



Kentucky should...

strengthen families and the workforce with access to Paid Family and Medical Leave

Welcoming new additions to a home through the birth or adoption of a child is a critical time for families to bond and adjust to changes. Paid family leave allows parents the opportunity to take time to care for their loved one without risking their financial stability. Although the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) ensures that new parents do not lose their jobs during family leave, it does not ensure they can still receive a paycheck.

Paid family leave offers families a number of benefits, including:



Allowing babies time to bond with their families in the crucial first months of life. This key time period establishes necessary attachments between the infant and the family that will shape the baby's relationships for a lifetime.



Allowing adoptive families time to bond with a new child in the family helps the child acclimate to the new home and establish successful routines.



Improving health outcomes for mothers and babies, including mental health for new mothers.

Making it financially possible for many families to have or adopt a child.

While all families benefit from paid leave policies, low-income families often have the most need and the least access to any type of paid leave.

The 2024 Executive Order enacting paid family leave for executive branch employees allows them to have a six-week paid family leave for the first time in Kentucky history, yet employees may only use that leave once every ten years.

While an important first step, many families wouldn't qualify and it discourages the healthiest spacing between having children:

- Data requested from the Kentucky Division of Vital Statistics from 2020-2024 shows that the average age gap between siblings is 3.2 years.
- Mayo Clinic suggests that the healthiest birth spacing starts at 18 to 24 months between births up to five years for improved outcomes for mothers and infants.

Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Policy Solution:

Ensure state employees have access to paid family leave every three years to support healthy families and financial stability after the birth or adoption of a child.