

Employers offer pet-sitting services:

Bringing up puppy

NEWS. Many workplaces offer childcare as part of their overall benefits packages. But how about a company-sponsored baby sitter for Fido?

Some employers are beginning to offer professional pet-sitting and dog-walking services to their animal-loving employees in an effort to cut down on absenteeism and boost productivity.

"Pets have become like kids," said Paul Mann, founder and CEO of Fetch! Pet Care, a franchise that provides pet care benefits to businesses.

Such services free employees to work late or leave town for last-minute business trips, as well as cut down on workers having to arrange for pet care during business hours, Mann said. Professional pet-sitting also prevents employees from missing work if their regular, less reliable dog walker doesn't show up, he said.

Services include in-home visits, overnight sitting, boarding, private and group dog outings, and for the kitty on the run, pet taxiing.

Just make sure the sitter doesn't let Fluffy stay up past her bedtime. **AP**

