

Return to work mums - Frustrations, Annoyances & Solutions

Over the years I have come across many mums who become frustrated about returning to the workforce. They may want to reduce their hours and not be able to, they may want to change their job function, be struggling to find day care, or may have even been made redundant whilst on maternity leave.

Now as a mum myself, I am experiencing some of these frustrations and am constantly speaking to other mums about their issues.

If you are in need of some help when it comes to returning to the work force, read on, or if you know anyone that this article may help, do them a favour and send it to them.

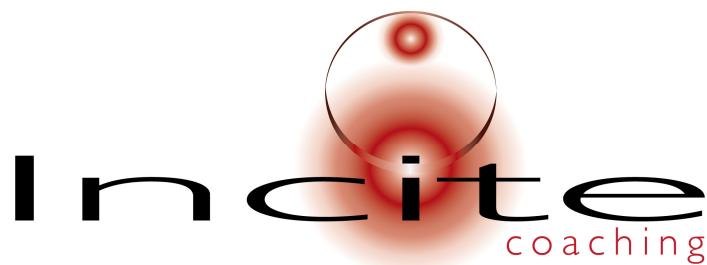
You want to reduce your hours but are unsure how?

Speak to your boss and discuss the option of returning to work 3 or 4 days a week. Before your meeting brainstorm all the benefits this will mean for the company. You may want to include: As an experienced member of the team, you can do in 3 or 4 days what a less experienced person may take 5 days to complete, and cost less; you know the job and can hit the ground running again; you now have a motivator for getting the job done and finishing on time (picking your little ones up from day care on time); you will be an easy member of staff to manage as you just want to get on with your job.

If internal options are not an option, consider looking externally. There are not many part time jobs advertised, therefore many people are under the misconception that to gain part time hours, you need to have been with the company for a number of months or years. This is not the case. Many companies will be open to discussing reduced hours for a job which is advertised as full time. Working 4 days is a more realistic outcome for both parties and you can always reduce your hours further once you have proved yourself as highly competent in the role. When starting the negotiation, remember that you need to sell the benefits to the company. Focus on your superior skills, experience and motivation to get the job done. When approaching such negotiations it is even more important than normal to tailor your application and interview answers so that the company has absolutely no doubt that you are more than capable and motivated to do a good job. Remove all perceived risk of hiring you!

You want to work but can't afford day care

I was shocked when I started looking for day care at the price. The places I have looked at have quoted me anywhere from \$80-120/day! Obviously I want my child to go to a day care which I liked and approved of, and this may mean paying more. So what are your options? Sit down and calculate how much day care will cost each month and then work out how much you need to earn after tax to live comfortably and make your returning to work worth while. Once you have that, check out www.ato.gov.au website to calculate your gross salary. This salary will now help you start negotiations in your new job or when negotiating returning to work in your old job.



If day care is still not affordable, check out the local council day care and family day care centres. They do tend to have rather large wait lists so make sure you get your name down early.

You could also look at getting a group of mums together and hiring a nanny. I'm sure there are plenty of mums in your mothers group who are in a similar situation. You can base the children in one person's house, or have a rotation. The more children the carer looks after, the more expensive, but the costs are still less than private day care centres. You also have the added advantage of being able to interview and select the carer who will look after your child.

Finally, many mothers or grandparents who hear about the struggles of finding suitable day care, decide to get their child minding qualifications and set up their own family day care. Ask around. Are any of the mums in your mothers group considering it? Do they know anyone who is? Are there any family members who can help you out? even just one day a week can save you up to \$6000 a year.

Remember the government also offers a 50% rebate (up to \$7000) on childcare costs with approved childcare centres. Ask if your childcare centre is approved by the scheme.

You want to work but can't get day care!

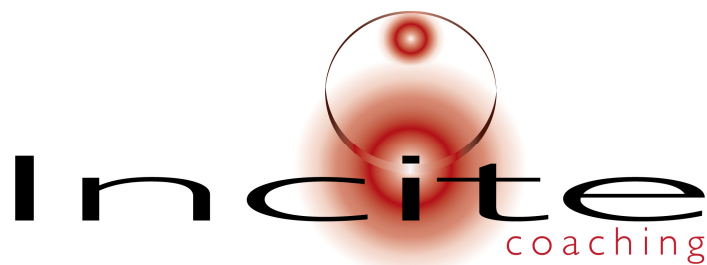
So you find a day care you like, that's within your budget, you excitedly put your name down on the wait list, only to be told its likely to be 12 months (or more!) before you get offered a place. If you (like me) didn't put your child's name down as soon as you found out you were pregnant, what can you do?

Day care centres, want to work with families that they like, seem organised and will cause little fuss. When visiting the centre, remember that the visit is like an interview (without the need for suits). This is an opportunity for you to ask questions about how the centre operates, but also for the day care Director to suss you out. Be friendly; ask intelligent questions and ensure your child is on his/her best behaviour. Make sure they are fed and have a clean nappy to reduce the chances of them becoming irritable.

Ask the person in charge of the wait list administration how many families are on the wait list, how frequently vacancies arrive and how often you should keep in touch with them. Many day care centres like you to keep them updated on any changes or circumstance to help their planning.

Increasing your chances of getting day care is like networking, you need to develop a relationship and then keep in touch. Make sure that when a vacancy comes up, you are at the forefront of their mind (without calling every day and driving them crazy). For more information on networking, read out articles on www.incitecoaching.com.au/articles.html

Finally, the more flexible you are with your days, the higher your chances of bypassing those parents who have fixed days.



You've been made redundant

Being made redundant whilst on maternity leave is, unfortunately, not uncommon. What can you do, when returning to work is the last thing on your list of priorities?

Make sure your name stays down on the day care lists and if a position becomes available, that you are happy with, take it if you can. This will mean that when a job does become available you are able to provide a start date, which removes any concerns from the employer about start dates and commitment etc.

If you are looking for a career change, write down a list of things that you loved in your last job and those that you can do without and start investigating the careers that interest you.

Ask your network if they are aware of any companies, jobs or contacts that may be of interest to you. Start making connections and getting your name out there.

Update your resume and have someone look over it for you to make sure that there are no spelling or grammatical errors, and to ensure that it makes sense.

Stay positive. Many people (understandably) become extremely negative after they have been made redundant. This is not attractive to potential employers, who could see you as being high maintenance. So stay positive, exercise, speak to friends and family and do something each day that you enjoy.

Check out the free articles on our website www.incitecoaching.com.au/articles.html for further hints and tips on writing your resume, negotiating the market place and overcoming redundancy.

For further information on how Incite Coaching can help you with your career transition and finding your ideal role, visit our website www.incitecoaching.com.au, call us on 02 9560 4407 or email us at info@incitecoaching.com.au

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