



Paid Family and Medical Leave: The Disability Angle

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The need for paid family and medical leave is universal. Nearly all of us at some point will need time away from work to care for a family member's or our own serious medical condition, or to welcome a new baby or new child into our family. Unfortunately, all too often workers can't get access to paid family or medical leave during these times. Without paid leave, workers face a terrible choice: getting paid, or taking the time they need for their family or themselves.

This year, The Arc has lifted up the disability angle on this important national conversation.

We've produced a video spotlighting [one family's story](#) about paid leave, and we're sharing the [stories of others who have personal experience](#) with paid leave. And with the Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, we've released a [first of its kind paper](#) outlining why paid family and medical leave is a necessity for the economic security and stability of people with disabilities and their families. Our research found:

- **The disability angle on paid family and medical leave is huge.** Nearly one in five Americans (47 million) and over one in four American families (34 million) include at least one child, adult or senior with a disability.
- **Like all workers, workers with disabilities may need access to paid leave** to welcome a new child, provide care for a family member with a serious medical condition, or if they experience their own serious medical condition. However, workers with disabilities are particularly likely to be in part-time, low-wage jobs that often don't offer even basic benefits – much less paid family and medical leave. For example, over two in three part-time workers don't have even one sick day.
- **Paid leave has the potential to increase employment and economic security overall and, if done right, especially for people with disabilities.** People with disabilities and their families are more likely to struggle to pay for the basics to begin with, and to face barriers to work and economic security. Their greater lack of access to paid leave only adds to the hardship, makes it harder to work, and reduces economic opportunity and stability.
- **Major gaps in access to paid leave exist in the United States.** Our country lags far behind our peer nations in the world, which typically offer robust national paid

family and medical leave programs In the U.S. workforce, only one in seven workers has access to paid family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition. Roughly two in five workers report they lack access to any paid leave.

To fully address the needs of all Americans, including people with disabilities and their families, our paper recommends that the U.S. adopt a comprehensive, national paid leave approach that is fully inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities.

We're encouraging people with disabilities and their families to be at the table and part of the conversation. **Do you have a paid leave story? Please [share it with us](#), and spread the word!**

View these and other resources on our web page at <https://thearc.org/policy-advocacy/paid-family-medical-leave/>.

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