

Benefits of Paid Family Leave for Maternal and Child Health

Paid Family and Medical Leave can be used to maintain a healthy pregnancy, welcome a new child into the home, maintain one's own health, help recover from illness, and to address issues related to domestic or sexual violence.

The intersection of paid family leave and maternal and child health:

Illinois mothers are key family breadwinners in 84% of Black families, 47% of Latinx families, and 47% of white families;¹ they would stand to benefit greatly from paid family and medical leave.

Paid family leave is associated with better health outcomes for the infant, mother/birthing parent, and family:

- **More likely to breastfeed infant²**
- **Lower rates of maternal mortality and re-hospitalization²**
- **Reduced risk of postpartum depression³**
- **More time for birthing parents to recover²**
- **More time to attend child's medical visits³**
- **Reduced rates of parental stress, thus decreasing risk of child maltreatment³**
- **More time for detecting infant/child developmental delays early³**

Inflexible workplaces and lack of benefits, such as paid leave, prevent individuals from accessing adequate prenatal or postpartum care and was listed as an opportunity for prevention of maternal deaths in Illinois.⁴ Providing paid family leave is crucial to give parents the time they need to take care of health and safety needs for themselves and their children while maintaining financial security!

Find out what the Illinois legislature is doing about paid family leave during the current session:

<https://www.iltimetocare.org/home>

References:

1. Shaw, E., Mason, C. N., Lacarte, V., & Jauregui, E. (2020, May). *Holding Up Half the Sky: Mothers as Workers, Primary Caregivers, & Breadwinners During COVID-19*. Retrieved 15 December 2022, from Institute for Women's Policy Research website: <https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Holding-Up-Half-the-Sky-Mothers-as-Breadwinners.pdf>
2. Handler, A., & Kennelly, J. (2021). Chapter 7: The Reproductive and Perinatal Health of Women, Pregnant Persons, and Infants. In *Kotch's Maternal and Child Health: Problems, Programs, and Policy in Public Health* (4th ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.
3. 1,000 Days. (2019). *The First 1,000 Days: The Case for Paid Leave in America*. <https://thousanddays.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Case-for-Paid-Leave-in-America-digital-final.pdf>
4. Illinois Department of Public Health. (2021). *Illinois Maternal Morbidity and Mortality Report 2016-2017*. <https://dph.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idph/files/maternalmorbiditymortalityreport0421.pdf>

