

Mitigating Inequities in Lactation via Kinship (MILK): A Person-Centered Approach to Achieving Lactation Equity Through Community

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AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

Learning Objectives

1. Review benefits of lactation for parent and child from a Number Needed to Treat (NNT) framework then consider lactation rates locally and globally—including lactation intent and reported success—with close attention to historically underrepresented communities in the US.
2. Examine cross-cultural kinship support structures surrounding the “fourth trimester”/postpartum period, both past and present, and consider their effect on the lactating parent-child dyad.
3. Explore a concentric -circle -approach to community networks that can begin to reclaim lactation in an inclusive and culturally responsive way to improve health disparities.

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Introductions

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AES Question



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Question 1

One of the **Healthy People 2030** goals is to increase the proportion of infants who are exclusively breastfed at 12 months of age to a projected:

- A. 38%
- B. 54.1%
- C. 85%
- D. 67.7%

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AES Question



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Question 2

How many patients need to be exclusively breastfed to avert a case of acute otitis media in a patient less than 6 months old?

- A. 1
- B. 3
- C. 5
- D. 10

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NNT Infant

Cases and deaths averted by optimal breastfeeding and numbers needed to treat [95% CI]			
	population [95% CI]	population [95% CI]	treat to avert a case [95% CI]
Child disease			
Acute lymphoblastic leukemia	185 [49 to 309]	37 [-22 to 91]	10,796 [6,453 to 40,777]
Acute otitis media	601,825 [596,885 to 609,362]	n/a	3 [3 to 3]
Crohn's disease	145 [31 to 249]	n/a	13,717 [8,006 to 64,323]
Ulcerative colitis	136 [18 to 263]	n/a	14,669 [7,595 to 107,930]
Gastrointestinal infection	2,558,629 [2,554,934 to 2,577,865]	n/a	0.8 [0.8 to 0.8]
Lower respiratory tract infection requiring hospitalization	20,900 [20,014 to 21,836]	40 [4 to 73]	95 [91 to 100]
Necrotizing enterocolitis	1,355 [1,237 to 1,489]	190 [144 to 239]	20 [18 to 22] ^b
Obesity (non-Hispanic Whites only) ^c	45,298 [44,408 to 46,353]	n/a	44 [43 to 45]

Suboptimal breastfeeding in the United States: Maternal and pediatric health outcomes and costs (Bartick et al)

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SIDS

NNT Breastfeeding prevention for SIDS 1:5500

Colonoscopy prevents 1: 1300

Mammography prevents 1: 2400

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Cognitive Development

UK study in 2022 showed that breastfed babies in disadvantaged mothers performed better on cognitive tests and these results persist from 3-7.

Expressive verbal testing 10% higher than peers.



AI Canvas, 2024, Pixabay

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NNT Maternal

Maternal condition	Cases averted in population (95% CI)	Deaths averted in population (95% CI)	Cases averted per 100,000 women (95% CI)	Deaths averted per 100,000 women (95% CI)	Women needed to treat to avert a case (95% CI)	Women needed to treat to avert a death (95% CI)
Breast cancer	5,023 (3,965 - 6,021)	838 (434 - 1,245)	252 (199 - 302)	42 (22 - 62)	397 (331 - 503)	2,379 (1,602 - 4,596)
Ovarian cancer (premenopausal)	22 (-71 - 112)	8 (-58 - 71)	1 (-4 - 6)	0.4 (-3 - 4)	92,713 (-28,274 to ∞ to 17,786) ^a	237,079 (-34,379 - ∞ to 28,254) ^a
Type 2 diabetes mellitus	12,320 (10,537 - 14,162)	473 (154 - 789)	618 (528 - 710)	24 (8 - 40)	162 (141 - 189)	4,218 (2,529 - 12,952)
Hypertension	35,982 (34,122 - 38,144)	322 (98 - 543)	1,805 (1,711 - 1,913)	16 (5 - 27)	55 (52 - 58)	6,192 (3,671 - 20,259)
Myocardial infarction	8,487 (7,520 - 9,583)	986 (677 - 1,295)	426 (377 - 481)	49 (34 - 65)	235 (208 - 265)	2,023 (1,540 - 2,946)
Total maternal deaths	n/a	2,619 (1,978 - 3,259)	n/a	131 (99 - 163)	n/a	761 (612 - 1,008)

[Long-term maternal benefits of breastfeeding \(contemporaryobgyn.net\)](http://contemporaryobgyn.net)

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Equivocal Findings

Return to pre-pregnancy weight
Postpartum weight loss
Osteoporosis



Google Images

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Environmental Protection

Impact Category	Unit	4 Months Feeding with Infant Formula	4 Months Breastfeeding	Difference between Breastfeeding and Infant Formula Feeding *
Global warming potential	kg CO ₂ -eq	200	145	55 (38%)
Terrestrial acidification	kg SO ₂ -eq	2.61	1.52	1.09 (72%)
Freshwater eutrophication	kg P-eq	1.32×10^{-2}	0.98×10^{-2}	0.34×10^{-2} (35%)
Marine eutrophication	kg N-eq	3.93×10^{-1}	2.47×10^{-1}	1.46×10^{-1} (59%)
Land use	m ² a crop-eq	122	80	42 (53%)

Andresen EC, Hjelkrem AR, Bakken AK, Andersen LF. Environmental Impact of Feeding with Infant Formula in Comparison with Breastfeeding. Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2022 May 24;19(11):6397. doi: 10.3390/ijerph19116397. PMID: 35681983; PMCID: PMC9180168.

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Economic Benefit of Breastfeeding



€5.6 Million savings per percentage point of increased breastfeeding.

Johnson, Gordon, 2016, USA Pixabay

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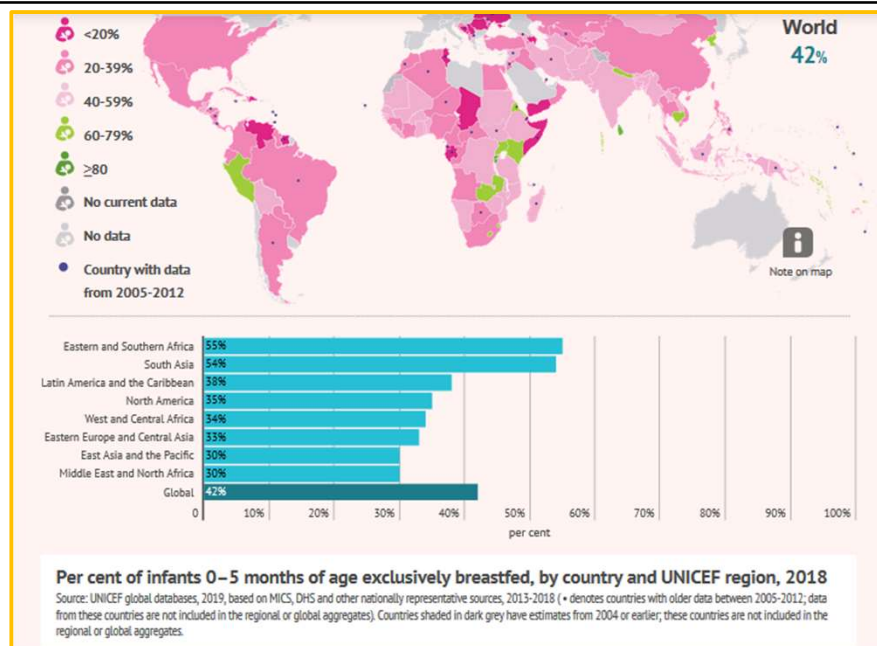
Considering the benefits, equity of health is at risk...

TABLE 1 Healthy people 2020 breastfeeding goals and current rates in United States by race/ethnicity in 2014^{3,4}

Categories	Ever breastfed %	Exclusive breastfeeding through 3 months %	Breastfed at 6 months %	Exclusive breastfeeding through 6 months %	Breastfed at 12 months %
Healthy people 2020 goals	81.9	46.2	60.6	25.5	34.1
U.S. rates	82.5	46.6	55.3	24.9	33.7
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Hispanic	84.8	45.5	52.5	24.5	31.7
Non-Hispanic White	85.7	51.5	60.0	27.9	37.8
Non-Hispanic Black	68.0	32.7	41.5	15.0	21.5
Non-Hispanic Asian	80.7	44.3	61.9	27.6	37.5
Non-Hispanic Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	79.9	59.5	68.1	29.9	31.7
Non-Hispanic American Indian/Alaska Native	79.5	51.2	52.8	26.5	29.7

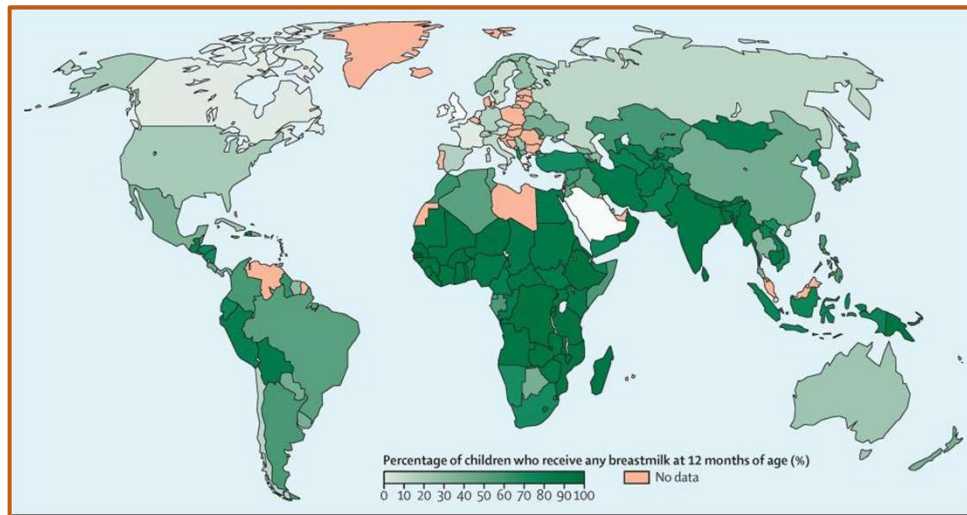
Long-term maternal benefits of breastfeeding (contemporaryobgyn.net)

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20% of babies are exclusively breastfed at 6 months of age – NICHE International

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Lancet 2021

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“Today in the West, we are waking up to the importance of cocooning baby in the weeks following birth. The understanding that he (or she) is not quite ready to meet the world-at-large when he emerges and is still in an early stage of development that’s come to be known as the “fourth trimester” has awakened us to the value of holding him close and sheltered for some weeks, so he can shift slowly and gradually into life outside the womb.”

- *the first forty days*

"my mother kiss is OK" by Krisztina.Konczos is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

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DR. LAWRENCE'S EXPERIENCE...



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Greece

Parent who has recently given birth stays home with baby for 40 days—cared for by mother or mother-in-law and other female friends from the community. Prayers of welcome for the mother and child offered in the church at 40 days post-birth. Time promotes bonding, skin-to-skin, establishing lactation while supported and free from community obligations.

"Greek Orthodox Church" by Caza_No.7 is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

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South Korea

Birthing parent traditionally observes **samchilil**, at least 21-days of confinement period during which they avoid going outside and receiving guests. **Sanhujori** (Korean: 산후조리) is the Korean culturally specific form of postpartum care during which they are cared for by their mother or mother-in-law, who prepares special foods like miyeokguk (a traditional seaweed soup with beef, chicken, or anchovies) to boost circulation, restore nutrients, and support breastfeeding. At 100 days old, the baby is introduced to the larger family with a ceremony.

"An Evening in Namdaemun Market, Seoul, South Korea" by sunbeams879 is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

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Nigeria

Parent who birthed observes a 30-day confinement period called **omugwo** (the Igbo term for the traditional custom of postpartum care), during which they are cared for by their mother or mother-in-law. They are given special foods and drinks, and daily massages are performed to help with recovery.

"Work in progress: High hopes for health in Nigeria" by DFID - UK Department for International Development is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

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India

Mother of new baby observes a 40-day to 3-month confinement period (often in her parents' home) called **jaapa**, during which they rest and are cared for by family members. The mother is fed soft and nurturing foods and fresh boiled milk with ghee and spices. She also receives daily, warm-oil massages to soothe her nerves and is taught how to gently massage baby as well—a relaxing, bonding experience.

"India - Kerala - Chavakkad Beach - mother and baby" by muffinn is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

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Mexico

La cuarentena is a 40-day period during which female relatives take on the domestic duties of a recently delivered mother in order to safeguard against future exhaustion-related illnesses. The midwife visits frequently over the first two weeks. The postpartum abdomen is wrapped in a faja or cloth to help keep the belly warm.

"Tarahumara mother and children, Creel, Mexico" by ali.eminov is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

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Morocco

The parent who delivered a baby observes a 40-day confinement period called **al-taqsan**, during which they are cared for by their mother or mother-in-law. They are given special foods and drinks to promote healing and lactation, and daily massages are performed to help with recovery.

"Fes, Morocco 1987" by Nick Kenrick, is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

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China

The recently delivered mother observes a confinement period called **zuò yuè zi** (sitting the month), during which they avoid leaving the house to stay sheltered from cold and wind, receive massages from a traditional practitioner, and are also given special foods and drinks to promote healing and lactation.

"Mother with child and shopping bags, center of Quanzhou, Fujian province, Southeast China" by Future Challenges is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

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Brazil

Post-partum people are encouraged to take a 40-day break from their regular activities after childbirth, known as **resguardo**. During this time, they avoid going outside and are cared for by family members. Special foods and drinks are prepared to promote healing and lactation.

"Brasilia, Brazil (3112744119)" by Steve Evans from Citizen of the World is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

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Japan

After delivery, mothers observe a 100-day confinement period called **osouji** (often in their mothers' homes), during which they avoid leaving the house and are cared for by their mother or mother-in-law. They are given special traditional foods and drinks, and a special massage is performed to help with recovery.

*File:ivory netsuke showing a mother breastfeeding a child, Japan Wellcome L0058577.jpg" is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

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United States

Birthing parents bring their pre-pregnancy jeans to the labor deck and plan to wear them home. There's no required protected time away from work and mothers or mothers-in-law are unlikely to be able to take time off or to have lactated for their children.

Community support might come in a few meals from a faith community or friend-group.

Photo credit: Kelley Lawrence.

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Stock image from Microsoft 365

COMMON THREADS OF WISDOM

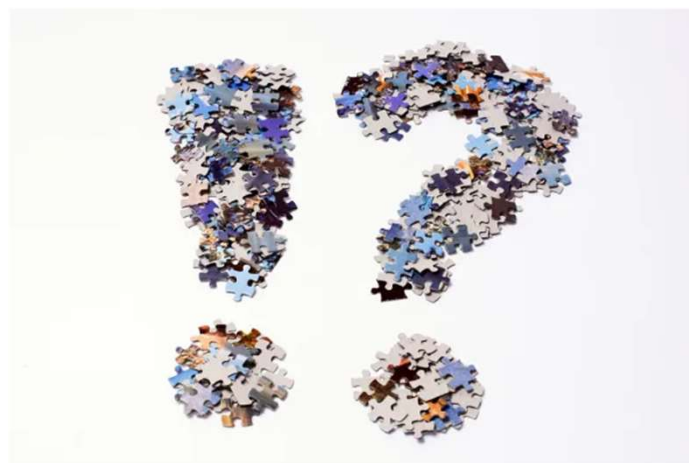
*Retreat
Warmth
Support
Rest
Ritual*

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Who?What?Where?How?When?



"Curious look of sherpa child in Everest Base Camp route Nepal IMG 4168" by Sumita Roy Dutta is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.



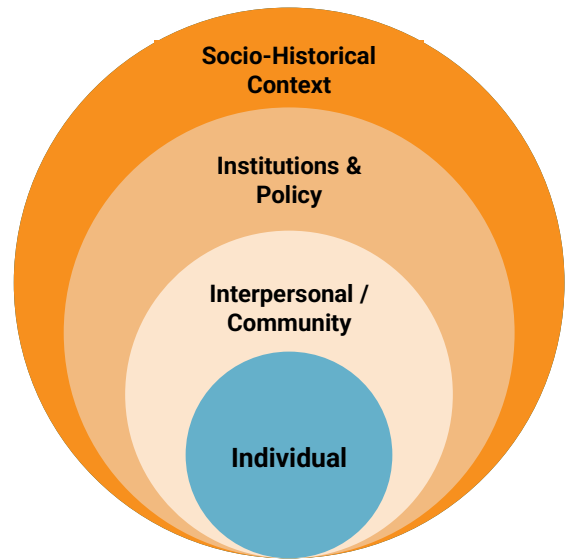
"Punctuation marks made of puzzle pieces" by Horia Varlan is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

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Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Community Networks



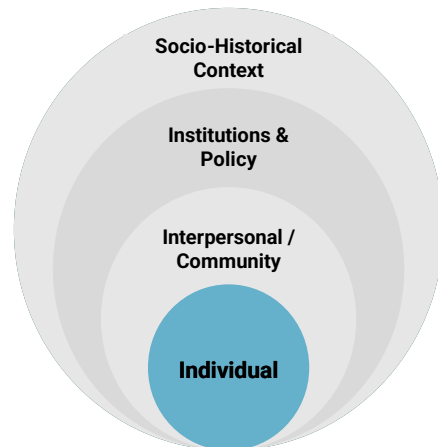
Photo: Vanessa Simmons, *Normalize Breastfeeding*



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Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Community Networks

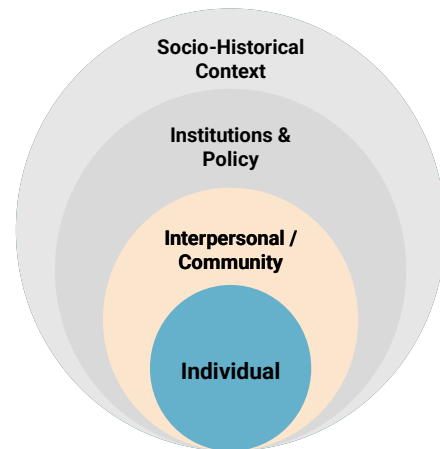
Attitudes
Knowledge
Beliefs
Pregnancy/Birthing Experience
Mental Health/Wellbeing
Self-efficacy



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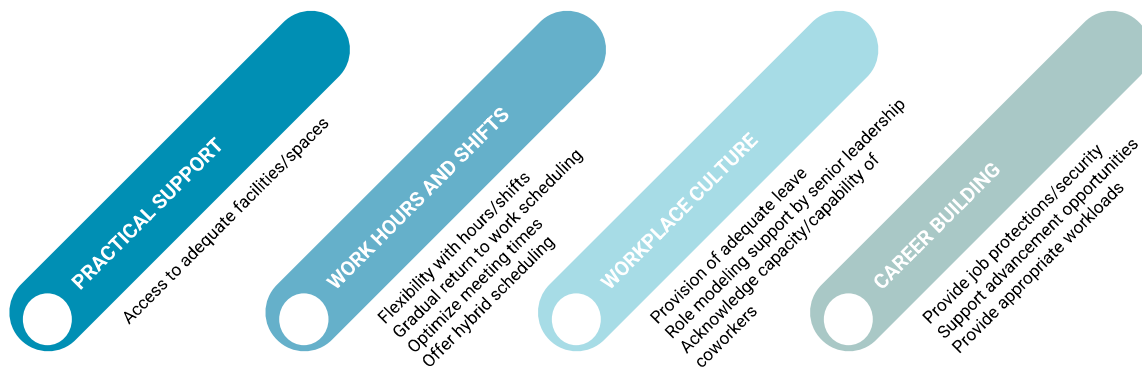
Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Community Networks

Partner
Family
Friends
Peer support
Health care provider
Lactation consultant
Workplace



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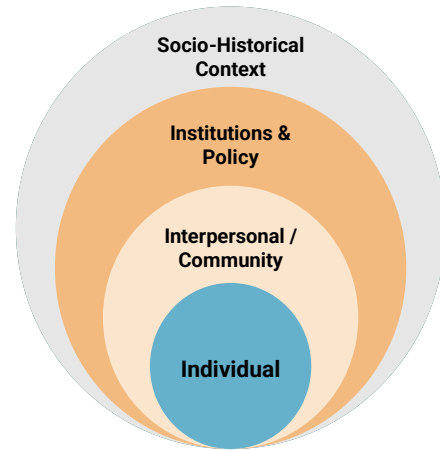
Employer/Leadership Tools for Supporting Transitions Back to Work



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Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Community Networks

Pay equity
Insurance Coverage
Paid Family Medical Leave



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"2DU colombia 42" by CIAT International Center for Tropical Agriculture is licensed under CC-BY-SA 2.0.



"Pregnant At Work" by Cjghr Connect is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Dynamic Workforce



"Construction worker at Westlake Center, 1988" by Seattle Municipal Archives is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

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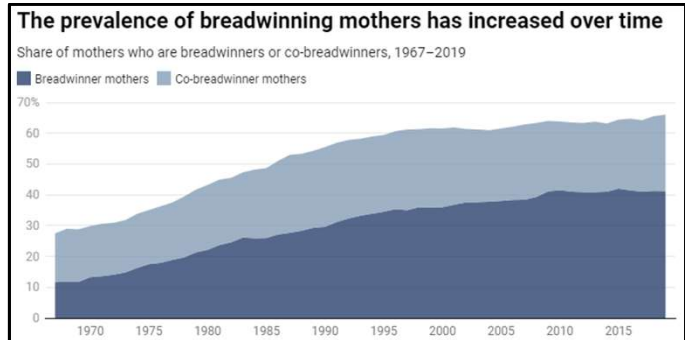


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Dynamic Workforce



"Construction worker at Westlake Center, 1988" by Seattle Municipal Archives is licensed under CC BY 2.0.



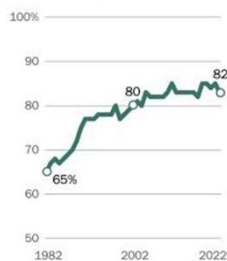
Glynn, S. J. (2021, March 29). *Breadwinning Mothers Are Critical to Families' Economic Security*. The Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/breadwinning-mothers-critical-families-economic-security/>

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Pay Equity

Gender pay gap narrowed in the 1980s and '90s, but progress has stalled since

Women's median hourly earnings in the U.S. as a % of men's median hourly earnings

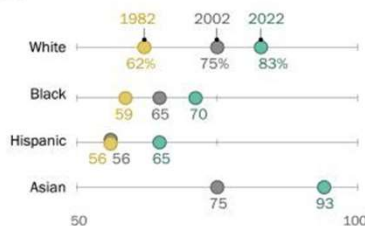


Note: Samples include employed workers ages 16 or older with positive earnings, working full time or part time, excluding the self-employed.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey outgoing rotation group files (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Black and Hispanic women experience the largest gender wage gap

Median hourly earnings of women in the U.S. as a % of the median hourly earnings of White men, by race and ethnicity



Note: Samples include employed workers ages 16 and older with positive earnings, working full time or part time, excluding the self-employed. White, Black and Asian workers include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race. Asian workers include Pacific Islanders.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey outgoing rotation group files (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



"Dollar Coin Head (front)" by matthiasxc is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Kochhar, R. (2023, March 1). *The Enduring Grip of the Gender Pay Gap*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2023/03/01/the-enduring-grip-of-the-gender-pay-gap/>

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Paid Family Medical Leave



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Paid Family Medical Leave

What constitutes a family?

“Family” = Typically includes an employee’s child, parent, spouse or domestic partner, sibling, grandparent or grandchild.

“Chosen Family” - those an employee considers family, but have no legal or biological relationship.



"hands on baby" by chellyc is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.

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Paid Family Medical Leave

What does PFML offer?

1. Paid benefits through an insurance system
1. Employment protections:
 - Right to reinstatement (ie job protection)
 - Right to health insurance continuation
 - Protection against discrimination or retaliation



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AES Question



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Question 3

Where does the US rank amongst the 41 high-income nations that provide government-mandated paid parental leave?

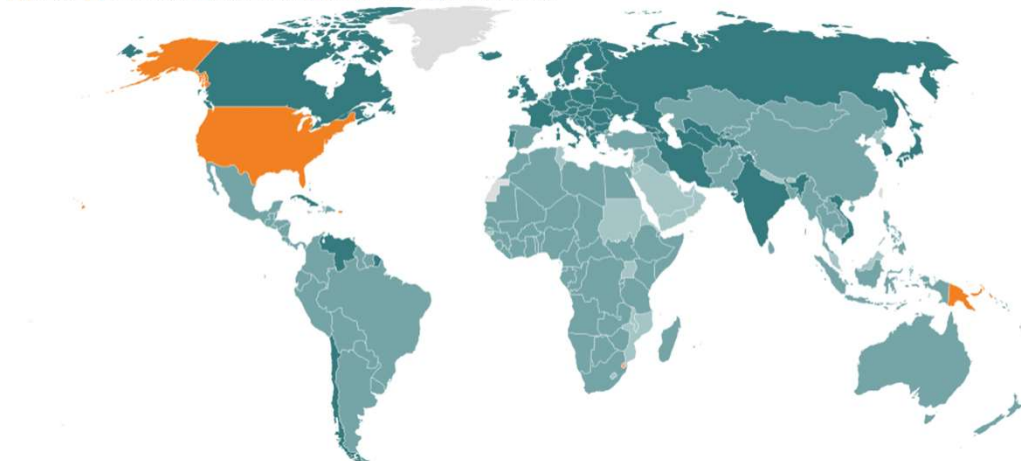
- A. Top 10th%
- B. Last (0)
- C. 25-50th%
- D. Top 5th%

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Paid Leave for New Mothers

The U.S. is one of seven countries without national paid maternity leave. (Some of those nations, small islands in the western Pacific, are too small to be seen on this map.) The average length for those that have the leave is 29 weeks.

0 weeks Up to 4 weeks 4 to 12 weeks 12 to 24 weeks 24 weeks or more



All leave lengths reflect a period with at least some income provided, in some cases small sums. Maternal leave lengths are a combination of leaves specific to the mother (when available) as well as shared parental leave. Data is up to 2019. Suriname has since added maternity leave.
World Policy Analysis Center, University of California, Los Angeles • By The New York Times

Miller, C. C. (2023, June 22). The World 'Has Found a Way to Do This': The U.S. Lags on Paid Leave. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/us/politics/paid-leave-democrats.html>

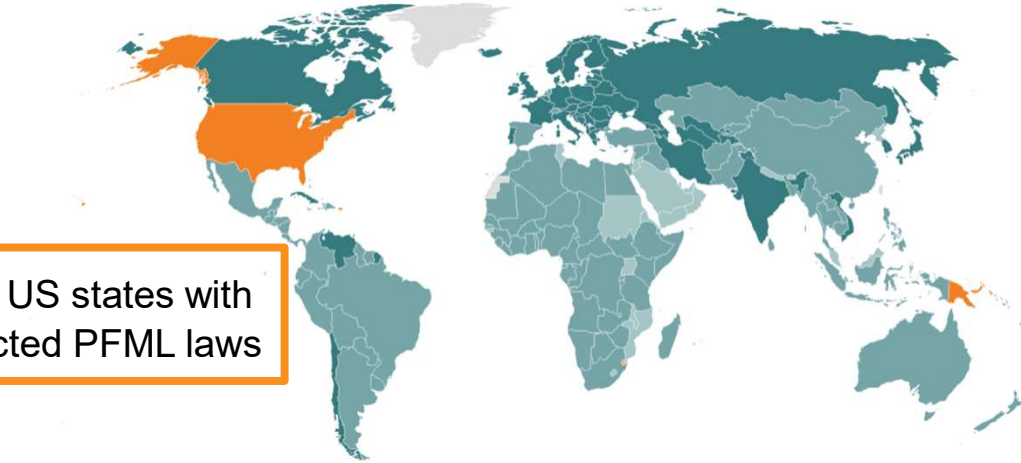
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0 weeks Up to 4 weeks 4 to 12 weeks 12 to 24 weeks 24 weeks or more

13 US states with enacted PFML laws



All leave lengths reflect a period with at least some income provided, in some cases small sums. Maternal leave lengths are a combination of leaves specific to the mother (when available) as well as shared parental leave. Data is up to 2019. Suriname has since added maternity leave.

World Policy Analysis Center, University of California, Los Angeles • By The New York Times

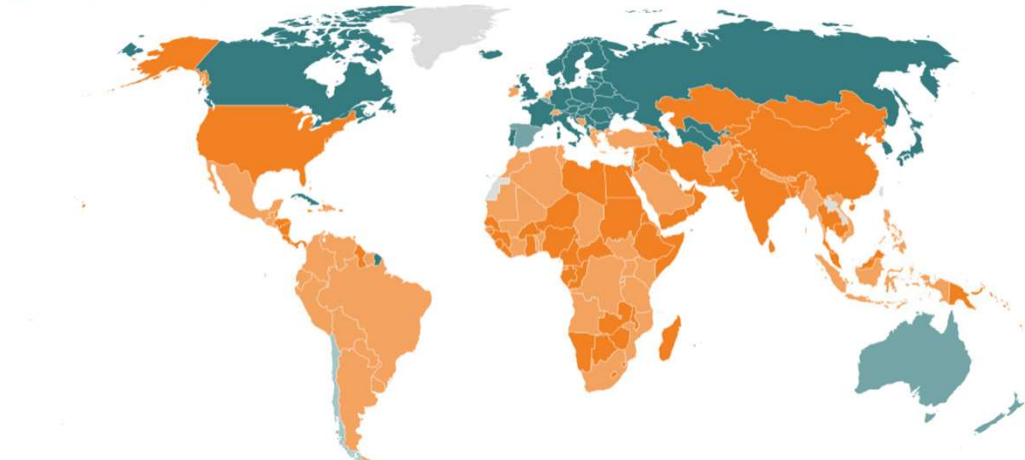
Miller, C. C. (2023, June 23). The World 'Has Found a Way to Do This': The U.S. Lags on Paid Leave. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/02/health/paid-leave-democrats.html>

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Paid Leave for New Fathers

The U.S. is one of 83 countries without national paid paternity leave. The average length for those that have it is 16 weeks.

0 weeks Up to 4 weeks 4 to 12 weeks 12 to 24 weeks 24 weeks or more



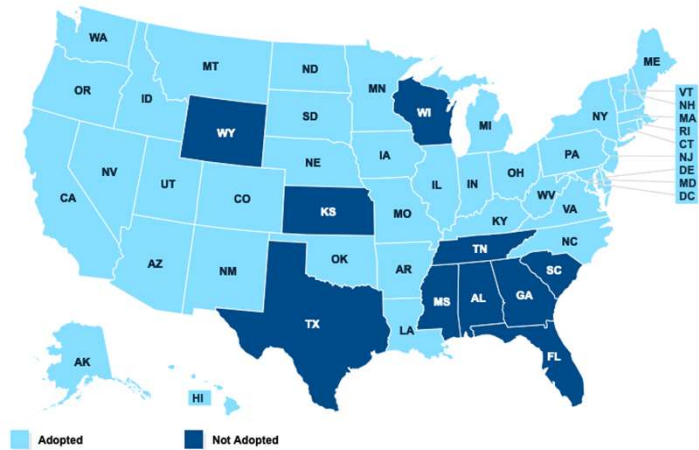
All leave lengths reflect a period with at least some income provided, in some cases small sums. Paternity leave lengths are a combination of leaves specific to the father (when available) as well as shared parental leave. Data up to 2019. Switzerland and Suriname have since added paternity leave.

Source: World Policy Analysis Center, University of California, Los Angeles • By The New York Times

Miller, C. C. (2023, June 23). The World 'Has Found a Way to Do This': The U.S. Lags on Paid Leave. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/02/health/paid-leave-democrats.html>

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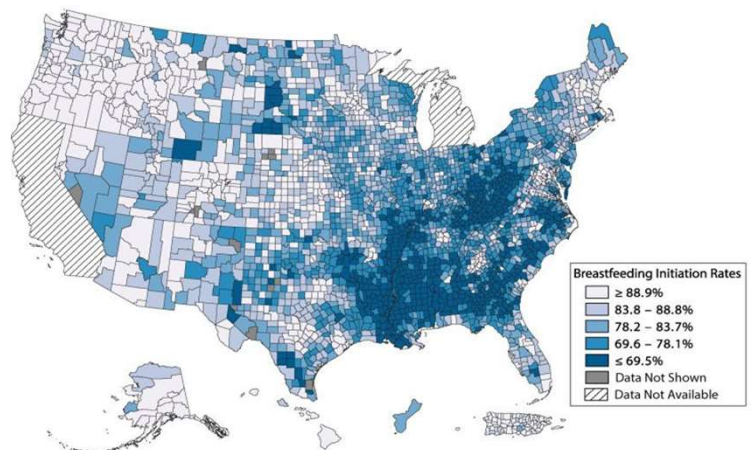
Medicaid Expansion



Source: Status of Medicaid Expansion Decision: Interactive Map published via Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF).

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Medicaid Expansion



Source: CDC Breastfeeding Initiation Rates and Maps by County, presenting 2018–2019 National Vital Statistics System data.

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Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Community Network

Racism
Discrimination
Biased treatment
Cultural “Norms”



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www.chichihualtia.org



FOR SALE—A Wet Nurse, about nineteen years of age, with her second child, six weeks old, will be sold low for cash, fully guaranteed. Also—A first-rate Seamstress, who can cut out and fit well. Also—Several first-rate House Servants, Mechanics and Field Hands. Those who wish to purchase would do well to call on the undersigned before buying elsewhere.
19 1w* J. W. BOAZMAN, 157 Gravier st.

Source: "[S]he could...spare one ample breast for the profit of her owner": White Mothers and Enslaved Wet Nurses' Invisible Labor in American Slave Markets," Slavery and Abolition 38, No. 2 (April 2017): 337-355.

Socio-Historical Context Influences on Lactation

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PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

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Mitigating Inequities in Lactation via Kinship



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Kinship *noun*

Kin·ship [kin-SHip]

1. The quality or state of being kin:
RELATIONSHIP
2. Sharing of characteristics or origins
3. A feeling of being close or similar to other people or things

“The web of social relationships that form an important part of the lives of all humans in all societies”

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AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

Kinship *noun >>> action*

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Kinship *noun >>> action*



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AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

Kinship *noun >>> action*

COMMON
THREADS OF
WISDOM

Retreat

Warmth

Support

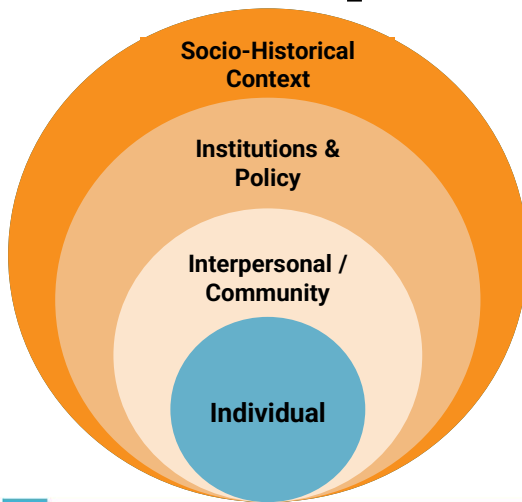
Rest Ritual

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Kinship *noun >>> action*



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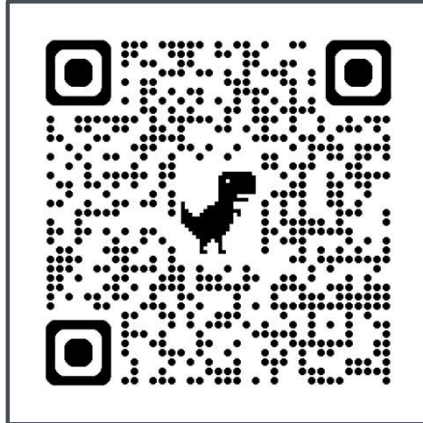
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Doctoring Parenthood: Navigating Conception, Birthing, Feeding and Parenting



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AES Answers

1. B
2. B
3. B

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