Today's piece was prepared by Jessica McDade, MD, based on an NPR article [A Pediatrician's View of Paid Parental Leave](http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/10/10/497052014/a-pediatricians-view-of-paid-parental-leave).

This article discusses the significant benefits that both maternal and paternal paid leave can have on the health and development of children and the overall health of a family. Paid parental leave is a controversial topic in this country, as the US has policies that are drastically different than those in most of Europe and Canada, where paid maternal leave is 6-12 months long and paid paternal leave of at least 2 weeks is the norm.

Paid maternity leave of at least 12 weeks increases early childhood checkups and vaccination. Maternity leave is also associated with a reduction in maternal depression, a disease that has negative impacts on early cognitive, social, and emotional development. It has been shown to increase rates of breast feeding, which not only is impactful on a child's immune system and overall health but also stimulates neurologic and psychosocial development. Additionally, >2 weeks of paternal leave can improve father-child bonding.

This article includes many bold and arguably controversial statements about benefits of paid parental leave without giving readers reference to real data or numbers to support their statements. If readers are interested in a review of the literature on paid parental leave, an article published by the UWSPH in 2016 can be found [here](http://www.mdpi.com.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/2227-9032/4/2/30/htm), which discusses more detail on topics including the impact that parental leave has on infant mortality, breastfeeding, immunizations, and gender issues.

**RESOURCES ON PAID PARENTAL LEAVE:**

[National Partnership for Women and Families](http://www.nationalpartnership.org/issues/work-family/) *information on current parental rights with respect to paid leave*

[Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act](https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/786) *Congressional website with info on current legislation backed by the AAP regarding paid family leave*

[Department of Labor site about FMLA](https://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/index.htm) *Resources for parents with questions about FMLA as well info about who is being denied paid medical leave for their children*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!