

Expecting better: A state-by-state analysis of laws that help new parents^[1]

Second edition

Author: National Partnership for Women & Families

Source: National Partnership for Women & Families

Format: Report

Publication Date: 1 May 2012

AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf^[2]

Excerpts from the executive summary:

For millions of parents throughout the country, a child's birth or adoption means stretched finances and unsettling concerns about whether caring for their new baby will cost them their jobs. Our nation's failure to provide key supports to new parents - including job-protected paid family and medical leave to care for a new child or recover from childbirth - adds significant pressure and harms millions of families during what should be one of the happiest times in their lives.

Working parents without paid leave - or even job-protected unpaid leave - face a range of difficult choices, none of which are acceptable. New parents are frequently forced to return to work before they, their spouses or partners, or their children are ready. Many must take unpaid leave that stretches their families' financial resources and puts their jobs at risk. Others must resign from work altogether. None of these options serves working families or the nation well. They hurt the national economy, erode the nation's competitiveness and cause significant hardship for families and communities.

Just three national laws, addressing pregnancy discrimination, family and medical leave, and nursing mothers' rights at work, help some new and expecting parents upon the birth of a child.

But the United States lacks a national policy that provides paid family and medical leave and other support to new parents. And gaps in our nation's chief work and family law, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), leave millions of working parents without even unpaid job-protected leave when a new child arrives. Some states do better - offering more support to working parents and providing good models for changes at the national level. Still, too many parents are left on their own.

The United States distinguishes itself from much of the rest of the world by failing to provide adequate supports and protections for parents and children. The absence of paid leave protections for new parents is in striking contrast to the 178 nations that guarantee paid leave for new mothers and the 54 nations that guarantee paid leave for new fathers. The United States guarantees neither.

...

This second edition of Expecting Better: A State-by-State Analysis of Laws That Help New Parents surveys the landscape of protections available to workers by cataloguing state laws that improve upon federal rights and protections. It is the most comprehensive state-by-state analysis of laws that relate to workplace rights and protections for new parents. In a special section, this report also includes a snapshot of laws that help parents and other family caregivers meet the needs of both older and younger members of their families.

As this report highlights, some states have surpassed the federal government by expanding access to leave and providing other workplace supports to new parents. Those states provide models worth replicating in other states and at the national level.

...

Despite these bright spots, the report concludes that all states show room for improvement. No state provides all new parents both guaranteed job protection and paid family and medical leave upon the birth or adoption of a new child. For this reason, not a single state earned a grade of "A."

...

There is much more progress to be made - progress that must be made if working families are to prosper, communities are to become stronger, and the nation is to sustain and build its competitiveness worldwide. That is why people in the United States want and need stronger family friendly policies, and particularly job-protected paid family and medical leave. America's families simply cannot afford to wait any longer.

Region: United States^[3]

Tags: maternity and parental leave ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/12/05/expecting-better-state-state-analysis-laws-help-new-parents>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/12/05/expecting-better-state-state-analysis-laws-help-new-parents> [2]

http://go.nationalpartnership.org/site/DocServer/Expecting_Better_Report.pdf?docID=10301 [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7865> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/maternity-and-parental-leave>