

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.\(^i\) 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. \textsuperscript{xv}

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\textsuperscript{iv} Vicky Lovell, *No Time to be Sick*.
\textsuperscript{vi} Vicky Lovell, *No Time to be Sick*.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{xii} Vicky Lovell, *No Time to be Sick*.
\textsuperscript{xiii} Vicky Lovell, *No Time to be Sick*.
\textsuperscript{xv} Jody Heymann, *The Widening Gap*.
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