

Paid Sick Days Are Good For Kids

CHILDREN GET SICK.

- **On average, school-age children miss at least 3 school days per year due to health reasons. Younger children have even higher rates of illness.ⁱ**
- **Some children have higher rates of absence because of health problems;** six percent miss more than two weeks of school each year.ⁱⁱ Fifteen to eighteen percent of children have a chronic health condition, such as asthma, sickle cell anemia, and cancer.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Children in poor families are more likely to have longer health-related absences, some lasting eleven or more days.^{iv}**

CHILDREN RECOVER FASTER AND ARE HEALTHIER WHEN PARENTS HAVE PAID SICK DAYS.

- **Studies show that children recover faster when cared for by their parents.** When parents can take leave to care for their children, children have a faster recovery time, and health care expenditures are reduced.^v
- **When parents cannot care for sick children and they must attend child care, it takes a toll on the health of the child, other children and child care providers.^{vi}** The effects are similar to having sick adults at work: increased contagion and higher rates of infection for all children in care.^{vii}
- **Without access to paid leave, parents may postpone or skip the well-child visits recommended by physicians, and may interrupt vaccination series or other necessary treatment.** Children are therefore more vulnerable to preventable serious illness.^{viii}
- **Studies show that when hospitals include parents in children's care, the length of their stay is shorter.^{ix}** One study found that the mere presence of parents shortens children's hospital stay by 31 percent.^x In addition, active parental involvement in children's hospital care may head off future health care needs, partly due to increased parental education and awareness.^{xi}

MANY PARENTS LACK PAID SICK DAYS

- **Working parents need to take around four days off per year** to care for each school-age child, given the incidence of illness among school-age children.^{xii}
- **Unfortunately, 94 million working Americans do not have paid sick days to use to care for a sick child.^{xiii}**
- **Low-income parents are at greater risk of experiencing difficulties caring for their sick children.** Low-income parents are less likely to have paid sick days and cite loss of pay associated with caring for sick kids as a difficulty. As a result, parents are forced to leave sick children home alone, or send sick children to school or day care.^{xiv}

- **Parents' report that paid leave is the primary factor in their decisions about staying home when their children are sick.** Parents with sick leave or vacation leave were 5 times as likely to care for their sick children as those who didn't have these employment benefits.^{xv}

ⁱ Vicky Lovell, *No Time to be Sick: Why Everyone Suffers when Workers Don't Have Paid Sick Leave*, Institute for Women's Policy Research, May 2004, using data from Bloom, Cohen, Vickerie and Wondimu, 2003.

ⁱⁱ Vicky Lovell, *No Time to be Sick: Why Everyone Suffers when Workers Don't Have Paid Sick Leave*, Institute for Women's Policy Research, May 2004, using data from Bloom, Cohen, Vickerie and Wondimu, 2003.

ⁱⁱⁱ University of Michigan Health System, *Children with Chronic Conditions*, <http://www.med.umich.edu/1libr/yourchild/chronic.htm>, 2006.

^{iv} Vicky Lovell, *No Time to be Sick*.

^v S.J. Heymann, Alison Earle, and Brian Egleston, 1996, as cited in Lovell, *Paid Sick Days Improve Public Health by Reducing the Spread of Disease*, Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2006.

^{vi} Vicky Lovell, *No Time to be Sick*.

^{vii} Heymann, Earle, and Egleston, 1996, as cited in Lovell, *No Time to be Sick*, 2004.

^{viii} Testimony of Dr. Heidi Hartmann, Institute for Women's Policy Research, before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, 2006.

^{ix} Kristensson-Hallstrom, Elander, and Malmfors, 1997, as cited in Lovell, *No Time to be Sick*, 2004.

^x Jody Heymann, *The Widening Gap: Why America's Working Families Are in Jeopardy—and What Can Be Done About It*, Basic Books, 2000.

^{xi} Palmer, 1993, as cited in Lovell, *No Time to be Sick*, 2004.

^{xii} Vicky Lovell, *No Time to be Sick*.

^{xiii} Vicky Lovell, *No Time to be Sick*.

^{xiv} Jody Heymann, *Forgotten Families: Ending the Growing Crisis Confronting Children and Working Parents in the Global Economy*, Oxford University Press, 2006.

^{xv} Jody Heymann, *The Widening Gap*.