Executive Summary
The Next Generation: Preparing for the Future of the Workforce

Today’s children are future business leaders and changemakers. Businesses can provide early experiences for children to explore new fields, encouraging them to choose a profession they are passionate about, contributing to a vibrant workforce development pipeline and business longevity. Supporting and investing in children also helps attract employees who share these values and build a strong community. To empower employees to be undistracted and productive at work and build a sustainable workforce, the Clark-Fox Policy Institute has produced a three-part policy brief focused on family-friendly business policies.

The third brief, available now, demonstrates how businesses can play a pivotal role in shaping the lives of future generations. Highlights from *The Next Generation: Preparing for the Future of the Workforce* reveal:

- **Accommodations for Pregnant Employees**: Nearly 1 in 4 women reported considering leaving their jobs due to lack of support or fear of discrimination while pregnant.
- **Lactation Support**: Businesses that have no lactation support programs or policies may deter recruitment efforts for new talent and increase employee turnover costs.
- **Early Childhood Education Assistance**: Missouri’s economy loses $1.35 billion a year due to a lack of childcare and early learning options for families.
- **Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) Days**: A STEAM workforce shortage is possible without investment in future generations pursuing STEAM degrees.

The institute recommends employers create a web support for employees by providing reasonable accommodations for pregnant employees, comprehensive lactation support programs, childcare assistance, and opportunities for children to learn about STEAM professions. These recommendations are based on a blend of scientific research and insights from community voices, including a listening session with working parents facilitated by the Gateway Early Childhood Alliance.

Gary Parker, PhD, Director of the Clark-Fox Policy Institute, emphasizes how businesses are uniquely positioned to drive positive social change by investing in child development and well-being. “Businesses have the power to shape the workforce for generations to come. Implementing policies that benefit today’s children and families helps create a more resilient and prosperous economy in the future,” Parker states.

For further details on the policy brief and to access resources on advocating for family-friendly workplaces, visit *The Next Generation: Preparing for the Future of the Workforce*.

About the Clark-Fox Policy Institute

The Clark-Fox Policy Institute is dedicated to child wellbeing through the development and dissemination of evidence-informed policy. Building on the foundation of scientific research, the Institute layers the empirical data with the lived experience of the impacted population. Science alone cannot drive the policymaking process, and the Institute is committed to working with communities whose voices are often left unheard. To achieve this, the Institute serves as a regional convener and a catalyst for addressing pressing social issues.