

Paid Family and Medical Leave: A Summary of the Evidence for Benefits to Children, Families, and the Labor Force

Rigorous research finds that a paid family and medical leave policy:

Benefits to Children	Benefits to Parents & Families	Benefits to Labor Force Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced postneonatal mortality (infant death between 28 and 364 days of life) by 12% • Decreased the likelihood of infants receiving late vaccinations among families with low incomes by up to 7 percentage points • Decreased hospital admissions for pediatric abusive head trauma by 2.8 admissions per 100,000 children under age 2 and 5.1 admissions per 100,000 children under age 1 • Increased mothers' time spent with children—including reading to their children 2.1 more times per week, having breakfast with children 0.7 more times per week, and going on outings with children 1.8 more times per month 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced the US Census official poverty measure rate by 2 percentage points, with even greater effects among single mothers with low levels of education and income • Reduced the rate of families' food insecurity by 2 percentage points, with even greater effects among households with multiple children • Increased the receipt of postpartum care by 1.5 percentage points for White women and 3.4 percentage points for women of other racial groups • Increased the number of parents who report coping well with the day-to-day demands of parenting by 5.3 percentage points • Decreased parental consumption of any alcohol by 12 percentage points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased mothers' labor force participation in the months surrounding birth by up to 8 percentage points • Reduced the labor force exit rate by approximately 20% per year across the 5 years after giving birth • Increased the probability of employment for mothers with low incomes 1 year following birth by 11% • Increased the probability of mothers' working 1 year following birth by 18.3 percentage points • Increased the likelihood of mothers returning to their prebirth employer in the year following birth by 13% • Increased mothers' weeks worked, and average weekly hours worked in the child's second year by 7.1 weeks and 2.8 hours, respectively

For more information on the evidence on state paid family and medical leave policies, see our evidence review:

