MATERNITY LEAVE IN LOUISIANA

KEY FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH ON MATERNITY LEAVE

Longer maternity leave is associated with increased breastfeeding duration as well as improved maternal mental health and child development.[1,2]

Maternity leave also gives mothers and babies more time to bond. Studies have shown that babies who have more bonding time with their mothers during the first 6 months of life tend to be more secure and confident as they grow up.[3]

WHAT LOUISIANA MOMS SAY ABOUT MATERNITY LEAVE

"I think working women should have more paid time off. With all the time you have to take for appointments … it's a shame you only get a percentage of your pay and only a few weeks off. You don't have enough time to enjoy and raise your baby."[4]

"A push for longer paid leave would be amazing. I was allowed 6 weeks paid leave…I chose to take an additional 2 weeks without pay. Those 2 weeks made a difference in my ability to return to work without feeling like a bad mom. I needed that bonding time as much as he needed me."[4]

"I stopped breastfeeding after 5 weeks because the stress of returning to work so soon affected my milk supply … if more time off was given to new moms, there may be more mothers who would breastfeed their babies for a longer period of time. 6 weeks is not long enough to adjust to a new baby and breastfeeding."[4]

CURRENT LOUISIANA POLICY ON MATERNITY LEAVE

The Louisiana Fair Employment Practices (FEP) Act requires employers with more than 25 employees to provide unpaid leave for up to six weeks for "normal" pregnancies, and up to 4 months for more "seriously disabling" pregnancies.[5]

In accordance with the **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**, a federal law, all FMLA-eligible employees in the United States are entitled 12 work weeks of unpaid leave per year. During this time, employees are entitled to the same health benefits provided by their employer at the same cost they pay while working. When an employee's FMLA leave ends, the employee has the right to return to the same or equivalent position.[6]

1 Staehlin K, Coda Bertea P, Zemp Stutz E. Length of Maternity Leave and Health of Mother and Child—A Review. International Journal of Public Health. 2007;52:202-209.
2 Berger LM, Hill J, Waldfogel J. Maternity Leave, Early Maternal Employment and Child Health and Development in the U.S. The Economic Journal. 2005;115:F29-F47.
3 Steinfeld, MB, MD. The Importance of Infant Bonding. UC Davis Medical Center. From: ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/
4 Louisiana PRAMS 2012
5 Guerin, L. (2015). *Louisiana Family and Medical Leave Laws.* From: nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/louisiana-family-medical-leave-laws.html
6 U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division. *Family and Medical Leave Act.* From: dol.gov/whd/fmla/

LOUISIANA PRAMS
Your voice. Your baby's voice.

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System

Louisiana PRAMS is a project of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Bureau of Family Health.

The PRAMS survey asks new moms about their lives before, during, and shortly after their pregnancies. Participants are randomly selected new moms in Louisiana with babies primarily aged 2 – 6 months old.

For more information on Louisiana PRAMS, visit PartnersforHealthyBabies.org

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October 2015

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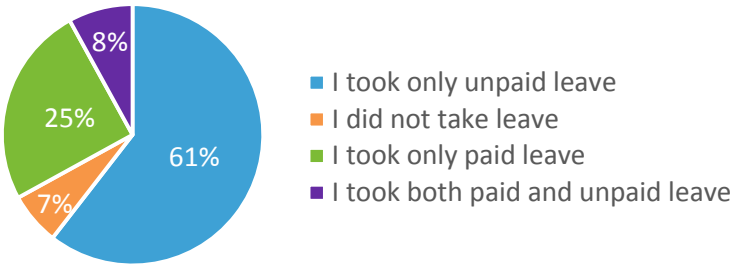
2012 PRAMS DATA

PAID VS. UNPAID LEAVE

61% of women who were employed during their pregnancies (and planned to or had returned to work at the time of survey) took **only unpaid leave** after the birth of a new baby. [4]

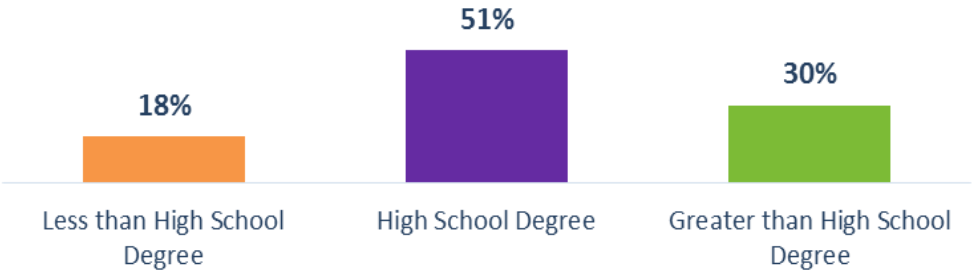


FACTORS AFFECTING WOMENS' LEAVE DECISIONS

Women who were employed during their pregnancy said the following factors influenced their decisions related to taking leave.[4]

FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO TAKING LEAVE BY EDUCATION LEVEL

Among working mothers who said they could not financially afford to take leave,* over 50% had achieved a high school degree as their highest level of education. [4]



4 Louisiana PRAMS 2012