

## Fact Sheet:

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### PARENTAL LEAVE FOR SCHOOL-RELATED ACTIVITIES

**Many parents find it extremely challenging to arrange for attendance at their child’s school events and parent-teacher meetings due to the time demands of their employment. Minimal flexibility, i.e. a dozen or so hours per year of job-protected time off, can make a world of difference for parents who wish to attend these school events but do not, for fear of losing pay or even their jobs.**

#### Why School-Related Parental Leave Matters

- Children with involved parents generally earn higher grades and test scores, attend school more regularly, and are also more likely to graduate and continue on to post-secondary education, regardless of race or income level.<sup>i</sup>
  - When fathers are positively involved, children have higher levels of academic achievement and fewer behavioral problems.<sup>ii</sup>
- A 2016 study found that participation in extracurricular activities and school functions by parents of high school students was a significant positive predictor of high school completion.<sup>iii</sup>
- One study found that parental involvement in school—measured by things such as attending school events or a parent-teacher conference—had a stronger positive impact on the academic performance of middle school students than helping with homework.<sup>iv</sup>
- Other research suggests that teachers tend to give greater attention to students with highly involved parents, and are more likely to identify academic problems in such students earlier on.<sup>v</sup>
- Eighty-six percent of Americans believe that parental involvement is the key factor in improving our schools.<sup>vi</sup>
- School efforts to promote student health are more successful when parents when are involved.<sup>vii</sup>
- Parents of children who receive special education services have a legal right to participate in the formulation of an Individualized Education Plan and to attend meetings at which the Plan will be revised.<sup>viii</sup>

#### Numerous States Have Recognized the Need for School-Related Parental Leave

- Eighteen states and the District of Columbia have recognized the importance of this issue and have adopted school-related leave laws or regulations.<sup>ix</sup>
- The laws vary as to whether provision of such leave is mandatory, how much time parents can take off, which employees are covered, which school events are covered, whether parents must work a certain number of hours to be eligible, how much notice parents must give their employers before taking time off, and whether parents can or must substitute paid leave for unpaid school-related leave. Below are a few highlights from some of the laws:
  - California requires that employers with 25 or more employees at the same location allow up to 8 hours of unpaid leave per month (no more than 40 hours per calendar year) for employees to participate in their children’s school activities.
  - D.C. and North Carolina laws cover all working parents. North Carolina provides 4 hours of unpaid leave per academic year, while D.C. provides 24 hours of unpaid leave during any 12-month period to participate in a child’s school-related events, including school

- and PTA events, performances, sports games or practices, and meetings with teachers or counselors.
- Rhode Island grants up to 10 hours of school-related leave per year to certain employees, Minnesota provides 16 hours, and Vermont and Massachusetts each offer up to 24 hours.
  - Arkansas, Hawaii, Florida<sup>x</sup>, Tennessee, and Texas laws grant school-related leave to public, but not private, employees.
  - Some laws limit coverage to employees who have worked a minimum amount of time prior to requesting leave,<sup>xi</sup> or who work for employers of a minimum size.<sup>xii</sup> Many provide fewer than 10 hours of school-related leave per year<sup>xiii</sup> and may limit the leave to parent-teacher conferences or other activities directly related to a child's academic achievement.<sup>xiv</sup> Other states only encourage, but do not explicitly require private employers to grant leave.<sup>xv</sup>
  - For more information on school-related leave laws in your state, check out <http://babygate.abetterbalance.org>. If you're a public-sector employee, check with your employee handbooks, human resources, and union representatives to learn about your rights.

**For more information, contact A Better Balance at 212-430-5982 or [info@abetterbalance.org](mailto:info@abetterbalance.org), or visit our website at [www.abetterbalance.org](http://www.abetterbalance.org)**

<sup>i</sup> Nat'l Coalition for Parental Involvement, *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement* pg. 24 (2002), available at <http://www.ncpie.org/whats happening/researchJanuary2006.html>

<sup>ii</sup> Heilman, B., Cole, G., Matos, K., Hassink, A., Mincy, R., Barker, G. (2016). *State of America's Fathers: A MenCare Advocacy Publication*. Washington, DC: Promundo-US pg. 46, available at [http://www.men-care.org/soaf/download/PRO16001\\_Americas\\_Father\\_web.pdf](http://www.men-care.org/soaf/download/PRO16001_Americas_Father_web.pdf).

<sup>iii</sup> Terris Ross, *The differential Effects of Parental Involvement on High School Completion and Postsecondary Attendance* pg 1 (2016), available at <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1100143.pdf>.

<sup>iv</sup> Child Trends: Data Bank, *Parental Involvement in Schools: Indicators on Children and Youth* pg. 2 (Sept. 2013), available at [http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/39\\_Parent\\_Involvement\\_In\\_Schools.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/39_Parent_Involvement_In_Schools.pdf).

<sup>v</sup> *Id.*

<sup>vi</sup> Mich. Dep't of Education, *What Research Says About Parental Involvement in Children's Education* pg 1 (Mar. 2002), available at [http://michigan.gov/documents/Final\\_Parent\\_Involvement\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_14732\\_7.pdf](http://michigan.gov/documents/Final_Parent_Involvement_Fact_Sheet_14732_7.pdf).

<sup>vii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health* (2012), available at [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/parent\\_engagement\\_strategies.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/parent_engagement_strategies.pdf).

<sup>viii</sup> U.S. Dep't of Education, *A Guide to the Individualized Education Program*, available at <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/spced/iepguide/index.html>.

<sup>ix</sup> Arkansas (AK Senate Resolution 16; Ark. Code § 21-4-216); California (Cal. Lab. Code §§ 230.7, 230.8; Washington, D.C. (D.C. Code § 32-1202); Florida (Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 60L-34.0051); Hawaii ( Haw. Rev. Stat. § 78-31); Illinois (820 ILCS 147.1 et seq.); Louisiana (La. R.S. 23:1015.2); Massachusetts (Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 149 § 52D); Minnesota (Minn. Stat. § 181.9412); Nevada (N.R.S. 392.4577; 392.920; 394.179; 394.1795); North Carolina (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 95-28.3); Oklahoma (Okla. Stat. § 10-105.2); Oregon (Ore. Rev. Stat. §329.125); Rhode Island (R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-48-12); Tennessee ( TN House Joint Resolution 56; Tenn. Code. Ann § 49-6-7001(b)); Texas (Tex. Gov. Code § § 661.913); Utah (Utah House Concurrent Resolution 6; Utah Code §53A-1a-105); and Vermont (21 V.S.A. § 472a).

<sup>x</sup> Florida regulations grant government employees leave to relocate children to a new school, but only encourage state agencies to grant their employees leave for school events.

<sup>xi</sup> These states include Illinois, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

<sup>xii</sup> These states include California, Illinois, Massachusetts, Nevada, Rhode Island and Vermont.

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<sup>xv</sup> These states include Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, and Utah. Florida regulations grant government employees leave to relocate children to a new school, but only encourage state agencies to grant their employees leave for school events.