



Life on rotation: What we learnt from you

Thank you to all the families who participated in this study. Our research is not possible without people finding time in their busy lives to speak with us and share their experiences.

What we did



We spoke with 22 current FIFO workers to understand their perspectives on the benefits and challenges of FIFO work, coping strategies, things that make it easier and harder to manage, family impacts and ideas for support. In this document, we provide a summary of what we found.

What we found

Key positives and challenges

- 
- The key benefits FIFO work were increased financial security and quality time with family when on R&R.
 - The main challenge was missing family and significant events, such as children's birthdays and milestones, like their first steps.

Wellbeing impacts

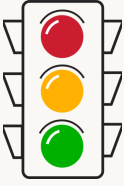
- 
- Separation from family and loneliness were the main factors that affected FIFO worker's wellbeing.
 - Partners reportedly experienced stress and fatigue from managing family responsibilities alone.
 - While most workers felt children adapted well to FIFO, younger children and those whose parent had recently started FIFO were viewed as more susceptible to challenges.

Core coping strategies

- 
- Workers regularly connected with their family through daily phone calls and messages, often following set routines.
 - Workers helped children adjust to FIFO by explaining the arrangement in age-appropriate ways, maintaining regular contact while away, and planning meaningful time with children when home.

What helps and what gets in the way

- Support from friends and family, like help with school pickups and housework, is pivotal and helps ease the pressure on partners during swings.
- Long and uneven rosters can make workers feel more disconnected from family and experience greater fatigue.
- Supportive workplace cultures, understanding managers, and family-friendly policies such as flexible roster arrangements helped workers balance their work and family responsibilities.



What can help?

Workers shared many ideas for ways that FIFO families could be supported



Resources for Families

Greater information for families, including family inductions, resources on different topics e.g. communication and multimedia content for children.



Peer support

Peer networks, including support groups and playgroups to help partners build social connections.



Reform

Wider implementation of balanced rosters and timely access to leave for family matters.



What's Next?

We are currently co-designing a **free online support resource for families**. The resource aims to help families build the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to thrive in FIFO working arrangements. The resource will be available in December 2026.



How can you contact us?

If you have any questions or feedback or would like a full copy of our publication, please contact Dr Vincent Mancini at:
vincent.mancini@thekids.org.au