



## FACTS ABOUT PAID MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE

**DEFINITION:** Paid Parental/Maternity/Paternity leave is employment-protected time off for mothers and fathers to allow them to bond with a new child, whether it is the birth of a new child, an adoption or foster child. Leave can usually be taken prior to the child's arrival as well.

**DID YOU KNOW?** The U.S. is one of only about *three countries* in the world that does not guarantee paid leave for new parents? We are on par with Papua New Guinea and Oman, according to the International Labor Organization and the United Nations ~2014.  
**Hard to believe? Keep reading to identify solutions for your organization.**

### PAID PARENTAL/MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE COULD INCLUDE:

Paid leave prior to and after the arrival of a new baby to rest, heal, and bond

Flexibility for new parents to go to important appointments and adjust to parenthood

Leave for adoptive parents to complete the adoption process and bond with new child

## What are the benefits of offering paid maternity/paternity leave?

Paid leave policies have been recommended by researchers as an effective and economically sound practice, especially for those balancing work and family. A survey from the Pew Research Center finds that the majority of working parents (56%) say it is difficult for them to balance their job responsibilities with their family responsibilities (Pew Research Center, 2015).

1. Studies within and outside the United States document how maternity leave reduces turnover intentions and makes it more likely that new mothers will stay with their same employer (Grover and Crooker, 1995). When women continue their job after having a child, rather than quitting permanently, this saves employers the expense of recruiting and training additional employees (Rossin-Slater, Ruhm, and Waldfogel, 2011).
2. A cross-national study of the U.S., Britain, and Japan found that maternity leave substantially increased retention for women after giving birth. Expansion of maternity leave in Canada increased the chances that women would return to their same employer after giving birth (Baker and Milligan, 2008; Waldfogel, Higuchi, Abe, 1999).
3. A recent study of fathers in the United States found that 89% of respondents said it was important for employers to provide paid paternity or paid parental leave (Harrington, Van Deusen, Fraone, Eddy, 2014). California saw a 400 percent increase in the number of fathers taking paid leave between 2005 and 2013, as the state's program became better established and known. Fathers who take two or more weeks off after the birth of a child are more involved in that child's direct care nine months after birth than fathers who take no leave." (National Partnership for Women & Families, June 2015).
4. The current evidence on children's outcomes emphasizes the importance of the early childhood and prenatal environment, so there are likely large long-term benefits of policies that improve infant health (Almond and Currie, 2012).
5. Children who do not have adequate parental care are more likely to show up sick to school and infect others. Studies also suggest that those with paid sick leave are more likely to utilize preventative health care such as cancer screening (Peipins et al., 2012).



## How can employers help?

Set up clear policies and review them with employees. Here are some basic steps:

- Decide upon levels or options of leave and which workers (FT/PT) have access to them
- Describe the process for scheduling/requesting to use paid leave
- Clearly state how Paid Leave is accrued (mention probationary periods, when accrual begins, if it is accrued hourly or monthly, etc)
- Describe employee rights for carrying over unused leave and whether or not they will receive a cash-out of all or part of their accrued but unused leave upon termination of their employment.

### Sample Maternity/Paternity Leave Policies and Other Resources

**Women Employed:** <http://womenemployed.org/sites/default/files/resources/ParentalLeaveModelPolicy.pdf>

**Society for Human Resources:** <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/policies/pages/maternityleavepolicy.aspx>

**Economics of Paid and Unpaid Leave** (June 2014):

[https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/leave\\_report\\_final.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/leave_report_final.pdf)

## BUSINESS TESTIMONY FOR MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE PROGRAMS

Laszlo Bock, Senior VP of People Operations at Google, talks about the results of increasing maternity leave from 12 to 18 weeks and beginning to provide full pay:

*“...the attrition rate for women after childbirth was twice our average attrition rate...After making the change in leave, the difference in attrition rates vanished. And moms told us that they were often using the extra two months to transition slowly back to work, making them more effective and happier when the leave ended. When we eventually did the math, it turned out this program cost nothing. The cost of having a mom out of the office for an extra couple of months was more than offset by the value of retaining her expertise and avoiding the cost of finding and training a new hire.”*

SOURCE: Laszlo Bock. 2015. *Work Rules! Lessons from Inside Google That Will Transform How You Live and Lead*. New York: Twelve, Hachette Book Group, at 280-81.

## CITATIONS & RESOURCES

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US Department of Labor – Bureau of Labor Statistics *National Compensation Survey*

When Work Works: <http://www.whenworkworks.org/>