5-7% of all children in Sweden have ADHD and 1% have autism (Gillbergcentrum, Göteborgs universitet, 2022; Socialstyrelsen, 2019). Previous research establishes that parents, primarily mothers, of these children suffer from reduced work capacity and need extended periods of sick leave (Findling et al., 2022). The causes of this reduced wage work capacity are yet to be explored.

At the same time, surveys with parents indicate that information management and communication about their children with various societal actors such as the school, the child- and youth psychiatry, and the Social Insurance Agency conflicts with wage work (Riksförbundet Attention, 2016).

Our study analyses the impact of parents’ information management and communication about their children with societal actors – called “information work” (Dalmer & Huvila, 2019) – on parents’ wage work capacity. The results are based on 50 semi-structured interviews with Swedish mothers of children with ADHD and autism.

The mothers perceived that they had to gather, assess, use and communicate information about their children to and between numerous societal actors. The information work conflicted with their wage work as it was time consuming and often had to be carried out during work hours. It also encompassed emotion work (Hochschild 1979) as it stirred up feelings of for example frustration and sadness that the mothers needed to manage.

The extent to which the information work conflicted with the mothers’ wage work depended on the mothers’ professions and the extent to which the mothers could draw on economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1979).


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