

Mom goes back to work, family OK

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Easing the maternal guilt associated with mothers returning to work, University at Albany health economist Pinka Chatterji and co-researchers Sara Markowitz and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn recently released the results of a study indicating that maternal work hours are not associated with adverse effects on infants and their mothers.

The researchers evaluated maternal mental and [physical health](#), parenting stress, and quality of parenting, using data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's Study on Early Child Care.

“Most prior research on maternal employment focuses on the effect on children. This study is different because it explores the entire family dynamic, including the incidence of depression and stress,” said Chatterji.

The study showed that six months after having a child, working full time had no adverse impact on parenting quality. In fact, mothers who worked full time had less parenting stress over the first 4.5 years of parenting than mothers who stayed home.

Still, the results suggest that the transition back into employment immediately after childbirth is difficult for the average family, ultimately detracting from maternal health and resulting in an increase in self-reported parenting stress.

Provided by University at Albany

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