

Paid Sick Days to Care for a Child at Home

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When a child stays at home, only about one in four parents can take paid time off to care for them.¹

Nationally, more than 26 million workers cannot take a single paid sick day to recover from their own illness, let alone care for a sick child or one whose school or childcare center has closed.² When there are childcare interruptions, parents and caregivers are often forced to choose between their job and their pay or sending a sick child to school. The need for paid sick days has become particularly clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, as parents have faced an increasing number of childcare interruptions, including school and childcare closures and quarantines.

Fourteen states and over a dozen cities and counties have adopted laws that give workers the right to earn paid sick days.³

Parents and caregivers in **Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington** and the **District of Columbia** can take paid time off work to recover from their own illness, care for a sick child or, in some cases, stay home with a child whose school or childcare center has closed.

There are 36 states without paid sick days laws to allow parents paid time off to care for their children when their usual childcare is interrupted.

Parents need a national paid sick days standard. The pandemic has made that clearer than ever.

Millions of parents, including more than 65 million women, left the workforce in 2020 due to a greater demand for caregiving during a wave of school, childcare and summer program closures.⁴ As the coronavirus pandemic continues, a return to classroom learning and in-person programming presents the risk of future closures, quarantines or other interruptions to childcare arrangements. Additionally, as more students pass the

Percentage of parents in states without paid sick leave laws who were able to take paid time off to care for a child who needed to stay home.⁵

Alabama	23%
Alaska	28%
Arkansas	13%
Delaware	28%
Florida	18%
Georgia	18%
Hawaii	39%
Idaho	34%
Illinois	20%
Indiana	21%
Iowa	36%
Kansas	32%
Kentucky	36%
Louisiana	29%
Maine	32%
Michigan	18%
Minnesota	37%
Mississippi	14%
Missouri	27%
Montana	29%
Nebraska	33%
Nevada	22%
New Hampshire	33%
N. Carolina	24%
N. Dakota	29%
Tennessee	27%
Texas	18%
Utah	26%
Virginia	31%
W. Virginia	31%
Wisconsin	30%
Wyoming	21%

age threshold to be vaccinated, parents will need to take time off to escort them and care for their recovery from symptoms.

In 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) extended paid sick days and paid family and medical leave to more than 80 million people in the first national leave standard of its kind. FFCRA’s emergency leave kept people safe and led to 15,000 fewer coronavirus cases per day.⁶ These results are desperately needed right now as children head back to school amidst outbreaks of the Delta variant of COVID-19 and rising cases among children. While the FFCRA expired in December 2020, it represented the first national paid sick days and paid family and medical leave policy in the United States, and demonstrated the potential of a permanent, national program.⁷

Public policies like the **Healthy Families Act (S. 1195/H.R. 2465)** would allow workers to earn seven paid sick days to use to recover from illness, access preventive care or care for a sick family member. Workers at places of employment with fewer than 15 employees would earn seven unpaid, job-protected sick days. At the federal level, it is estimated that a proposed paid sick days law would expand access to more than 90 percent of the private sector workforce.⁸ This would enable millions of additional workers to earn paid sick time, and millions of parents to be able to take time off work to care for their children when childcare arrangements are interrupted.

Learn more and take action at PaidSickDays.org

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2021, August). *Household Pulse Survey Data Education Tables: Weeks 28-35* (Education Table 2. Childcare Arrangements in the Last 4 Weeks for Children Under 5 Years Old). Retrieved 25 August 2021 from the U.S. Census Bureau website: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/household-pulse-survey/data.html>. Prior to Weeks 34 and 35, the Childcare Arrangements in the Last 4 Weeks Table was identified as Education Table 6 and applied to children of all ages. Calculations were derived by averaging the use of paid leave for childcare interruptions and averaging the number of childcare arrangements, both over the course of 8 weeks.

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2021, September). *National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2021*. (Table 33). Retrieved 29 September 2021, from <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2021/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2021.pdf>

³ National Partnership for Women & Families. (2021, March). *Current Paid Sick Days Laws*. Retrieved 24 August 2021, from <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-sick-days/current-paid-sick-days-laws.pdf>; National Partnership for Women & Families. (2021, July). *Paid Sick Days Statutes*. Retrieved 1 September 2021, from <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-sick-days/paid-sick-days-statutes.pdf>.

⁴ National Partnership for Women & Families. (2021, May). *Women Carried the Burden of Unpaid Caregiving in 2020*. Retrieved 2 September 2021, from <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/women-carried-the-burden-of-unpaid-caregiving-in-2020.pdf>

⁵ See Note 1.

⁶ Pichler, S., Wen, K., & Ziebarth, N.R. (2020, October 15). COVID-19 Emergency Sick Leave Has Helped Flatten The Curve In The United States. *Health Affairs*, 39(12), doi: 10.1377/hlthaff.2020.00863

⁷ Mundell, E. & Foster, R. (2021, September 3). COVID Cases Rise Sharply Among Kids As School Year Starts. *USNews.com*. Retrieved 6 September 2021, from <https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2021-09-03/covid-cases-rise-sharply-among-kids-as-school-year-starts>

⁸ U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee. (2010, March). Expanding Access to Paid Sick Leave: The Impact of the Healthy Families Act on America's Workers. Retrieved 1 September 2021, from http://jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?a=Files.Serve&File_id=abf8aca7-6b94-4152-b720-2d8d04b81ed6

The National Partnership for Women & Families is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy group dedicated to promoting fairness in the workplace, reproductive health and rights, access to quality, affordable health care and policies that help all people meet the dual demands of work and family. More information is available at NationalPartnership.org.

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