Points to consider when thinking about training LTFT (for childcare reasons)

Definitely not a complete list, but derived mainly from personal experience.

Practical considerations:

What % would suit you - 50-80% WTE

Will increase duration of training programme depending on %WTE worked

How much sleep/ rest do you get at home?

How much support do your children need - special needs/ ill health/ educational needs?

What support do you get from partner and other family?

What childcare options do you have available to you?

Financial position? Can you afford to work decreased hours?

When deciding on childcare provision:

* Ideally need a child care option that allows for some flexibility
	+ May need to change days when moving to different rotations
	+ Do you think you will be able to finish work on-time if you are responsible for picking up child?
	+ Will you be working 'normal hours' or shifts?
	+ Who will look after the child if they are unwell or unable to attend childcare setting because the childcare is on holiday?
* Who is going to be able to pick up the children? Childcare setting is often best placed near the work-place of the person responsible for drop-off and picking up. If combination of people, may be best suited near home.
* Who might be able to help if child is unwell or needs picking up from child-care early?
* If working nights, please consider childcare during the following day-time, especially if you have to work another night shift the following night.
* Remember to ask employing trust about childcare vouchers as these can help save money if you are able to use them for chosen child-care option (nurseries, pre-schools, some childminders)
* Children over 3 yrs old can apply for some free-childcare hours (can be used at nurseries, pre-schools, some childminders)

Different childcare options:

**Private nanny**

Pros - look after child from any age in your home

 - can be live-in or attend on daily basis

 - may be able to stay late if you are not able to leave work on time (at extra cost)

 - will usually look after your child even if unwell

Cons - usually most expensive option, could be more than you earn. Works out cheaper the more children you have. With 3 children it is usually more cost effective than nursery or childminders, with 2 it is borderline.

 - may not be able to change days easily - depends on individual

 - what happens if they are unwell and not able to look after your child?

 - take annual leave themselves which may not coincide with yours

 - you are responsible for their NI, tax, sick leave and maternity leave

**Au pair**

Pros - look after child from any age in your own home

 - can be flexible with late finish times

 - will look after child even if unwell

 - can be cheaper option although require a bedroom in your house and meals etc

Cons - need a spare bedroom and to be able to live with an extra person in the house

 - who will cover when the Au Pair is unwell or on holiday

 - English is often not their first language

**Nursery**

Pros - usually take children from 3mths up

 - may be able to change days relatively easily if given adequate notice - need to ask

 - open all year round with no holiday periods except bank holidays

 - usually provide all meals for your child

 - reasonable cost (approx £50-75 per day)

 - some nurseries make provisions for shift workers and you can book your child in just on these days (not very common, but worth enquiring as can save a lot of money)

Cons - fixed opening hours with fines if pick up late (usually 08:00-18:00)

 - will not look after child if they are unwell

**Childminder**

Pros - look after child in their home. Usually have several children at one time

 - may be able to continue looking after your child if you return late from work (at extra cost)

 - More reasonable cost (similar to nurseries)

Cons - may not be able to change days easily - depends on individual

 - may not be able to take your child when unwell as have other children to look after

 - may incur fine if you pick up child late

 - what are arrangements if the childminder is unwell?

 - take annual leave that may not coincide with your own

 - usually charge a 'retaining fee' whilst child is at school, typically 1/2 rates

**Pre-school**

Pros - often a bit cheaper than nurseries

 - may be able to change days if given adequate notice

Cons - only usually take children from 2 years up

 - only open during term time

 - often shorter opening hours 09:00-15:00 but some do extended days

 - often have to provide child with packed lunch

 - fixed opening hours with fines if pick up late

 - will not look after child if they are ill.

**Family members**

Pros - may be most flexible option (although not always)

 - likely to be able to stay late if you don't get back on time

 - will look after your child if they are unwell

 - may be free, although may ask for remuneration

Cons - may not be able to change days/times easily... May cause friction within family

 - what cover is there if they are sick or on holiday?

**School** (obviously only applicable for older children)

Pros - if attending public school, no cost

 - many schools run pre- and after-school clubs to help working parents

 - child-minder is another option for pre- or after-school hours

Cons - 12 weeks of school holidays

 - inset days

 - child can't attend if they are unwell

 - inflexible hours and can't pick up late

Emotional considerations:

* Will it allow you to spend more time with your children?
* Will you feel like you have missed out on your children's development milestones?
* Can end up feeling like you are doing bad job at home and at work - need to get right balance for you... Very personal decision.
* Decreased pay if work LTFT, although this has to assessed once you factor in child-care costs (and not needing to pay for child-care on the days that you are at home)