



## Press Release

# Boston College

## Father's Day 2014: More dads seek paid paternity leave, new study finds

*Boston College Center for Work & Family Study Explores Dads' Views on Paternity Leave, and Corporate and Country Policies and Programs*

CHESTNUT HILL, MA (June 9, 2014) – Fathers want to be present and involved from the first days of their children's lives and increasingly expect their employers to support them through paid leave, flexibility, and ultimately a culture that respects their desire to be hands-on caregivers, according to a new study of 30 corporations and more than 1,000 fathers by the Boston College Center for Work & Family (BCCWF).

***The New Dad: Take Your Leave***, the latest assessment of the changing role of fathers by the Center, focuses on the much debated topic of paternity leave. While fathers are increasingly playing a significant role in caregiving for their children, society and organizations largely still retain the view of father as breadwinner.

Many organizations and governments are currently in the process of expanding their offerings for parental leave and specifically leave for new fathers. This report contributes data and insights to better understand the needs and desires of fathers and inform organizational policies and legislative initiatives. The study explores different perspectives on paternity leave, including a survey of more than 1,000 fathers from nearly 300 different organizations (primarily well-educated professionals); a benchmarking study of paternity leave policies at leading organizations; and a review of global paternity leave policies and practices, as well as U.S. states that have enacted laws to provide paid parental leave.

Recommendations are provided for fathers, organizations and legislators based on the information collected and analyzed by lead author Brad Harrington along with BCCWF colleagues Fred Van Deusen, Jennifer Sabatini Fraone, Samantha Eddy, and Linda Haas, global parental leave researcher from Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis.

"Most fathers in our survey felt that between two to four weeks of paid paternity leave is an appropriate amount, considering both work and family obligations," said Brad Harrington "although some men seek more as they take on the role of primary caregiver. Organizations that want to retain their best talent must acknowledge that fathers are playing a more active role in their families, and consider paternity leave as an essential benefit. This issue is highly connected to women's advancement, as men being more active in caregiving can have a tremendous impact on women's ability to succeed and thrive in the workplace." Professor Harrington will share the report findings at the White House Panel on Working

Fathers today, an event White House officials are hosting for business leaders, researchers, and fathers.

Ernst & Young LLP, the sponsor of the Boston College study, is an example of a business that offers — and benefits from — paid paternity leave. Ernst & Young LLP provides its dads up to 6 weeks of fully-paid paternity leave.

“Between 500 and 600 plus men at our firm take paid parental leaves each year — which is roughly consistent with the number of women who take paid parental leaves annually,” said Karyn Twaronite, partner of Ernst & Young LLP and the EY Americas Inclusiveness Officer. “An internal survey recently revealed that our working parents expressed the highest levels of engagement among all US professionals. The business case for benefits like paid paternity leave is clear to us. We are pleased that the progressive men in our workforce consistently utilize it over time and increasingly express a desire for flexibility.”

Highlights from ***The New Dad: Take Your Leave*** include:

### **Fathers’ attitudes about paternity leave**

- Paid paternity leave is important to fathers when considering an employer: **89% rated paternity leave as important (with 60% rating it very/extremely important).**
- The **average amount of time taken by fathers in the survey was approximately 2 weeks**, with 6% of men taking no time at all, 12% taking less than 1 week, 24% taking 1 week, 39% taking 2 weeks, 6% taking 3 weeks, 4% taking 4 weeks, 1% taking 5 weeks and 8% taking 6 weeks or more.
- The amount of leave taken was a combination of paternity leave (54%), parental leave (13%), vacation/PTO (51%), holiday time (6%), and sick time or personal absence days (combined 4%).
- Interestingly, the **more children** fathers had, the **lower the number of weeks** they took off.
- Most (86%) fathers in the U.S. said that they would only take time off if they were paid at least 70% of their salary and **45% indicated they would require full salary to take their full leave.**
- Of the fathers who did not have access to paid paternity leave, **91% indicated they would have taken more time with their families if paid leave was available.**
- Fathers were highly involved in hands-on caregiving and household tasks during their paternity leaves. **More than 90% reported that they spent time caring for their new child and changing diapers, and more than 80% went food shopping, cleaned the house and prepared meals.**
- Of note, **76% of fathers would prefer the option of not taking all of their time off immediately following the birth** of their children, but would rather have some flexibility in when and how they used their paid paternity leave time.
- **Nearly all fathers (95%) rated workplace flexibility as important to their ongoing ability to balance work and family needs** (79% reported that flexibility is very or extremely important to them).

- **A full 99% of men in the study feel that employers should offer paid paternity leave**, with 74% of respondents suggesting that 2 to 4 weeks is an appropriate amount.

### **Findings on company paternity leave policies**

- Of the 30 companies surveyed, **60% offer paid paternity or parental leave**, while 40% do not.
- Those that do offer a **wide range of paid leave, from 3 days to 12 weeks** of paid paternity or parental leave, including extended leave to fathers who are primary caregivers.
- For companies that do not currently offer paternity leave, **70% were unsure of how they would proceed in the future** in regards to paid leave. Only one company was clear that they would offer paternity leave as a future benefit.
- When asked about the barriers to implementing paternity leave, **63% of companies cited cost**. Other barriers mentioned included workplace culture, coverage while the father is on leave and the difficulty of creating an infrastructure to implement paternity leave.

### **Findings on global approaches and policies**

- Although some countries provide very generous paternity and parental leave policies, the **average amount of paternity leave time that fathers actually take off is fairly similar to the U.S. — 2.2 weeks**.
- Of 34 developed countries reviewed by the International Leave Network (Moss, 2013), **the U.S. and Switzerland were the only two countries that did not offer some form of paid leave** for fathers.
- On average, **62% of eligible fathers in the 34 countries studied took paternity leave** or father-specific parental leave, showing that a little over half of the men eligible for paternity leave are taking advantage of it.
- Across the 34 countries, **the majority provided paternity leave with a high pay rate**, defined by the Leave Network as greater than 66% of normal salary. Countries with less than 66% compensation still saw notable fathers' participation; however, it was significantly less than those with a high pay rate.

**For additional information, access the full report and an executive summary at [www.bc.edu/cwf](http://www.bc.edu/cwf) or [www.thenewdad.org](http://www.thenewdad.org)**, a website dedicated to the Center's research on fatherhood.

### **About The Boston College Center for Work and Family**

Boston College Center for Work & Family is a global leader in helping organizations create effective workplaces that support and develop healthy and productive employees.

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