New Jersey Family Leave Insurance (NJFLI) is available to most workers in New Jersey. There are benefits to taking NJFLI for both the leave-taker and the person for whom they are caring. This factsheet will outline the health benefits of taking leave.

NJFLI can be taken as 12 consecutive weeks or 56 days if taken intermittently. The wage replacement rate currently is 85% of a parent’s average weekly wage up to a maximum of $993 per week (increasing to $1025 in 2023). Leave can be taken for bonding with a new child, caring for a sick family member, or for coping with domestic or sexual violence. The definition of family includes anyone an employee may consider family. More information for employees from the New Jersey Department of Labor can be found at their website.

Key Points

- Mothers who take leave are more likely to breastfeed and breastfeed for longer periods, which could result in lower risk of health problems for the children.
- Among mothers who worked prior to taking leave, taking less than 8 weeks of leave was associated with negative overall health and taking less than 12 weeks of leave was associated with increased depressive symptoms.
- Mothers and fathers report less stress over the transition to parenthood and report greater well-being across that transition when fathers take leave.
- Paternity leave is associated with less of an increase in stress and fatigue during the father’s transition to parenthood.
- Implementation of paid leave in California was also associated with parents reporting improved health among infants. It was also associated with improved self-reported mental health among mothers.
- Implementation of paid leave in California was associated with decreased hospital admissions among infants for gastrointestinal and respiratory illnesses. More generally, mothers who took leave and their infants were less likely to be re-hospitalized after the birth.
- Parents of children with serious healthcare needs report that when they are able to take paid family leave, their children benefit physically and emotionally. In addition, parents report that their own mental health is better when they can take leave, and that leave reduces their levels of stress given their caregiving duties.
• There is very little research on those who take leave for elder care and none on health outcomes. One study did find that nursing home use decreased significantly after the implementation of PFL in California.¹

The key points above indicate that using NJFLI can result in improved health, not only for those who take leave, but for the family members who are in the leave-takers’ care. While on leave, parents or caregivers can focus more on caregiving without having to worry about reporting to work every day. While much of the research focuses on leave taken at the birth of a child, there is also evidence that ill children whose parents take leave and the parents themselves also benefit.

⁵ Cardenas et al.
ABOUT THE CENTER FOR WOMEN AND WORK

The Center for Women and work (CWW) promotes economic and social equity for women workers, their families, and their communities. CWW conducts research, advances education, and engages in programming that support women in the workplace and contribute to effective policy making. CWW’s work focuses on providing training, technical assistance, and programs for students, educators, industry, and governments; analyzing and addressing issues that directly affect the living standards of working families locally and globally; and collaborating with partners to support community-level work. CWW is housed within the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and is a member of the Institute for Women’s Leadership Consortium.

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