

Let's Talk About... Parental Leave Webinar
April 27, 2023
Selected Quotes from Open-Ended Responses
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Any emphasis with formatting was added by the researcher to indicate which category the quote represented. No content was changed.

Q9 - Thinking about all of the formal and informal policies available to you when your child or children joined your family, what was most helpful to you?

“Having twelve weeks of **paid parental leave** was life-changing. ... I also had an incredibly supportive supervisor and administrative team. I felt very safe and protected when taking my leave, and when I returned to work, I felt well supported as a new parent.”

“**Flexible time** was important to me, but knowing that having the support from my colleagues and supervisors was the most helpful thing to me. The policies themselves made it possible for me to stay sane, but knowing that I had support behind me was the best thing for me.”

“Having **dedicated space in the library building to pump milk** while nursing. I had a small study room with no windows, a chair and table, and a door I could lock. I didn't have to share the room with anyone else. It was close to my office. This made pumping so much more convenient because it required very little transit and set up. Pumping takes a lot of time as it is, so this accommodations made a HUGE difference.”

“**Flexible scheduling and working from home** during the pandemic meant that I was able to keep my child at home for much longer than I would have under "normal" circumstances. I'm not convinced that these policies would have been as available had I not had my child during the height of the pandemic in 2020/early 2021.”

Q10: Were there any barriers to using these formal and informal policies at your institution?

“**No** - my boss really helped to ease the path for me. Others at the same institution with a different direct supervisor may have had different experiences.”

“An almost complete **lack of awareness of how they worked**. I had to figure out most of it by talking with folks in other units, and those who lacked my privilege might never have had the ability to ask.”

“In addition, the **lactation space** that I had access to was a shared space. I would have small windows of time when I could pump and sometimes the room was occupied by somebody else

during that time. That was painful, stressful and sometimes embarrassing if I leaked and it showed in my clothes. I don't miss those days!"

"The main barrier to using FMLA leave is that my university **did not pay for it**. I burned all of my sick time, then all of my vacation time, and had to work a bit of time unpaid, before returning to work. It took quite a while to build the sick/vacation days back up after I returned to work."

Q11: What support do you wish you had had as related to preparing for a new baby, being away from work to care for a new baby, or returning to work after leave?

"The number one thing I needed that I did not get was **paid maternity leave**. In the absence of paid maternity leave, the birth mother cannot focus on recovering or her job. She is asked to do both and it's not possible. Mothers, their professional success, their babies, the rest of their family, and their jobs all suffer when sufficient maternity leave is denied."

"**Paid parental leave is a necessity** -- our libraries need to be advocating for this on all our campuses. Without paid parental leave, I had to use all my sick time to have a partial paycheck. Now I have very few sick days available, which is very scary with a young child in the third year of a global pandemic. Parents need support-- if libraries are serious about DEI efforts, this is a concrete way they can put their money where their mouth is."

"**Remote work options**. I have them now (since the pandemic) but at the time of my daughter's birth, any remote work was greatly discouraged."

"Campus daycare a million percent. Or honestly any real **support securing childcare**. We are in a high cost of living area with extremely limited infant care."

Q12 - If there is anything else you'd like to share related to your parental leave experience, please include it here.

"My colleagues were amazing supportive and understanding. They are the ones the bent policy to make things work because they knew how hard it was for new mothers at the institution. While administration was committed to minimum compliance with FMLA, they didn't give any extra staff to my colleagues to help with my absence during maternity leave."

"I found the entire process demoralizing and deeply upsetting. With no actual paid leave, I was financially vulnerable and disability insurance covered less time than I expected. FMLA is not actually helpful as it does not provide any income. So so stressful."

"I don't believe that being a librarian at my college is a job that is friendly to working mothers. I am actively seeking employment elsewhere that will allow me to have more flexibility in my schedule. I am confident that I can complete work successfully, be innovative, and further an institution's mission. But I am not able to be at a certain place at a certain time anymore. I can

be successful outside of my cubicle. I'm throwing in the towel. This year has been short of a nightmare for me.”

“Thank goodness for my peer colleagues. My library administration was also super supportive and flexible. I think communication and understanding and highly personalized plans are necessary... some people will be excited to return and anxious dive back into work and even more responsibility. Others will need to pull back for a bit. It's a huge personal and medical event that is honestly life and death well after the baby is here — employers need to respect that so so so much more than they do.”