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# Executive Summary

**F**or working parents caring for a child with a special need, balancing the needs of their child with the demands of their work life can be challenging. Taking full advantage of all services and supports available to them and their family is crucial. One potential source of benefits and services is a parent's employer. Many worksites offer benefits and work-family supports that parents may find helpful. So it is important to understand and consider what may be available through the workplace.

This guide is designed to help working parents think about employer-sponsored benefits and supports. It addresses the kinds of benefits and policies that may be available and describes ways to access these benefits, in particular:

**Health Care Benefits**, including dental benefits, prescription drug plans, catastrophic funds, public benefits that may be available (such as SSI/Medicaid and SCHIP), and employer advocacy with health plans on behalf of employees

**Work-Life and Employee Assistance Programs** that may offer information and referral to child-care providers, stress-management seminars, flexible work arrangements, and legal counseling, in addition to many other types of services

**Flexible Spending Accounts** for dependent care and medical expenses

**Employer Assistance** in determining whether and how an employee can access and use benefits that are offered through the workplace

**Disclosure** as an important and personal issue to consider when evaluating use of employer-sponsored benefits and supports

This information can help employees optimize the use of benefits provided through their workplace. Resources are also provided that can help parents make more informed choices about both public and private benefits and support programs.

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