

5 reasons why generous paid family and medical leave benefits are so important

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Four months of fully paid family leave, six months of fully paid leave for the birth parent and six+ months of paid medical leave: that's what Sun Life is offering its employees [in 2020](#). While some may consider it too much, others recognize the importance of this change as it relates to working parents and caregivers.

Why is it important? Well, many great things can happen when a company listens to its employees in addition to the requests of the changing marketplace. When their basic needs are met, employees have the bandwidth to perform better for their organizations. Here are some of the reasons why implementing paid family and medical leave is beneficial:

1. Employees perform better once they come back

Considering that [longer maternity leave lowers the chance of postpartum depression](#), mothers who return to work after an adequate leave are less likely to deal with mental health problems. It's hard enough being separated from their newborn during the workday. This, combined with problems from postpartum depression, could cause new mothers to have performance issues. It takes time to heal, and paid leave enables mothers to take advantage of essential bonding time while healing physically and emotionally. *You can't rush recovery!*

2. It encourages employee retention

A [recent study](#) found that women who take paid leave are *93% more likely* to be in the workforce 9 - 12 months after a child's birth than women who take no leave. It turns out that income stability is a key factor when working parents consider employment opportunities. To keep employees on board after childbirth, it's important to support them financially during the process, e.g. versus offering them unpaid leave or a short leave.

3. It's essential to being inclusive

[Data reveals](#) that 92 countries offer paternity leave, let alone paid leave, while the U.S. does not. Abundant, *paid* time off for fathers is a necessity that more organizations can afford (Sun Life being proof). [It's even shown](#) to make fathers take better care of their kids!

Furthermore, benefits that include adopted children are integral to organizations trying to be inclusive. Parents may not be using their time off to recover physically, but it is still essential they are given the opportunity to bond with their new family members as well.

4. Attractive to prospective employees

In the fierce competition for talent, having benefits that differentiate you from your competitors is essential. Paid family and medical leave is [highly sought after](#) in the hiring game, so what better way to recruit the best talent out there than to offer them generous benefits? Highly-skilled employees should yield a greater return on investment in the end.

5. It's good for the baby

Perhaps the most important aspect of this benefit is the health of the baby themselves. [Studies have found](#) that the first year of a baby's life is crucial to their development. Furthermore, [findings suggest](#) that decreased parental leave during the first year of life is associated with worse cognitive test scores and increased behavioral problems. With the stakes high, it is crucial that employees are given the opportunity to circumvent any harmful consequences due to lack of parental involvement.

"It's up to employers to do more to cover this gap with robust, innovative and competitive paid leave packages that meet the needs of today's workforce. I call on all employers to re-examine their leave policies to do what's right for their employees and companies, and join us on this critical journey. We welcome the opportunity to share our experience to help shape these programs and reach more Americans." – Dan Fishbein, M.D., president of Sun Life U.S.

If you truly want to recruit the best talent, and show your employees how valuable they are, consider more generous paid family and medical leave benefits. It does good in more ways than one!

Looking for a way to modernize your benefits offering and experience for your employees? [Check out Maxwell's simple benefits and HR experience](#)