



# 2022 Family-Friendly Focus



The Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program is a partnership among First 5 San Luis Obispo County, the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce and the County of San Luis Obispo. This FREE initiative, housed within the Chamber, aims to help businesses hire and retain employees, support working parents' balance between job and home life, and bolster the economic vitality of our communities. The program builds on the SLO County Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit which was created by the "We Are the Care" Initiative – a countywide coalition dedicated to addressing local child care and related work-life balance challenges faced by local families.

## SEPTEMBER HERO: iFixit

Start with something small and work your way up. Take it from iFixit: the payoff of implementing family-friendly policies on \*any\* scale will prove to be a worthy endeavor. The company, with an office in San Luis Obispo and 145 employees across the country, has a 100% retention rate of parents returning to work after having children.

If you're not familiar, iFixit is the world's largest online library of free repair manuals for fixing electronics, household goods, cars and just about everything else. They also sell parts and tools—all while giving their own employees helpful tools to successfully navigate work-life demands, many specific to growing families. iFixit offers several perks: a \$1,000 bonus to employees who have a new baby, 100% salary continuation while parents are on pregnancy leave and paid family leave, Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts, (DCFSA) plus a \$1,250 stipend per year to go towards childcare expenses.

According to iFixit Human Resources Director Kelly Boss (pictured above), being able to provide monetary benefits and flexibility has made the company a place where parents can prioritize family life and work life in a way that is balanced and sustainable. She says choosing to continue someone's salary while they are out on leave is a small price to pay to keep valued, skilled employees, versus the costs of recruitment and hiring someone new. Boss knows firsthand how grateful employees are for a supportive culture, as she was one of the first employees to have a child while working at the company. Her personal experiences riding the rollercoaster of new

parenthood, coupled with her HR lens, have shaped the way she has chosen to develop iFixit's policies. iFixit Founders Kyle Wiens and Luke Soules are right there with her. From the beginning, they have been instrumental in reinforcing a family-friendly atmosphere that is a direct reflection of the company's motto, "People, planet, profit."

iFixit makes a concerted effort to ensure its benefits package is inclusive of ALL employees, regardless of stage of life; for example, flexible and remote work options apply to everyone. In Boss' situation, this has meant having more ease in establishing a schedule around her son's nursing times, the opportunity to be at home/more present with her children while reducing the kind of childcare costs that have become an increasing financial burden on families. For other employees, the flex option might mean being able to take care of aging parents, or bring pets to the office. iFixit team members also receive \$1000 when they get married, and everyone gets \$300 per year to spend on whatever keeps them healthy and well! No matter the policy, the objectives and outcomes are the same: higher productivity and better morale. iFixit, like a growing number of businesses, is learning to adapt to differing circumstances and new scenarios—with a laser focus on retaining appreciated and trusted employees whose loyalty to the company only deepens. Transparency, empathy, and innovative practices are all keys to helping employers and their employees successfully shift together in an ever-evolving landscape... all for the betterment of our children, parents, families, and communities. Our thanks to iFixit for setting such a high standard!



To learn more about the Family-Friendly Workplace Toolkit, visit [slofamilyfriendlywork.org](http://slofamilyfriendlywork.org). For information on the Family-Friendly Workplace Accelerator Program, contact the SLO Chamber's Workforce Development Manager, Christina Lefevre Latner, at (805) 786-2762 or [christina@slochamber.org](mailto:christina@slochamber.org). To learn more about early-childhood related initiatives, go to [first5slo.org](http://first5slo.org).