



PEACE AT HOME
PARENTING SOLUTIONS

A Perfect Storm for U.S. Working Families

Children's Mental Health Crisis and Working Parent Burnout: Companies Can Help



One definition of a perfect storm is “a critical or disastrous situation created by a powerful concurrence of factors.” We are seeing precisely this condition among U.S. families. We can also see how U.S. companies can play an important role in addressing it.

An astounding 66% of working parents are experiencing “parental burnout” ([Ohio State Univ. report](#))

which may include increased anxiety, depression and use of alcohol as well as increased punitive parenting

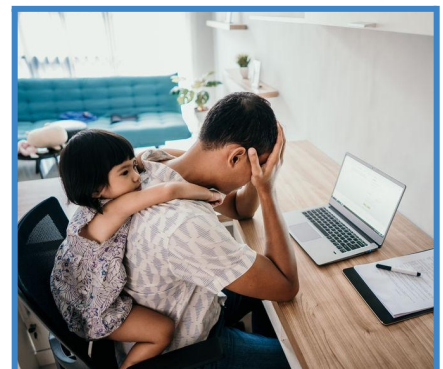
(i.e. yelling, insulting, criticizing, cursing, spanking) and feeling detached from children.

At the same time the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Children's Hospital Association and the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry have all **declared that the mental health crisis among children and teens is a “[national emergency.](#)”**

Parents are desperate and struggling to function when their kids need them the most. And mental health resources are clearly inadequate to meet the need.

The standard guidance that parents need to put on their own oxygen masks first has never been more relevant. But what exactly does that mean right now? **Even if we had enough therapists available for every child with symptoms, parents' mental and physical states are far more important factors in kids' wellbeing.** The fact that

the majority of the population of the U.S. grew up with [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#) suggests that unless parents increase their self-awareness and seek other options, they will likely parent from a place of worry and anger and pass on some of the issues they experienced as children themselves. This intergenerational transfer of [toxic stress](#) has been dramatically increased by the pandemic and it seems evident that we should be focusing resources on parents, at least as much or more than, on children and teens at this time.



(Continued on next page)



Parents are experiencing excessive activation of their stress response system. Triggered not only by their own childhood experiences, but also activated by [“The Great Collide”](#) of trying to meet workplace demands while caring for children during the pandemic and beyond. Parents are not only dealing with post pandemic effects on children’s mental health, but also trying to help kids feel safe, amidst dramatically increased political discord, focus

on racism, and violence in our schools.

Chronic activation of our biological stress response system results in parenting behavior that is harmful to children including increased anger, pressure, criticism, detachment, and verbal and physical aggression among other parent responses. Children look to parents to signal safety in the world and parents are struggling to provide that necessary reassurance. The best way we can help our struggling children is to provide focused education and support directly to parents, who have the most powerful impact on child wellbeing. And child therapists must more effectively engage parents in the process, helping them understand what their child needs to address their psychological challenges.

As the founder of Peace At Home Parenting Solutions, I see that companies are a largely untapped resource in this national crisis. **Corporate [HR and Benefits departments are uniquely situated to deliver](#) evidenced-based tools and support directly to parents and caregivers to address this frightening perfect storm.** While many are turning to schools to provide the unmet mental health needs of children and teens, we believe that U.S. companies should be an important part of the solution, reaching stressed parents in the workplace with accessible resources. This is a win-win solution. As parents gain increased confidence in their approaches, companies will see reduced absenteeism and resignations as well as increased focus and productivity, while **children gain much needed peace at home.** (8-10-22)

Ruth E. Freeman, LCSW

Founder and President

Ruth@peaceathomeparenting.com



[Peace at Home Parenting Solutions](#) is a dynamic hub of knowledge and compassionate support that inspires parents to create positive change for their children, their families and themselves. Our team of 20+ advanced degree expert specialists support parents through organizations like MIT, CVS Health, the LEGO Group and others.