



National Office  
P.O. Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696

## For Immediate Release

FROM: Wayne Loder  
Public Awareness Coordinator  
The Compassionate Friends  
(Toll-free) 866-964-4000  
E-mail: [wayne@compassionatefriends.org](mailto:wayne@compassionatefriends.org)  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

# Employers Need to Work on Bereavement Support, Survey Finds

Oak Brook, IL, October 12, 2006—Just over half of all parents who experience the death of their child while working outside the home rate their employer as having been helpful in providing support in the days that followed, according to a survey just released by the nation's largest self-help bereavement organization.

The survey, taken earlier this year by The Compassionate Friends, a nearly 600 chapter bereavement organization for families that have experienced the death of a child, found that 50.9% of parents employed at the time their child died rated their employer as either extremely or somewhat helpful at the time of their child's death. Of the remainder, most said their employer was neither helpful or unhelpful, although 8.8 percent rated their employer was somewhat or extremely unhelpful.

While more than half of employers received good marks, this was a drop compared to a 1999 survey, also conducted by The Compassionate Friends. In that survey, 69% gave their employers a passing grade.

"The drop is disheartening," says Patricia Loder, executive director of The Compassionate Friends. "There could be many reasons for the slide. Smaller companies are being rapidly absorbed by larger companies which are generally perceived as less caring of individual employees. Market pressures may also be causing companies to demand higher performance from every person on the job."

Through its Compassionate Employer Recognition (CER) program, The Compassionate Friends annually recognizes employers who are nominated by employees as having gone above and beyond the call of duty following the death of a child within their families.

"We recognize that it is every employer's responsibility to support an employee who has experienced the death of a child," says Mrs. Loder. "We hope that in light of the current survey employers reexamine their personnel policies to assure they are providing a positive response in support of employees who are suddenly bereaved parents."

The 2006 survey of 400 bereaved parents from across the United States has a margin of error of +/-4.3%. To view a complete summary of the report, visit the TCF national website at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org), and click on "When a Child Dies—2006 Survey Summary."

Those interested in the Compassionate Employer Recognition program will also find information and names of past recipients on the national website. Nominations for the 2007 CER program must be received by November 30, 2006.

A comprehensive summary of the survey, which also examined other bereavement issues including current divorce rates among bereaved parents, is available at [www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org), or by calling the National Office at 877-969-0010.

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