

# Does the Market Help Workers Balance Work-Family Conflict?\*

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## **Abstract**

We use data from the Canadian Workplace and Employee Survey (1999-2002) to assess the take-up of family-friendly benefits that are provided by employers. We distinguish between availability and actual use of benefits to account for worker selection into firms according to benefit availability. We find that selection is important for understanding the take-up of family-friendly benefits, although it does not differ much between genders. We also find that the provision of these benefits helps workers relatively little to manage the work-family conflict and benefits are often unavailable to those who need them most. Our findings suggest that the market fails to help employees balance their family-work conflict.

*Keywords:* work and family balance, family-friendly benefits, take up of employer benefits

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