



# Return to Work TOOLKIT

*a comprehensive guide  
for your journey back to work*



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**RTW**  
toolkit

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## \* foreword

"Brilliant. Days and nights, weeks even, of tossing and turning, to-ing and fro-ing, can be put aside with this logical, efficient and thorough Toolkit which eases some of the stress in returning to work. It is a personal advisor at your finger tips to help **prioritise and focus on exactly what YOU want to get out of a return to work**. You can dispense with dead ends and wrong turns, the Toolkit shows you how to make each minute and each decision count. Returning to work has an impact on everybody in the family. This guides you through the process without 'glossing over' all of the issues you'll need to consider. When I worked through the Toolkit I came out the other side feeling like an excited student thoroughly prepared for whatever the examiners could throw at me! Well done and thank you."

*Tracey Holmes - Sports Presenter and Journalist*

"Returning to work is not just about getting a job. It is about negotiating flexibility, re-building your self confidence, and re-defining yourself as a working parent. This Toolkit is essential and **builds a bridge to the workforce** again."

*Kate Sykes - Founder of [www.careermums.com.au](http://www.careermums.com.au)*

"Almost every mother on maternity leave who I speak to is agonising over when to return to work and in what capacity. There is no one-size-fits-all 'silver bullet' to answer all our working parent questions however, The Return to Work Toolkit takes you on **a personal journey helping you to answer those questions for yourself**. This Toolkit is so thorough, well-structured and low stress to follow. The exercises and tips are content-rich and thoughtful. With this Toolkit you can return to work renewed."

*Karen Miles - Speaker & Author of 'The Real Baby Book you need at 3am'*

"The Return to Work Toolkit is **practical, up-to-date, pragmatic and realistic**. Getting back to work is complex. Parents need to get on top of the current market, refresh their skills, and get organised at home. There is a lot of talk about the right formula for work/life balance and for juggling work and family commitments. This Toolkit talks directly to the issues, with a pragmatic perspective, and some very practical exercises to help you make sure your move back to work is a smooth transition, and another step towards an enjoyable and fulfilling working life. To round it off, the Toolkit is succinct, to the point and clearly designed. Working parents have no time to get lost in complex anecdotes, or cumbersome design."

*Kirsten Lees - Journalist & Author of 'Let Go Of my Leg'*



\* welcome

Hello & Welcome to your Return to Work Toolkit!

This Toolkit is designed to assist mums and dads to review their career options and return to the workforce following full time parenting. Regardless of how long you've been out of the workforce, the decision to return to work can feel somewhat daunting, even overwhelming. There are many things to consider and this Toolkit will guide you through an easy, step-by-step process making the return to work transition a smooth one.

It is important that you feel confident and that you are prepared for the return to work and for the changes that will inevitably take place for you and your family. The Toolkit will help you explore your return to work options, prepare for the job search process and re-enter the workforce with confidence.

#### **Why go back to work?**

Your decision to return to work is a personal one. Many parents choose to return to work for different reasons: financial, to resume a job / career they enjoy, for lifestyle reasons or perhaps for a break from the kids! When going back to work, it's important to think about what you would like to gain from re-entering the workforce.

The Toolkit is packed full of activities, thoughtful questions and practical 'how to' advice from experts and other parents who have returned to work. It will help you to self-evaluate and self-assess what is important to you.

#### **Everyone's journey will be slightly different.**

Your journey back to work will be an individual experience. It is important to realise this and not feel pressured to meet a certain deadline. This Toolkit is intended as a guide only. Feel free to pick and choose sections of the Toolkit to complete, in a random order if you feel that is more appropriate for your situation.

Congratulations on taking the first step; and good luck with your journey back to work!



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# \* how to use this toolkit

## What is this Toolkit for?

Use this Toolkit to guide you through the decision-making process of returning to work. You will be prompted to explore and consider options and factor-in issues as you work your way through the various activities and sections.

### Structure of the Toolkit

The return to work process is explained in 5 steps on the (previous) Contents page. The Toolkit is divided into these five sections which deal with each of these steps in turn. Throughout the Toolkit, there will be exercises and checklists which we encourage you to complete.

### Who will benefit from using this Toolkit?

This Toolkit will assist parents on parental leave planning to return to their job; parents looking to review their job / career options; and parents who have been out of the paid workforce for an extended period, i.e. 12 months or more. We make reference to 'mums' throughout the Toolkit to cater for the majority of our readers, however, we acknowledge many dads will have a use for this Toolkit as dads increasingly play a significant role in sharing the primary care giving responsibilities with their partners.

### Starting your Return to Work Journal

As you work your way through the Toolkit, we suggest that you keep a journal. You can record questions, thoughts, ideas and decisions in this journal. At certain points in the Toolkit, we will ask you to record something specific in your journal. Use your journal in a way that suits you. Buy a book that works for you with either big, blank pages, or ruled lined pages - whichever you find helps your creativity flow! The following symbol will indicate that it is time for your journal:



### Exercises

Throughout the Toolkit there will be exercises to complete. These will help you start to build a return to work plan. The following symbol will indicate that it is time for an exercise:



### My Profile template

At particular points in the Toolkit, we make reference to the My Profile template. This template has been included at the end of Step 3: Exploring My Options, for you to record key points and findings in one central place. You will find the My Profile information useful when it comes to creating or updating your resume. The following symbol indicates that it is time to record information in the My Profile template:



### Mind mapping

Mind mapping is a technique that many people use to help organise their thoughts into a logical structure. You may find it a useful method to use in your journal. You can apply it to any topic, scenario or experience. Mind maps are usually created free-hand, and they evolve as your thinking develops. A sample mind map is included on the next page to illustrate what we mean.

### Need help - prefer to speak to someone?

Specialised career consultants can assist you throughout this process. If you feel you need additional advice, contact a mums@work career consultant on 02 9967 8377 or email info@mumsatwork.com.au