

Boston College Center for Work & Family

E X E C U T I V E B R I E F I N G S E R I E S

Defining Paternity Leave:

Shifting Roles, New Responsibilities in the
Family and the Workplace

This presentation is a companion to the Boston College Center for Work & Family Executive Briefing Series. It is designed to be customized by your organization. Please feel free to cut and paste these slides into your own format, and to use the questions provided as a guide to develop your own presentation. If you do not have a copy of the full Briefing, please email: cwf@bc.edu.

What is Paternity Leave?

- Paid or unpaid time that a father takes off work upon the birth or adoption of a child.
- According to the 2004 SHRM Benefits Survey, 15% of employers offer paid paternity leave (an increase from 12% of employers in 2003). The average number of paid leave days is 25.
- 39% of the 2003 Best Companies for Working Mothers offer paid paternity leave.

Why focus on Paternity Leave?

- Shared Care
 - ✓ Increasingly couples are finding ways to balance parenting and work responsibilities and adjusting solutions as the needs of their children change (ThirdPath Institute, www.thirdpath.org)
 - ✓ 96% of men and women surveyed agreed that fathers and mothers should share equally in the caretaking of children (Radcliffe Public Policy Center, 2000)
- Attitude Shift among Younger Workers
 - ✓ 70% of men aged 21 – 29 said they wanted to spend more time with their families and would be willing to sacrifice pay to do so (Radcliffe Public Policy Center, 2000)
- Changing Composition of Families
 - ✓ Less than a quarter of American households consist of traditional nuclear families (Belefante, 2004)
 - ✓ The percentage of dual-earner marriages is on the rise, from 49% in 1977 to 67% in 2002 (Families and Work Institute, 2002)

Factors to Consider When Creating a Paternity Leave Policy

- Type of Leave—Paternity or parental
- Paid or Unpaid—Anywhere from 0 to 100%
- Length of Leave—Paid leaves typically ranges from 1 to 3 weeks. Unpaid leaves extend beyond 12 weeks available by FMLA.
- How Leave Can Be Taken—All at once or incrementally
- Employee Eligibility—Typically ranges from no prior service requirement to 12 months prior service.

What Does Paternity / Parental Leave Look Like In Your Organization?

- Do you offer Paternity Leave?
 - ✓ Is it paid or unpaid?
- How does it fit within your overall Parental Leave strategy?
- What types of leave are your employees asking for?

Business Drivers for Offering Paternity Leave

- Maintaining competitive practices
- Recruiting and retaining talent
- Equity and fairness
- Providing new father/child bonding time
- Becoming an Employer of Choice

(2004 National Work & Family Roundtable Pulse Survey)

What Are The Business Drivers In Your Organization?

- What is important to your senior leaders related to:
 - ✓ Organization mission, values, goals?
 - ✓ Business drivers of retention, equity, maintaining competitive practices? Others?

Barriers to Implementing & Increasing Usage of Paternity Leave

- Upper management does not perceive paternity leave as a strategic tool
- Managers discourage paternity leave:
 - ✓ Believe that paternity leave hurts productivity
- Fathers do not consider paternity leave to be well accepted within the company's culture

What are the Barriers In Your Organization?

- What interferes with new fathers taking paternity leave in your organization?
- Ask managers how they handle paternity leave for their direct reports
- Is paternity leave acceptable in your organizational culture:
 - ✓ Poll your top-level managers: How many of them have taken paternity leave?

Strategies for Increasing Paternity Leave Usage

- Track paternity leave utilization rates to provide hard numbers on who takes paternity leave and how successful your policy is over time
- Survey your employees' needs through e-mail, interviews and focus groups
- Educate managers on how to plan for a leave
- Encourage top level managers to serve as role models and to take leaves themselves
- Consider offering flexible leave plans

Strategies for Increasing Paternity Leave Usage In Your Organization?

- What can you do to encourage paternity leave usage across the company?
- Do you track paternity leave usage?
 - ✓ Length of leave
 - ✓ Department level
 - ✓ Position type (e.g., manager/non-manager)
- How do your managers currently plan for a paternity leave?

How Paternity Leave Policies Impact Top Priorities

There is clear evidence that paternity leave and parental leave policies improve:

- ✓ Recruiting
- ✓ Employee Job Satisfaction
- ✓ Loyalty
- ✓ Retention

How Paternity Leave Policies Impact Top Priorities

- Recruiting
 - ✓ KPMG's paid parental leave policy has strengthened its recruiting and retention initiatives.
- Employee Job Satisfaction
 - ✓ Employees who felt that their supervisors supported their personal/family needs were more likely to report high levels of job satisfaction (70% who experienced high support vs. 19% who experienced low support) (Families and Work Institute, 2002)
- Retention
 - ✓ Marriott estimates that for every dollar it spends helping employees with work/life issues such as fatherhood, the company saves four dollars due to lower turnover and absenteeism.

Summary

Paternity and parental leave policies provide advantages to employers and employees:

- Fathers: Valuable time to bond with newborn or newly adopted child
- Children: More likely to manage stress better and perform well in school with father's involvement
- Employers: Benefit through employee good will, retention, and loyalty
- Employees: More satisfied with their jobs

**Leading employers realize that paternity leaves
are a benefit for everyone**