



## Questions and Answers about FAMILY LEAVE: A Sloan Work and Family Research Network Fact Sheet

### Introduction

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has prepared Fact Sheets that provide statistical answers to some important questions about work–family and work–life issues. This Fact Sheet includes statistics about Family Leave. (Last updated: July 2008)



### Which employees know about family leave?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “...workers with higher wages and more job experience demonstrate greater awareness of family leave” (Baird & Reynolds, 2004, p. 342).
- ✔ **Fact 2** “...married men are significantly *less* likely to know about family leave than men who are not married, a difference in odds of about 32 percent” (Baird & Reynolds, 2004, p. 339).
- ✔ **Fact 3** “If women had family situations and work situations like those of men, they would still be over five times more likely than men to know about leave benefits” (Baird & Reynolds, 2004, p. 340–41).



### Which employees receive paid family leave?

- ✔ **Fact 1** According to the National Study of Employers, “women on maternity leave (52%) are much more likely than men on paternity leave (16%) to receive some replacement pay during leave” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 19).
- ✔ **Fact 2** A briefing paper from the Center for Economic Policy Research found that 28.5% of mothers took paid maternity leave, 18.4% used other paid leave for maternity, 24.3% quit, 2.0% were let go, and 1.8% did not stop working. (Boushey, 2005, p. 6)



### Why do employees take family leave?

- ✔ **Fact 1** “The most common reason individuals take a family leave is for a newborn (2.29%). Following leaves for newborn are leaves for a sick child or parent (both a little over 1%), and then leaves for maternity disability or a sick spouse (.76 and .56%, respectively)” (Armenia & Gerstel, 2006, p. 880).
- ✔ **Fact 2** “During the 18–month period covered by the survey, 6.2% of the employed population took a leave to care for a family member” (Armenia & Gerstel, 2006, p. 879).



✔ **Fact 3** According to the National Study of Employers, “although paid time off to care for *mildly* ill children is not required by law, 49 percent of employers with 50 or more employees allow employees to take some time for this purpose without having to use vacation days or losing pay” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 19).

✔ **Fact 4** According to the National Study of Employers, “75 percent of employers say that they provide paid or unpaid time off for employees to provide elder care without jeopardizing their jobs” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 23).



### Why don't employees take family leave?

✔ **Fact 1** While researching paid and unpaid leave benefits of global working families, Heymann found that “parents who lacked support at home and at work were more likely to have to leave a school-age child home alone. Eighty percent of single and married parents who had no paid leave, no other caregivers in the household, and no regular family support had left a school-age child home alone compared to 45 percent of other parents. Eighty-eight percent of parents who were single, had no paid leave, and did not have other caregivers in the house had left a school-age child home alone compared to 47 percent of other parents” (Heymann, 2006, p. 51).



### What are the benefits of family leave?

✔ **Fact 1** “...longer paternity leaves were related to a planned pregnancy, better employer’s reaction to childbirth, more preoccupation with the infant, and higher family salience” (Feldman, Sussman, & Zigler, 2004, p. 469).

✔ **Fact 2** “...high SES (socio-economic status) mothers who took longer leaves adapted better to work compared to high SES mothers who took shorter leaves” (Feldman, Sussman, & Zigler, 2004, p. 472-473).

✔ **Fact 3** “Mothers who took maternity leave and received pay have current wages that are 8.9 percent higher than mothers who either took no leave or self-financed their maternity leave” (Boushey, 2005, p. 9).

✔ **Fact 4** “Having received pay during maternity leave leads to a larger effect on current wages for women with no more than a high-school degree, a 13.6 percent increase, compared to women with at least some college where the increase is only 8.3 percent.” (Boushey, 2005, p. 11).

✔ **Fact 5** Mothers who received pay during maternity leave, “have a 78.7 probability of currently being employed, 13.5 percentage points higher than mothers who did not have pay. Mothers who self-finance their maternity leave are no more likely to still be employed, and are less likely to currently be employed (72.1 percent) than mothers who received pay during maternity leave” (Boushey, 2005, p. 12).

✔ **Fact 6** “Mothers who used other paid leave [such as sick leave or vacation], are 10.2 percentage points more likely to be currently employed, for a 79.7 likelihood of currently being employed. Mothers who quit are



10.2 percentage points less likely to currently be employed, for a 63.7 probability of current employment” (Boushey, 2005, p. 13).



### What is the quality of the family leave benefits being offered?

✔ **Fact 1** According to the National Study of Employers, “between 15 and 24 percent of employers with 50 or more employees provide fewer than 12 weeks of leave of different types, while 13 to 22 percent provide more than 12 weeks” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 16).

✔ **Fact 2** “While there are no changes in the maximum length of caregiving leaves offered to new mothers and fathers following childbirth, new adoptive parents and employees caring for seriously ill family members, far fewer employers provide full pay during the period of maternity-related disability, now at 16 percent, down from 27 percent in 1998” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 6).



### Do employers offer job protected family leave?

✔ **Fact 1** According to the National Study of Employers, “38% of organizations allow some employees to take sabbaticals i.e., leaves (paid or unpaid of six months or more) and return to a comparable job” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 15).

✔ **Fact 2** “The provision of job-protected maternity leave was common among the respondents. The data reflect an increased level of job-protected maternity leave among both Medium and Large Size employers, rising from the 80% range in 1992-1993 to 90% plus in 1998” (Dorman, 2002, p. 460).



### Which companies provide family leave benefits?

✔ **Fact 1** According to the National Study of Employers, “organizations with racial or ethnic minorities in top and senior positions are more likely (29%) to offer generous caregiving leaves than organizations that do not have racial or ethnic minorities in top and senior positions (18%)” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 37).

✔ **Fact 2** According to the National Study of Employers, “nonprofit organizations are more likely (30%) to offer generous caregiving leaves than for profit organizations (19%)” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 37).

✔ **Fact 3** “Those most likely to offer generous caregiving leave benefits are employers that; are larger; are nonprofits; have more union members; and have more racial and ethnic minorities in top positions or who report directly to those in top positions” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 7).

✔ **Fact 4** Employers with 50 or more employees are “most likely to allow at least some groups of employees to return to work gradually after leaves for childbirth and adoption (77%)” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 12).



✔ **Fact 5** According to the National Study of Employers, “although small employers are equally likely (or “unlikely” if you will) to offer any replacement pay to men during paternity leave, they are significantly less likely (48%) than large employers (76%) to offer any replacement pay to women during maternity leave” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 19).

✔ **Fact 6** According to the National Study of Employers, “there is no statistically significant difference between the proportion of small employers (50 to 99 employees) and large employers (over 1,000 employees) that offer at least 12 weeks of caregiving leaves; that is, they offer full Family and Medical Leave coverage—79 percent and 82 percent, respectively” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 17).



### How and why do companies fund their employees' leave benefits?

✔ **Fact 1** According to the National Study of Employers, “employers providing at least some pay to women during maternity leave, most (80%) fund this pay through a general temporary disability insurance (TDI) plan, which typically provides partial wage replacement during the period of maternity-related disability. Only 73 percent of small employers, versus 85 percent of large employers offer TDI coverage” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 19).

✔ **Fact 2** According to the National Study of Employers, “the main reason cited by employers for developing workplace flexibility, caregiving leaves and dependent care initiatives is the retention of employees in general (37%), with fewer mentioning the retention of highly-skilled employees (5%)” (Galinsky, Bond, & Sakai, 2008, p. 32).

The Network has additional resources related to this topic.

1. Visit a topic page on Family Leave at: <http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic.php?id=26>  
Topic pages provide resources and information, including statistics, definitions, overviews & briefs, bills & statutes, interviews, teaching resources, audio/video, suggested readings, and links.
2. Visit our database of academic literature with citations and annotations of literature related to the issue of Family Leave. You can connect to this database at: [http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-0&local\\_base=BCL\\_WF](http://library.bc.edu/F?func=find-b-0&local_base=BCL_WF)



## References

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Armenai, A., & Gerstel, N. (2006). Family leaves, the FMLA and gender neutrality: The intersection of race and gender. *Social Science Research, 35*, 871–891.

"This paper uses data from a national survey conducted under the auspices of the Congressional Commission on the Family and Medical Leave Act (Commission on Family and Medical Leave, 1996). The Employee Survey randomly sampled the telephone household population of the coterminous US aged 18 years and older who had been employed for pay any time between January 1, 1994, and the time of the interview (a time span of approximately 18 months). The design allowed for more than one respondent to be selected from a household" (p. 876).

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Baird, C.L., & Reynolds, J.R. (2004). Employee awareness of family leave benefits: The effects of family, work, and gender. *The Sociological Quarterly, 45*(2), 325–353.

"The analyses use data from the young women's and young men's cohorts of the (1996) National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY), a nationally representative sample...The sample is limited to employees who should be covered under the FMLA according to Public Law 103-03 (1993)...The final sample consists of 1,333 women and 1,441 men for a total sample size of 2,774" (pp. 333–334).

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Boushey, H. (2005). Family-friendly policies: Boosting mothers' wages. *Center for Economic and Policy Research*. Retrieved November 14, 2008, from [http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/labor\\_markets\\_2005\\_04\\_06.pdf](http://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/labor_markets_2005_04_06.pdf).

"This report looks at two types of flexible workplace policies—scheduling flexibility and access to leave for the birth of a child (a form of anticipated leave)— and finds that they have either positive effects or little to no effect on wages... The data for this analysis come from the 1996 and 2001 panels of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). The sample for this analysis consists of mothers aged 25 to 54 who worked prior to the birth of their first child" (p. 2 & 5).

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Dorman, P. (2002). FMLA, PDA, and maternity leave in Idaho: A comparison of survey data 1992–1993 and 1998. *The Social Science Journal, 39*(3), 451–464.

"The first data base was gathered in 1992, prior to enactment of FMLA and consisted of a two-county sample...the sample included 223 employers who were listed in the Greater Boise Employer Directory 1991, which primarily included employers located in Ada and Canyon counties. There were 144 survey responses... The second set of data...was gathered in the fall of 1993 from a randomly drawn state-wide sample of 372 employers, which resulted in 101 responses...1998...the sample originally surveyed in 1992 was revisited to assess changes over the period in the same leave variables included in the 1992 survey...resulting sample of 220 employers...A second sample of 439 was randomly drawn by the staff of American Business Information, Inc., from their data base of Idaho employers...186 responded...data from 1992 to 1993 were merged as a 'pre-FMLA' and the combined data was used for longitudinal comparison of the same variables in the combined 1998 'post-FMLA' survey" (p. 453).

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Feldman, R., Sussman, A.L., & Zigler, E. (2004). Parental leave and work adaptation at the transition to parenthood: Individual, marital, and social correlates. *Applied Developmental Psychology, 25*(4), 459–479.

"The participant pool was derived from a birth record database containing the names of families with children born in the New Haven area between April 1996 and February 1998...Ninety-eight dual-earner mothers and fathers whose firstborn child was between 3 and 5 months old participated in the study...To participate, the mother had to be employed prior to childbirth, take a period of maternity leave, and resume employment by the time of the survey." (p. 466 and 463)



Galinsky, E., Bond, J.T., & Sakai, K. (2008). *National study of employers*. Families and Work Institute.

2008 NSE sample includes 1,100 employers with 50 or more employees—77 percent are for profit employers and 23 percent are nonprofit organizations; 40 percent operate at only one location, while 60 percent have operations at more than one location. Interviews were conducted on behalf of Families and Work Institute by Harris Interactive, Inc.

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Heymann, J. (2006). *Forgotten families: Ending the growing crisis confronting children and working parents in the global economy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Forgotten Families reports on global studies that were conducted over the course of a decade. It includes survey data from 55,000 households in seven countries and five regions, in-depth interviews of 1,000 families in six countries and five regions, and examinations of public policies in over 170 countries. While research has been conducted previously in North America, Europe and comparatively across the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), this is the first study of its kind on a global scale.

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