

MATERNITY LEAVE

Maternity leave from a job after childbirth provides critical time for maternal-infant bonding and adjustment to life with a new baby. Longer maternity leave is associated with increased breastfeeding duration as well as improved maternal mental health and child development.^{107,108} The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) guarantees both women and men up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave around the birth or adoption of a child, as long as they work for larger employers (50+ employees) and meet certain tenure and working hour requirements. However, many women do not qualify for FMLA or cannot afford to take unpaid leave

and may use a combination of short-term disability, sick leave, vacation, and personal days in order to have some portion of their maternity leave paid. The U.S. is one of only 5 countries in the world that does not mandate paid maternity leave.¹⁰⁹

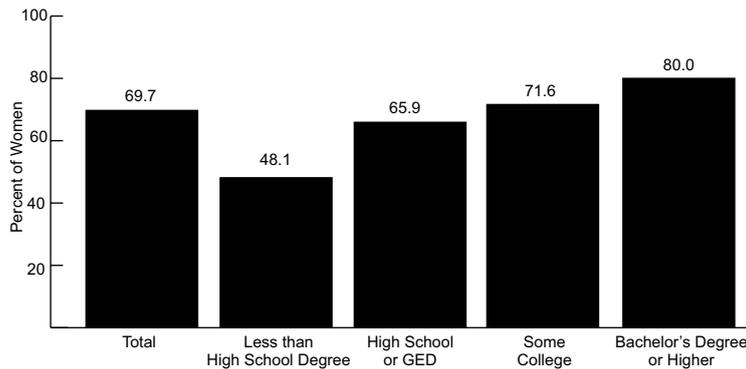
In 2006-2010, 66.0 percent of women reported being employed during their last pregnancy, of whom 69.7 percent reported taking maternity leave. Thus, nearly one-third of employed women did not report taking any maternity leave (30.3 percent). Women with at least a college degree were more likely to have taken leave than those who had attended college but not graduated (80.0 versus 71.6 percent, respec-

tively) while less than half of women without a high school degree reported having taken leave. Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black women were less likely to report having taken maternity leave than non-Hispanic White women (62.5 and 64.3 percent, respectively, versus 72.2 percent). When taken, the average length of maternity leave was 10.0 weeks (data not shown).

Among employed women who did not take maternity leave for their last pregnancy, 5.1 percent did not take it because it was not offered or allowed by their employer. Of non-Hispanic White women, 3.2 percent reported this reason, compared to 8.2 percent of Hispanic women and 10.2 percent of non-Hispanic Black women.

Employed Women Aged 18-44 Years Who Took Maternity Leave After Their Last Childbirth,* by Educational Attainment, 2006-2010

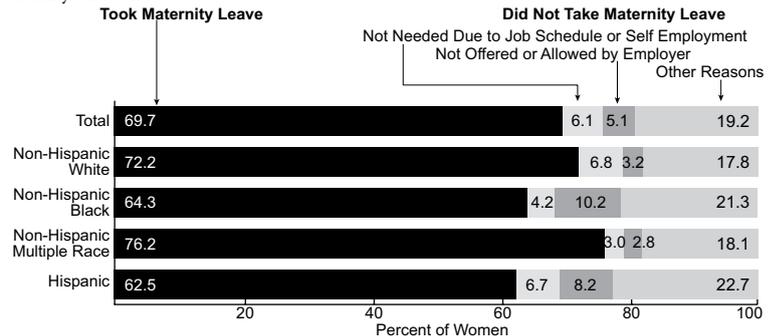
Source (III.9): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Survey of Family Growth



*Following a live birth occurring in the 5 years before the survey.

Employed Women Aged 18-44 Years Who Took Maternity Leave After Their Last Childbirth*, and Reasons for Not Taking Maternity Leave, by Race/Ethnicity,** 2006-2010

Source (III.9): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Survey of Family Growth



*Following a live birth occurring in the 5 years before the survey. **The samples of American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander were too small to produce reliable results.