



for every child

Family-Friendly Policies Intrapreneurship Guide

An employee guide for advancing positive workplace policies and practices for children and families.

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Introduction

UNICEF works with parents around the world to ensure every child has a chance at the best start in life. The first 1,000 days lay the foundation for a child's ability to grow, learn and earn in the future. Investing in these early moments requires family-friendly policies that are good for families, businesses, economies, and, most importantly, children.

Urgent action is needed to promote family-friendly policies globally, including in the United States – one of only two countries in the world without national paid maternity leave. Ultimately, no parent should have to choose between a paycheck and a bedtime story. UNICEF calls on governments, businesses and supporters like you to help build workplaces and communities that put children first.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to equip you with the tools and ideas on how you can be an *intrapreneur* – an internal advocate and changemaker – for family-friendly policies in your workplace and community. While some workplaces may need new or adapted policies, others may already have strong policies in place to support children and families. Understanding the needs of your organization is essential, which is why we recommend doing some preliminary research to understand what resources are currently available and the specific needs of caregivers around you.

Noting the wide variety of realities for each employee and workplace, each section has been designed to be used either on its own or in tandem with the Guide in its entirety. We encourage you to use the sections that will be most useful to you. Individual sections include guidance on how to:

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Some frequently used terms and abbreviations include:

Caregiver... Families come in all forms and not every child is primarily cared for by two biological parents. We use 'care-giver' to encompass any caring adult that is committed to ensuring that a child receives the 'eat, play and love' they need to survive and thrive.

Early Childhood Development (ECD)... The period from birth up to eight years of age (with an emphasis on the first 1,000 days of life), which presents a critical window of opportunity for a child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development.

Family-Friendly Policy (FFP)... Government and workplace policies that help to balance and benefit both work and family life by providing the time, resources and services caregivers need to bond with and care for children.

UNICEF USA (UUSA)... A domestic non-profit that supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood.

It's About Time to Spread the Word

Family-Friendly Policy Key Facts and Messages

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Join us in advocating for family-friendly policies in your workplace and community by learning the facts about family-friendly policies and spreading the message that **#EarlyMomentsMatter**.

The start of a child’s life is a special time that requires particular care and attention. The first 1,000 days are some of the most crucial as children’s brains are rapidly developing at the rate of nearly 1 million new neural connections every second – a speed that will never be achieved again. Laying the groundwork for this development does not just require that children have the proper nutrition or health care; growing minds also need loving interactions with and regular mental stimulation from attentive caregivers. As more and more people enter the workforce, businesses and governments can play an important role in ensuring that all caregivers are able to take the time they need to support their growing child.

This is where family-friendly policies (FFPs) come in. FFPs provide caregivers with the time, resources and services they need to ensure that every child has the best start in life. Though FFPs may take on many forms, UNICEF places them into four main categories:

- 1. Sufficient paid family leave
- 2. Accessible, affordable, and quality child care
- 3. Breastfeeding support
- 4. Child benefits

While each context varies, there are some important considerations that should be kept in mind in order to ensure that each FFP is as impactful as possible:

| PAID FAMILY LEAVE | ACCESSIBLE, QUALITY, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE |
|---|---|
| <p>Provide sufficient time for all caregivers to bond with a new child.</p> <p>Ensure paid leave can be taken without financial or professional repercussions.</p> <p>Allow for flexible and smooth transitions back to work after the leave period ends.</p> | <p>Ensure affordability for all families.</p> <p>Provide for variability in a caregiver’s work schedule.</p> <p>Engage children in age-appropriate learning and socio-emotional development activities.</p> |
| <p>Provide time and infrastructures to enable exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months and continued breastfeeding for as long as the mother chooses thereafter.</p> <p>Address the physical and cultural barriers to successful breastfeeding in the workplace.</p> | <p>Ensure families have the financial resources necessary to support young children.</p> |
| BREASTFEEDING | CHILD GRANTS |

The impact of FFPs is significant and widespread for children, caregivers, businesses and economies:

- Globally, FFPs have been shown to help drive economic growth. For example, Nordic countries have reported a 10 – 20 percent increase in GDP as a result of FFP expansion.
- FFPs have been shown to decrease labor detachment among birth mothers by 20 – 50 percent, thus contributing to a more diverse and engaged workforce.
- Due to policy gaps, approximately one in four of the U.S.’s working mothers will return to work within two weeks of giving birth, thus compromising post-delivery healing and breastfeeding rates.

The case is clear: FFPs are a win for all, and without them, U.S. children, families and businesses lose.

Key Messages

FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

Main Message: Family-friendly policies are a win for children, caregivers, businesses and the economy.

Supporting Points:

Investment in a child's earliest years – especially the first 1,000 days – is critical for ensuring that children have the opportunity to thrive. Without investment early on, children do not perform as well in the long-term and governments pay 2 – 3 times more in programs to address educational and health gaps later in life.

Lack of FFPs hurts the business bottom line by increasing absenteeism, decreasing productivity and leading to higher turnover rates, especially among women.

83% of millennial parents surveyed by Child Care Aware said they would leave a current job for one with more family-friendly benefits.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Main Message: All caregivers should have the opportunity to welcome a child without fear of financial barriers or professional repercussions.

Supporting Points:

The U.S. is one of two nations worldwide without a national paid maternity leave policy.

At the national level, qualifying working caregivers are guaranteed 12 weeks of unpaid leave through the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). As a result of eligibility and financial restrictions, approximately one in four working mothers will return to work within two weeks of giving birth.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 19% of U.S. workers had access to employer-sponsored paid family leave in 2019.

Due to social and financial barriers, only about half of the world's fathers fully utilized the paid leave provided to them.

CHILD CARE

Main Message: Lack of accessible, affordable, quality child care is a cost that children and businesses cannot afford.

Supporting Points:

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) considers child care to be "affordable" if it costs equal to or less than 7% of a family's income; however, research indicates that average child care costs exceed this standard in every single state.

Early childhood development (ECD) is the most cost-effective investment in a child's education, costing approximately \$0.50 per capita per year. An analysis by the Heckman Institute estimates that early, quality child care further leads to an annual 13 – 16% return on investment.

One report estimates that child care inadequacies cost businesses and the U.S. economy a respective \$13 billion and \$57 billion annually.

Tip: Spreading the Word on Social Media

When spreading the word on social media, use the hashtag **#EarlyMomentsMatter** to connect to UNICEF's global ECD efforts.

It's About Time to Support Working Parents

Family-Friendly Road Map for Working Parents

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Join us in advocating for family-friendly policies in your workplace and community by reading an expert's advice on how new and expecting caregivers can work with employers to prepare for a new child.

If you're considering, anticipating or actively welcoming a child into your family – congratulations!

Regardless of where they call home, caregivers share many similar joys and challenges with their counterparts around the world. This may include the added stressor of balancing work and caregiving, especially during the initial transition back into your regular work schedule. Recognizing these shared concerns, UNICEF sat down with consultant and career coach [Mary Beth Ferrante](#) to discuss strategies for transitioning back into the workplace. In addition to referencing the full suite of tools provided on [UNICEF's Parenting Hub](#), Ferrante suggests the following steps for helping you navigate this transition so that you can be the best caregiver and employee that you can be.



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1. ADJUST YOUR PERSPECTIVE

First things first: try to adopt a mindset that places your role as a caregiver not just as valuable to you, but as valuable to your company. As [Section 1: It's About Time to Spread the Word](#) discusses, investing in families is an important tool for growing a successful business and workforce. While you may have to develop new or different strategies to balance your day-to-day responsibilities, caring for a child does not make you a worse employee or vice versa. In fact, it may make you an even better version of both.

2. RESEARCH YOUR RESOURCES

Understanding the benefits you are entitled to through your employer as well as local, state and federal laws is a very important step in the planning process. Benefits may not just be limited to paid family leave, but may also include breastfeeding and child care support, health care access, financial planning and savings tools, tax subsidies or government allowances (i.e., child benefits or grants), pregnancy discrimination protections, and much more.

For information on how to research and potentially change FFPs at your workplace, view [Section 3: It's About Time to Advocate](#).

Once you understand the resources that are available to you, set up a plan with your team to manage the transition and ensure that everyone is set up for success. This may include outlining how to best cover your responsibilities while you are on leave as well as a means for smoothly transitioning back into your role after your child has arrived. This is where discussing options like adjusted, transitional work schedules – sometimes referred to as “soft landing” – can be helpful for both parties. In addition to having these conversations with your manager, Human Resources professionals may be helpful allies in establishing and enacting these plans. If you manage your own clients (either as part of a firm or independently), communicating your plans to them will also be valuable for maintaining strong working relationships.

Research has shown that, as a result of harmful gender norms and financial / professional barriers, nearly half of the world's fathers who are provided with paid paternity leave do not take full advantage of the time to which they are entitled. If you identify as a male caregiver who is hesitant to take full advantage of a family leave policy, remember that the presence of a caring father figure has been linked with better outcomes for both children and partners. Even 50 more minutes spent with a child per day can make a big difference in balancing caregiving responsibilities and making sure that children are receiving the stimulation their growing brains need.

As stories from UNICEF's work in the field further demonstrate, male caregivers have an incredibly important role to play in children's lives from the earliest days, and you deserve to be present for as many of those moments as possible. If you would like to work on positively changing gender norms at your workplace for all caregivers, please view [Section 4: It's About Time to Change the Culture](#).

3. UNDERSTAND YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS

Once a child comes home, you may be feeling a mix of emotions – excited, tired, full of love, and overwhelmed. Even though children are small, they are complex beings. For example, did you know that a baby's brain grows fastest during the first 1,000 days of life? Or that repeating a child's babbles and favorite stories can aid with language learning? Older adopted and fostered children may also need time to adjust and require additional attention as they become used to their new home.

Even though there is no definitive guidebook on how to be the perfect caregiver, there are lots of resources available to aid you in finding a healthy routine that works for all. [UNICEF's Parenting Hub](#) is one helpful online resource full of concrete information and skills that can help prepare you to set your child up for success. The [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) may also serve as a valuable resource for those caring for children who are adopted or fostered.

"We are convinced that when our people are happy with their children and with their families, and are safe, productivity increases, and they are focused on the job, which is their second home, where they spend a majority of their time."

*- Luis Aguirre,
President, Index Mexico*

As quoted in UNICEF's "Family-friendly policies: A global survey of business policy"

4. RETURNING TO WORK

Returning to work can be an especially difficult and emotionally charged period for any caregiver, especially when navigating the challenges of continued breastfeeding and finding accessible, affordable, quality child care. If you are a breastfeeding mother who works in a location other than your home, Mary Beth Ferrante suggests establishing a pumping strategy to enable continued breastfeeding in your place of work. Keep in mind that if you work at a company with more than 50 employees and are not exempt from [section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act](#) (FLSA), your right to reasonable break time for breast milk expression is protected under [federal law](#). You may also want to do further research to see if additional protections are provided by your state and view the Office on Women's Health's [guidance on supporting nursing moms at work](#) – including their [Employee's Guide for Breastfeeding at Work](#) – for more information.

For single-parent households or homes where all caregivers are employed, identifying accessible, affordable and quality child care can be an added point of anxiety. Especially in the U.S. where child care tends to be [cost-prohibitive](#), identifying a provider whom you can trust without breaking the bank is no small feat. Do your best to ask friends, family, and coworkers about care providers they have interacted with and set up time to do on-site tours or meet child care professionals in-person. Nanny share arrangements can also help reduce costs while still providing your child with access to a trusted provider. In addition to identifying outside help, work with other supportive caregivers – whether they be a partner, family member, or trusted friend – to establish a schedule where caregiving responsibilities can be shared. While this will look different for everyone, having an arrangement like this can be essential in making sure that both you and your child feel supported.

It's About Time to Advocate

Family-Friendly Policy Employee Action Kit

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Join us in advocating for family-friendly policies in your workplace and community by working with your colleagues to advance and shape what policies look like in your place of business.

As discussed in [Section 1](#) and UNICEF's [Business and Family-Friendly Policies Evidence Brief](#), instituting FFPs is a win for children, caregivers, businesses and economies. In the U.S., policy guarantees vary state-by-state, which often means that no two workplace policies are exactly the same. Luckily, some businesses are taking a stand by providing employees with access to FFPs such as paid family leave or child care support.

If you are not self-employed, the first step in understanding your workplace's FFPs is to do your research. Begin by reviewing your Human Resources handbook or reaching out to a relevant colleague or union representative to better understand what is available to you. If you are currently employed by a workplace that provides comprehensive FFPs, congratulations! This is an important accomplishment to celebrate. You can turn to [Section 5: It's About Time to Act](#) for inspiration on how you can continue raising awareness and encourage *all* caregivers to take full advantage of the resources available to them.



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If you discover that there is some room for improvement – whether that be building upon an existing policy or creating a new one – never fear. This section is designed to assist you in working with your employer and colleagues to bring an FFP to life by guiding you through three policymaking phases:

Phase 1: Proposal

Curious about what a policy should contain or how you can take your existing policy to the next level? This phase will walk you through:

- Elements of a strong FFP proposal
- What data can help you make the business case for why your workplace needs your FFP
- Examples to guide your proposal

Phase 3: Pitch

Now that you have done a lot of hard work, it's time to share your proposal with decisionmakers and, potentially, colleagues. Learn how to:

- Consolidate your message into a pitch
- Set the meeting to deliver your proposal, including a sample calendar invitation
- Socialize your new or updated policy

Phase 2: People

People throughout your organization will play a pivotal role in the success of your policy. Read this phase for more on how to:

- Develop a ~5 – 7-person core team
- Identify additional stakeholders to assist you in creating and implementing your FFP
- Visualize your strategy using tools such as a SWOT analysis and stakeholder maps

Though the process may feel lengthy, never forget that you are part of a global community helping to make sure that every child has the best start in life.

Ready to get started?

Phase 1: Proposal

Supporting FFPs in your workplace begins by understanding what policies may already be in place. You may be surprised to discover that your employer already offers a comprehensive FFP package. You may also discover that your employer may excel in one area of FFPs but have room for growth in others. Either way, it is important to understand your starting point before advocating for a new or augmented FFP.

If you have conducted research on your organization's policies and discovered there is room for improvement, you can begin to gather data to support instituting a new or updated policy. Answering the following questions is a good starting point for this wider research:

1. What is the problem facing children and families broadly?
2. What does the problem look like within your state and workplace?
3. How is the problem impacting your organization?
4. What are your coworkers' thoughts and needs when it comes to FFPs?
5. How does your organization's policy (if there is one) currently address the issue?
6. How can a new or updated policy help address these challenges and close gaps?

Illustrating how the lack of FFPs is impacting your organization in particular may seem tricky at first. Here are some suggestions for additional information that may be helpful to gather when building your proposal:

| DATA TYPES | METRICS |
|---|---|
| Competitor Data | # of organizations within your sector in total # of organizations of a similar size within your sector % of those organizations with FFPs Sampling of excerpts from these FFPs Employee feedback on the rationale for enacting these FFPs and the impact these FFPs created |
| Community Demographics (specify a geographic area to apply throughout analysis) | # of working caregivers % of caregivers covered by government or employee FFPs # or % of children with(out) access to quality child care % of working caregivers eligible for FMLA protections # of state or local FFPs enacted |
| Workplace Demographics | # of caregivers caring for children under age 3 # of caregivers caring for children ages 3 – 18 # of caregivers who have taken family leave in the past year Average length of family leave taken % return to work rate following family leave |
| Operational Data | Annual turnover rate Average absentee rate Average tardiness rate Total resources available for funding policy changes |

Understanding your organization's current financial resources is also key for eliminating implementation barriers down the line. While some organizations may want to institute comprehensive FFPs, they may be constrained by financial limitations that should be taken into account when building out your proposal. In addition to knowing your organization's budgetary realities, you can leverage tools from organizations such as the [Society for Human Resources Management](#) to demonstrate both the costs and potential savings of instituting your FFP in the short- and long-term.

When drafting your proposal, keep in mind that the content will vary widely depending upon your company's needs, existing policies, and your target aims. It is also important to keep in mind who may be impacted by this policy. Remember that your policy should not just support biological, two-parent households but also work to meet the needs of single, adoptive and foster parents as well as non-parent caregivers and caregivers of children with disabilities. Be sure to reflect the needs of employees with varying work arrangements (e.g., part-time staff, contract workers, etc.) and wage levels. Not every employee may be able or willing to advocate openly for this policy, so it is your responsibility to represent their needs fairly and equally.

Regardless of the details of your proposal, it should contain the following basic elements:

- Background regarding the existing policy (or lack thereof);
- Proposed changes you would like to make to existing policies or new policies you would like to introduce. This should include proposed policy language in addition to a summary of the changes being proposed;
- How this change is projected to impact the business and its operations (including from a financial perspective); and,
- Reference to case studies of similar businesses that have implemented similar policies and the outcomes they experienced as a result. You may also include employee testimonies and findings from your internal data collection process if available.

The tone of your proposal should always remain cordial and factual. Frame the new policy not as a burden but as an opportunity for the company to grow and become increasingly competitive within your sector. If applicable, it may be helpful to reference how the policy will help the business meet its current goals, including any organizational social impact or diversity metrics. Referencing alignment with a company mission statement or membership in a certification body (e.g., B Corporation, UN Global Compact, etc.) may also be useful here. Ultimately, this is not a matter of you versus leadership. You are here to work together in the interests of children, employees, and the business as a whole.

Tip: Resources for conducting research

- The [Economic Policy Institute's interactive guide on child care costs by state](#)
- IFC's [business case](#) for employer-sponsored childcare
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce [Early Childhood Education](#) portfolio
- [Paid Leave US'](#) (PL+US) paid leave toolkit, template proposal, and cost-benefit analysis calculator
- [Sections 1 and 6](#) of this Guide



Phase 2: People

Implementing an FFP is a team effort that requires time and dedication. Having a coalition of supporters can also be critical for demonstrating to leadership that there is a pressing need and desire for this policy. Strong teams often include about five thoughtfully selected individuals, though size can vary depending upon your context. Begin identifying your team members by asking yourself these questions:

- Who is in a leadership position or has influence within your organization (including relevant union leaders)?
- Who has been impacted by FFPs (or a lack thereof) and, thus, may be able to lend both passion as well as a personal narrative illustrating why this policy is essential?
- Who may have capacity to dedicate time towards convening and keeping your team on track?
- Who has essential areas of expertise either in the policy area, implementation process, or strong historical knowledge about your organization?

In building your team, it may also help to think about some of the essential roles that you'll need filled, such as:

- A leader who can take responsibility for coordinating and convening team meetings as well as tracking progress toward goals;
- Someone with the authority or influence to help eliminate roadblocks; and,
- An individual with personal experience regarding the policy or a knowledge network they can draw on to advise regarding data and strategy.

“For example, Johnson & Johnson evaluated their program, and reported that over 1100 parents had taken advantage of their global parental leave program [in its first year], and that these employees reported a 96% satisfaction rate.”

- Flavia Miranda,
Global Welfare Design & Employee Program Lead, Johnson & Johnson
As quoted in UNICEF's [“Family-friendly policies: A global survey of business policy”](#)



Your team will also likely require representation from crucial groups or individuals that may be impacted by this policy. Keep in mind that while your list of potential stakeholders may be long, not every person has to have a regular role in your core implementing team. Stakeholders can be brought in on an ad-hoc basis or can have their inputs contributed through a broad data collection effort like a SWOT analysis (see [Appendix 1](#) for a template) or survey.

What is most important is identifying a core group of individuals with the time, passion, and skills to sustain your efforts from beginning to end. Once those people have been selected, consider drafting a terms of reference (ToR) outlining your goals, meeting frequency (including mode of communication if you are coordinating remotely), general timeline and roles / responsibilities for all members. While creating a ToR (see [Appendix 2](#) for a template) may seem tedious, it is essential for ensuring that everyone understands what is being asked of them, staying on track towards achieving your common goal and avoiding scope creep.

IDENTIFYING ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Once you have identified your core group, pinpoint any gaps in your team’s expertise or knowledge base. This will serve as the starting point for identifying a wider range of organizations and individuals to engage with regarding your prospective policy. In addition to filling these gaps, stakeholders – whether internal or external – can provide critical information on topics related (but not limited) to:

- Relevant local data on the state of family well-being in your area and any FFPs currently in progress;
- Lessons learned from other businesses and organizations advocating for similar policies;
- Estimating the financial cost of policy implementation as well as potential return on investment in the short- and long-term;
- Understanding existing policies and the processes needed to change them; and,
- Any potential legal or insurance barriers that may prevent or slow implementation.

Remember that key stakeholders may exist outside of your workplace. For example, some communities have business alliances or coalitions who may be able to provide valuable insights and support your efforts. They may also be able to connect you to other companies who have gone through the same process you are going through now.

| STAKEHOLDER | AREA OF INFLUENCE | STANCE | MESSAGE(S) |
|---|--|---|--|
| Cindy Smith (Director, Human Resources) | Policy implementation Garnering buy-in from the C-suite | Cindy is new to the organization and not aware of the potential benefits of the policy. | This policy will reduce costs from turnover and absenteeism. This policy will help Cindy meet her goal of increasing gender diversity in our workforce. |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Next, outline how you would like to engage them. You may dedicate meetings to particular topic areas and invite stakeholders with relevant experience to answer questions during those sessions or consolidate findings from interviews or surveys into a [SWOT analysis](#) highlighting the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and potential threats to implementing your policy.

Keep in mind which individuals outside of your group hold important decision-making roles that could propel or derail your efforts. Think about why their role is important (i.e., what doors can they open for you or keep shut), where they currently stand on the issue, their motives for their current stance, and what messaging may be most persuasive for getting them onboard. We’ve included a blank table above to help get you started.

For those who find visualizations helpful, you can also translate this information into a stakeholder map, such as an influence / interest diagram or support / oppose spectrum. See [Appendix 3](#) for templates for both.

Phase 3: Pitch

Now that you have developed your team and proposal, it is time to pitch your policy. Luckily, you have already done most of the logistical leg work. Now you just have to put it into action.

Begin by turning your key messages and company data into a presentation deck. The deck should be succinct and data-driven but also include a limited number of case studies and / or human stories illustrating why your company needs this policy now. You may find a template pitch deck [here](#) or develop your own, making sure to:

- Provide background on what the specific FFP is generally, and data behind why it matters from a universal perspective;
- Utilize the research you conducted in the [Phase 2](#) to highlight key company-specific data that may lay the groundwork for your suggested policy change;
- Outline the company's current policy (or lack thereof), changes you would like to introduce, and how those changes may impact the organization; and,
- Include a case study and / or story to illustrate the policy's impact.

"In the United States, the business case can be difficult to make. But when we aggregate all things together, including the impact on [employee] stress, it is way north of a 100 percent return on investment."

*- Rick Ridgeway
Vice President, Public Engagement, Patagonia
As quoted in UNICEF's ["Family-friendly policies:
A global survey of business policy"](#)*

Next, reference your key stakeholders list and / or maps that you developed in the People subsection. Who on this list will you need to seek approval or gain buy-in from for your policy to be successful? Depending upon your organization, you may be able to bring this policy directly to the head of Human Resources or a member of your executive team; other organizations may require you to garner buy-in from a department head or a union representative who may facilitate outreach on your behalf. This may be especially true if the policy will need to be approved by a Board of Directors or similar governing body.

Once you have identified your first stakeholder, set your meeting date and time. Be sure to include an agenda that leaves plenty of time for questions and feedback. You may also include the sample policy in the calendar invitation to provide stakeholders with enough time to review and reflect beforehand. Regardless of how the meeting progresses, be calm, open to inputs, and thank the individual for their time. This first meeting is just the beginning of the negotiation process and may require many more until your policy is enacted.

Once your policy has been approved (congratulations!) it is time to spread the good news to the rest of your colleagues. Host an information session, such as a brownbag lunch, to get everyone acquainted with the new policy and what it means for them. You can always turn to [Section 5: It's About Time to Act](#) for more socialization ideas. Your pitch deck will, again, be helpful here.

After your socialization session(s), follow up with an all-staff email (this may come either from your core team, Human Resources, or another relevant party) so that every employee has easy access to the policy for reference. Ensure that this policy is integrated into relevant employee handbooks and translated into other languages and accessibility formats as necessary to ensure that every employee is able to utilize and understand what the policy offers.

Most importantly, be sure to thank and acknowledge your team for all of their hard work for your company's families.

It's About Time to Change the Culture

Building a Family-Friendly Work Culture

UNICEF works with parents around the world to ensure every child has a chance at the best start in life. The first 1,000 days lay the foundation for a child's ability to grow, learn and earn in the future. Investing in these early moments requires family-friendly policies that are good for families, businesses, economies, and, most importantly, children.

Urgent action is needed to promote family-friendly policies globally, including in the United States – one of only two countries in the world without national paid maternity leave. Ultimately, no parent should have to choose between a paycheck and a bedtime story. UNICEF calls on governments, businesses and supporters like you to help build workplaces and communities that put children first.

Join us in advocating for family-friendly policies in your workplace and community by fostering a culture that celebrates and prioritizes the needs of working families.

While having FFPs is critical, creating a culture that enables and empowers caregivers to utilize those resources is just as important. A [study by MenCare](#), for example, highlighted that even when offered paternity leave, fewer than 50% of the world's fathers took the full amount of time they were entitled to. This speaks to the power of creating cultures that prioritize child care and make it possible for all caregivers to take the time provided without fearing financial or professional consequences.

Every workplace has its own unique culture, which may further vary across departments and individual teams. Individuals who work remotely or organizations that vary outside of a 9 to 5, office-based structure may have further nuances to consider. Thus, creating culture change may be slow and require various strategies to best suit your unique context. This section highlights four ways that a workplace can begin to build an environment where families are truly celebrated.

1. PROVIDE KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES

Ensuring that knowledge around workplace FFPs and caregiving tools are widely socialized and readily available is one crucial way to change corporate culture. Find ways to raise awareness, not just during onboarding but throughout every employee's career by leveraging suggestions in [Section 5](#). Some organizations have worked to integrate caregiving resources into other existing platforms such as health and wellness offerings. Doing so allows companies to make these resources more sustainably accessible to all employees, including caregivers, and tie the impact of these resources to larger organizational worker well-being goals.



2. INCREASE VISIBILITY

Workplaces may tend to encourage employees to separate their personal life from their work life; however, providing ways to recognize personal achievements and celebrate employees as caregivers and family members is one way to demonstrate that employees can and should bring their full selves to work. Increasing visibility and recognition of children and families can include:

- Destigmatizing breastfeeding and enabling women to easily and comfortably breastfeed and / or pump at work. Read the U.S. Office on Women's Health's [Easy Steps to Supporting Breastfeeding Employees](#) to learn more.
- Providing a means for recognizing and congratulating caregivers on the birth, adoption, or fostering of a new child. This can be done over workplace communication mechanisms (such as email, Slack, or Facebook Workplace), during all-staff meetings, or through another official announcement framework. Always be sure to receive the individual's consent before sharing personal news or pictures with colleagues.
- Instituting on-site child care or subsidizing child care at a nearby location. Developing a child care sharing partnership with another local business may also be an opportunity to provide greater access to affordable, quality child care for working families.
- Changing the way that you discuss parenting both publicly and in company policies. Instead of using 'maternity' or 'paternity' leave, switch to 'family leave' or describe parents as 'caregivers' instead. Doing so recognizes that child care is the responsibility of every loving caregiver, regardless of gender or biological affiliation with the child, and normalizes the diverse structures of today's modern family.
- Creating affinity and support groups for working caregivers to gather to discuss common issues and steward relevant events for the organization. These may be attached to counseling services, which can support caregiver mental health and address cases of postpartum depression early on. If desired, specialized groups can further address the needs of caregivers who are LGBT+, single, adoptive, foster, etc.
- Celebrating UNICEF Parenting Month using some of the suggestions in [Section 5](#).

“Family-friendly policies transcend culture, they transcend race, they transcend income level, professional levels, they transcend everything.”

*- Harsha Jalihal Vice President, Human Resources, Unilever
As quoted in UNICEF’s “Family-friendly policies: A global survey of business policy”*

3. LEAD FROM THE FRONT

One thing we hear from businesses again and again is a desire to see examples and identify leaders who are doing great work advancing FFPs in the workplace. The best part is that *you* can be that leader by normalizing the utilization of FFPs and putting families first. This is especially important for those in leadership positions who have the power to set the tone for their teams.

Are you a manager who is expecting a child?

Model positive behaviors by taking the leave available to you. While this may be logistically difficult and require more planning, doing so is important for sending the message that taking leave is acceptable for all staff. Leveraging the resources outlined in [Section 2](#) may further support your planning process.

Are you a manager with employees who are expecting a child?

Understand and openly communicate what resources are available to your team members and encourage them to take the leave available. Back up your words with actions to make sure employees don’t feel that this is just “lip service.” Consider implementing training for all managerial staff on these topics, including implications of existing policies and how to navigate these conversations.

Human Resources colleagues can be especially helpful with building and conducting trainings like this. Meet to understand HR goals and metrics. For example, does your HR team track how many employees take advantage of paid leave or monitor overall family-friendliness and employee satisfaction? Do they have a certain number of workplace events and trainings they must conduct every year? Your organization may also consider tying FFP metrics to indicators of success that members of leadership are held to and regularly evaluated on. This helps to ensure that organizations are both collecting data on FFPs and holding leaders accountable for ensuring that those policies are properly implemented.

By synchronizing cross-team priorities, you not only support employees but can also help your HR colleagues meet the goals they have set, making these efforts a win-win for all involved.

4. SET BOUNDARIES

Childhood is a short and precious time in a person’s life that requires special resources and attention. Not only do young children require additional interaction with their caregivers, but they also experience a [monumental window of development](#) that, once shut, never opens again. This is why providing employees with the time to be as present as possible at the outset of a child’s life is essential for setting children up for success.

Set the right tone by allowing caregivers to have flexible work schedules (including setting reasonable lengths for breastfeeding breaks) and place limits on the extent of business communications outside of work. Strategies from [four-day workweek pilots](#) have also yielded insights into how businesses can make the most out of the workday, thus cutting down on what employees may need to do outside of the office. Your workplace may further consider making time accommodations for working caregivers during key times of year, such as allowing a workplace-wide late start or early release on the first day of the school year.



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It's About Time to Act

Family-Friendly Policy Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

UNICEF works with parents around the world to ensure every child has a chance at the best start in life. The first 1,000 days lay the foundation for a child's ability to grow, learn and earn in the future. Investing in these early moments requires family-friendly policies that are good for families, businesses, economies, and, most importantly, children.

Urgent action is needed to promote family-friendly policies globally, including in the United States – one of only two countries in the world without national paid maternity leave. Ultimately, no parent should have to choose between a paycheck and a bedtime story. UNICEF calls on governments, businesses and supporters like you to help build workplaces and communities that put children first.

Join us in advocating for family-friendly policies in your workplace and community by volunteering to raise awareness, voices, and funds to support children and families.

After learning about what FFPs are and why they matter, you may be wondering how you can take action. If you are looking to assess and / or alter your own workplace policies, read [Section 3: It's About Time to Advocate](#) for guidance on how to get started.

This section presents ideas on engaging your workplace in discussing FFPs and celebrating children and families. While this will cover three examples of micro-volunteering opportunities, including Lunch 'n' Learns, ECD-related events and ways to recognize Parenting Month, it is just the tip of the iceberg. Each workplace is different, so feel free to get creative and select an activity that you think will work best given your context.

LUNCH 'N' LEARNS

Lunch 'n' Learns offer an easy way to educate coworkers about FFPs and provide useful tools that they can utilize to support their implementation. While many Lunch 'n' Learns take the form of a panel or presentation, they can also be formatted as workshops, hands-on learning activities, and informal discussions around a particular topic or reading(s).

Potential topics for your Lunch 'n' Learn may include (but are not limited to):

- Understanding FFPs locally and globally
- The business case for implementing FFPs
- Children's rights and what children need to survive and thrive
- Transitioning back to work after welcoming a new child
- Establishing balance between work and family as a new caregiver
- Your child's developmental benchmarks
- Breastfeeding support and normalization in the workplace
- Financial planning for parenthood
- How to measure success and track progress towards implementing FFPs
- Barriers to and benefits of utilizing family leave

Leverage the resources below to help make your Lunch 'n' Learn a success:

- UNICEF USA [Event Templates](#), such as sample invitations and handouts to help you spread the word
- Template agenda (see [Appendix 4](#))
- [Background slides](#) which include images and stories from UNICEF programs. Note that slides are set to automatically transition every 15 seconds.

"In the absence of legislative change, some U.S. businesses have stepped up to offer work-family policies to their employees. That's great news — that is, if you have a secure, salaried role in one of these firms. In reality, the workers most in need of support are those least likely to have access to it in our privatized system. The onus shouldn't be on individual employers — except to put pressure on government officials to develop a more holistic solution to the problem. We need a national system to support all working families. Creating one won't be simple, but every other wealthy industrialized nation has found a way to provide paid parental leave and subsidized healthcare and child care to all their residents. Surely Americans can solve this puzzle, too."

- Caitlyn Collins

As quoted in the Harvard Business Review's

["Two New Moms Return to Work — One in Seattle, One in Stockholm"](#)

PARENTING MONTH

UNICEF's Parenting Month is an excellent time to engage in awareness raising and volunteering around FFPs during the month of June. Parenting Month also calls on participants to recognize the importance of children in our societies and the contributions of working caregivers to their places of employment.

Parenting Month can incorporate any of the activities listed in this section as well as other public-facing advocacy and PR elements. If sharing information online, consider leveraging the dedicated hashtag [#EarlyMomentsMatter](#). Your workplace may also consider highlighting working caregivers, sharing a public statement in support of FFPs, or setting in-person meetings with relevant elected officials to share why you think FFPs matter in your workplace, city, state and country.



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ENGAGE FOR ECD

A **Literacy Drive** combines volunteer, fundraising, and education activities around the theme of promoting ECD. These events can be adjusted to contain different elements and may include a selection of any of the following activities:

- Volunteering with or providing technical assistance to a local child-serving organization
- Reading to young loved ones
- Sharing ECD-related trivia
- Collecting children's books for donation
- Hosting film screenings featuring films related to FFPs and literacy
- Sharing educational materials about ECD and FFPs in your workplace and / or wider community
- Fundraising for global UNICEF ECD programs

Activities included in Literacy Drives can also be assigned point values to create friendly competitions between teams or even between organizations in the same community or sector. Ensuring that your activities tie global data to the realities faced by children in the U.S. can be a useful way to frame the Drive and garner increased employee engagement.

For those interested in more hands-on volunteering and engagement experiences, **Read-a-Thons** may present a related alternative by challenging employees to spend time reading to children they know. This can include employees' own children, younger family members, or children who are part of organizations at which your employees are registered volunteers (ensuring that child safeguarding policies are closely observed regardless of whether these interactions occur in person or through remote sessions). In order to make competitions like these more accessible to those who are not currently caregivers, employees could also participate in activities similar to the ones laid out above. Read-a-Thons may be an excellent complement to UNICEF employee fundraising opportunities, especially around Halloween when [Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF](#) is in full swing.

It's About Time to Leverage Our Resources

Tools for Supporting Your Work for Family-Friendly Policies

UNICEF works with parents around the world to ensure every child has a chance at the best start in life. The first 1,000 days lay the foundation for a child's ability to grow, learn and earn in the future. Investing in these early moments requires family-friendly policies that are good for families, businesses, economies, and, most importantly, children.

Urgent action is needed to promote family-friendly policies globally, including in the United States – one of only two countries in the world without national paid maternity leave. Ultimately, no parent should have to choose between a paycheck and a bedtime story. UNICEF calls on governments, businesses and supporters like you to help build workplaces and communities that put children first.

Join us in advocating for family-friendly policies in your workplace and community by leveraging our tools and resources to advance your efforts.

Appendix 1

SWOT Analysis Framework

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>STRENGTHS</p> <p><i>What are the strong points of existing workplace FFPs, employee benefits and social impact programs? How do they lead to positive outcomes or positively compare to similar organizations?</i></p> | <p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p><i>Where are there areas of improvement with regard to FFPs in your workplace?</i></p> |
| | |
| <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p><i>What potential advantages may be leveraged by changing or implementing new FFPs? How could this positively contribute to growth and advancement? What difference would this make in the lives of working parents?</i></p> | <p>THREATS</p> <p><i>What is at stake if the status quo does not change (for the business, individual employees, etc.)? What are the risks involved with continuing to do 'business as usual' with respect to FFPs?</i></p> |
| | |

Appendix 2

Terms of Reference (ToR) Template

TITLE
(What is the name of your group?)

OVERVIEW AND KEY OBJECTIVES
(Provide a summary statement highlighting the main purpose of convening the group. This should include action-oriented goals regarding what you would like to achieve and what deliverables you foresee producing as a result of your efforts.)

PROPOSED TIMELINE AND MEETING FREQUENCY
(How long do you intend to convene this group? How often do you plan to meet?)

PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP COMMITMENTS

| MEMBER NAME / TITLE | PROPOSED ROLE | TASKS / DELIVERABLES | TIME COMMITMENT |
|--|---------------|---|-----------------------|
| Cindy Smith (Director, Human Resources) | Team lead | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Regularly convene meetings and set agendas for the group.Deliver final versions of the Policy Proposal and Policy Pitch Deck to relevant stakeholders. | ~3 - 5 hours per week |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Appendix 3

Stakeholder Mapping Tools

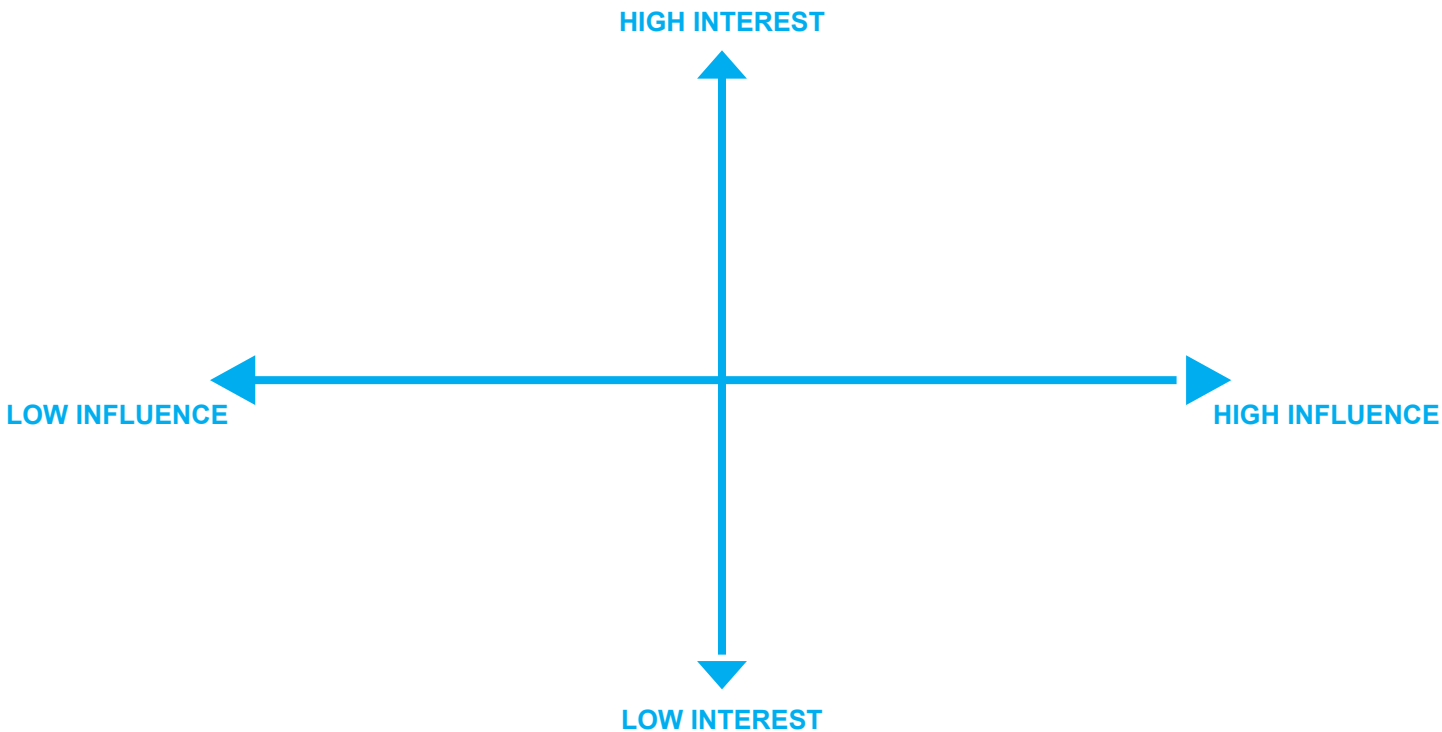
SUPPORT / OPPOSE SPECTRUM

Place each stakeholder along the spectrum based upon their level of support or opposition to the proposed policy.



INFLUENCE / INTEREST MATRIX

Place each stakeholder based upon level of interest and level of influence (i.e., power to impact the policy’s development / implementation). It may be helpful to also write out your rationale for why you have placed each stakeholder in each corresponding location.



| STAKEHOLDER | RATIONALE FOR PLACEMENT |
|--------------------|---|
| Executive Director | Has the second highest level of influence in the organization (after the Board of Directors); has previously stated that she is supportive of implementing more comprehensive FFPs. |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Appendix 4

Lunch 'n' Learn Sample Templates

OVERVIEW

Total Duration: 1 hour

Lunch 'n' Learn Topic (choose one):

- Understanding FFPs locally and globally
- The business case for implementing FFPs
- Children's rights and what children need to survive and thrive
- Transitioning back to work after welcoming a new child
- Establishing balance between work and family as a new parent
- Your child's developmental benchmarks
- Breastfeeding benefits and normalization in the workplace
- Financial planning for parenthood
- How to measure success and track progress towards implementing FFPs
- Barriers to and benefits of utilizing paternity leave

SAMPLE RUN OF SHOWS

Informal Discussion or Presentation

Minutes 0 – 5: Welcome and brief introduction

Minutes 5 – 10: Background on UNICEF, your chosen topic and FFPs generally

Minutes 10 – 45: Moderated discussion

Minutes 45 – 50: Summary / recap of discussion

Minutes 50 – 55: Provide additional resources

Minutes 55 – 60: Final questions / thoughts and wrap up

Panel

Minutes 0 – 5: Welcome and brief introduction

Minutes 5 – 8: Introduce panelists

Minutes 8 – 35: Moderated questions with panelists

Minutes 35 – 55: Q&A with panelists and audience

Minutes 55 – 60: Discussion recap and wrap up

Appendix 5

Resources and References

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Business and Family-Friendly Policies: An Evidence Brief](#) (UNICEF, 2020)
- [Childcare Toolkit and Global Case Studies](#) (International Finance Corporation, 2019)
- [Early Childhood Development](#) (UNICEF)
- [Early Childhood Education](#) (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation)
- [Family-friendly policies: A global survey of business policy](#) (UNICEF, 2020)
- [Five Tips to Start Childcare in Companies](#) (International Finance Corporation, 2020)
- [Paid Leave US](#) (PL+US)
- [Parenting Hub](#) (UNICEF)
- [Society for Human Resource Management](#)
- [The Cost of Childcare](#) (Economic Policy Institute, 2019)

CITED STUDIES

- [Are the world's richest countries family friendly? Policy in the OECD and EU](#) (UNICEF, 2019)
- [Redesigning the workplace to be family friendly: What governments and businesses can do](#) (UNICEF, 2020)
- [Brain Architecture](#) (Harvard University Center on the Developing Child, 2020)
- [Fact Sheet: Paid Family Leave Increases Mothers' Labor Market Attachment](#) (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2020)
- [SIGI Global Report](#) (OECD, 2019)
- [Family and Medical Leave in 2012: Technical Report](#) (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012)
- [Early Moments Matter for Every Child](#) (UNICEF, 2017)
- [The U.S. and the High Cost of Childcare: A Review of Prices and Proposed Solutions for a Broken System](#) (Child Care Aware of America, 2018)
- [National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States](#) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019)
- [State of the World's Fathers](#) (MenCare, 2019)
- [Federal Register, Volume 1, Number 190](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016)
- [Benefits and Costs of the Education Targets for the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Education perspective paper](#) (Copenhagen Census Center, 2014)
- [There's more to gain by taking a comprehensive approach to early childhood development](#) (Heckman Institute, 2017)
- [The Economic Impacts of Insufficient Child Care on Working Families](#) (ReadyNation / Council for a Strong America, 2018)
- [The Bedrock of American Business: High-Quality Early Childhood Education](#) (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2020)

