By Nicola Semple | Filed in Deciding if you want to Return, Legal Rights for Maternity Leave, Resources on October 31, 2012 with no comments

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Decided not to return to work after your maternity leave? If so, your resignation after maternity leave needs to be handled sensitively and diplomatically. Let me share with you the key mindset you need and top tips that will help you handle it well.

If you decide not to return to your previous job after your maternity leave and decide to resign it is best to handle the situation carefully to make sure that you maintain a positive relationship with your employer.

No matter how certain you feel that your decision to not return to work after maternity leave is the right answer for you or your family or how liberated you feel leaving your employer, you never know what might happen in the future. After spending some time at home you may decide that you really miss your job and the intellectual stimulation and financial independence it provided you. You may find that your family situation changes and financial pressures are such that you can no longer afford to stay at home and you need to return to work.

Even if you never return to your old employer, you may find that your line manager moves on to head up a team at a new organisation. When you are back in the job market looking for work in a few years time your paths may cross again. You never know what the future will hold so don't burn any bridges.

When dealing with your resignation after maternity leave, work on the basis that you want to maintain a positive working relationship with your employer and keep a professional stance at all times.

Top Tips for Handling Your Resignation After Maternity Leave

Meet with your line manager to discuss all of the options for your returning to work after maternity leave

- Carefully consider the options presented to you and make sure you are certain that none of these options provide a viable solution that would allow you to return to work and achieve the work/life balance that you want.
- If you decide that resigning from your job really is the most appropriate way forward for you, arrange to meet your boss face to face to discuss your decision with them.
- Be as honest as you can with them and stress how difficult a decision it has been for you.
- Explain that you have made the decision based on the way you want your family life to shape up rather than any negative feelings towards the organisation.
- Stress how much you are going to miss working with your employer and the intellectual stimulation that the role provided for you.
- After the meeting follow up with a formal letter of resignation and a telephone call to make sure that your line manager has received your resignation letter.

Resignation After Maternity Leave: Your Resignation Letter

Your resignation letter doesn't need to be a long, detailed document. If you have met with your line manager and discussed your reasons for your resignation after maternity leave then you just need to put together a simple, concise, professional document to formally record your decision not to return to work.

Some suggested wording is below to give you a starter for your own resignation letter. It is important that you personalise your letter to your specific situation and where possible refer to the conversation that you had with your line manager about your reasons for your resignation after maternity leave.
Dear (line managers name)

After much thought and consideration, I have decided not to return to work after my maternity leave.

This is a bitter sweet decision as I have always enjoyed working with you and the team but my new family situation means I want to spend as much time as possible with my child.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for such a wonderful time working for you, and for the opportunities and experience I gained
Please accept this letter as formal notice of my resignation, effective from (insert date here)

I wish you and the team every continued success

Kind regards
XXXX
After your resignation after maternity leave try and keep some kind of contact with your ex-employer. This doesn't need to be a weekly event, in fact they will probably find it a bit odd if you are contacting them every week! But an email/a phone call/a coffee every six months or so will make sure they don't forget who you are and will allow you to keep updated on what is happening in the organisation and help you spot any opportunities that may come up in the future.

One very effective way of keeping in touch with your old employer is to forward on news stories or email newsletters that you think may be of interest to them. Not only are you maintaining contact with your old employer but you are demonstrating that you are still keeping abreast of what is happening in your industry.

Keeping in touch with your old employer will keep you connected to what is happening in your profession and will also keep them in your network. If you do need to approach them for help when you do decide to return to work it won't come as a complete bolt from the blue.

If you have indeed decided to resign, I know you will now have the tools to handle it well. Just forget about any current emotions, and make sure you handle it professionally. It's for your own future.