

## Baby step: Men are now bringing their kids to work

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Two years ago, when Sharon Thomas became a father and was planning to move from Bengaluru to Mumbai for a better job, his main criteria was that the company should have a crèche facility. Since Thomas and his wife don't have family living with them, they decided that one of them should land a job in a company with daycare. Thomas' wife joined a software firm in Mumbai, and Thomas, an MBA and B Tech, opted for a leadership role at Johnson & Johnson (J&J), which had a daycare facility within the building. Thomas has been using J&J's crèche facility ever since he joined the company in September 2016.

**A** growing number of male employees are using crèche facilities as men now shoulder more household responsibilities in dual-income households



“So far it has worked beautifully. I can go down to the crèche and check on her whenever it's required. Initially, my mother-in-law had to come with us for about 10 days to ensure our daughter adjusted to

the teachers. She settled in after about a month,” said Thomas, 35, HR leader for pharma business at J&J India.

Although daycare centres provided by organisations are primarily meant for women employees, a growing number of male employees are using these facilities too. The trend has emerged with men shouldering more household responsibilities in dual-income urban households.

Filmmaker Karan Johar, who is a single parent, has even opened a crèche inside his Dharma Productions office in Mumbai so he can spend more time with his twins Yash and Roohi. All Dharma staff—male and female—can use the crèche.

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## ‘We encourage policies that support work & life balance’

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Not everyone has that luxury but they do rely on company facilities. According to a survey by ProEves, which provides childcare, maternity and parental support solutions to companies, 70% of organisations provide in-house crèche facilities or access to a crèche to both male and female employees. The survey covered 70 companies.

Ketika Kapoor, co-founder, ProEves, said, “From our conversations with companies on their daycare strategy, we have observed that there is equal usage by women and men employees of on-site daycare. This is in the right direction towards equal parenting responsibilities.”

Hindustan Unilever (HUL), Asian Paints and Johnson & Johnson (J&J) have extended these facilities to male employees. Indrajeet Sengupta, HR head, J&J, said, “We have a crèche in our office building and it’s almost full. While the largest number of users is women, we see a growing interest among male employees wanting to use the facility.”

An HUL spokesperson said, “We encourage policies that support work-life balance like agile working and flexibility.”

Emrana Sheikh, VP (HR), Asian Paints, said, “With the rise in nuclear families, it has become more important for organisations to provide a support ecosystem that caters to the needs of working parents.”

J&J’s Sengupta said their focus was on building an inclusive workplace.