

# Infants at the office? The Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney's Office is trying it

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The Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney's Office now allows employees to bring their infants to work.

The office is the first county agency to offer the "Infants in the Workplace" program for employees with children between six weeks and nine months.

Prosecuting Attorney Mary Robnett said the program should mean lower childcare costs and reduce feeding stress for parents and their children.

"For the office, giving employees this option will help people stay in their current positions and lower our turnover costs," Robnett said in a press release. "It will be a boon to recruitment as well, a new way to attract high-quality applicants."

There are a few stipulations. Parents can only bring in one infant and must be sufficiently equipped with supplies.

Two colleagues have to be willing to serve as "care providers" if the need should arise, according to program rules. Employees cannot bring in their own child and become a "care provider" for another parent.

The program is only for those working in the office, not staff in the courtroom or conducting investigations.

Infants who have been "fussy" for more than 30 minutes and disrupting the workplace need to be taken home, according to program rules. Vaccinations are encouraged but not required, spokesperson Adam Faber said.

At least 10 state agencies have similar programs, including the Attorney General's Office and the state Department of Health. Gayle Robbins is human resources manager

for the prosecutor's office. Robbins said the office has modeled its program on those and expects a good outcome.

The office has committed to a yearlong trial and will evaluate success based on feedback.

"When we near the end of the pilot program, everyone will have a chance to give their input about what worked and what didn't," Robbins said. "But if our experience is anything like these other workplaces, the benefits will be obvious."



Employees at the Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney's Office now can bring infants to the office. DAVID MONTESINO NEWS TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO