



mums@work

enjoy work, love family...

Common Return to Work Mistakes Parents Make	Suggested Tips & Tricks
Don't have a plan and are under-prepared for the return to work transition.	Be organised, create a return to work and 'to do' list. Identify what you will need to tend too, what support will you need, how will you make the transition back. Be realistic and give yourself the time and space needed to work through it.
Don't do a career/job audit and reset life goals.	Review your life and career plans; what's important to you since becoming a parent? What interests you and what would you like to gain from RTW? How do you see family fitting in?
Don't ask for help and try to do it alone. Don't network self through friends, colleagues and other channels.	Tell your family and friends you're planning on RTW. Get in touch with past colleagues and associates too. Ask parents you know who have RTW and ask how they did it. Join network groups you think will help with your RTW such as Linked In and Facebook or industry associations.
Wait for the ideal work-life balance utopia to magically appear.	Start researching your RTW needs and ideal RTW job and arrangements and narrow-down the options. Don't wait for it to land in your lap, it won't!
Don't know where to look or what actually searching for.	Seek out a career counsellor to help you figure out what you want and how to find it. Register on job boards that support parents find flexible employment such as <a href="http://www.careermums.com.au">www.careermums.com.au</a>
Under-estimate the time job searching takes and the time it takes to settle back into work.	Set aside a certain amount of time per week to work on your RTW. When back at work expect the first few months back to be full of ups and downs, it's normal. Use the mum-grapevine to vent the lows and get ideas to make it easier.
Don't update resume to address the parenting gap.	Make a list of all the things you've done since becoming a parent; the skills you've acquired; the extra-curricular study or unpaid work etc and include these in your resume. Don't leave an unexplained gap. Format your resume to highlight your strengths and experience not your absence.
Don't back self or the value skills learned since becoming a parent.	We are often our own worst enemy. Have confidence in your skills and experience and the chances are others will too! Remember, being a parent is often the toughest job many of us will ever do – your patience, negotiation and adaptability skills will come in handy when back at work.
Don't keep in touch when on parental leave.	Keep in touch with your work periodically when on leave (stay as connected as you'd like to); ask for work from home access so you can log in to team emails if you wish to; ask for a gradual RTW so you can re-orientate yourself over time: eg: 1 day the first week, 2 days the next and 3 days from 1 <sup>st</sup> month?.
Don't refresh skills or retrain adequately.	If you feel your skills and knowledge are rusty, check out how you can refresh them through short courses, volunteer work, joining associations etc. If you're changing careers, find out what qualifications you'll need and what transferable skills you have to offer.
Don't know how to negotiate flexibility.	Think about your flexibility needs; propose a few options to your manager and how you see it working; present the benefits and how you plan to overcome any draw backs; ask your manager for a meeting to discuss and to provide their response in writing.
Procrastinate too much instead of giving it a go.	Get out there have a go, learn from setbacks and if things don't always go to plan, then review your options and reassess next steps.