



## Fact Sheet Parents and Children

### Background

- As more families have moved from rural to urban areas, more adults are working away from their homes, and more women have entered the paid labor force, increasing numbers of children are living in households where all adults work for pay outside the home—a conservative global estimate of 340 million children under the age of six and 590 million children between the ages of six and 14.
- Working conditions originally formulated with the assumption that employees were not caring for children or other family members must be changed to reflect new global realities. Working adults—both men and women—need paid leave from work to care for young children, as well as occasional leave to care for older children’s health needs.
- The WORLD Policy Analysis Center presents new findings on the global availability of maternal leave, paternal leave, and leave to care for children, drawing on original analyses of labor legislation in countries around the world.

### Findings

- Evidence confirms that paid leave for new parents significantly improves infant and child health. In most of the world, providing paid leave for new mothers is the norm; just **eight countries do not provide paid maternal leave**. The only high-income country not providing this paid leave is the United States.
- Far less progress globally has been made in paid paternal leave. Combining leave available only to fathers and that available to either parent, **only a minority of countries, 93, provide paid leave that can be taken by new fathers**; 46 of these provide less than three weeks. Father-specific paid paternity leave is available in just 78 countries.
- Providing parents with paid leave to care for a sick or injured child is proven to have beneficial outcomes for children’s health and wellbeing. **Only 60 countries worldwide provide parents with paid leave specifically to meet their children’s health needs**. In countries that provide unpaid leave, parents are protected from job loss when they are caring for a sick child, but they still suffer wage loss; 15 countries guarantee only unpaid leave for children’s health needs.
- Some countries have legislated leave that can be taken for family needs in general, leave that can be taken at the employee’s discretion, or leave that can be taken for emergencies. When these variants are taken into account, 84 countries provide paid leave and 20 provide unpaid leave that can be taken for a child’s health needs.

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