

WORKING MUMS

Are you juggling more than just raising your beautiful kids?

Well if you are thinking about heading back to work or are in a financial position of having to go back to work we thought we would share some of our stories with you. Its a hard decision sometimes to know what's right for you and your family so hearing other stories about mums you know can help make some informed decisions or just solidify in your mind you've made the right choices already.



Going back to work

When I first set eyes on the contents of my tummy on the ultrasound screen 2 years ago, the last thing on my mind was going back to work. I had enjoyed the previous year pootling around with my baby boy much more than I had thought I would. The hard road ahead of bringing up 3 small children filled my thinking time in the dead of night and I wondered if my brain would ever be able to cope with anything remotely commercial in the future.

When the girls were 6 months old I started to fantasize about having a job. Not because I wanted to go to work particularly but the thought of having 1 hour a day at lunch to exactly as I pleased was so appealing. Eating crisps without having to share them, reading magazines in silence, meandering through shops gazing at clothes. Money was getting tight and my brain was becoming less and less active. The last job I had before getting pregnant with my son was as a Sports Spread Betting Trader in London. There aren't a great many trading opportunities here in the sunny Bay of Plenty so I tried to think of something which would fit into our family life as well as have some kind of interest to me. I have a qualification to teach Primary children but I was reluctant to leave my baby twins and toddler son for a full time job. A friend gave me a great piece of advice. "It will be right under your nose, whatever it is you'd like to do". She had fashioned a career with her husband doing up houses and selling them on. They'd both always loved interiors and were fascinated by architecture and building. They gave up their jobs as a teacher and a lawyer and pursued their dream. Inspired by the way she had looked at work I changed the way I was looking for work. Like lots of us mums I wanted to be flexible with the hours I worked in order to put my family first, didn't want to spend masses on childcare and wanted the work to be fulfilling. It turned out my friend was right. My job was right under my nose.



Sylvia, Dusty and Delilah Roper

I have always loved writing – diaries, letters, emails, essays at school. Last November on the twins' 1st birthday I started writing a blog. This gave me practice at being a writer as well as giving me something to show potential publishers and editors. I was prepared to work for free in order to build a portfolio and contacts but so far have not needed to. In an incredible stroke of luck I met the editor of Simply You magazine. I told her I wanted to write but that I had no experience. She read my blog and offered me a column in the magazine. She sent me a brief for another article to be written and that is also to be published in the next edition. Friends who are reading my blog have put me in contact with friends of theirs and I now have a few different magazines I'm writing for.

Most of my work with the twins have their morning nap and my son is at kindy. The twins have started 2 afternoons a week at preschool and as I get more work we will apply for a childcare subsidy to get them another half day. If I have a deadline to meet and am running out of time my husband takes the children so I can get it done. He has taken on some of the housework and cooking too.

This has been a fantastic opportunity for my family. I am happier as my brain is being stimulated and I am contributing to our funds. The pay isn't great and is slightly erratic but what a difference it makes to our financial situation. My husband and I are sharing both the burden of providing and the housework. This has made us more considerate with each other. I like knowing my children are growing up seeing us both work and both look after them. In a few years when the children start at school I'd like to write a book. Heady aspirations I know but they fill me with excitement.

Contact Work and Income about childcare subsidy. Most of us are eligible for a substantial part of each child's daycare costs to be subsidised for up to 9 hours per week. Read my blog at <http://jennyjanerudd.blogspot.com>

Heading back to work....

It all started a year ago in July when Darren and me decided that it was time to have our own business again... We had settled in New Zealand for nearly 11 months from coming home from the UK and knew it was the right path to take, so as we began the process of sorting out the hair dressing salon - ESCADA. It was time to look at some childcare for the twins, Erin and George... We went through PORSE, as my sister works for them up in Auckland and always talked to me about the company and what benefits for the kids and we get out of it. They have been amazing for us as they found a fabulous Home Educator for us... Sarah!!! She has been a star with the twins and even helps me out when needing care for Sydney our eldest who's nearly 7 years old. It has been now a year we have been with Sarah, and our lives seem so much easier having her around as she has become part of the twins life on a regular 3 days a week 9—2pm.



Mornings are always a rush sorting out the 3 kids, myself and 3 packed lunches and when I get the spare 10mins the load of washing that needs hanging out! We always seem to be at the door at 8.30am ready to take Sydney to school and twins to Sarah's...some how! Some days can be testing!! Dropping them off at Sarah's house is always nice to know they are going to be sorted in a similar routine I would be doing for them at home, drawings, puzzles, walks to the parks, sleeps lunches are all part of a child's daily routine and Sarah can provide that for the twins while I head to work in the salon. After a busy day the children are always happy to see me at 2.30pm, nice that I get to pick up all the children by 3pm and spend the afternoon with the. As there is always washing to get in, dinner to make and a catch up with husband and friends in the evening....

It is always a juggling act when it comes to work and children but when you get that balance it seems to work for the whole family. I am lucky enough to work for 3 days and to have the rest of the week to enjoy being a mum to my children. Playgroup for the twins on a Tuesday and music on Thursday, as well as now Kindy 2 afternoons a week to fit in. Heading back to work for me was a good move, as we all benefit to having a balanced life style now. Knowing there are many of you having to make that decision it is always nice knowing that there are many of us out there already that get through the days and weeks enjoying our work - life - balance. Always have time for play too!
Cheers Angel Wyllie

RETURNING BACK TO WORK

I was approached by my previous employer if I was keen to return back to work part-time, I thought long and hard about it and decided it would be good for us financially and for me personally. At the time Matthew was in Preschool four days a week (he is now at School) and the girls were two days a week at a different Daycare, which they started when they were 11 months old, I took advantage of the 9 hour subsidy per child, they were 16 months old when I started work and I only work for a total of 10 hours per week within the School hours.

The girls have moved daycare centres and are now opposite Matthews school so that makes a big difference with dropping off and picking up. I find that if I prepare my meals in the morning I then have time for the kids when we get home as they are all very tired and just want some Mummy time. On the days I work I try not to have any appointments eg: Swimming lessons' and play dates, etc as the extra running around can become very busy and the kids and parents can become grizzly. What also works for us is preparing the lunches their School/Preschool Bags and their clothes the night before. My husband tries to leave for work at 7.30am so we try to have the kids fed and dressed before he goes, then I do the hair, teeth and shoes on so to speak, we are still perfecting it, but we are nearly always out the door by 8.15am. My employer is very understanding and I think this helps me and my family. I enjoy the work I am doing and the hours. I wish you the best of luck for those thinking about returning back to work. Nichole :)

Working mums

A working mum story, I guess that's me. Rob and I own a motorcycle shop GP Red Baron. Our girls Olivia and Charlotte are 21 months.

Rob and I used to work at the shop together however about a year ago, Rob was offered an opportunity to return back to being a project engineer. He drives down to Kawerau to the paper mill everyday, leaving home at 6am and gets home at 5pm to help with dinner and of course his cuddles before bed time.

I have been back at work a day or two a week since the girls were only a few months old. At that stage Rob would stay home and have 'daddy day care', he loved it.

I needed to work more hours and had already looked into day care. Our shop is in MacDonald Street, so down to Top Kids we went. I had two friends who highly recommended it and its closeness to work was ideal.

The girls were so tiny when they started. (about 5 months) For a year they went for two half days, and for one or two days a week I had a friends mum (Granny Liz) look after them. Having them looked after at home worked well, I would get home after work and they had had their dinner and were in the pj's.

April this year I had to start being at work full time, now they go Monday to Friday. Except of course Tuesday mornings when we go to playgroup. At least there is some perks when you sleep with the boss!

Our mornings usually start just before 7am (good little sleepers). I try to do breakfast at 7-7.30, then 7.30-8 is getting dressed and we are hopefully out the door to be at Top Kids by 8.30am. Our mornings do test my patience at times, especially when I need to change a new nappy or my biggest problem now

a line or both of them decide to change their shoes! And pull their socks off but all is forgotten by the time I get out of the driveway.

When we arrive at Top Kids Charlotte usually goes straight outside to play and Olivia finds a good book or something to play with. Charlotte gives me a look that says 'don't kiss me mum!'

In the afternoon when I come to pick them up, I get big smiles and cuddles. Charlotte won't let me go and is instantly ready to get out to the car. Most days now there is also a new painting too. We have now gone from being the smallest there to two of the biggest children in the room. Now, they are getting ready to move up to the next room with older kids, how time flies. I feel that the girls have learnt so much being at day care and of course caught every illness there is. They play with other children their own age, have different toys, play outside in a secure environment, learn songs/nursery rhymes, read different books, have a varied diet and do paintings/drawings even go to the pet shop to learn about animals. We then get to read their portfolios about the things they do and how they have learnt from their play

The girls do get tired by the end of the week. Once I have picked them up at the end of the day, we go straight home unless I have a good food and drink supply with me and then we stay at work usually on a Friday evening, now they are old enough to enjoy running around the bike shop and sitting on the bikes while daddy pushes them inside.

I am very lucky that I work in our own business that has good staff that can cope without me for short periods and I do have a great husband who loves looking after his 3 girls.

My sanity is catching up with my friends at playgroup and my Sundays chilling out with my family. All in all my life is wonderful as I have a great family and I cherish every moment we spend together, although we have a very busy life we make time to enjoy our time together as it passes very quickly.

You have to live life to experience it, so do everything you can and enjoy the time you have.

Jacqui Jackson or JROC (Jacqui, Rob, Olivia & Charlotte)

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