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Don't let fear factor stop your returning to work

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FOR many women, and occasionally men, the thought of returning to work after a career break to raise children is a daunting prospect.

There are many reasons for this, the cost of childcare, whether to use a registered childminder or ask a friend to help, finding a job between the hours of 9 and 3 to fit in with the school run, and perhaps the most important, the guilty feeling that the children may think they're being neglected.

Then there's the fear factor: loss of confidence due to being out of the job scene for a long period of time.

All this has to be balanced against the fact that many mothers need to return to work to bring in an

additional income.

The message from Paul Preston, Managing Director of recruitment specialist Active Resourcing, is that although returning can be a daunting thought, if someone has been out of the work environment for a while, that shouldn't stop women from taking the plunge, they still have many skills that will make them an asset to the workforce.

"Although many women think they've lost skills and confidence because they've been out of the workplace for some time, they forget to consider that if they've been looking after children they'll certainly have developed great communication and time management skills, and they're probably great organisers and

negotiators, all valuable skills that employers are looking for."

As well as helping mums and dads returning to work to find the right job, Active say they can put candidates in touch with organisations that can provide help and advice. For example the Milton Keynes based registered charity Milton Keynes Women and Work Group, whose aim is to provide advice and guidance to women wanting to return to paid work or to update their skills.

Active can also give advice on employee rights and changes to legislation, for example, the key maternity changes to be implemented in the Work and Families Act from April 2007:

- paid maternity leave will be extended from 26 weeks to 39

weeks, rising to year by the end of 2009.

- the introduction of 10 'keep in touch' days during maternity leave
 - the notice period given by an employee of their intention to return to work will be raised from four to eight weeks
 - there will be a requirement for an employee to have worked for an organisation for 26 weeks in order to qualify for additional maternity leave.
- Active Resourcing was established in 2002 and is a privately owned, independent company that specialises in the recruitment of permanent, temporary and contract professionals.

The company has offices in Milton Keynes, Northampton and Luton.