The effects of fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workforce practices on families in Australia

A limited but growing amount of Australian research into fly-in fly-out (FIFO) work practices tentatively suggests that a FIFO lifestyle can have positive, negative or few effects on children and on family relationships - depending on the circumstances.

Key messages

FIFO Families

Most FIFO families are healthy functioning families when the right conditions are in place, such as a balanced work/family roster

Parenting

Parenting can be challenging, especially for partners at home

Potential impacts on children

Negative
- Negative emotions
- Increased behaviour problems
- Bullying at school
- Pressure to succeed academically

Positive
- More time with parent when they are home

Communication

FIFO families need to be able to communicate:
- Regularly
- Privately
- Effectively
- Spontaneously

Further research is needed that is:

- Longitudinal
- Collects data pre-entry to FIFO
- Engages with all types of FIFO workers and their families

FIFO lifestyle

Benefits

- ✓ High Income
- ✓ Independence
- ✓ Quality, extended time at home
- ✓ Getting things done during leave
- ✓ Meeting new people
- ✓ Travelling to new locations
- ✓ Clear separation between work and personal life
- ✓ Regular exercise on the job
- ✓ Healthy food on site

Challenges

- ✗ Emotional and functional adjustment to leaving and returning cycle
- ✗ Loneliness and isolation
- ✗ Hopelessness
- ✗ On site physical exertion and fatigue
- ✗ Reduced communication
- ✗ Absence at family events
- ✗ Difficult for at-home parent to undertake work or study
- ✗ Reduced social opportunities
- ✗ Restricted opportunity to get home in a family emergency