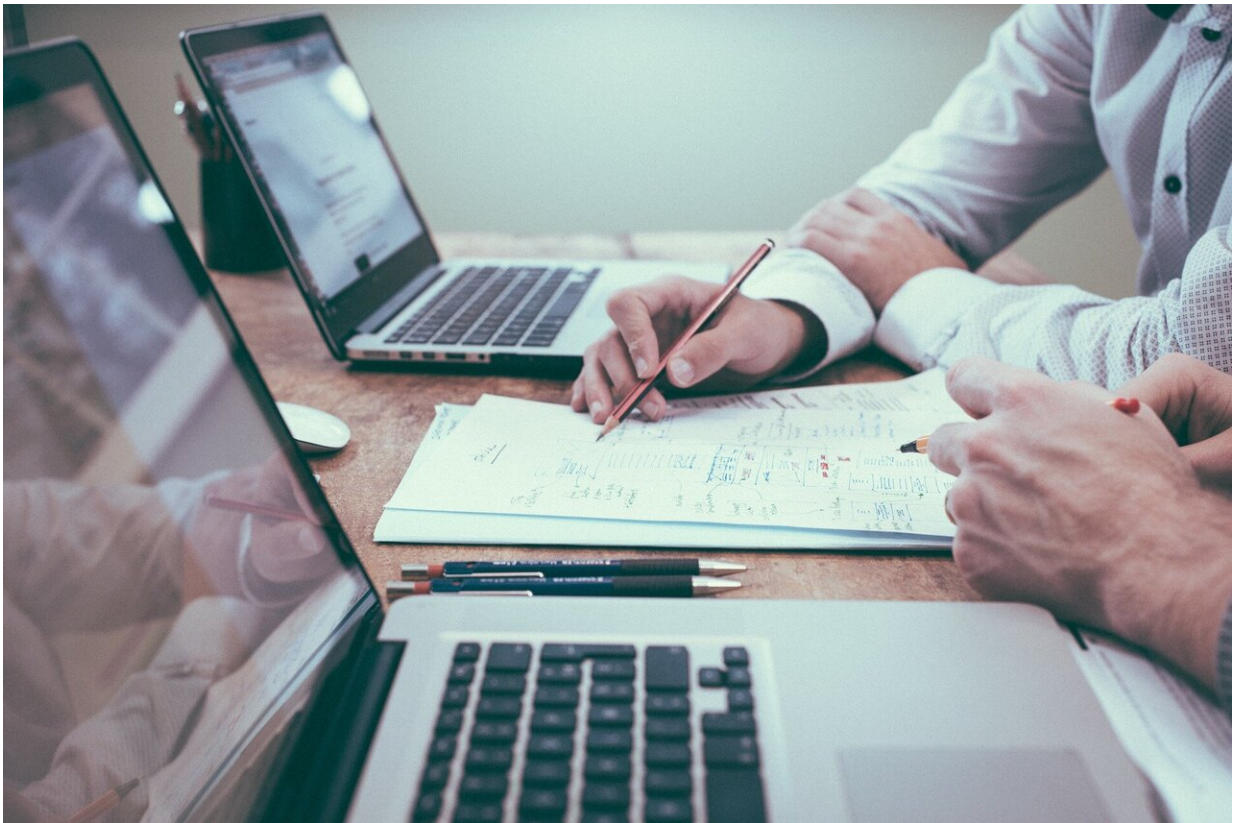


Higher parenting stress for dads working from home versus onsite during pandemic

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Forty percent of parents who worked remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic reported higher parenting stress compared with only 27 percent of parents who worked onsite, reports a new survey from

scientists at Northwestern University and Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago.

The study results revealed a gender difference: Fathers who worked from home were twice as likely to report that parenting was stressful all or most of the time compared to [fathers](#) who worked onsite. Parenting stress for mothers who worked at home was slightly higher, but it did not reach [statistical significance](#).

The study found no differences in mental or [general health](#) between parents who worked remotely or onsite.

"Our [survey](#) results show that teleworking during the pandemic was associated with more parenting stress, especially for fathers," said lead author Dr. John James Parker, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and a pediatrician at Lurie Children's. "This might be a reflection of societal expectations that men should prioritize work obligations over family needs, which creates additional stress for fathers working from home."

The study will be published in *JAMA Network Open*.

The study authors recommend parents reflect on their family and work situation and try to find an arrangement that limits stress and promotes well-being.

"This can be as simple as putting a noise-cancelling machine in the workspace, rearranging schedules to limit distractions and planning time for parents to step away from work to be fully engaged with their children," said Parker, who also is an internist at Northwestern Medicine.

"Employers could provide support to fathers by offering more flexibility

and recognizing that both parents need more work/life balance," Parker said. "Employers also could encourage parents who work from home, especially men, to take advantage of employee assistance programs if they are experiencing high levels of stress. This is important, since [parents' stress](#) is linked to negative parental health and child developmental outcomes."

More information: Teleworking, Parenting Stress, and the Health of Mothers and Fathers, *JAMA Network Open* (2023).

Provided by Northwestern University

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