

ISBN 978-9955-9971-7-7

These guidelines have been developed for family consultants to show the ways they can organise training on work-life balance and offer consultancy for working family members.

The guidelines present the methods for organising workshops using visual material, good practice examples based on interviews with employees and modules with the main topics concerning work and life balance of employees. In addition, the guidelines show how personal consultations for families having problems with work and life balance can be carried out and how family members having similar problems can help each other.

The guidelines are the result of the European project

"FACILITATING FAMILY LEARNING ON WORK AND LIFE BALANCE" (FAMILY),
No. 502889-LIP-1-2009-1-LT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

More information about the project and its outcomes can be obtained from the project's website: www.family-learning.eu



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. The publication reflects the views only of the authors and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



FACILITATING FAMILY LEARNING ON WORK & LIFE BALANCE

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY CONSULTANTS 2009-2011

Project No: 502889-LLP-1-2009-1-LT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP

www.family-learning.eu

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1. INTRODUCTION

The guidelines are the result of the European project "FACILITATING FAMILY LEARNING ON WORK AND LIFE BALANCE" (FAMILY), No 502889-LLP-1-2009-1-LT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP. The project was funded with the support of the European Commission in the Lifelong Learning programme. More information about the project and its outcomes can be obtained from the project's website: www.family-learning.eu.

Reconciliation of work and family roles has recently gained a particular popularity in public policy debates across Europe. The concept refers to a number of qualitative changes in contemporary societies, such as increasing labour market participation of women, changing family forms and the demographic decline, which play a crucial role in social organisation of work. Countries differ in their policy responses, sometimes stressing the need for more flexible working arrangements, sometimes encouraging the supply of care services or focusing on a more equal distribution between paid and unpaid work.

Nevertheless, the problem of work and life balance is still faced by many families and often results in withdrawal of one of family members from the labour market. Despite some employers' initiatives to create family-friendly workplaces, they aren't widely spread and recognised in most European countries countries. Thus, the bottom-up approach encouraging involvement of employees themselves in implementing family-friendly measures at workplaces and as a result to remain active in the labour market becomes of crucial importance.

An innovative approach for training of employees on work & life balance has been developed within the project. These guidelines have been developed for family consultants to introduce them the newly developed training materials on reconciliation of work and family life and show them the ways they can organise training on work-life balance and offer consultancy for working family members.

Family consultants have a double role in the training process of the working family members, as well they are suggested:

- to offer face to face trainings or self-learning with distant assistance on the basis of the content of modules to those employees who have work and life reconciliation problems (the modules have to be selected in accordance with the needs of the learners)
- ▼ to provide personal consultations for families having work-life balance problems.

The guidelines present the methods for organising workshops using State of Art Review, video clips, good practice examples based on interviews with employees and E-handbook containing modules with the main topics concerning work and life balance of employees.

Family consultants are advised to encourage family members for self-directed learning regarding issues related with reconciliation of work and family life. As well family consultants should facilitate family members having similar problems to help each other.

2. MATERIALS AVAILABLE FOR THE TRAINING

2.1. STATE OF ART REVEW

State of Art Review report contributes to the training modules presented in the E-Handbook.

It overviews the family-friendly policies targeted towards the reconciliation agenda in Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and United Kingdom with the main focus on national public policies with regard to diverse leave facilities, care services, flexible working arrangements or training/retraining of employees, who return to labour market after a break due to family reasons.

Trainers may integrate this part into the discussions with the learners on family-friendly policies on European and national levels to facilitate face-to-face training on separate training modules from E-Handbook.

As well this report presents the cases of good practices on effective implementation of family-friendly measures at workplaces in all these countries and discusses the provisions that emerge at company level as organizations may either supplement public provisions and services or other family-friendly measures at workplace.

It is recommended to use the presented good practices on effective implementation of family-friendly measures at workplaces during the training sessions as case studies for further discussions with the learners.

State of Art Review is available in printed version in English language. It is included in E-Handbook on DVD and can be downloaded from the project's website: **www.family-learning.eu**

2.2. E-HANDBOOK

E-Handbook "Family learning on work & life balance" offers innovative training modules for family learning on work-life balance. It aims to help learners to develop their social and civic competences in the area of gender equality, family-friendly workplaces and work-life balance.

The training modules presented in the E-Handbook can be used both for face-to-face and self-learning.

INTRODUCTION to the training programme "Family learning on work and life balance". It gives the learners the possibility to learn about entire training course and gives the short overview about all six modules, which then could be selected by trainer for face to face sessions or by learner in case of self-study. The introduction consists of three main parts:

- ✓ presentation of the project "Facilitating family learning on work and life balance"
- ✓ presentation of six modules from E-handbook
- motivation of learners for self-learning on work and life balance

The introductory part consists of five Power Point Slides and it is common for each of the six modules.

Training modules:

- **Module 1.** Arrangements in cases of maternity/paternity leave and "time-out".
- **Module 2.** Possibilities for flexible working time arrangements (including flexible working hours, part-time work, jobsharing, work from home and telecommuting).
- **Module 3.** Support services for childcare and pre-natal and post-natal arrangements for protecting and supporting women in the workplace (e.g. breast-feeding facilities).
- **Module 4.** Possibilities for dealing with responsibilities to care for long-term disabled and elderly people and other dependents.
- **Module 5.** Additional opportunities for services provided by companies for employees and their families on the basis of collective or other type of agreements. Opportunities for education, training and career development when experiencing problems in work & life balance.
- **Module 6.** Improving quality of working life: Overview of policies and practices for family-friendly workplace at European and national levels.

The common structure of each module comprises:

- **☑ THEORETICAL PART**
- **☑ PRACTICAL PART**
- **☑ NEXT STEPS**

THEORETICAL PART

The main aim of this part is to create awareness and sensitise the participants on the issues of the topic. Thus, this part is rather short, written in learner-friendly manner pointing out the importance of the topic in implementation of family-friendly practices at workplaces, the main problems and challenges, and the benefits for the employees.

PRACTICAL PART

The practical part is the most important part of each module. The main aim is to deepen the knowledge gained while reading the theoretical part. The methodology of the practical part of each module is based on self-learning from personal experiences of other employees. Mostly all case studies are created on the basis of Collection of the best practices developed within the project, which consists of videos and interviews with the personal reflection of the employees who have benefited from family-friendly measures applied at their workplaces. Practical parts of all modules are constructed in the way that each of 6 modules gives learner a possibility to analyse at least one video clip and 3-4 interviews on the topic.

The questions provided at the end of each case study are aimed at encouraging self-reflection of the learner on her/his information presented in the case study in comparison with own situation.

NEXT STEPS

This part aims to encourage the learner to think about the further steps he/she could undertake after having completed any of the modules. Presented general questions could give the learner the idea how he/she could act further to ensure the possibility to reconcile work and family life.

All training modules can be used for training and consultancy and can be adjusted to the specific needs of the learners and to the national situation in different countries.

E-Handbook is published in multilanguage DVD (in EN, DE, FI, IT, LT and LV) as well it is available for download from project's website **www.family-learning.eu.**

2.3. BROCHURE WITH GOOD PRACTICES

The brochure "Best practices on work & life balance" is aimed to encourage family members to contribute themselves in implementing family-friendly measures at workplaces. Brochure includes collection of 32 good practice examples in 6 languages, based on interviews with family members who benefited from family-friendly measures at the workplace:

- 1 Returning back to work after the maternity leave, while her husband stays at home with the baby
- 2 A father of a newborn baby sharing his parental leave arrangements with his wife
- 3 A business woman with a demanding work load and a mother of twins of whom one has special needs
- 4 Job alternation leave a new inspiration to work
- 5 Flexible share of parental leave by father and mother
- 6 Children are welcome at their parent's working place
- Work/life balance with work time account
- 8 Childcare by company kindergarten
- 9 Positive about disability
- A recipe for success, flexibility, childcare and training
- 1 Cancer care
- **1** Families benefit from affordable childcare schemes
- At home full time in teleworking
- 14 Benefits of flexible working time
- Father's baby care
- 16 A public voucher for baby sitting
- 17 Career is not a barrier for happy family
- 18 Flexible work arrangements great solution to work and live in balance
- 19 Trade union is value as for employees as employer
- 20 Collective agreement platform to build work and life balance in institution/company
- 21 Child day-care centre services at workplace

- Young father's experience of paternity leave
- 23 Flexible work arrangements for taking care of elder mother
- 24 Flexible working hours for taking care of disabled daughter
- Flexible work arrangements and support for family is an advantage for both family and employer
- 26 Family-friendly workplace with "mini kindergarten"
- 27 The advantages of work at home for people with commitments to their families
- 28 Family decision mother and father takes parental leave alternately
- 29 Family-friendly workplace at public institution
- 30 Career break a way to reconcile work and commitment to mother
- 31 Flexibility is very important for shift work
- 32 Flexible work arrangements provide possibility to reconcile work and care for elder mother and mother-in-law

All examples of good practices are based on at least one of the following family-friendly measures at workplace:

- ☑ child care services,
- ✓ care services for elderly or family members with disabilities,
- ☑ paternity/maternity/child care support leaves by company,

- ☑ additional services provided by company for families/ mothers who are on paternity/maternity/child care leaves,
- oxdot other type of measures.

The brochure is available in printed version in EN, DE, FI, IT, LT, LV. It is included in E-Handbook on DVD as well it is available for download from project's website: **www.family-learning.eu**.

2.4. DVD WITH VIDEO COLLECTION "GOOD PRACTICES. WORK & LIFE BALANCE"

This training tool is based on expert knowledge and personal reflection of working family members who benefited from family-friendly measures at workplace. The DVD contains 8 video clips in 6 languages (English, German, Finnish, Italian, Latvian and Lithuanian) with the possibility to choose the transcripts:

- ☑ Gender Balance in Lithuania: Good Practice of Positive Paternity. (in Lithuanian language with transcripts in English, Finnish, German, Italian and Latvian);
- ▼ Flexible work arrangements for shift work. (in Lithuanian language with transcripts in English, Finnish, German, Italian and Latvian);
- ▼ Family-friendly workplace with "mini kindergarten". (in Lithuanian language with transcripts in English, Finnish, German, Italian and Latvian);
- ✓ Slow Life. (in Finnish language with transcripts in English, German, Italian, Latvian and Lithuanian);
- ▼ Family Friendly Work Places with Trade Union and Collective Agreement. (in Latvian language with transcripts in English, Finnish, German, Italian, and Lithuanian);
- ✓ Organisational Ethos Assists Disabled Woman to Work. (in English language with transcripts in Finnish, German, Italian, Latvian and Lithuanian);
- Work life balance: how to be flexible. (in Italian language with transcripts in English, German, Finnish, Latvian and Lithuanian);
- ▼ FamUnDo An innovative project to improve companies in family-friendly policies. (in German language with transcripts in English, Finnish, Italian, Latvian and Lithuanian).

This collection of video clips on the DVD is a good visual tool for training of those employees who have problems in reconciling their responsibilities for work and family.

All video clips with the subtitles in EN, DE, FI, IT, LT and LV are available to download from the project's website **www.family-learning.eu**.

3. HOW TO REACH LEARNERS?

The groups of learners which could be addressed by the training may vary in different countries. According to the experience of the partners in the project many different stakeholders can be interested. Therefore, it is advisable to look for cooperation with

- trade unions
- employer's associations
- employment agencies
- welfare association, charitable associations
- ✓ self-help groups for parents with disabled children or other people with disabled dependants
- ✓ family centres, neighbourhood centres, children centres
- ✓ childcare facilities (courses for parents)
- ✓ carers' organisations
- adult education organisations

The cooperation partners might be interested in offering courses for their clients or offer courses for their own employees who do consulting and are interested in background information.

For example, family and community centres which work with parents on subjects concerning the upbringing of children and dealing with family problems are often confronted with mothers who want to go back to work after parental leave but do not know how to find a good solution for their family as well as for their employer. They might be interested in offering courses and consultancy on the topic.

Employment agencies might want to give advice to clients who want to find a job but do not have a solution for their child care problems.

Trade unions might want to advocate for the course or they might want to train their employees or shop stewards of companies so that they have a background to negotiate solutions for working time schemes or child care assistance for parents or support for employees with other care responsibilities.

Care organisations (self-help groups) might want to inform their members about good practices how to combine care fore disabled dependents and work etc.

In many cases it might be necessary to address the targeted organisations personally, present the material and show the possibilities how the products of the project can be used for offering courses and for self-learning.

4. TRAINING AND CONSULTANCY

The products of the project have been developed for self-learning of family members but they can also be used for various types of training including phases of self-learning for the clients.

The training material includes theoretical parts and practical exercises. The modules on the different topics refer to the good practice examples and the video clips and include questions and exercises which can be used when working with the self learning material in a workshop.

Trainers can apply their own training approach and methods they usually use. Usually there is an extensive need for discussion and exchanging experience between the participants of a workshop. Therefore, it is suggested to integrate group discussion, role play (including video recording) and the visualisation of discussions (by using metaplan) in to the training session. It could be also helpful to choose exercises and assign them for homework.

The duration of course may vary depending on the target group and training approach. We just name some possibilities:

Face to face training:

- ✓ Two hour training providing a short introduction into the topic of reconciling work and family life and explain the possibilities of self-learning by using the E-Handbook.
- ✓ Four hour training on one specific module according to the needs of a specific target group (e.g. working with module No2 "Possibilities for flexible working-time arrangements")
- ✓ Two four-hour sessions within one month for raising awareness, discussing various topics and using different elements of the selflearning material according to the needs of the participants.
- ✓ One week session for train-the trainer seminars dealing in-depth with all topics and develop specific methodological approaches.

Distance learning:

It is also possible to offer a distance learning course using the E-handbook and offering personal consultations.

4.1. GENERAL OUTLINE OF A WORKSHOP WITH FAMILY MEMBERS

Trainers who want to offer a workshop could find it helpful to use the following suggestions:

- ✓ Focus on the individual problems of the participants
- ☑ Be flexible and able to alternate the content of the workshop depending on the interest of the group members
- Provide theoretical knowledge on the topics relevant for the participants
- ☑ Give the chance for exchange of experience of the participants
- Organise feedback to the different possible actions taken by the participants
- As an option, the trainer may train the learners conversation techniques that are useful if talking to employers about possible measures to improve work-life-balance.

The workshop can be designed for a two-day course with each of the topics or combination of several ones. The programme for a workshop which takes eight hours can be divided into two four-hour sessions within one month. In addition it is recommended to have a feedback workshop after two or three months in order to give the participants the possibility to reflect on their achievements.

Given below is a sample workshop proposal on the basis of the workshops carried out in European countries and highly appreciated by the participants.

Example

COMPATIBILITY OF WORK AND FAMILY – CREATION OF INDIVIDUAL APPROACHES

Duration: 2 days, each 4 hours

Number of participants: 10-15

people

Material: E-handbook (modules 2 and 3), booklet with good practice examples, DVD with video clips, projector, flipcharts, evaluation sheet.

Chair circle







WORKSHOP: FIRST DAY

TOPIC: Where do I stand, where do I want to go, which possibilities do I have?

Introduction of the participants (chair circle)

- ✓ Name, family status, information about job, ...
- ✓ Answer to the question: "What comes up in my mind when I think of this topic?"
- ✓ Answer to the question: "This will be a good workshop if ...?"



Imaginary journey

(individual work, drawing/writing on flipchart paper)

✓ How do I imagine my ideal job-related and familial path of life?

Theoretical input during the work time (projector, flipchart)

- Legal matters of the organisation of work time
- Presentation of different work time models
- Discussion within the group about the possibilities of work time organisation

BREAK

Theoretical input dealing with the topic child care (projector, flipchart)

- ✓ Legal formalities of child care
- ✓ Introduction of different possibilities of child care
- ✓ Focussing on the regional offers
- Discussion within the group dealing with the different possibilities of child care

Presentation of a good example of child care or organisation of work time (depending on the interests of the groups/video or written illustration)

 Collective discussion about the example (advantages and disadvantages, reference to individual situation)

HOMEWORK: What do I want to reach – What are the problems?

WORKSHOP: SECOND DAY

TOPIC: Development of individual solutions

Stumbling blocks (group work, flipchart)

- ✓ Concrete focusing on the biggest stumbling blocks that make compatibility of job and family harder to receive (group work)
- Presentation of the three most important stumbling stones in a plenum, collective searching for solutions



Preparing for conversations (employer / partner)

(role games, videos, group discussions)

- ▼ Theory "Conversation techniques"
- ✓ Practice: Content of the conversation, argument, counterargument etc.
- ✓ Exercise: Conversation

BREAK



Question sheet dealing with the transfer (individual work)

- ✓ Concretization of future steps
- Schedule

Feedback of the participants, clarification of questions

Final reflection of the participants

We suggest the trainers to offer their learners the following framework for reflection at the end of the training session:

M	NEXT STEPS	
1	What do I want to put into reality?	—
	Topics:	<u> </u>
	Methods:	<u> </u>
2	How?	
3	When? Until when?	
4	With whom?	
5	What has to be done first?	<u> </u>
6	Which material do I need?	
7	What kind of support do I need?	
8	Partnership	
	Name: Telephone number:	
	Post address: Date:	

4.2. TRAINER'S ROLE IN ASSISTING SELF-LEARNING

The modules presented in E-Handbook can be used for training but also for self-learning or for a distance learning course. The training approach is based on the module principle meaning that each module is developed as an accomplished unit and can be used during the one-two day's workshops or for self-education.

The methodology of the training workshops is based on flexible approach meaning that trainers can also develop their own structure of the workshops using combination of the training materials developed within the modules in accordance with the learners' needs which has to be done at the beginning of the workshops.

Each module gives suggestions for deepening the knowledge on the topic of the module by analysing specific case studies. The case studies themselves include questions to be answered by the trainee as shown in the following example from module 6 (Promoting quality of working life: Overview of policies and practices for family-friendly workplaces at European and national levels):

MODULE 6. Case studies of best practices.

Case study "Lloyds TSB Bank plc"

Aim: to create awareness of family-friendly initiatives of employers **Task:** to read the case study "Lloyds TSB Bank plc" and reflect on the

questions provided below.

Duration: 30 min.

Ouestions for reflection:

- Do you agree that flexibility should not only be an advantage for the company, but also the measure which creates an opportunity for people to develop a balance in their lives?
- What are the advantages gained by an employer because of good functioning of flexibility system in the company?
- What would be your steps to negotiate a change with your employer to adapt family friendly policies? Is there any way you could initiate progressive measures using technologies and support of your colleagues?
- What kind of information or plan would you deliver to employer trying to implement the measures as "Flexible benefits scheme", "Job-share register", etc.?



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The role of the trainer is to support the self-learner during the whole learning process. This can be the case at the very beginning of the learning process when the learner has to state its personal expectations and needs, thus making it easy to decide which module to choose to start the learning. Trainer has to support the learner when he or she has questions concerning the theoretical information given in the modules.

Nevertheless, the most important is the support in the last part of the training modules when the learner has to plan the own further steps towards better reconciliation of work and family life.

The closing part of the modules gives advice which next steps might be useful to be taken by the learner:

NEXT STEPS TO DO...

You have just completed this training module...

CONGRATULATIONS!

What would be your next step?

What actions are you going to take?

Don't worry... we have got some hints for you...

what you could DO NEXT...



undergroundteacher.blogspot.con

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CLOSING PART - NEXT STEPS TO DO...

START TO THINK ABOUT THE NEXT STEPS FOR YOU TO DO:

- Make a personal plan, set your personal goals;
- Discuss the ideas of better reconciliation of work and family life with your family members;
- Organise a discussion on reconciliation of work and family life at your workplace (use e-Handbook on DVD or published on www.family-learning.eu);
- How could you raise awareness about the family-friendly measures presented in the project at your workplace?
- Consider the possibility to discuss work-life balance problems with your employer;
- Think how you could use some of the presented good practices to show to your employer (trade union representative, etc.) as an example of familyfriendly measures;
- Think, who could support you while talking to your employer about your workfamily balance problems (representative of trade union, human resource manager, NGOs working in the field, etc.).



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The trainer can use the suggestions given in the different modules for his personal consultancy and adjust it to the questions raised by the trainee. It is very important that the trainer assists the self learner in developing a personal plan, which includes reasonable goals which have the chance to be achieved during the next weeks or months. The instructions could give advice as indicated in the final slide of the different modules.

4.3. GENERAL OUTLINE OF INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATIONS FOR PARENTS AND PEOPLE WITH OTHER CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

The individual counselling can follow a training course but it can also just use parts of the material from the modules to assist in a specific situation of a client who has to deal with the problem of reconciling work and family obligations.

The following outline gives an example of an individual consultation.

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATION

DURATION: 2 days, each 2 hours

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Getting to know the consultant and the family member

- Presenting of the problems dealing with the compatibility of job and family
- ✓ Structuring of the problems

First thoughts about the solution of the problem, discussing the future course of action



Possible questions:

- Which offer can I make to my employer?
- Which alternatives do I have concerning child care?
- Legal matters
- What can my partner offer his employer?
- Family and career ambitions?

PREPARATION FOR THE SECOND ENCOUNTER

Preparation of the consultant for the second encounter



- ✓ For example: Research (Laws, possibilities of child care or further education, information centre, job market)
- Methodical preparation (e.g. counselling, coaching plan, conversation training)

Preparation of the family member

- For example: Discussion with the partner about first ideas for a better compatibility of job and family
- Research aiming at possible solutions (internet, phone)
- ☑ Concretion of the problem of the solution finding

SECOND ENCOUNTER

Presentation of the research achievements

- What can be used for the individual situation? (Laws, possibilities of child care or further education, information centre, job market)
- ✓ How do I precede with the achievements? (action schedule)

Dealing with conversation situations

- ☑ What do I want to convey?
- ✓ How can it be conveyed?
- ✓ Argument / counter-argument
- ✓ Practices (role-play / videos)

SECOND ENCOUNTER

Collective conversation of the counsellor, the conferrer and his/her partner (supervision)

- Explanation and analysis of the current situation by turns
- Explanation of the individual wishes and problems and criticism by turns
- ✓ Collective solution finding (who can do what?)
- ✓ Creation of an action plan



SECOND ENCOUNTER

For example collective conversation of the consultant, the family member and his/her partner with his/her employer



- Explanation and analysis of the current situation by turns
- Explanation of wishes and problems by turns
- ▼ Collective solution finding (what is possible under given conditions?)
- ☑ Creation of an action plan

Eventually third encounter

Consultant should encourage family members for self-directed learning on work-life balance, to facilitate family members having similar problems to help each other as well as to encourage them to lobby for implementation of family-friendly measures at their workplaces.

5. FINAL REMARKS

The product which is presented in the E-handbook can be used as a tool-kit. Trainers have a possibility to select what they need according to the goals of their work with the specific target groups. As the material has been developed within international project it might be necessary to add national information regarding the up-to-date legislation, ongoing discussions and other useful links.

Some of the noted legislation might change frequently that's why it is necessary to check the national legislation regularly when preparing a course.

Trainers should keep well informed about the legislation in their own country because our experience shows that participants of training courses tend to ask very specific questions on the topics presented in E-handbook.

Necessary information could be also derived from the national ministries for family affairs or from ministries of labour. Also important sources of information could be publications from trade unions, national projects on work-life balance and the reconciliation of work and family life.

For any question please contact the project coordinator or partner in your country.

APPLICANT:



Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson, LT www.lygybe.lt

COORDINATOR:



Social Innovation Fund, LT www.lpf.lt

PARTNERS:



European Partnership, LT www.europartner.lt



Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, FI www.ttl.fi



Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia, LV www.lbas.lv



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