilemmas. The most fundamental dilemma the dads we have studied face is finding the sweet spot between a focus on their careers vs. their caregiving responsibilities. The results of all our studies show that a very significant percent of today's fathers struggle with this conundrum and knowing where they should be on the career vs caregiver spectrum in order to do the right thing for their partners and themselves. This chapter will highlight results from our studies, and some other noted scholars, that bring to light fathers' caregiving dilemma.

Our research samples over this time have focused almost exclusively on U.S., college educated, white-collar fathers who work in large corporations. As such, we do not assert that the results are generalizable to all fathers.

We have been gratified that *The New Dad* series has contributed to a growing body of knowledge about the experiences and expectations of today's fathers. We feel that it has also catalyzed a significant increase in our national dialogue on this important subject.

2 Comparing Dads' and Moms' Caregiving Responsibilities

The historic, often stereotypical, division of labor in which men go off to work and women take care of children and the home is no longer the common model of today's American family. Significantly, more families are dual-career, with both mothers and fathers working. There are even more single-parent headed households in the U.S. than the historical model of the "traditional American family." As a result, there is increasing pressure on men to do a greater share of childcare and housework than was the case in previous generations. Mothers' increased labor force participation demands this. According to a 2015 EY global workforce study, Millennials are almost twice as likely to have a spouse/partner working full-time than Baby Boomers were (78% for Millennials vs. 47% of Baby Boomers). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) reports that in 2013 both parents were employed in 59.1% of all married couples with a child under 18 years old.

Time use data indicate that men have nearly tripled their time spent providing primary childcare, (i.e., the amount of time when childcare is their primary activity) over the last few decades (Wang and Bianchi 2009). Although women continue to spend more hours providing childcare than men do, fathers spent about 2.5 h in primary childcare activities per week from 1965 to 1985, and that number had grown to nearly 7 h per week by 2000 and to 7.5 h by 2015. In 2013, the Pew Research Center identified a similar increase in fathers' involvement in the home (Pew 2013a). Pew reported that when one combines child care, housework, and paid work time, fathers dedicate approximately the same number of total hours to the family as

mothers do, but mothers still spend approximately two times as many hours on childcare and housework as their male partners (in heterosexual couples).

It is also interesting to examine whether men's participation in caregiving is different for men whose wives are in the paid labor force versus those whose wives are not. Wang and Bianchi (2009) found that:

- Fathers whose spouses worked for pay spent significantly more time in solo care activities (i.e., without their spouse present) than men whose wives were at-home full time.
- Fathers with spouses in the paid workforce were more involved in childcare, particularly when their children were infants and toddlers, than fathers whose wives did not work.

A 2015 study by Ohio State University researchers using time diary data from 182 couples who participated in the *New Parents Project* found that 95% of both men and women who were about to have their first child agreed that mothers and fathers should equally share the childcare responsibilities (Yavorsky et al. 2015). In the same vein, Knight and Brinton (2017) found that 93% of Europeans agree that “men should take as much responsibility as women for home and children” and 78% agree, “fathers are as well-suited to look after their children as mothers.” According to the Ohio State study however, after the arrival of their child, men did about 10 h a week of physical childcare – the “less fun work” such as changing diapers and bathing the baby – while women spent 15 h per week engaged in those activities. Men spent about 4 h and women about 6 h per week in the more “fun” part of parenting, which included activities such as reading to the baby and playing. (Yavorsky et al. 2015).

Is the division of labor also problematic for same-sex couples? A Families and Work Institute study of both same-sex and different-sex couples indicated that men in same-sex couples have significantly higher satisfaction with the division of household and childcare responsibilities. As these tasks cannot be divided solely based on traditional gender roles, more conversations occur about how the responsibilities are fulfilled. In both same-sex and different-sex couples, those who have conversations about the divisions of household responsibilities have a higher satisfaction with the division of labor than those who do not explicitly address such concerns (Matos 2015).

3 How Do Fathers See their Roles?

Historically, most people assumed that a father's role was clear – he was the breadwinner, providing his family with the much-needed economic means to make other family objectives possible – from the basic necessities of food and shelter, to the longer term, more strategic investments in funding children's college educations and mom and dad's retirement. But times have changed.

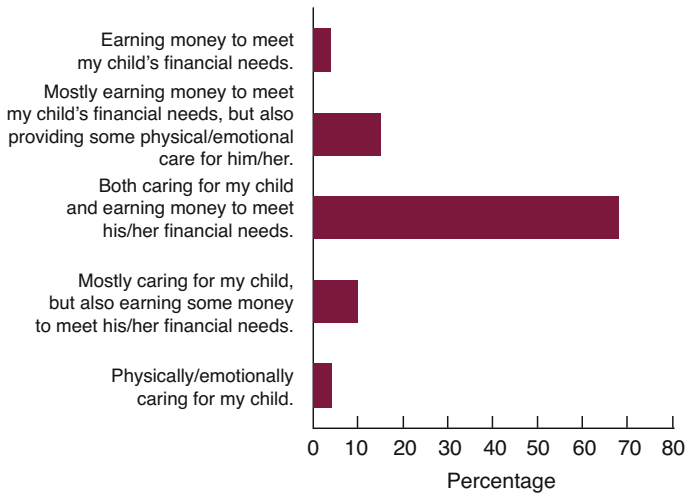


Fig. 1 How fathers see their role: Caregiving vs. breadwinning. Source: Boston College Center for Work & Family. *The New Dad: Caring, Conflicted and Committed*. 2011

In 2013, the Pew Research Center released a report (2013b) stating that in the U. S., women now made up 40% of primary household earners. In response to this, in June of the same year, the *New York Times* published a “Room for Debate” editorial titled “*What are Fathers For?*” The title suggested that as men’s role as the family breadwinner was diminishing, it raised a question of how much and in what ways do fathers contribute to contemporary families (New York Times 2013). On closer examination, the most important detail from the Pew study behind the headline was glossed over – that in 5 out of 8 of the households where the mother was the primary breadwinner, she was also the only adult present (i.e., it was a single mother-led household). In homes where an unmarried woman was the sole breadwinner, the family’s average income was only \$23,000 a year. More than half of the children in such homes live in poverty. By contrast, female breadwinners who were living with and earning more than their husbands were in an entirely different income bracket; their median salary was \$80,000. And for the remaining 60% of U.S. families where the woman is not the primary breadwinner, fathers are still the main financial provider.

So how do fathers today see their role as breadwinners vs. caregivers? In our 2011 study *The New Dad: Caring, Committed and Conflicted* (Harrington et al. 2011), which surveyed 963 fathers employed in one of four Fortune 100 organizations, fathers were asked to identify where they fell on the continuum between providing for their families’ financial needs (the breadwinning role) and caring for their families’ emotional and physical needs (the caregiving role). The result was surprising. More than 2/3 of the fathers believed the two were equally weighted – they did not see themselves solely or even primarily as financial providers as one might

Perceptions of Work Culture

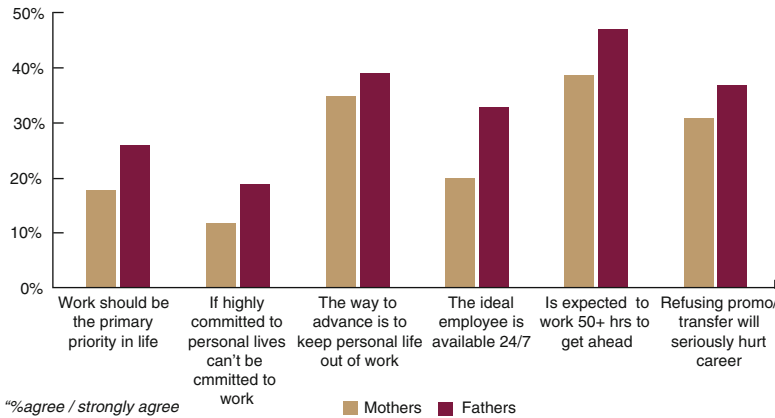


Fig. 2 How Millennial mothers and fathers respond to cues from their corporate culture. Source: Boston College Center for Work & Family. *The New Millennial Dad: Understanding the Paradox of Today's Fathers*. 2016

expect. In fact, as can be seen in Fig. 1 below, less than 5% of the fathers reported that they saw their role as being a financial provider alone.

How does this more balanced view manifest itself in action? Do organizations and society as a whole support fathers as caregivers? Are fathers more sensitive to organizational culture norms than their female counterparts? Are fathers still more ambitious and career focused than mothers? Are fathers likely to be, or even consider being, stay at home fathers than was the case in the past? How do men's actions align with their expressed desire to be more fully engaged caregivers? These are the topics that much of our research set out to explore.

In our 2016 study on Millennial fathers (Harrington et al. 2016), we explored the issue of how sensitive Millennial dads were to cues transmitted by their corporate culture regarding the so-called "ideal worker." This model would suggest that the ideal worker is one who goes to any length to be sure work is completed, is available beyond standard hours to focus on work projects, and will compromise time with one's family and personal life to meet their employer's expectations (Williams 2001). We compared their feelings with those of Millennials mothers.

As the Millennial dads strive to reach their professional goals, they seem to be keenly aware of and influenced by their workplace culture. In our study, the young fathers indicated greater awareness and sensitivity to the demands of their employers and to the vision of the ideal worker than their female counterparts. Men were more likely to characterize their work environments as requiring a great deal in terms of time, energy, and focus.

As can be seen in Fig. 2, the fathers were more likely than mothers to characterize their work environments as requiring work to be primary. Constant availability was seen as the expectation for one-third of fathers (vs. 20% of mothers), and nearly half of fathers saw 50 h as the baseline commitment expected in order to "get ahead."

Slightly more Millennial dads than moms believed keeping their personal life out of the workplace was important for advancement. Relative to their female peers, Millennial fathers were more likely to believe that turning down a promotion or transfer would seriously hurt their careers, and they were more inclined to believe that their employer felt work should be primary in one's life.

Despite the high hurdles for career success, fathers indicated a greater willingness to do what was necessary to succeed professionally and to make tradeoffs affecting their personal and family lives. Nearly 87% of men with children were willing to put in a great deal of effort at work beyond what was normally required (compared to 77% of mothers). Fathers characterized themselves as highly engaged with their work and expressed a deep sense of professional responsibility. Four-out-of-five described themselves as being very involved personally with their jobs and over half experienced their organization's problems as their own. Importantly, dads were twice as likely as mothers to want to advance even if it meant less time with their children (although that number was still quite small at 16%) and nearly twice as likely to be willing to relocate for career advancement.

The heightened sensitivity of fathers to organizational norms might be explained by the reality that men reap greater professional rewards – with regards to opportunities and compensation – than mothers. Research has shown, for example, that while women experience a “motherhood penalty” in terms of diminished earning after becoming a parent, men receive a “fatherhood bonus” (Hodges and Budig 2010; Budig 2014). This sensitivity may also come from understanding the costs that can be associated with more conspicuous family focus as we explain in the next section. While fathers portrayed the terms of engagement for professional growth as very demanding, and with attendant costs, they were more willing to meet those terms in their pursuit of career success. This can leave fathers with less time and energy for active involvement as caregivers and equal partners at home, thwarting their efforts to get closer to the egalitarian ideal of truly shared caregiving.

4 Is there a Career Penalty for Being a Committed Dad?

As we will explore later in this chapter, most fathers who participated in our research seek to be equal caregivers with their spouse. But does such caregiving inevitably mean career penalties for dads? Women have faced negative career consequences for many years as the result of their caregiving responsibilities. When women become parents, there is often an assumption that they will make compromises at work due to their family responsibilities, whether or not that is in fact the case. It is well documented that women pay a price for becoming mothers from pay losses (Budig and England 2001) to being viewed as less committed, less promotable, and even less competent in the workplace (Correll et al. 2007).

While research indicates the motherhood penalty is steep, the penalty for highly involved fathers may be even steeper. (Williams 2010; Berdahl and Moon 2013). For fathers who are the sole or primary breadwinners, the risks of prioritizing family

at the cost of their focus on work, may simply seem too high. As women have historically struggled with these unfair suppositions, there has, at least, been an expectation that mothers are faced with difficult trade-offs due to the dual demands of work and family. There is little such expectation when it comes to men.

This could be due to gender stereotypes and the very short duration of men's parental leave patterns. For example, 16% of fathers in our 2011 study (Harrington et al. 2011) took no time off following the birth of their most recent child and 96% took 2 weeks or less. 96% of fathers reported that their supervisor expects no change to occur to their working patterns as the result of their becoming parents. While as mentioned, many fathers may experience a fatherhood bonus in terms of compensation, by contrast, those who take time off to be active caregivers often suffer lower long-term earnings.

In a 2013 study, Berdahl and Moon researched how workers of both genders were treated as the result of being "conspicuous caregivers." They found that while both women and men both faced stigma, men who were too conspicuous in their involvement in family were seen not just as lesser workers, but also "lesser men" (by contrast, women who did so were viewed as lesser workers but "better women"). This is because these men did not adhere to the breadwinning model of fatherhood, one where men are regarded as employees first who have little to no responsibilities outside of work. In spite of increased societal expectations around paternal involvement and the desire of many men to participate more fully in family life, Berdahl and Moon's research suggests that fathers who are heavily involved in caregiving, or take time off for to care for their families, can be subject to informal and formal professional sanctions.

The authors also found that fathers who were highly involved in childcare reported the greatest levels of harassment compared to other men in the sample, in particular fathers who provided minimal childcare. In a second study in the same article, fathers who were responsible for more domestic work at home experienced greater workplace mistreatment than non-fathers and fathers who participated less in housework (Berdahl and Moon 2013).

Similarly, Coltrane et al. (2013) found that men who took time off to care for family members had significantly lower long-term earnings than men who had not done so. The authors found that regardless of gender, leaving work for family reasons was associated with lower long-term earnings, indicating that both men and women who take time off to care for family members suffer financial consequences as a result.

5 Are Fathers Interested in Taking Paternity Leave?

Perhaps no work-life topic has garnered more attention in the U.S. recently than paternity leave. As some major employers began to offer paid paternity leave, a debate ensued about the validity of giving fathers time to provide caregiving to their new children. But as time has progressed it has become increasingly clear that more

and more fathers want and need paid time off following the birth or adoption of a new child, and the issue of paternity leave has gained public support.

Research we conducted in 2014 (Harrington et al. 2014) looked at a sample of more than 1000 fathers from 286 different organizations in the U.S. and found that paternity leave is important to them: a full 89% of dads surveyed believed it is important that an employer provide paid paternity leave. Our research found that virtually all of the men who participated in the study felt employers should offer paid paternity leave. It also revealed that the vast majority of fathers, 86% of respondents, would not make use of paid paternity leave unless it covered at least 70% of their salaries, and most fathers were looking for 100% pay during this leave period.

A recent study of U.S. fathers (Petts et al. 2019) found that as little as 2 weeks or more of paternal leave-taking is positively associated with children's perception of fathers' involvement, father-child closeness, and father-child communication. The results suggest that increased attention to improving opportunities for parental leave in the U.S. may help strengthen families by nurturing higher quality father-child relationships.

Unfortunately, in the U.S. only about 13% of private-sector workers are covered by formal paid leave policies (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017). Most fathers would need to combine vacation time, holiday time, and personal days to take any time off following the birth of their children. There has, however, been a flurry of progress regarding paid paternity leave at many major U.S. corporations. Employers such as American Express, EY, Intel, IBM, KPMG, and Johnson & Johnson have increased their fully paid, gender-neutral parental leave policies to allow for bonding time for both mothers and fathers with durations ranging from 8 to 20 weeks.

In order for parents to truly be equal partners in caregiving, we believe it is essential that fathers be actively involved in hands-on care from the time their child arrives. Research in countries where paid parental leave is readily available for fathers have found that men who take more time off with their new children develop better parenting skills and are better prepared to accept the responsibilities that facilitate shared-parenting. When a pattern of "dad at work" and "mom at home" is set in place following the birth of a child, it is difficult to reverse this pattern, so it is important for dads to establish themselves as involved caregivers from the very beginning.

6 Are More Fathers Today Considering Being an at-Home Dad?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of at-home dads has risen from 1.6% of families with an at-home parent in 2001 to 3.8% in 2018 (U.S. Census Bureau 2019), a substantial increase albeit from a very small base. So while at-home dads continue to be more the exception than the rule, it is clear from our research that fathers' attitudes about caregiving, including full-time caregiving, are changing. In

our 2011 study of working fathers, a surprisingly high percentage of fathers (53%) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” when asked, “If your spouse earned enough money to support your family’s needs, would you consider being a stay-at-home dad?” (Harrington et al. 2011.) In our 2016 study of Millennial parents, 51% of Millennial fathers agreed with the same statement vs. 44% of Millennial moms (Harrington et al. 2017).

Through our study of at-home dads (Harrington et al. 2012) we learned that these fathers were comfortable in their role and generally assessed themselves as doing a good or very good job at caregiving and domestic tasks. The fathers reported that being an at-home parent initially took adjustment, and they stated they were faced with a number of challenges including:

- The loss of a social network. This loss is felt most acutely by at-home fathers since their numbers continue to be low.
- Feelings of being stigmatized due to the continuing sense that the at-home parent role is still not appropriate for a man.
- The fear that their future employment opportunities would be jeopardized by the fact that they had taken on this nontraditional role.

In spite of these obstacles, we found evidence that the at-home dads we studied were very good parents and this assessment was strongly confirmed by their spouses’ survey responses. They reported that the at-home fathers were devoted to their children and were highly active, involved parents. Much like our image of the competent and caring at-home mom, these fathers were committed to their children, supportive of their spouses and their careers, and doing the myriad of daily tasks needed to maintain their households, even if in some cases their assessment of a clean house fell slightly short of their wives’ standards.

7 Are Fathers Living up to their Own Caregiving Expectations?

Over the course of our fatherhood studies, we have asked fathers about how their expectations of caregiving compare to their reality. We have done this by asking two questions:

- How do you believe caregiving *should be* divided between you and your spouse/partner?
- How *is* caregiving divided between you and your spouse/partner?

In our studies, we have seen a consistent pattern in the answer to these two questions. While more than two-thirds of men respond that caregiving should be divided 50–50, less than one-third of men say this is, in fact, the case. In all of those cases where there was a shortfall in shared caregiving, it was the fathers themselves who admitted they were coming up short and the wives/partners who were fulfilling

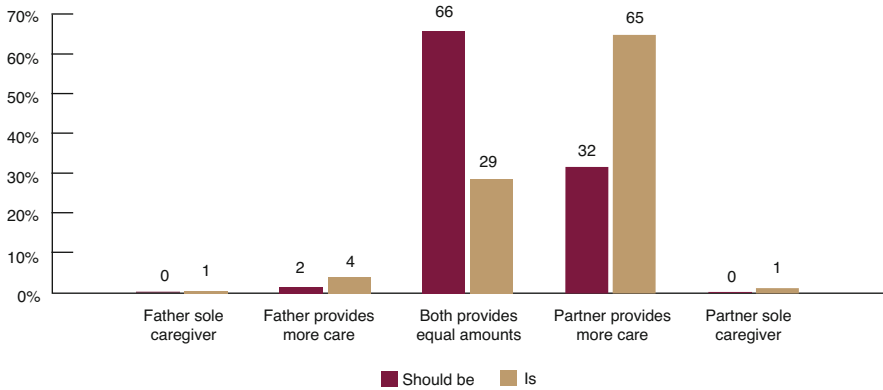


Fig. 3 How Fathers believe caregiving “should be” divided compared to their current division. Source: Boston College Center for Work & Family. *The New Dad: Career vs. Caregiving Conflict*. 2017

the majority of caregiving responsibilities. Therefore, it would be fair to suggest that for more than one-third of fathers in our sample, there is a very significant gap between their espoused caregiving goals and their current reality.

In order to better understand the impact this caregiving gap has on the father’s career and life satisfaction, we broke fathers into three groups (Harrington et al. 2017). The first group of fathers responded that caregiving at home should be divided equally and that indeed it was. We labeled this group the *egalitarian* fathers and they comprised 30% of the study participants. A second group of fathers responded that their “spouse should provide more caregiving at home” and they were doing so. We labeled this group *traditional* fathers to reflect their more traditionally gendered views on parental roles and caregiving. They comprised approximately 32% of the sample. The third group responded that caregiving should be divided 50/50 but admitted that their spouse provided more care than they did. This group was labeled as *conflicted* fathers due to the dissonance between their caregiving aspirations (SHOULD be) and their reality (IS). Conflicted fathers comprised 38% of the sample (Fig. 3).

As researchers, we discovered that these categories presented a highly useful way to conceptualize the work-life experiences of today’s fathers. When we broke our sample into the three fatherhood types, some interesting similarities and differences were evident.

- Income levels of the three fatherhood types:** The traditional fathers’ income was the highest and *Egalitarians*’ income is the lowest. More than one-third (34.4%) of the *Egalitarians* earned less than \$75,000 as compared to only 12% of the *Traditionals* and 22% of the *Conflicteds*. On the upper end of the earnings scale, nearly 3 out of 5 traditional fathers earned more than 100 K compared to 44% of conflicted fathers and 32% of egalitarian fathers.

- **Education levels of three father types:** Since our research was conducted with mainly “white-collar” professionals, the vast majority of the fathers in the sample attended college with most holding at least a bachelor’s degree and/or a graduate degree (90% of the *Traditionals*, 77% of *Egalitarians* and 80% of the *Conflicteds*). Less than 1% possessed only a high school diploma. In general, the more educated a father is, the more likely he belongs to the Traditional fatherhood group.
- **Partners’ work patterns of three father types:** Not surprisingly, there is a marked difference in the employment status of the partners of the three of fatherhood types. Slightly more than 90% of the *Egalitarians’* partners were employed, compared to 73% of *Conflicteds* and only 44% of *Traditionals’* partners. When we review partners’ work hours (including those who did not work outside the home), the differences between spouses working hours by fatherhood type are significant. *Egalitarians’* spouses worked an average of 28 h per week, *Conflicteds’* spouses worked 20 h per week, and *Traditionals’* spouses worked just 9.

When we compared the responses to subsequent questions indicating, for example, the fathers’ overall satisfaction on a number of work and life indicators, a clear pattern emerged. We discovered that overall, *Egalitarian* and *Traditional* fathers expressed higher levels of satisfaction in their jobs and their careers. For example:

Job Satisfaction & Commitment: On job satisfaction, a clear pattern that emerges. *Traditionals* and *Egalitarians* are consistently more satisfied than *Conflicted* fathers are. While all three fatherhood types showed high levels of satisfaction with their jobs (positive responses are consistently between 70–90%, which speaks highly of the employers whose organizations participated in the study), overall *Conflicted* fathers are the least satisfied in their jobs.

The Feeling of Belonging to a Group: When asked if they really felt a part of their workgroup, once again the *Conflicted* group reported the lowest levels of satisfaction. *Egalitarians* showed the highest levels of satisfaction.

Job Withdrawal Intentions: On items that explored discontent, *Conflicted* fathers showed the highest level of job withdrawal intentions. This included their intention to look for other jobs as well as their thoughts about quitting their present jobs outright. In general, *Conflicted* fathers were about 10% more likely than the other two fatherhood types to think about quitting their jobs and are 7–9% more likely to report looking for another job.

Career Satisfaction: Career satisfaction measures we used looked less at the fathers’ satisfaction in their present role and more at their satisfaction with their career progression over time (e.g., satisfied with advancement, satisfied with their earnings growth, etc.). *Conflicted* fathers once again had the lowest levels of satisfaction on these career satisfaction items. In the area of career satisfaction, the *Traditionals* reported the highest levels of satisfaction on three items: progress toward career goals, income, and advancement.

8 What Impact Does Generational Cohort Play in Fatherhood Types?

In our years of researching the changing role of fathers from a work and family perspective, perhaps no question has emerged more frequently from the media and corporate groups than, “Isn’t this all a generational thing?” The implication is that Millennials have grown up in a time of greater gender equality and that this had led younger fathers to seek these greater levels of engagement and parity with their spouses in caregiving.

While there is some evidence to support a generational shift, our research does not demonstrate dramatic differences between the fatherhood cohorts by generation. While there are a higher percentage of *Egalitarian* fathers in the Millennial generation than in the Baby Boomer generation (31% vs. 27%), there were slightly fewer *Egalitarians* in the Millennial sample vs. Generation X (31% vs. 32%). The number of *Conflicted* fathers in our samples was also 4% higher among Baby Boomers when compared to Generation X and Millennials (i.e., 40% of Baby Boomer fathers vs. 36% of Generation X and Millennials (Fig. 4).

When we analyze the career satisfaction of fathers, another interesting pattern emerges for *Egalitarian* fathers. When one reviews the scores by generations, there is a trend toward higher satisfaction for the younger *Egalitarian* fathers versus older ones, (i.e., Millennials are the most satisfied, followed by Generation X, followed by Baby Boomers).

For questions regarding involvement in caregiving, the three fatherhood types showed significant differences in their responses. When asked to choose one of the following statements “I would like to spend more time with my children,” “I am satisfied with the amount of time I currently spend with my children,” or “I would like to spend less time with my children,” a clear pattern emerged that was consistent across all three generations. *Conflicted* fathers were the most likely to agree with the

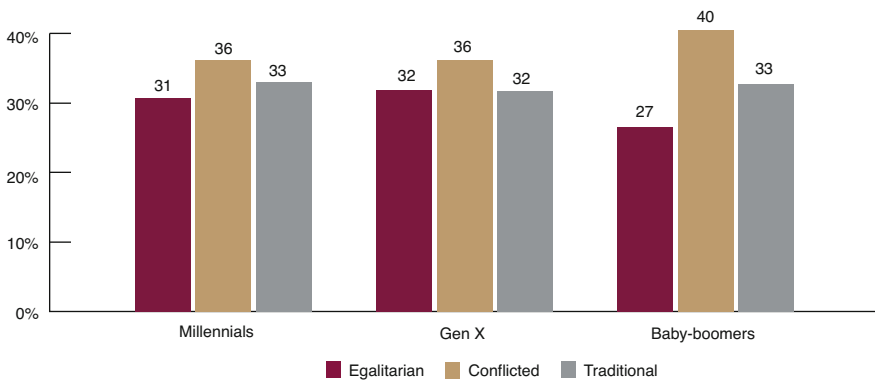


Fig. 4 “Fatherhood types” By generation. Source: Boston College Center for Work & Family. *The New Dad: Career vs. Caregiving Conflict*. 2017

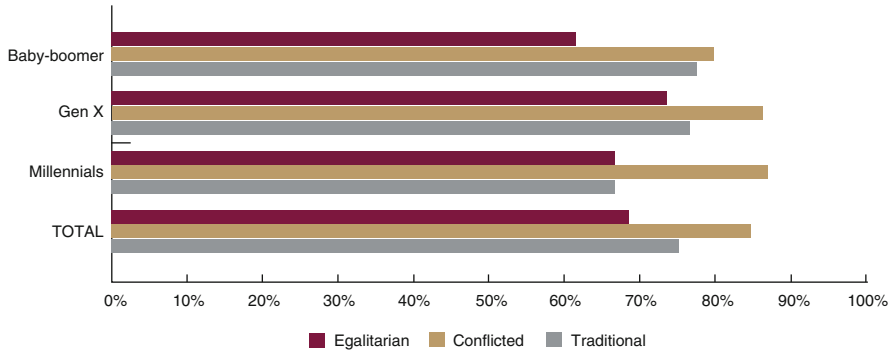


Fig. 5 Preference for more time with children by fatherhood type and generation. Source: Boston College Center for Work & Family. *The New Dad: Career vs. Caregiving Conflict*. 2017

statement that they would like to spend more time with their children. Overall, nearly 85% of *Conflicteds* responded they wanted more time, compared with 75% of *Traditionals* and 69% of *Egalitarians*. This suggests the relatively lower level of comfort *Conflicted* fathers feel towards the current state of their work-family balance when compared with the other two fatherhood types (Fig. 5).

9 Summary and Recommendations

As was stated in the introduction, the lack of focus on the experiences of fathers over the years has often led to a misunderstanding of the important role they play in American family life. From the absence of attention in research, to inaccurate portrayals in the media, to the outdated workplace assumptions about the caregiving roles that fathers play, men have continued to be seen as minor players in the family. While some progress is being made to better understand the roles fathers play today, much more research and greater insight is needed.

How can employers help fathers be more engaged caregivers? Here are a few thoughts:

- Consider having a fathers’ employee network that provides dads the opportunity to discuss their concerns and needs regarding caregiving and balancing their work-family demands.
- Make parental leave policies gender neutral and offer the same amounts of paid leave for fathers that mothers currently receive (beyond the time birth mothers are given for delivery and recovery). This will demonstrate that the fathers’ role in parenting is given the same weight as the mothers’ role.

- Cultivate a flexible work environment at your organization. Offering flexible work options can support dads as they strive to meet both their professional and personal responsibilities.
- Consider establishing a voluntary mentoring program for fathers interested in not just career-related dialogue, but which also includes conversations regarding the work-family dilemmas and challenges men face.
- Conduct a survey with fathers in your organization to assess whether they feel the climate is as accepting of fathers' engagement in caregiving as it is for mothers.

There are also things that fathers themselves can do to enhance their caregiving role:

- Talk to other fathers formally or informally to share common struggles and brainstorm potential solutions. If a father's employee resource group does not exist in your organization, explore the possibility of establishing one. Dads groups are also growing in many local communities (see, e.g., City Dads Group: <https://citydadsgroup.com/>) for social connections and support.
- If your organization offers paternity leave, strongly consider taking this time off to bond with your child and to gain experience in "hands-on parenting." This will increase your confidence and competence in your parenting skills. It will also help you establish very early on your role as a co-caregiver with your partner.
- Have frequent conversations with your partner about your roles at home and at work and your goals for your family. Our research has demonstrated that couples who hold these discussions more frequently have higher life satisfaction (Harrington et al. 2015).
- Support other fathers at your workplace who are caregivers. Changing organizational culture requires more than changes in policies or even statements of support from senior leaders. Men who support colleagues in their effort to be engaged parents will help to shift the organizational culture to one that is more equitable and encouraging of men as caregivers. This will in turn, also promote the advancement of women in the organization.

We believe that it is time to do a "hard reset" – at home, in the workplace, and in society. It's time to ask ourselves why, as we've redefined the role of women in the workplace over the past 25 years, we have been much less able to do the same for men on the home front. No doubt, a major contributor to this situation is men themselves. For far too long, fathers' voices have been silent and nearly absent from work-family conversations. This has had a detrimental effect on fathers' ability to redefine their role in contemporary families. It's time to see more clearly what dads are doing in the family and ask how we can help them do it better. We have begun to see positive early results of men speaking out, particularly by men in at-home dads' networks. The change in how dads are being portrayed in the media is a good example of how change can come from research, media attention, and the voices of dads themselves. We are convinced that gender equity will never be attained until workplaces and society see men and fathers from a "whole person" perspective. When we achieve that aim, we will have enhanced workplaces, created

a more equitable society, and strengthened the most important building block to ensure our country's prosperity – the American family.

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