

Paternity Leave

"It is a wise father that knows his own child."

—William Shakespeare



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What roles do new fathers have in your native country?
2. Should parental leave benefits be gender-neutral?
3. How do mothers and fathers parent their children differently? *What part of speech is "parent" in this question?*

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| ___ 1. maternity | a) to develop a close relationship |
| ___ 2. eligible | b) related to motherhood |
| ___ 3. paternity | c) to behave toward someone in a certain way |
| ___ 4. pass up | d) resistant, not ready or willing to make a change |
| ___ 5. reluctant | e) to refuse or decline a good opportunity |
| ___ 6. treat | f) to have the right to do something |
| ___ 7. bond | g) related to fatherhood |
| ___ 8. make ends meet | h) to convince |
| ___ 9. coax | i) to have enough money for life's necessities |
| ___ 10. pacifier | j) something that takes away a person's freedom |
| ___ 11. burden | k) a nipple-shaped object that a baby sucks on for comfort |

Reading

PATERNITY LEAVE

Daddy's on Diaper Duty

1. In most countries around the world, new mothers take **maternity** leave after they have a baby. The amount of pay and time off they receive depends on their government and employer. In some countries, fathers are **eligible** for parental leave. **Paternity** leave is becoming more common as gender equality improves in the workplace.
2. Even though some companies offer a paid paternity leave, many men do not take it. Why would dads **pass up** this benefit and opportunity? Some **reluctant** dads worry about their careers. They don't want to miss a chance at getting a raise. Will their bosses **treat** them differently when they return to work? Many fear they will be viewed as lazy. Although they want to be at home with their family, they don't want to be laid off when their company downsizes.
3. Some fathers take paternity leave despite the lack of a benefit package. They use up vacation or sick days to **bond** with their newborns. The father may quit his job altogether if his partner earns a higher income. This makes it easier for the family to **make ends meet** on one salary.
4. One thing that men can't do is nurse their newborns. Is this nature's way of saying that babies should be with their mothers? Some new fathers feel they work harder than their female partners. **Coaxing** a fussy baby to take a bottle or a **pacifier** is not an easy job!
5. In countries where parental leave is not paid, the primary caregiver may be someone other than the mother or father. This is common in the United States, where many employers do not pay for parental leave. When both parents have to work, the **burden** of childcare often falls on the grandparents. What effect does this have on a family?

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. Why is paternity leave becoming more common?
2. Why are many men reluctant to take paternity leave even if they are eligible?
3. Why do some men quit their jobs after a baby is born?
4. Why do some new fathers feel they have it harder than their female partners?
5. Why is the United States mentioned in this reading?

Vocabulary Review

Which word from page 1 is described in the sentence?
More than one option may be possible.

#	Sentence	Word
1	The employee rules state that a father is allowed to take 12 weeks of the paid parental leave.	
2	The father and baby are getting to know each other by cuddling and reading stories together.	
3	The grandparents were happily retired. Now they are responsible for their grandson's childcare.	
4	If she doesn't go back to work, we won't have enough money to buy groceries.	
5	My husband isn't sure about taking paternity leave. He doesn't want to miss out on a raise.	
6	She doesn't know who the father of the baby is. They are going to run a blood test.	
7	I convinced him to take three weeks of paternity leave!	
8	She's kind to everyone except her own husband. I can't believe the way she talks to him.	
9	The baby won't stop crying. Where is her plug?	
10	He could have had three months off with pay, but he declined.	

Grammar Review

DOES THIS SURPRISE YOU?

A. Describing Unexpected Situations

There are a few different English words and expressions for describing unexpected situations. Some are followed by a noun. Others are followed by subject, verb, object (SVO). Read the dialogues with a partner. Take turns being A and B. Can you find a pattern in the comma placement?

despite | in spite of + NOUN

- A: Despite the offer, he didn't take the paternity leave.
 B: Really? That's surprising!
 A: He didn't take the paternity leave in spite of the offer.
 B: That's crazy! Why didn't he?

despite the fact that | in spite of the fact that + SVO

- | | |
|--|--|
| A: Despite the fact that the baby was three hours old, the dad went to work. | A: In spite of the fact that his boss said no, the man took a week off work. |
| B: No way! What did the mother think? | B: Good for him. That's brave! |

even though | although | though + SVO

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| A: Even though his wife was in labor, he went golfing with his friends. | A: Though his friends went surfing, Max stayed home with the baby. | A: Benji stayed home with the baby although he wanted to go golfing. |
| B: Are you serious? That's ridiculous! | B: He did? He must really love that baby. | B: I'm shocked. Benji loves golfing! |

B. Writing

Work together to make up some of your own sentences using these words and expressions. Experiment with sentence structure.

Discussion Questions


1. How do babies and older children benefit from a father taking paternity leave?
2. What responsibility should a government have when it comes to parental leave benefits?
3. What can mothers or childcare workers do to help working fathers feel more involved in the lives of their newborns?
4. How have paternal benefits changed in your country since you were a baby?

Critical Thinking

IN PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS

How would society change if all employees were eligible for a “family leave benefit”? Work together with a group to come up with a benefit package that makes sense for everyone. How much time off and pay would families receive? Why would this benefit the employer and the government as well?

Listening – Gap Fill

 <http://blog.esllibrary.com/2014/06/04/podcast-paternity-leave/>

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

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5. primary
4. than
3. altogether
2. Even though, lazy
1. government

ANSWERS: