

THE WORK, FAMILY, AND EQUITY INDEX

WHERE DOES THE UNITED STATES STAND GLOBALLY?



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About the Project on Global Working Families

The Project on Global Working Families is the first program devoted to understanding and improving the relationship between working conditions and family health and well-being globally.

About This Report

As part of the Project on Global Working Families, with the support of the Ford Foundation, the **Work, Family, and Equity Index** has been developed to measure governmental performance around the world.

The Work, Family and Equity Index is the first venture to systematically define and measure successful public policies for working families globally. The Work, Family and Equity Index has two functions. First, the Index identifies essential goals for work-family policy based on the research evidence. Second, the Index enables us to examine individual country's public policies for working families relative to global standards.

The elements in the Index have been selected to comprise an evidence-based set of policies that are important to meeting the needs of working families in general and low- and middle-income working families in particular. Those policies that have achieved widespread recognition based on the weight of the research evidence or consensus in global policy and international agreements are included. To complete the Index, data were gathered from 168 countries that represent a wide range of political, social, and economic systems.

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In developing the measures for this Index, we received invaluable input from national and international leaders. We brought together both state and national leaders from the United States whose work focused on areas of work, family, and equity. These leaders had worked in academia, non-profit organizations, business, and government. They came from a wide range of fields including: medicine, public health, education, business, sociology, social work, political science, and economics, among others. In addition to the United States, we also convened a group of exceptional leaders from the Americas, Africa, Europe, Asia, and Oceania whose work addresses the needs of children, the disabled, the elderly, and families to discuss the relevance of their experiences at national and international levels to the design of an index to measure success on work, family, and equity. In the process of developing the Index we met with leaders from the United Nations, the International Labor Organization, UNESCO, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and relevant nongovernmental organizations that have global reach. We are deeply indebted for all of their input.

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Does the U.S. Measure Up?

When it comes to the right to work, the United States is well-situated, in the company of many other countries that ensure the equitable right to work across racial and ethnic groups, for men and women, regardless of age or disability. However, when it comes to ensuring decent working conditions, the United States is far behind in many areas. This is particularly true when one examines the working conditions that are needed to care for children and other family members.

Areas where the U.S. lags behind

Working conditions

- 163 countries around the world offer guaranteed paid leave to women in connection with childbirth. The U.S. does not.
- The only other industrialized country which does not have paid maternity or parental leave for women, Australia, guarantees a full year of unpaid leave to all women in the country. In contrast, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) in the U.S. provides only 12 weeks of unpaid leave to approximately half of mothers in the U.S. and nothing for the remainder.
- 45 countries ensure that fathers either receive paid paternity leave or have a right to paid parental leave. The United States guarantees fathers neither paid paternity nor paid parental leave.
- At least 76 countries protect working women's right to breastfeed; the U.S. does not, in spite of the fact that breastfeeding has been shown to reduce infant mortality several-fold.
- In fact, nearly two-thirds of these countries protect breastfeeding for 15 months or longer. Nearly nine out of ten protect this right for at least a year.
- At least 96 countries around the world in all geographic regions and at all economic levels mandate paid annual leave. The U.S. does not require employers to provide paid annual leave.
- At least 37 countries have policies guaranteeing parents some type of paid leave specifically for when their children are ill. Of these countries, two-thirds guarantee more than a week of paid leave, and more than one-third guarantee 11 or more days.
- 139 countries provide paid leave for short- or long-term illnesses, with 117 providing a week or more annually. The U.S. provides only unpaid leave for serious illnesses through the FMLA, which does not cover all workers.
- 40 countries have government-mandated evening and night wage premiums. The U.S. does not.
- At least 98 countries require employers to provide a mandatory day of rest: a period of at least 24 hours off each week. The U.S. does not guarantee workers this weekly break.
- At least 84 countries have laws that fix the maximum length of the work week. The U.S. does not have a maximum length of the work week or a limit on mandatory overtime per week.
- 42 countries guarantee leave for major family events; in 37 of these countries, the leave is paid.

Services for children

- The U.S. is tied with Ecuador and Suriname for 39th in enrollment in early childhood care and education for 3–5 year olds. Nearly all European countries perform better. A wide range of developing and transitioning countries had higher enrollment rates than the U.S., despite being poorer.
- The U.S. is tied for 91st out of 151 countries in the area of preprimary student-to-staff ratios.
- In terms of the percentage of GDP spent on early childhood education, recent data place the U.S. in a seven-way tie for 13th place out of 30 OECD countries. Previous studies of a larger number of countries showed the United States to be 20th out of 72 countries. The relatively low percentage of GDP spent is of particular concern, given the low enrollment and low student-to-staff ratios.
- Fifty-four nations have longer school years than the U.S. Twenty of these countries have a school year which is more than 20 days longer than that of the U.S., adding practically a full month to the school calendar.

Areas where the U.S. holds even

In sharp contrast to the above areas, U.S. policy does well in guaranteeing rights to attend school and the right to work. The U.S. has done more to provide supports for the elderly than for the young.

Right to school and to work

- The U.S. Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) is a broad piece of legislation ensuring the rights of children with special needs in education.
- The U.S. and at least 63 other countries have antidiscrimination legislation that protects the rights of the disabled in employment. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits discrimination both on the job and in public services.
- The U.S. is among at least 48 nations which prohibit discrimination in employment or pay based on age. Its Age Discrimination in Employment Act (1967) is aimed at preventing age discrimination in hiring, promotion, termination, compensation, and working conditions.

Services and income to the elderly

- An estimated 96 percent of the U.S. workforce is eligible for pensions through the Social Security administration. However, these pensions are not always sufficient to lift the elderly out of poverty and to cover their out-of-pocket health care costs.

Inadequate information

Sufficient global information was not available through public sources to make comparisons of policies in several key areas. Information was particularly lacking about services available for the youngest children, 0- to 3- year-olds, and for school-age children during after-school hours and days when school was out of session.

Background

For the first time, an index to measure how United States' public policy compares in meeting the needs of all American working families has been created. While reports allowing international comparison of maternity leave policies have been available, a broader examination of whether American policies towards working families measure up has not been conducted. This project begins to fill this gap. We have examined national policy regarding such critical issues as infant and toddler care, early education, care for school-age children, eldercare, parental leave, and leave to care for other family needs.

The Work, Family and Equity Index has two functions. First, the Index identifies essential goals for work-family policy. Second, the Index enables us to measure progress in implementing public policies for working families relative to global standards.

In this background section, we will discuss the demographic and social changes that have occurred in the U.S. and globally that make this Index necessary. The next section will discuss why we have chosen specific policies and measures as indicators of the support a country offers to working families.

Global Context: Demographics and Caregiving in the 21st Century

Throughout human history, both mothers and fathers, in addition to rearing children, have been engaged in productive activity. In recent history, what has markedly changed is not the fact that fathers and mothers work at multiple tasks but rather the location and nature of that work. Parents are increasingly working away from their homes and any children and adults they are caring for. Moreover, their work hours and conditions fall less under their own control and are increasingly dictated by supervisors and managers.

The demographic and social transformations that occurred in North America and Europe between the mid-1800s and the end of the 1900s have occurred and are continuing to take place worldwide. First single women and men, then married women, moved into the industrial and post-industrial labor forces.

A brief review of countries with significant recent increases of women in the paid workforce includes the United States, where the female share of the labor force increased from 32 percent to 46 percent between 1960 and 2000. In Canada, it increased from 25 percent to 48 percent. South America also saw a marked increase in the female labor force. For example, in Uruguay, the percentage increased from 24 percent to 42 percent, and in Colombia it increased from 23 percent to 31 percent. Similarly, the share of women in the labor force has been rising in the Middle East, with some countries experiencing rapid changes. In Kuwait, the female share of the labor force has increased almost eight-fold, from 4 percent to 31 percent. Central America, North Africa, and Oceania also fall into the group of regions that have seen notable increases over this period.

A different employment pattern can be seen in regions such as Southern Africa, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Western Republics, the Central Asian Republics, and in many countries in Eastern and Central Africa, where female labor force participation was already high in 1960 and has remained high. In Southern Africa—specifically in Mozambique, Malawi, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana—

the percentage of the workforce comprised of women was well above 40 percent in 1960, and remained high in 2000. Some countries in East Asia, such as Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, China, and Myanmar, also started high and remained above 40 percent. However, other East Asian nations, such as Brunei (19 percent to 36 percent), Indonesia (27 percent to 41 percent), Singapore (18 percent to 39 percent), and Macau (18 percent to 42 percent) experienced rapid increases in the percentage of working women.

Transformation in where and how we live

Marked changes in urbanization have accompanied the dramatic changes in the labor force. Only 18 percent of the world's population lived in urban areas at the beginning of the twentieth century. But by the century's end nearly half of the world's population did.^{1,2} The United Nations estimates that by the year 2030, more than 60 percent of the developing world's population will live in cities.³ The greatest changes in the developing world occurred in the second half of the twentieth century with the percentage of the population living in cities more than doubling from 18 percent to 40 percent.⁴ Over the same period, the percentage of the population living in cities in the industrialized world increased from 55 percent to 75 percent.⁵

Urbanization plays a key role in the changes that are occurring in community, work and family life for several reasons. When individuals migrate to urban areas, they often move away from their extended family.^{6,7,8} Even when extended family migrate together to urban areas, the available housing often restricts the ability of large extended families to reside in one location. Families living in urban areas often need to have a larger number of adults in the paid workforce in order to subsist, and informal as well as formal work in urban areas is often designed in ways that make it hazardous, if not impossible, for children and other dependents to accompany adults to this work.

The urbanization trends of countries around the world are more variable than those of female share of the labor force. Some regions are still mostly rural, while others are quite urban. High variability can be found within other regions. However, despite the individual differences, the overall trend worldwide is toward increasing urbanization.

Some of the most dramatic increases in urbanization are found in the Middle East. In Oman, the percentage of the population living in urban areas increased from 4 percent to 84 percent. In Lebanon, it increased from 40 percent to 90 percent, and in the United Arab Emirates, from 40 percent to 86 percent. Nations in Central Africa have experienced similarly striking changes. In Gabon, the percentage of the population living in urban areas increased from 17 percent to 81 percent between 1960 and 2000. However, these changes have not been identical in all countries of Central Africa; the range in degree of urbanization in Central Africa has increased. Variability is high in South America as well, with 2000 rates ranging from 38 percent in Guyana to 91 percent in Uruguay. Brazil saw a steep increase in urban living, from 45 percent in 1960 to 81 percent in 2000.

The greatest variability in urbanization rates within any region is in East Asia.

Cambodia is at one end of the spectrum, with 16 percent urbanization. At the other end are Singapore and Macau, with rates of 100 percent and 99 percent, respectively. South Korea and Brunei were two of the East Asian countries urbanizing the most rapidly, with South Korea's rate increasing from 28 percent to 82 percent and Brunei's from 45 percent to 72 percent. The urbanization of other East Asian nations increased much more slowly, in particular Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Myanmar. However, despite the country-to-country variance in the speed of increase, the overall trend in East Asia, as in other regions, is toward increasing urban living.

Effect on children and families

The twin trends of urbanization and rising paid labor force participation in most of the world's regions mean that fewer adults are near their children or other family members during the work day. Even in rural areas, the transformation of the agricultural economy is pulling the spheres of work and home apart and dramatically changing how children and other family members are cared for.

What do these trends and transformations mean for the well-being of families globally? Our research suggests that the effects of the transformations in labor force participation and urbanization on family health are critically influenced by working and social conditions.^{9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20}

Work and Family: A public concern

What can we do to improve how the needs of all working families, but particularly low-income families, are met? The United States' experience provides an important example. While some corporations have implemented important family benefits, voluntary private sector initiatives have not reached the large majority of the nation's working families. Employer-sponsored childcare in the United States is available to only one in eight employees, and even programs that offer tax savings for those able to pay for their own childcare (that is, primarily middle- and upper-class workers) are available only to three in ten people. Eldercare assistance referrals are provided to only one in four families.

The failure of the private sector to solve the work-family problem should not be surprising. There are many needed services that no one would ever expect companies to supply. Most nations have not relied on companies to provide an education for their employees' children. Countries have recognized that providing public education is not closely related to the work of companies and thus would likely be left poorly attended and funded, if done at all. Just as it doesn't make sense for companies to be responsible for the education of their employees' twelve-year-old children, it doesn't make sense for them to be responsible for the early education of three- and four-year-olds or the after school education of school-aged children. In addition, most countries have not relied solely on businesses to maintain basic standards at work. Many of the basic steps taken to protect workers, such as health and safety regulations, workman's compensation, and anti-discrimination measures, have included roles for both government and business. Since private sector efforts cannot be expected to fulfill the needs of working parents alone, the Index was developed to examine performance by the public sector.

While it may be argued that without enforcement, legislation and policies will have limited impact, having protective legislation in place is a necessary first step toward improving working conditions. While single firms may of their own initiative develop improved workplace policies, their voluntary efforts are unlikely to result in universal coverage for employees. Even when benefits to society would be significant, firms have little incentive to improve working conditions and benefits; in fact, there is often a disincentive if it means the company will have to bear the cost while its competitors may choose not to provide any coverage. Passage of legislation is thus necessary to increase the likelihood of implementation, even if the policy is not fully enforced. At a minimum, having legislation in place can support workers' demands for better treatment.

Selecting the Measures for the Index

Elements in the Index were selected to comprise a comprehensive and evidence-based set of policies that are important to meeting the needs of working families in general and the working poor in particular. They are based on a thorough review of the medical and social scientific literature and of norms codified in international agreements.

In order to select evidence-based items for the Index, our research team conducted a comprehensive review of the academic literature in a wide range of areas using the following databases: Social Science Citation Index, Science Citation Index, Sociofile, Econlit, Medline, and ERIC. Our criteria for including a policy on the weight of the research evidence were that the findings regarding the policy's importance to the health and well-being of working families were strong and statistically significant; had been replicated; and were consistent across time, location, and data source. The review included an examination of published research that documented the conditions faced by and the needs of working families, as well as those that investigated the consequences of existing policies and programs (or lack thereof) for the well-being of working families, their children, and their elderly and disabled members. In addition to this review of the literature, we elicited summary analyses of the evidence base on work and family issues from leaders in a variety of academic fields—ranging from child development to employment research to political science—as well as from public and private sector professionals at a series of conferences.

In order to identify the policies that had achieved global consensus, we conducted a comprehensive review of international agreements, treaties, covenants, and other legal documents that were relevant to work and family issues, including the more than 240 treaties proposed by the UN and the ILO. Our analysis included an assessment of the number of countries who had signed or ratified treaties, and the number of agreements both signed and proposed pertaining to a given issue. The sources with particular relevance to our Index items included the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights,²¹ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW),²² the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC),²³ the ILO's Holidays with Pay Convention (Convention 132), Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention (156), and Maternity Protection Convention (183).²⁴

This comprehensive research and international agreement review, together with a series of meetings with both national and international experts, led to the construction of an index with 20 items. The items are described below along with a summary of the research evidence compiled that led to the inclusion of each item.

Description of individual items

The first ten items of the Index address the ability of working adults to care for children, including children with special needs. The second ten items of the Index address the ability of working adults to care for adult family members who are disabled, elderly, or otherwise in need of care.

The Index items are designed to address the needs of working families in a series of dimensions. First, the items were constructed so that the health, educational, and developmental needs of children are met, and that the health needs and well-being of adults are addressed.

The Index items are designed to examine policies in the workplace that enable employees to be active caregivers at the same time as succeeding at work. In addition, the items are designed to address the needs of working families to have services support the care of children and other dependents while family members are at work. Finally, Index measures were developed to address the fact that the health and well-being of all—whether children, those with disabilities, or those who are aging—are best met not only through the support of their family but through their own ability to lead full, active lives.

This section of the report will describe each measure and summarize the research evidence behind the individual items selected for the Index. A bibliography of sources is provided at www.globalworkingfamilies.org.

Item 1: Paid leave for childbearing and childrearing

Measure

Adequate paid leave for childbirth and childrearing (maternity, paternity, or parental leave) is available to all working adults in a manner that allows them to care for infants and toddlers, maintain job security, and continue to financially contribute to the support of their family.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***Paid parental leave can improve children’s health outcomes.*** Research evidence has shown that paid maternal and paternal leave improves children’s health outcomes by making more time available to parents to provide essential care for their children. Paid maternal leave facilitates breastfeeding and reduces the risk of infections. Maternal and paternal leave policies

alike increase the likelihood that children will receive necessary immunizations. Countries with paid parental leave policies have lower infant mortality and morbidity rates. Paid leave policies also encourage the formation of bonds between parents and children, contributing positively to children’s psychosocial development.

- ***Paid parental leave improves economic conditions of families.*** Access to paid parental leave increases the long-term employment and earning prospects of working parents, especially by eliminating the wage “child penalty” mothers often pay. The entire family benefits from parents’ increased job security and consistent income.
- ***Implementing paid parental leave policies provides economic returns to employers.*** Research has shown that having access to paid leave improves workers’ performance on the job. Workplaces with paid parental leave policies experience lower job turnover rates, leading to lower recruitment and training costs and a higher level of productivity. Workers in more supportive workplaces are likely to have higher levels of job satisfaction that, in turn, increase their commitment to their company’s success.
- ***Paid parental leave enjoys international consensus.*** Two widely accepted human rights instruments, the International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, guarantee paid parental leave.

Item 2: Infant and toddler care

Measure

High-quality care for children during the first three years of life is available, affordable, accessible, and provided by well-trained staff in safe and nurturing settings; and paid parental leave is available.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***High quality care is essential for healthy child development.*** Dramatic physical and cognitive development takes place during the first three years of life, affecting the formation of key capacities. Children’s health, motor development, and cognitive and behavioral progress are all placed in jeopardy if high-quality care is not available in these formative years. If children receive good care at a time when their brain is highly malleable, they develop physical, mental, and social skills that allow them to thrive later in life.
- ***Quality and reliability of early childhood care matter to parents’ work and families’ financial status.*** Access to high-quality infant and toddler care improves parents’ ability to get and keep jobs, cuts down on their absenteeism, and improves their productivity on the job. High-quality childcare also helps bridge the gender gap by reducing the “motherhood penalty” on women’s wages and careers.

- ***To be beneficial, high-quality infant and toddler care must be affordable and accessible.*** Price is an important determinant of whether families have access to childcare; affordable childcare facilities encourage increased enrollment by children and facilitate job retention and success. Location is also important; when facilities are located far from parents' workplace and home, it is less likely that they will be able to make use of them.
- ***International agreements recognize children's rights and parents' needs.*** The Convention on the Rights of the Child is accepted by 192 nations that pledged to "ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being." The Convention also calls on states to "render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities" by "the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children."

Item 3: Early childhood education and care

Measure

High-quality early childhood education is widely available, affordable, and accessible to all children between 3 and 5 years of age.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***Early childhood education increases school readiness.*** The tested benefits of high-quality early education include higher enrollment and attendance rates in primary school and improved academic performance. Children who participate in early childhood programs arrive at school better ready to learn. Early education contributes to better vocabularies and reading skills, lower need for special education programs, and reduced rates of repeating grades. These benefits have been shown to be especially strong for low-income and minority groups.
- ***Early childhood education improves children's academic achievements.*** In long-term studies, participants in early education programs scored better on tests and received better marks in school and on standardized tests than non-participants. The benefits of early childhood education last well into students' lives: studies have shown that a significant portion of achievement gaps in fifth grade are due to different levels of preparation in kindergarten. Students who attend early education programs have also been found to have higher rates of high school graduation.
- ***Early childhood education improves life achievements and reduces inequality.*** The benefits of early education stretch far beyond school. Research has shown that persons who attended preschool became more economically independent in adult life, more likely to be employed and supporting themselves on their own earnings, and less likely to need public assistance in the form of welfare payments. The social and behavioral benefits are also marked.

- ***Investments in early education yield a high rate of economic return.*** Early childhood education results in increased productivity and wages over a lifetime and a better standard of living in adulthood. Investing in early education reduces future expenditures on remedial and special education and decreases the need for expensive rehabilitation services. Likewise, it also lowers expenditures within the criminal justice system. Translating the effects on school success, socioeconomic success, and social responsibility into economic terms, researchers found that the investment in early education yielded a seven-fold return per child, and that the overall value of preschool in reducing future costs per year was greater than the cost of the preschool programs themselves.
- ***The quality and reliability of early education programs matter to parents' work.*** As with infant and toddler care, quality education programs for young children are crucial for parents' success at work. Higher earnings for parents and caregivers who are freer to enter the labor force are an additional indirect benefit of early education. Lack of quality early education can lead to higher rates of parental absenteeism and lower productivity on the job.

Item 4: Working adults' availability to provide routine care for children

Measure

Policies exist that assure that all children have a parent or other adult guardian available to support their educational, emotional and developmental progress during non-school hours (including evenings, nights, weekends and holidays). Policies exist to ensure that adults can afford necessities and attain a decent standard of living on a reasonable number of hours of paid work.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***Non-standard work is common and on the rise.*** The number of parents working during the evenings, nights, and weekends is on the rise in both North America and Europe. The occupations that are growing the fastest have unusually high percentages of employees working nonstandard hours. Among employed adults working non-standard shifts in the United States, the evening shift is the most common. Forty percent of full-time men and women working non-standard shifts are working the evening shift. The remaining non-standard schedules are divided among night shifts, rotating shifts, and split shifts. Among part-time workers, more than half of the non-standard shifts are evening shifts.
- ***Low-wage workers must work long hours to survive economically.*** Low-wage workers also spend more time on average on unpaid activities such as transportation to work and accessing health care and other social services.
- ***Evening, night, weekend, and holiday work are typically not occurring by choice.*** Most evening and night shift workers do so not because they choose to, but because they have

to. Over three-fifths of employees working nonstandard schedules do so because they “could not get another job,” because it is “mandated by the employer,” or because of “the nature of the work;” only a small minority reported that they work a non-standard schedule for “better pay” or for “better childcare arrangements.”

- ***Parental evening and night work have negative consequences for children.*** Parents who work non-standard shifts are more likely to have children score low in math, vocabulary, and reading tests, who repeat a year, and who are suspended from school.
- ***Parental evening and night work have negative consequences for families.*** Families with adults who work the night and evening shifts report lower-quality home environments. In addition, shift-working couples have higher divorce rates.

Item 5: Educational opportunities and supervision for school-age children throughout the day

Measure

High-quality educational and/or enrichment opportunities throughout the full day are available, accessible and affordable for all school-age children.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***Many young children are left alone after school.*** In many areas, the school day lasts between six and seven hours. The standard work day lasts at least eight hours or more. Thus, the school schedule is aligned with only a fraction of families’ work schedules. A national survey in the United States found that 12 percent of 5- to 11-year-old children of working parents were left alone without adult supervision of any kind during some after-school hours.
- ***After-school programs have academic benefits.*** Participation in after-school programs has been shown to improve homework performance and lower dropout and grade-repetition rates. For example, twice as many students in a nationwide after-school leadership program have gone on to college or technical training after high school as have students who have not participated.
- ***After-school programs have social and emotional benefits.*** After-school programs have been shown to reduce juvenile arrests, reduce vandalism, and improve social skills. The highest rates of juvenile crime in the United States occur on weekdays after school is over—half of all violent juvenile crimes occur between 2 and 8 pm. In addition, unsupervised middle school students are more than twice as likely to use drugs and alcohol than their supervised peers. However, when communities make structured activities available to students in the after-school hours, fewer students suffer from major troubles including substance abuse and other behavioral and mental health problems.

Item 6: Educational opportunities and supervision for school-age children throughout the year

Measure

High-quality educational and/or enrichment opportunities throughout the full year are available, accessible and affordable for all school-age children.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***Vacation times for parents and children do not match.*** Typically, the school year lasts for approximately nine–and a–half months and typical work schedules stretch over the entire calendar year. Thus, school schedules overlap with only a fraction of the work schedule.
- ***Summers can be difficult for working families.*** Working parents typically must work throughout the summers, while their children are out of school. Finding adequate care and educational opportunities can be a serious challenge. Even if available, summer programs usually cover only a portion of the summer vacation, leaving children with no structure for care and education during the weeks at the beginning and conclusion of the summer.
- ***When developmental opportunities are unavailable, summers set children back academically.*** For many children, summer vacations mean a prolonged break from school work that results in academic losses. A recent review of the educational literature found that extended summer vacations set back the achievement scores of school-age children by about a month, or one-tenth of a grade-level. While math scores went down for all children, low-income children fall back more than middle and upper income children in both math and reading.
- ***Structured summer programs can solve both problems.*** Organized summer programs have been shown to reduce summer setback and narrow the gaps between children growing up in different social and economic conditions. They also enable parents to work while their children are supervised. While supervision for school-age children during summer vacations is clearly needed, more than that is required in order to provide for children’s educational and developmental needs.

Item 7: Paid leave and flexibility for children’s educational needs

Measure

Adequate paid leave is available to all working adults when they need to attend to a child’s educational or developmental needs.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***Parental involvement is crucial to children’s educational and developmental outcomes.*** When parents are involved in their children’s education, children achieve more in elementary school, junior high school, and high school. Parental involvement is associated with children’s higher achievement in language and mathematics, improved behavior, greater academic persistence, and lower dropout rates. At all ages, children do better in school if their fathers are involved as well as their mothers. Of U.S. parents who have a child scoring in the bottom quartile in math, more than half, at times, lacked any kind of paid leave. One out of two low-income working parents face work-related barriers to becoming involved in their children’s education.
- ***Parental involvement is particularly important for children who are at risk educationally, including children living in poverty and children with learning disabilities.*** Studies show that parental participation is particularly important in improving the academic achievement of children from families of low socio-economic status. When the parents of children with learning disabilities are taught ways to help them, their children have been shown to perform even better on standardized tests of reading than comparable children who received tutoring in school but no at-home help.
- ***Adequate working conditions are essential if workers are to attend to their families’ needs.*** In order to be involved with their children’s education, parents need leave from or flexibility at work for such things as parent-teacher conferences and consultation with specialists.
- ***Parents of children who are most in need of educational support are least likely to have working conditions that enable them to meet those needs.*** Low-income working parents are less likely than middle-income parents to have the paid leave from work or flexibility at work that parents often use to address the educational, developmental, and health needs of their children during the workday. A study examining the effects of working conditions on parental involvement in the education of school-age children found that one out of two low-income working parents faced barriers to becoming involved in their children’s education. Thirty-nine percent faced barriers to participating in school meetings, school trips, or school events. Many parents had difficulty finding any time to spend with their children, let alone time to assist them with their schoolwork. Eighteen percent of the low-income parents interviewed had little or no time with their children during the week.
- ***Paid leave is supported by international agreements.*** The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (accepted by 171 nations) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (accepted by 148 nations) call on states to guarantee workers “reasonable limitations of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.”

Item 8: Paid leave and flexibility for children's health needs

Measure

Adequate paid leave is available to all working adults when they need to meet the preventive or curative health needs of a child on a routine or intermittent basis.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***Paid family medical leave helps parents improve children's physical health.*** Parents play a critical role in caring for children's preventive and curative health. A series of studies have demonstrated that parental presence helps children recover more rapidly from illnesses and injuries, improves the outcomes for children with both acute and chronic illnesses, and is invaluable to children being treated both on an outpatient and inpatient basis. Parents who have paid leave are more likely to care for their children themselves when they were sick, as well as more likely to provide preventive health care.
- ***Paid family medical leave helps parents improve children's mental health.*** Parental involvement is equally critical in the case of children's mental health. This is true both for chronic problems and acute ones. The detrimental effects of separating young children from their parents when they are sick have been repeatedly demonstrated. When parental involvement in the care of sick children is increased, children's anxiety decreases. If parents are available, they can play an important role in easing the child's psychological adjustment to having a serious disease. Because of the importance of parental care, pediatricians have increasingly offered parents the chance to become involved in different aspects of the care of their children's health.
- ***Poverty and poor health are dangerous and mutually-reinforcing obstacles for many families.*** A growing body of international research indicates that poor working parents have greater caregiving responsibilities than non-poor families since children and adults in low-income families have higher rates of illness. A study in the U.S. found that poor working parents are more likely than non-poor families to have three weeks or more a year of illness burden to manage. Twenty-seven percent of working poor parents faced a family illness burden of over three weeks compared to 23 percent of non-poor parents. National research has also shown that poor single mothers who had been on welfare were significantly more likely than other mothers to have the additional responsibility of caring for children with chronic health conditions or limitations.
- ***Poor working caregivers are significantly more likely than non-poor working caregivers to lack the benefits they need to succeed at work while caring for their families.***

Item 9: Access of children with special needs and disabilities to equal educational opportunities

Item 10: Health supports for children with special needs and disabilities

Measure

Access of children with special needs to educational and community activities is facilitated by policies and programs that promote full participation in these activities. Health care and developmental assistance for children with special needs is available, accessible and affordable on a routine, intermittent, or extended basis, as needed by the child.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***Children with special needs experience barriers to programs and services.*** A survey of American children with special health needs found that 11 percent of children with existing special health care needs were uninsured, 6 percent were without a usual source of health care, 18 percent were reported as dissatisfied with one or more aspects of care received at their usual source of care, and 13 percent had one or more unmet health needs in past year. In many industrialized and developing countries, schools often lack the resources needed to integrate disabled children.
- ***Services provided to children with disabilities have important effects on their future abilities and opportunities.*** These services are critical to the development and well-being of the child and the ability of the parent to work.
- ***Disabled children need access to schools and community activities so that they can interact with their peers and develop fully.*** Social support such as childcare centers and schools that are structured so as to be accessible to children with disabilities, special transportation services, extra time for completing activities, guidance, and tutoring are just a few examples of physical and policy-based aids that can help children with special health or developmental needs function more independently outside the home and engage with their peers. High-quality services that are available, accessible, and affordable can promote children's development in both academic and behavioral spheres.

Item 11: Access of adults with disabilities to equal employment opportunities

Item 12: Access of adults with disabilities to participate fully in family and community activities

Item 13: Health supports for disabled adults

Measure

Policies and programs exist to protect adults with disabilities who are able and willing to work from discrimination in employment practices including hiring, training, and promotion, and to support their participation in the workforce. Access of adults with disabilities to family and community activities is facilitated by policies and programs that decrease barriers and support full participation in these activities.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***The ability of disabled people to live full lives has implications for workplaces and families, in addition to the individual.*** Workplaces that discriminate against disabled employees forfeit the skills these individuals can bring to the workforce. For individuals and their families, discrimination can lead to unnecessary degrees of dependence. When given the right supports, many adults with disabilities are able to be as productive as non-disabled workers in a wide range of different occupations. Furthermore, once hired, the ILO reports that disabled employees tend to work longer for the same employer than non-disabled employees do and, excluding work missed because of their disability, tend to miss fewer days of work than their non-disabled colleagues.
- ***Data from around the world suggest that the disabled are more likely than the non-disabled to be economically and socially disadvantaged.*** Disabled people often have less access to education than non-disabled people do. There is also evidence to suggest that in many countries the disabled are less likely to marry, have children, or act as the head of a household. The disabled also have higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of economic participation than the non-disabled. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that those who live in the same household with a disabled person are more likely to be poor and experience hunger.

Item 14: Access of older adults to equal employment opportunities

Item 15: Access of older adults to participate fully in family and community activities

Item 16: Health supports for older adults

Measure

Policies and programs exist to protect older persons who are able and willing to work from age-based discrimination in employment practices including hiring, training, and promotion, and to support their participation. Access of older adults to family and community activities is facilitated by policies and programs that decrease barriers and support full participation. Health supports for older adults are available, accessible and affordable on a routine, intermittent, or extended basis, as needed.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***The population of older adults is large and growing.*** By 2000, the population of individuals 60 years old or older reached 606 million, or 10 percent of the total world population. This population is projected to expand rapidly by 2050, reaching two billion, or 21 percent of the total world population. In 2000, 69 million were aged 80 or over. By 2050, this population is projected to reach 379 million. In industrialized regions, 20 percent of the population is currently over 60, and the proportion is expected to reach 33 percent by 2050. In less developed regions, the proportion of individuals over 60 is likely to rise from 8 percent in 2000 to 20 percent in 2050.
- ***Many older adults continue to work.*** However, discrimination related to age in hiring, training, promotion and compensation practices have been a growing concern for older workers worldwide.
- ***Many older adults care for family members.*** Older people throughout the world make instrumental contributions to their households by caring for grandchildren and performing domestic work that allows other household members to engage in direct economic activity. In many instances, the proportion of older adults who provide their adult children with household support is comparable to the proportion receiving financial or instrumental help.
- ***Some older adults need care and assistance with daily living.*** Older adults are more likely than younger people to have limitations in their activities. A range of policies and services are needed to assure that older persons can have all their health care needs met in a manner that supports independent living.
- ***Participation in community activities is associated with enhanced quality of life.*** Strong social networks are instrumental in promoting continued physical and mental activity, which is crucial to healthy aging. To ensure that older persons can fully participate in community activities, accommodations are necessary to render public places and community activities accessible.

- ***The majority of eldercare is unpaid and performed by family members.*** Informal family caregivers typically provide unpaid help for persons who are no longer able to manage all aspects of their daily life or personal care. Caregiving can encompass tasks related to managing a household (e.g. keeping accounts, shopping, cleaning) and activities of daily living such as dressing, bathing, eating, and toileting. An estimated 22.4 million American households provide informal care to an elderly family member or a friend.
- ***Working caregivers face severe challenges.*** When family members are available to help, but do not have the supports available at work necessary to make this possible, their health and economic status can suffer. Research has shown that without adequate policies and supports, the combined strain of working and caregiving can result in reduced wages, job loss, and poor health outcomes.
- ***Policies that make high-quality long-term care affordable and accessible matter to everyone.*** Guaranteeing that adults who need extra help to remain independently at home receive this help, that high-quality professional care is affordable and accessible, and that family caregivers have adequate workplace accommodations would improve the quality of life of both adults in need of care and their caregivers.
- ***There is international consensus about the need to promote the independence and social inclusion of older persons.*** The United Nations Principles for Older Persons assert that “older persons should have access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help.” The United Nations General Assembly adopted these principles on December 16th, 1991 through Resolution No.46/91.

Item 17: Policies to meet basic needs of those unable to work

Measure

The basic needs of disabled or older adults who are unable to work are met through policies that guarantee adequate economic support such as old-age and disability pensions.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***Social insurance programs such as pensions are common policy responses to supporting those unable to work.*** Many workers are unable to provide for their families and save enough during their working lives to support themselves in their later years, and severely disabled adults are unlikely to have gathered sufficient savings to support themselves on a long-term basis. Thus, government pension and income support plans can be critical.
- ***Policies that enable independent living matter to everyone.*** Guaranteeing that older and disabled adults who cannot work receive support would improve the quality of life of both adults in need of care and their families.

- ***There is international consensus about the need to provide for older persons.*** As noted earlier, the United Nations Principles for Older Persons states that “older persons should have access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help.”

Item 18: Working adults’ availability to provide routine care for older and disabled family members

Measure

Policies exist that ensure that working adults have adequate time to care for older or disabled family members if needed when other care is unavailable, such as during evenings, nights, weekends, and holidays. Policies exist to ensure that adults can afford necessities and attain a decent standard of living on a reasonable number of hours of paid work.

Reasons for inclusion

- ***Non-standard work in the evenings and nights is common and on the rise.*** See Item 4 for statistics on the increase in non-standard work hours.
- ***Low-wage workers must work long hours to survive economically.*** Low-wage workers also spend more time on average on unpaid activities such as transportation to work and accessing health care and other social services.
- ***Evening, night, weekend, and holiday work are typically not by choice.*** Most evening and night shift workers do so not because they choose to, but because they have to, as discussed in Item 4 above.
- ***Evening and night work can have negative consequences for families.*** When programs available for disabled and elderly adults are primarily offered during the daytime, evening and night work can impede the ability of workers to care for these family members.

Item 19: Paid leave and flexibility for adult family members’ health and other essential needs

Measure

Adequate paid leave is available to all working adults when they need to attend to an older or disabled adult’s preventive and curative health and basic care needs. Discretionary paid leave and paid leave for family events is available to all working adults to attend to other essential family needs.

Reasons for inclusion

- **Adults fare better when they receive support from family members.** An extensive body of research demonstrates that adults live longer when they enjoy higher levels of social supports from friends and family. For example, social supports have been linked with reduced severity of myocardial infarction, and improved survival rates for patients with coronary disease and myocardial infarction.
- **Family caregiving responsibilities extend beyond health care.** Workers may need to take leave, for example, in order to cope with a death in the family, assist older and disabled family members to find essential care or address other unexpected problems. A nationally-representative study found a wide variety of family responsibilities cause adults to take cutbacks from work. While a large percentage of cutbacks were taken to meet the health needs of family members, 10 percent were taken to provide transportation to family members, 16 percent to provide other instrumental support, 3 percent to cope with a death, 1 percent to deal with divorce, and 15 percent to provide emotional or other support.
- **Working caregivers face severe challenges in managing multiple responsibilities.** A study analyzing the National Long Term Care Survey found that 29 percent of all employed caregivers reported rearranging their schedules to manage eldercare responsibilities. When working family members do not have the workplace supports necessary to make caregiving possible, their own health and economic status can suffer. As noted above, research has shown that without paid leave policies, the combined strain of working and caregiving can result in reduced wages or even job loss, as well as stress, feelings of social isolation and depression, all of which can adversely impact the physical and mental health of caregivers.
- **Discretionary paid leave can help workers address predictable and unpredictable caregiving needs.** While it might, in theory, be possible to create special leave policies for each distinct need, a more efficient way of permitting families to address the critical situations that arise is to ensure that workers have a limited amount of discretionary paid leave to meet these essential family needs.
- **As noted previously, paid leave is supported by international agreements.**

Item 20: Paid leave and flexibility for personal health needs

Measure

Adequate paid leave is available to all working adults to attend to personal health needs.

Reasons for inclusion

- **Paid leave is crucial to the ability of employees to meet their own health needs.**
- **Individual health is critical in order to balance multiple responsibilities.** A sick adult cannot perform to his or her best ability at work, care for children and dependent adults, or participate in the community as well as he or she could when in good health.

- *When sick employees come to work, they may spread infectious illnesses or reduce productivity.*

Role of equity

We believe it is critical that countries' performance on this Index be measured against criteria of equity. In assessing a country's policies as they relate to working families, it is essential to know whether the policies are equally available and affordable to men and women, across social class, generations, and across the diverse demographic groups that compose a given society. It is equally essential to be certain that making use of these policies does not disadvantage or lead to discrimination against caregivers.

The policies promoted by this Index can help countries to promote equality. If women have leave when their children are sick, they will not lose their jobs when faced with an impossible choice—caring for their child or earning the income necessary to feed and house themselves and their families. If poor families have access to quality childcare and early education, their children will be better equipped to break the poverty cycle. Addressing the needs of all working families is central to addressing social inequalities—particularly those of gender and class.

- ***Caregivers face inequities in the workplace in hiring, wages, promotion, and job stability.*** While caregivers are often women, men who are caregivers also face penalties. They may lose jobs when they take time off to care for a child or an elderly parent. Even when family-friendly policies are in place, there are frequently unspoken penalties for taking advantage of them. An employee who takes time off for family needs may not advance in a firm as quickly as employees who do not. There may be no or only poor career tracks for part-time workers or workers who temporarily exit the labor force for caregiving. Preventing explicit and implicit discrimination against caregivers is essential to meeting the needs of working families.
- ***The poor disproportionately bear the caretaking burdens in many societies.*** Moreover, lower-income working caregivers are more likely to lack essential benefits and to have poor working conditions than middle-income caregivers. As a result, low-income families often find themselves trapped. With higher caregiving burdens and lower hourly wages, they often must choose between working long hours to get their families out of poverty while having no time for caregiving, and spending time caring for their families but staying below the poverty line. Poor working conditions place barriers to parental involvement in their children's education and development, often resulting in lower academic achievements, increased behavioral problems, and poorer health outcomes for children.
- ***More equitable provision of these basic social services can help break the cycle of poverty.*** Low-income families have greater needs for health services than wealthier families, and fewer resources with which to meet these needs. Affordable, high-quality childcare is also difficult for poor families to find. Without access to quality childcare, children are less ready for school and more likely to have poor health and developmental outcomes.

Collecting Global Data

In order to assess how the U.S. is performing relative to countries around the world on each of the Index measures, we gathered and analyzed a wide range of publicly available data. The steps we took included, among others: conducting a detailed review of labor codes from 128 countries, examining information on social security systems in 160 countries, and reviewing information on national policies and programs for families from a wide range of intergovernmental and nongovernmental sources. The sources of information are summarized in this section of the report and in the Appendix.

Scope and comparability of data collected

Two overarching characteristics of the Index are worth noting. First, the Index measures and compares policies in countries from a wide range of political, social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. The scope of our data collection has been global. While serving as important models, data limited to Western Europe do not currently constitute a strong enough argument for change on its own—examining a broad range of nations in the global economy is invaluable. Second, it is crucial to the effectiveness of the Index to assess all of the public policies in as comparable a framework as possible. For each item in the Index, we developed and collected data on a set of core features.

Description of data sources

The data sources for the Index items fall into two categories: those related to workplace policies, and those related to services and programs. For example, in the area of children’s care, we have a set of labor-related measures—the availability of paid leave at an infant’s birth or to care for children’s health needs, the wage replacement rate and duration of the leave—as well as a set of measures related to public services—the availability of early education for 3- to 5-year-olds, and out-of-school care for school-age children.

We searched for and reviewed both primary and secondary sources of data. Our primary data sources include actual labor codes and primary sources from national governments on their programs and services. Secondary sources include data, documents, and reports from global intergovernmental organizations such as UNESCO and the World Bank; national collections of international data; and, where globally comparable data were unavailable, regional sources such as documents published by the OECD, regional branches of intergovernmental organizations such as UNESCO, and regional academic studies. These are all detailed in the Appendix.

Data checking and verification

Throughout the data collection process, we continuously checked our sources to ensure that we obtained any updates to the information. When multiple sources of data were available, we cross-checked these sources. In many cases, the sources were complementary in nature, for example, the country- or region-specific sources adding detail to the labor codes but not conflicting with them. In the instances when documents did provide conflicting information, we investigated and tried to reconcile any discrepancies between sources that were identified. As a general rule in resolving these conflicts, we sought to prioritize and put greater weight on primary sources rather than secondary, and yield to the more current of the two sources.

Findings on U.S. Performance

The findings below highlight the successes and failures of the United States in work-family policy when compared with the rest of the world. The statistics presented in this section represent what we were able to find on measures selected for the Work, Family, and Equity Index, as well as best proxy indicators. For example, in the case of paid parental leave we were able to examine legislation in detail that provided fairly comprehensive information on the item itself. In contrast, indicators used to examine the availability of year-round opportunities for school-age children are illustrative of a proxy measure.^A

Paid leave for childbearing and childrearing (Item 1)

Few would argue that parents do not need to take time off to spend with their newborn or newly-adopted child. New mothers need time to heal physically, and both mothers and fathers need to have time to bond with their child without worrying about losing their jobs or how to support their families on unpaid leave.

Paid leave for women

- Out of 168 countries studied, 163 countries guarantee paid leave to women in connection with childbirth.
- The U.S. provides no paid leave to women in connection with childbirth. It is one of only five countries total, and one of only two industrialized countries, which lack this protection.
- Australia, the only other industrialized country which does not provide paid leave to mothers, offers one full year (52 weeks) of unpaid leave, more than four times as much as the unpaid leave offered by the U.S. through the Family and Medical Leave Act.

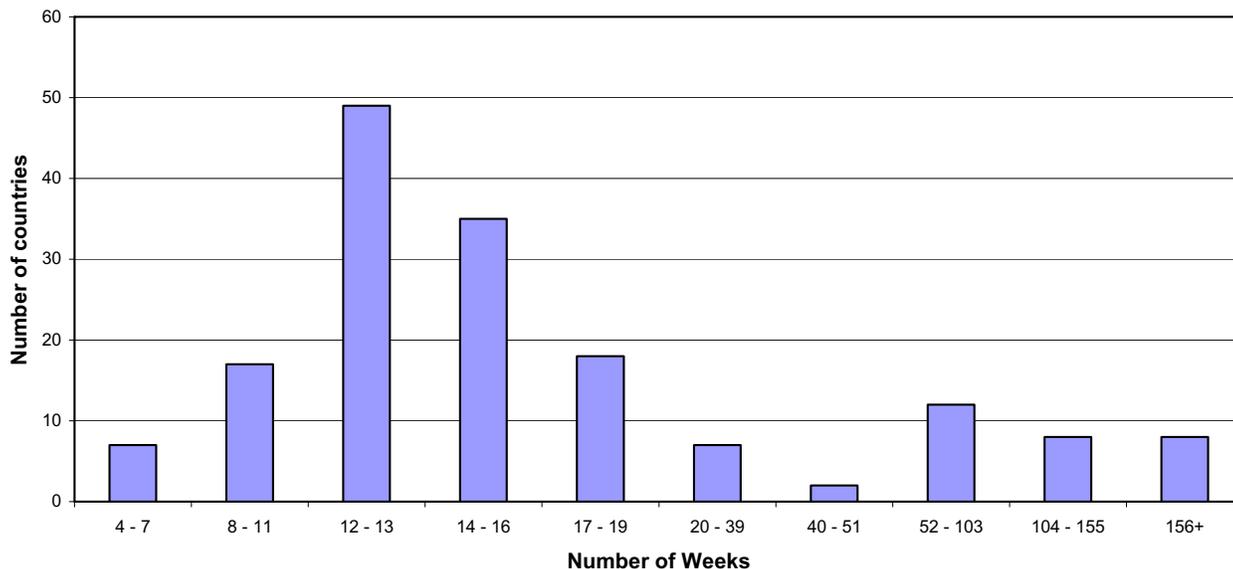
^A We believe that an ideal measure of opportunities for school-age children would examine whether school-age children had educational or other enrichment activities available throughout the calendar year. However, data on this wider measure has not been collected globally. The closest proxy measure available is the length of the school year. While school incorporates a large portion of the activities available to school-age children, it does not include a measure, for example, of publicly-available camp or other enrichment opportunities when school is not in session.

- The only other countries studied which do not provide paid leave to mothers are: Lesotho, Papua New Guinea, and Swaziland.
- More than half of all countries which provide paid leave to new mothers (84 out of 163) offer at least 14 weeks of paid leave; seventeen countries offer 20 weeks or more paid leave.
- Including paid parental leaves that may be used to extend time off from work following maternity leave, 90 countries offer 14 or more weeks of paid leave to women. Twenty-eight countries offer one year or more paid leave to women; eight countries offer three or more years. (See Figure 1.)
- The majority of countries which guarantee paid maternity or parental leave for women (99 out of 163) provide 100 percent wage replacement for at least some portion of this leave.

Maximum potential leave for women (total paid and unpaid)^B

- The U.S. offers a maximum of 12 weeks of leave to women. Ninety-eight countries offer at least 14 weeks potential leave for women; fifty-four countries offer more than 20 weeks.
- Forty-one countries offer a maximum of one year (52 weeks) or more.

Figure 1: Maximum Paid Leave (Maternity & Parental) Available to Mothers



Note: The United States does not guarantee any paid leave to mothers.

Findings are based on an analysis of data from:

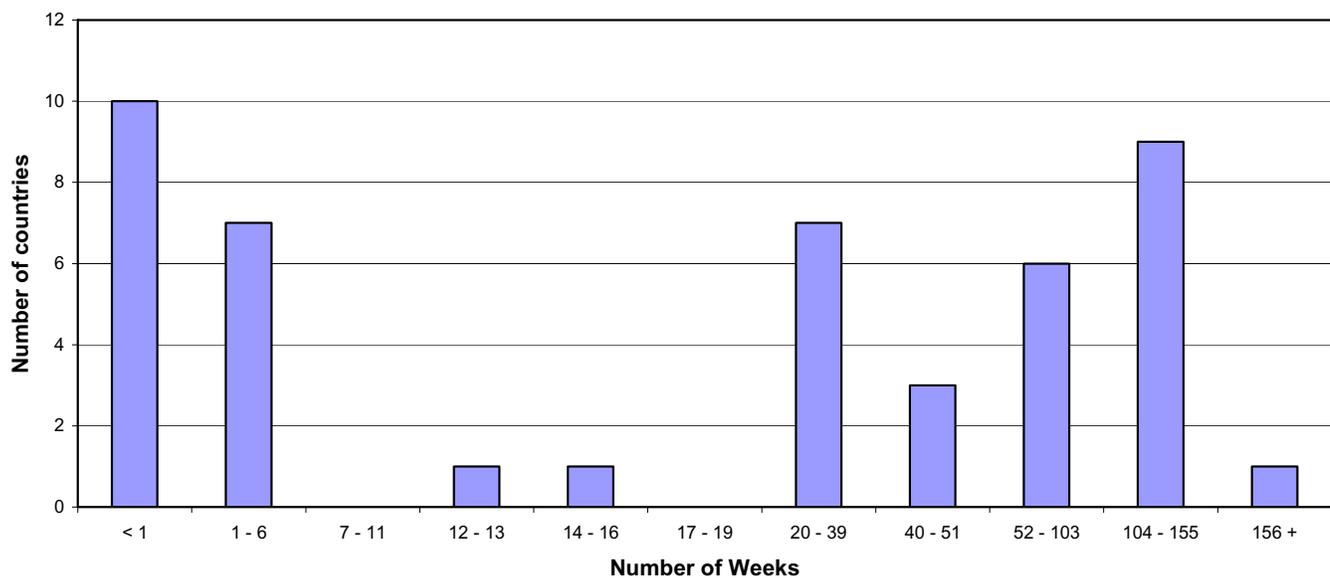
- Labor codes, other national legislation, and secondary sources describing relevant legislation.
- Social Security Administration. 2002-3. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas.
- United Nations. The World's Women 2000: Trends and Statistics.
- Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies. "Reflections of Recent Demographic Conditions on Family and Social Policies in Central and Eastern European Countries."
- The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies at Columbia University.

^BMaximum potential leave for women and men calculates the maximum available leave if one parent takes all of the gender-specific leave and the parental leave.

Paid leave for men

- Twenty-seven countries provide paid paternity leave. The majority of these (16 out of 27) provide 100 percent wage replacement for at least some portion of the leave.
- The majority of countries which offer paid paternity leave (24 out of 27) provide three weeks or less of paid leave.
- Eighteen countries which do not provide paid paternity leave offer paid parental leave, which is available to fathers as well as mothers. In total, 45 countries offer some form of paid leave to fathers (parental and/or paternity).
- Including paid parental leaves, which may be used to extend time off following paternity and maternity periods, 27 countries offer at least 14 weeks of paid leave to men. Sixteen countries offer one year (52 weeks) or more. (See Figure 2.)
- The U.S. provides no paid leave for men.

Figure 2: Maximum Paid Leave (Paternity & Parental) Available to Fathers



Note: The United States does not guarantee any paid leave to fathers.

Findings are based on an analysis of data from:

- Labor codes, other national legislation, and secondary sources describing relevant legislation.
- Social Security Administration. 2002-3. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas.
- Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies. "Reflections of Recent Demographic Conditions on Family and Social Policies in Central and Eastern European Countries."
- The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies at Columbia University.

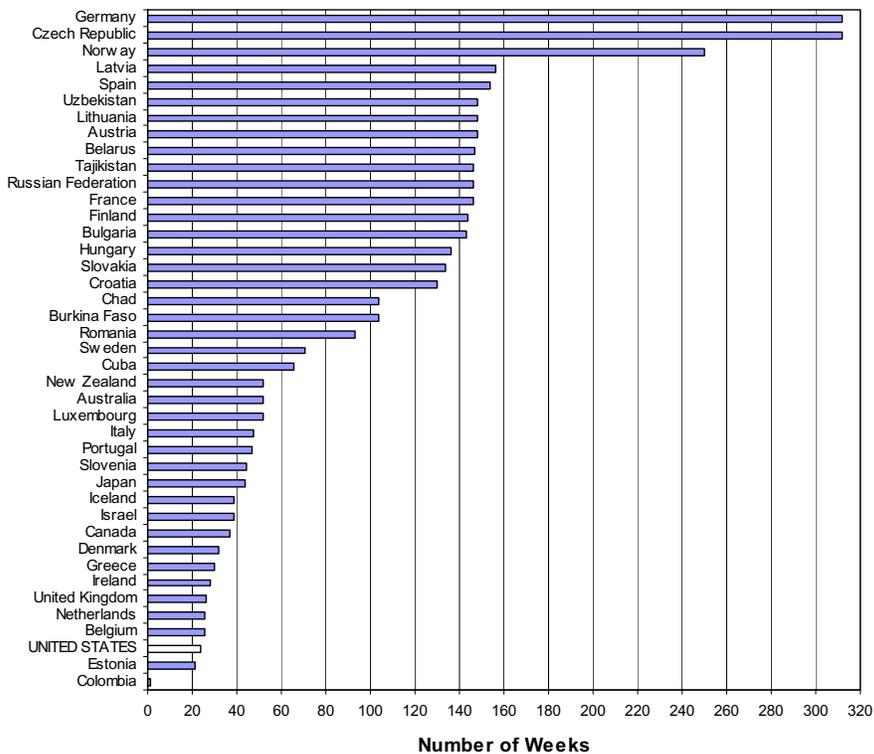
Maximum potential leave for men (total paid and unpaid)

- The U.S. offers a maximum of 12 weeks of potential leave to men.
- The majority of countries which provide leave to men offer substantially more than the U.S.; 34 countries offer 20 weeks or more.
- Twenty-four countries offer one year or more of potential leave to men.

Parental leave

- At least 41 countries offer parental leave to mothers and fathers, usually following paid maternity and/or paternity leave periods.
- The majority of these countries (32) offer paid parental leave. The U.S. offers only unpaid parental leave.
- 19 out of 41 countries offer two years or more of parental leave per family. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3: Duration of Parental Leave Per Two Parent Family, Including Paid and Unpaid Leave



Note: The United States has 12 weeks of unpaid leave per parent.

Findings are based on an analysis of data from:

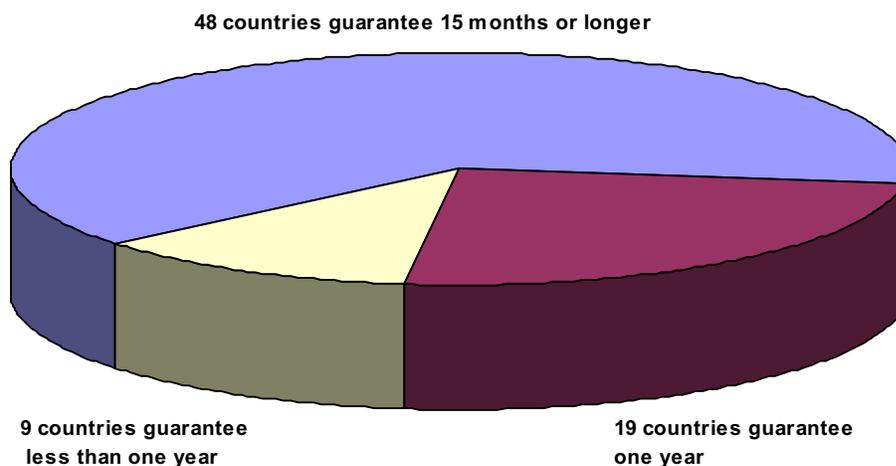
- Labor codes, other national legislation, and secondary sources describing relevant legislation.
- Social Security Administration. 2002-3. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas.
- Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies. "Reflections of Recent Demographic Conditions on Family and Social Policies in Central and Eastern European Countries."
- The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies at Columbia University.

Infant and toddler care (Item 2)

Infants' and toddlers' health can be put at risk when their parents must leave them in low-quality care. It is essential to critically evaluate the accessibility and affordability of quality infant and toddler care. We need to know how many children are in the care of a parent or competent adult and how many are in suboptimal situations—like in the care of an older child or in overcrowded, unregulated child care centers.

- Breastfeeding has been shown to reduce infant mortality several-fold. At least 76 countries protect women's right to breastfeed at work; the United States does not.
- The length of the period during which women could take breastfeeding breaks varied. In 64 percent of countries, it was 15 months or longer. Twenty-five percent were one year, and 11 percent of countries had durations of less than a year. (See Figure 4)
- In some countries, the care needs of infants and toddlers are met through extended parental leave. Twenty-four countries provide paid leave benefits to one or both parents until the child is at least one year of age (52 weeks). Eleven European countries provide paid leave benefits to parents until the child is three years of age (156 weeks) or older.
- The U.S. provides no paid leave benefits to parents. The maximum amount of unpaid leave per two-parent family provided by the FMLA expires when the child is 24 weeks of age.
- In the U.S., 54 percent of zero to three year olds are cared for in public or private formal-care settings. However, little is known about the availability and affordability of quality child care in the United States or globally. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 4: Breastfeeding Breaks



Note: The United States does not guarantee women's right to breastfeeding breaks.

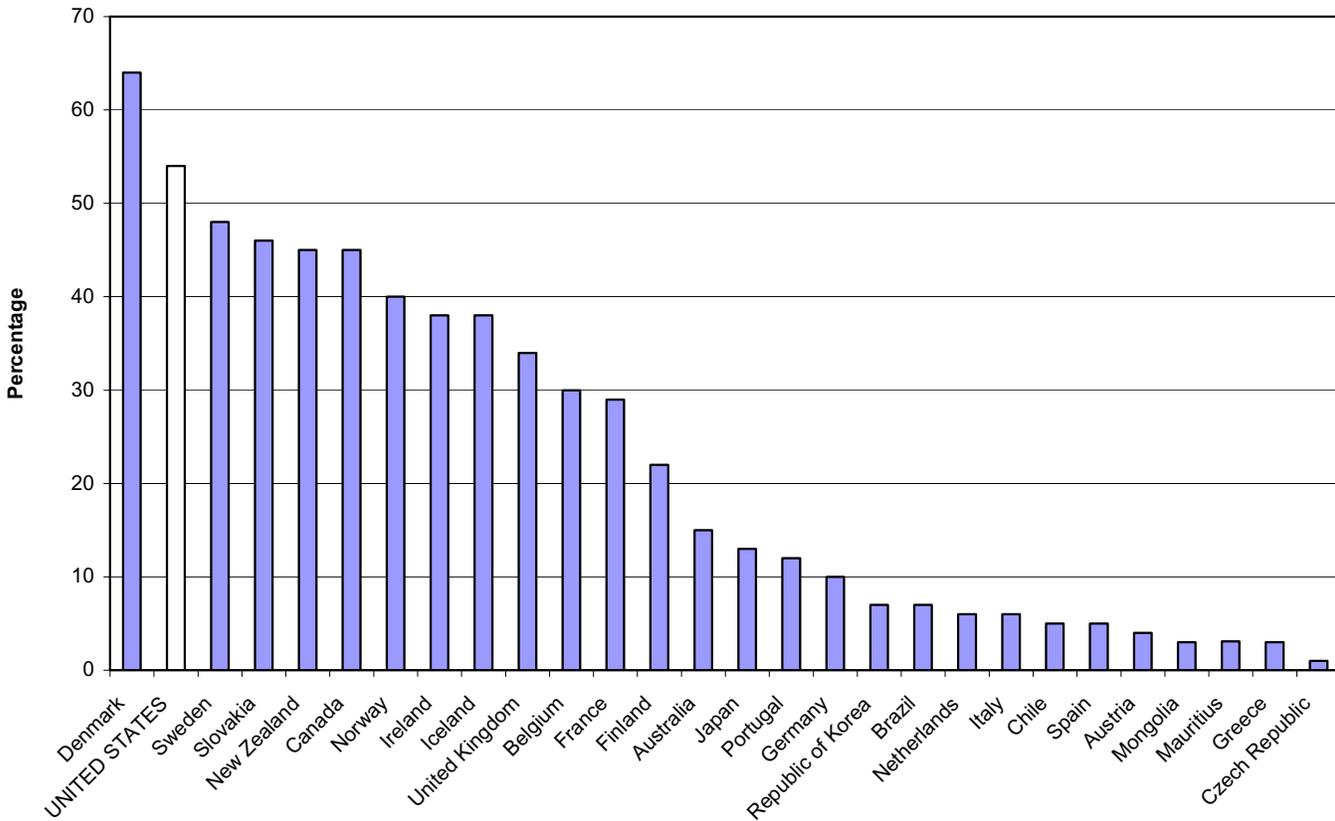
Findings are based on an analysis of data from:

· Labor codes, other national legislation, and national constitutions.

· Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies. "Reflections of Recent Demographic Conditions on Family and Social Policies in Central and Eastern European Countries."

· The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies at Columbia University.

Figure 5: Percentage of Population Under Three Years of Age in Formal Childcare Centers



Data are from: OECD. (2001). *Balancing Work and Family Life: Helping Parents Into Paid Employment*.

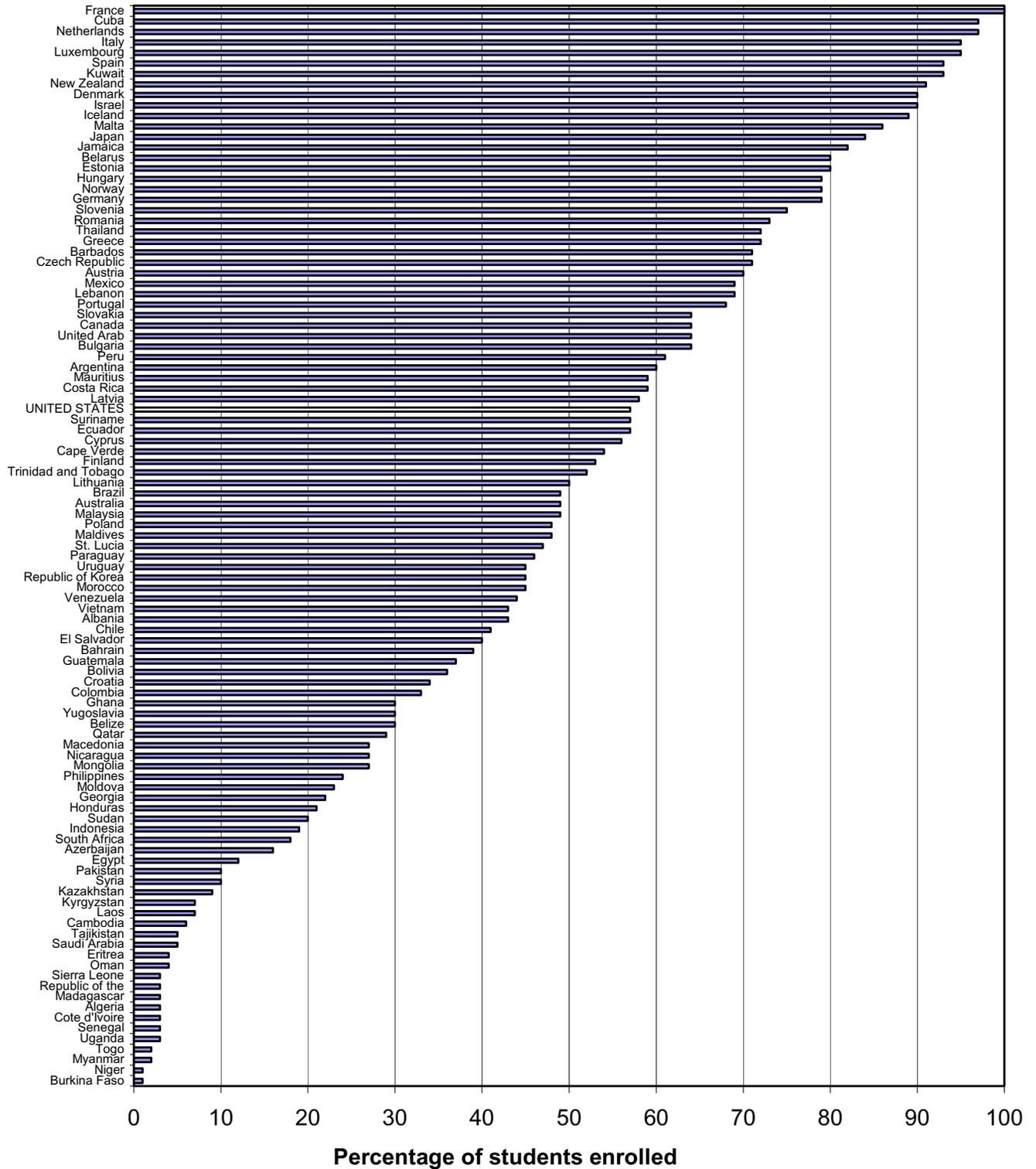
Early childhood education and care (Item 3)

Research has clearly shown the importance of early childhood education to children’s outcomes, yet the U.S. lags behind its European peers as well as many developing and transitioning countries on several key indicators.

- The United States is tied with Ecuador and Suriname for 39th in enrollment in early childhood care and education for three- to five-year-olds at 57 percent. Nearly all European countries performed better. A wide range of developing and transitioning countries had higher rates of enrollment than the U.S., despite being poorer. (See Figure 6.)
- The U.S. tied for 91st out of 151 countries in the area of student-staff ratios; its rate of 22 students to each staff member was tied by Guatemala, Nepal and Senegal. Among industrialized countries, only the U.K. and Japan did worse. The U.S. was outperformed by a number of far poorer countries.
- In terms of the percentage of GDP spent on early childhood education,^c the U.S. is in a seven-way tie for 13th place out of 30 countries with 0.4 percent. (See Figure 7.)

^c Expenditure on educational institutions from public and private sources.

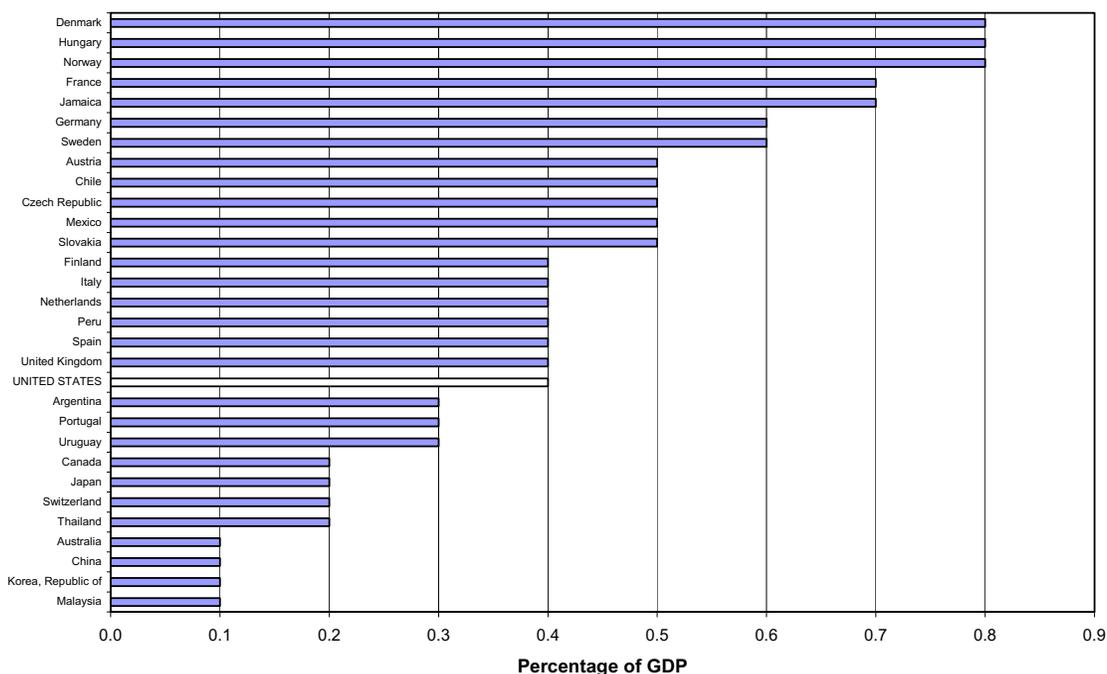
Figure 6: Preprimary Enrollment



Definition: Percentage of 3-5 year olds enrolled in preprimary education.

Data are from: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2003). Global Educational Digest 2003.

Figure 7: Percentage of GDP Spent on Preprimary Education



Data are from: UNESCO/OECD. (2003). Financing Education - Investments and Returns, Analysis of the World Education Indicators 2002 Edition.

Working adults' availability to provide routine care for children (Item 4)

An employee's ability to balance work and caregiving well is largely determined by the conditions he or she faces in the workplace. Policies such as paid annual leave and limits on the length of the work week and on mandatory overtime help protect working caregivers.

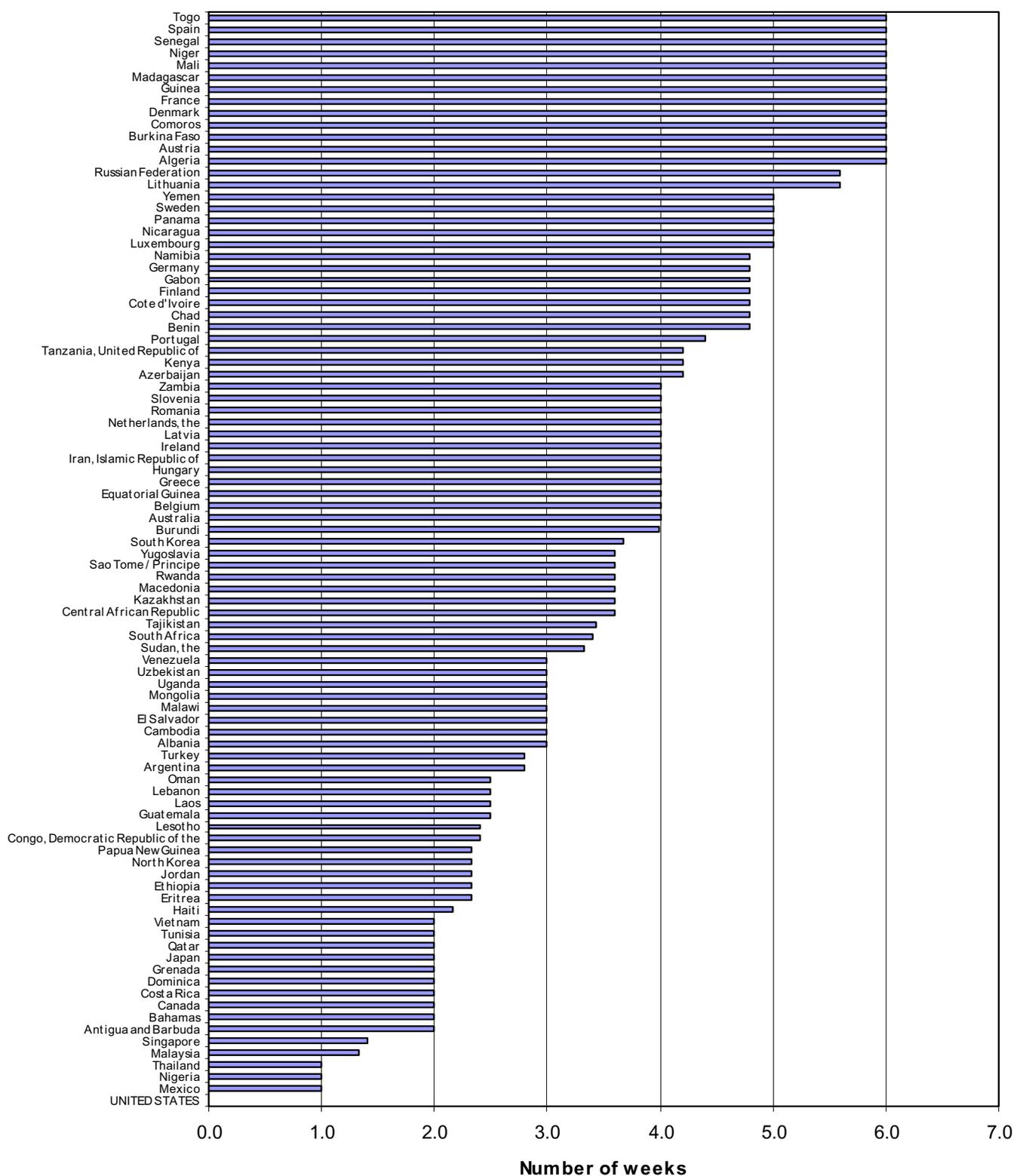
Reasonable work hours and weeks

- The United States does not require employers to provide paid annual leave. At least 96 countries around the world, in all geographic regions and at all economic levels, do guarantee paid annual leave. (See Figure 8.)
- At least 84 countries have laws that fix the maximum length of the work week, either by setting upper limits for the total number of hours that may be worked or limiting the amount of overtime that can be worked in a certain time period. The United States does not have a maximum length of the work week.
- The average work week length in the U.S. was second only to Japan's hours among industrialized countries.

Addressing work schedules

- At least 98 countries require employers to provide a mandatory day of rest; a period of at least 24 hours off each week. The U.S. doesn't guarantee workers this weekly break.
- 40 countries have government-mandated evening and night wage premiums. It is most common for the premium to be between 10 percent and 30 percent, but the premiums range from 6 percent to 100 percent. The U.S. has no premium for non-day work.

Figure 8: Duration of Paid Annual Leave



Note: The United States does not guarantee workers the right to paid annual leave.

Findings are based on an analysis of data from:
 · Labor codes and other national legislation;
 · Dennis, R. (2003) "Annual Leave in Australia: An analysis of entitlements, usage and preferences."
 · Jorgensen, H. (2002). Give Me A Break: The Extent of Paid Holidays and Vacation.

Educational opportunities and supervision for school-age children throughout the day (Item 5)

Infants and toddlers are not the only children at risk; many parents are forced to leave their school-age children home alone before and/or after school. Children who are unsupervised after school are more likely to be victims of violence, or to be injured in an accident.

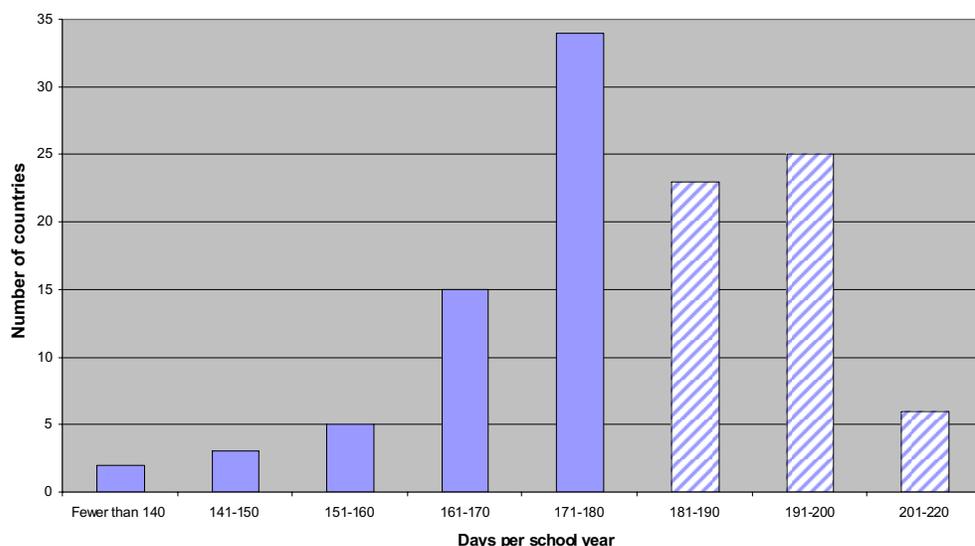
- Data on school-age children are extremely limited. What we need to know is how many hours of the day children are in adult care. Some global data are available on school instructional hours, but differences in definition make cross-country comparisons difficult to conduct or interpret.
- Little is known about the quality, accessibility, and affordability of educational enrichment programs in the after-school hours. To understand how school-age children are faring, it is important to know whether additional support is available outside of school hours.

Educational opportunities and supervision for school-age children throughout the year (Item 6)

Extending the school calendar in the U.S., which is still based on the rhythm of agricultural life, would ensure that school-age children have educational or enrichment opportunities for a greater percentage of the year and could result in improved academic achievement.

- The United States is one of 22 countries that have school years of 180 days.
- Fifty-four nations have longer school years. (See Figure 9.)
- Twenty countries have school years of 201 or more days. This is a month more than the United States.
- Little is known about the accessibility and affordability of summer programs and opportunities across social class.

Figure 9: Length of the School Year



Note: The United States' average number of days per school year is 180, less than 54 other countries

Data are from: UNESCO, World Data on Education: A Guide to the Structure of National Education Systems.

Paid leave and flexibility for children's educational needs (Item 7)

Working parents with school-age children often need leave or flexibility to meet with their children's teachers, thus improving educational outcomes. Children whose parents cannot attend these important meetings are at a disadvantage due to their parents' poor working conditions.

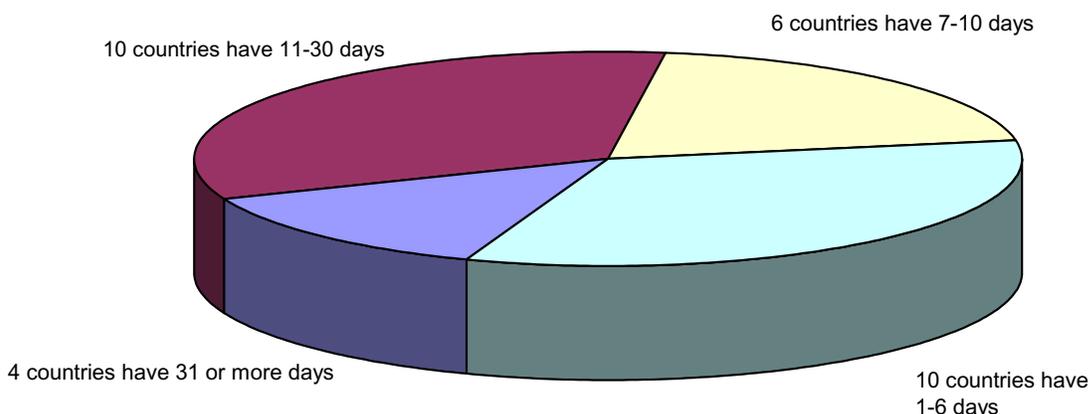
- At least 34 countries guarantee discretionary leave (17 paid). (While 94 countries guarantee paid annual leave, it is unclear whether employees could use this type of leave for children's educational needs.)
- The United States does not guarantee either annual or discretionary leave.
- To our knowledge, only Greece and Switzerland offer paid leave or flexibility specifically for children's educational needs.

Paid leave and flexibility for children's health needs (Item 8)

An extensive range of research has shown that parental involvement is critical in helping children recover from illnesses. Paid leave is the most reliable predictor of working parents' ability to care for sick children.

- At least 37 countries have policies guaranteeing parents some type of paid leave specifically for when their children are ill. (In addition, at least 34 countries guarantee paid or unpaid discretionary leave, which could possibly be used when children are ill.) The United States does not guarantee any paid leave to meet children's health needs.
- Forty-seven percent of the countries for which we found duration data guaranteed 11 days or more. Twenty percent required employers to grant seven to ten days of paid leave for children's health needs. Thirty-three percent guaranteed one to six days of paid leave. (See Figure 10.)

Figure 10: Duration of Paid Leave for Children's Health



Notes: The United States does not guarantee paid leave for children's health needs.

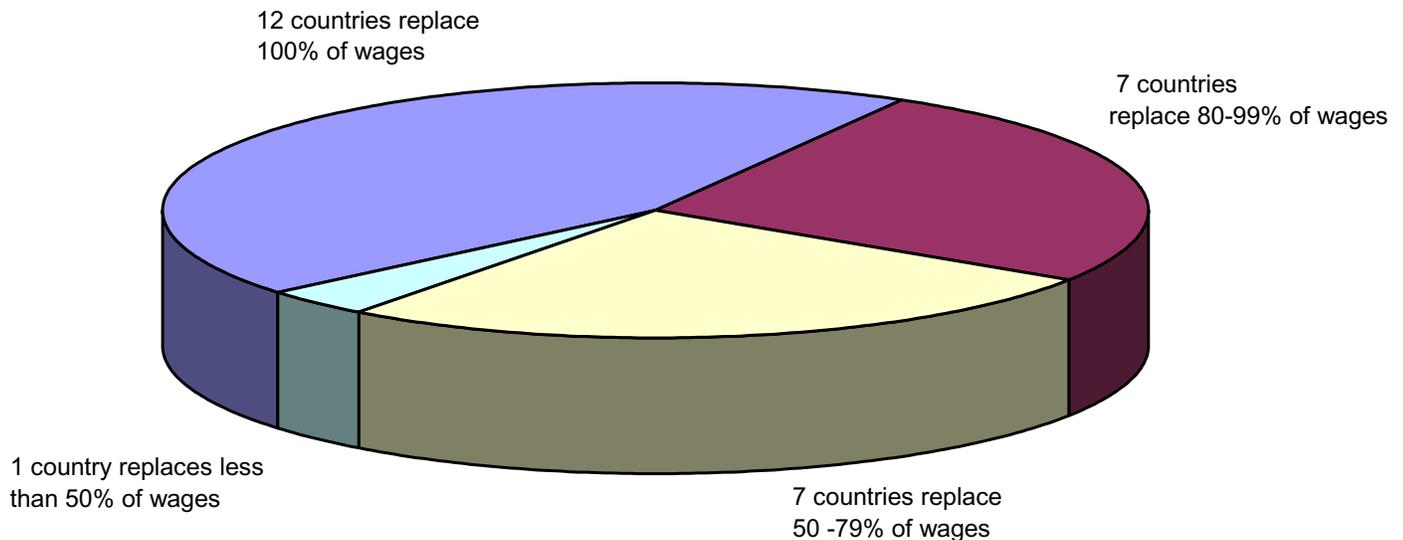
Where countries offer a range of benefits, the minimum duration guaranteed is included above.

Findings are based on an analysis of data from:

- Labor codes, other national legislation, and secondary sources describing relevant legislation.
- Social Security Administration. 2002-3. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas.
- The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies at Columbia University.

- Amongst those countries with fixed wage replacement rates, the majority guaranteed 100 percent of wages. Wage replacement rates varied within some countries according to years of employment, the length of the leave, or the severity of the illness. An overview of wage replacement in countries that offer either fixed or variable rates is provided below. (See Figure 11.)

Figure 11: Wage Replacement Rates for Paid Leave for Children’s Health



Notes: The United States does not guarantee paid leave for children’s health needs.

Where countries offer a range of benefits, the minimum duration guaranteed is included above.

Findings are based on an analysis of data from:

- Labor codes, other national legislation, and secondary sources describing relevant legislation.
- Social Security Administration. 2002-3. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas.
- The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies at Columbia University.

Access of children with special needs and disabilities to equal educational opportunities (Item 9)

Ensuring that children with special needs and disabilities have full access to education and community activities is vital to their development. The number of children living with chronic conditions and other special needs has been increasing. Policies that consider and address the needs of both these children and their caregivers are essential.

- The United States’ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a broad piece of legislation ensuring the rights of disabled children to education. It also provides for federal funding to help states pay the costs of educating children with special needs.
- There is an important data gap in this area; we have been unable to find global data on the inclusion of disabled children in community activities.

Health supports for children with special needs and disabilities (Item 10)

Disabled children often have health care needs surpassing those of other children. It is vital for children to receive health care and needed rehabilitative services early in life, as they play a critical role in children's future chances for independent living and work.

- There are no readily comparable international data organized by country that adequately address the extent and nature of disabilities in children.
- In the United States, special services are available for children with disabilities. While services provided have recently become more restrictive under Social Security, health insurance coverage for poor children through the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) has expanded.

Access of adults with disabilities to equal employment opportunities (Item 11)

Disabled adults' welfare is often linked to their ability to remain in the work force.

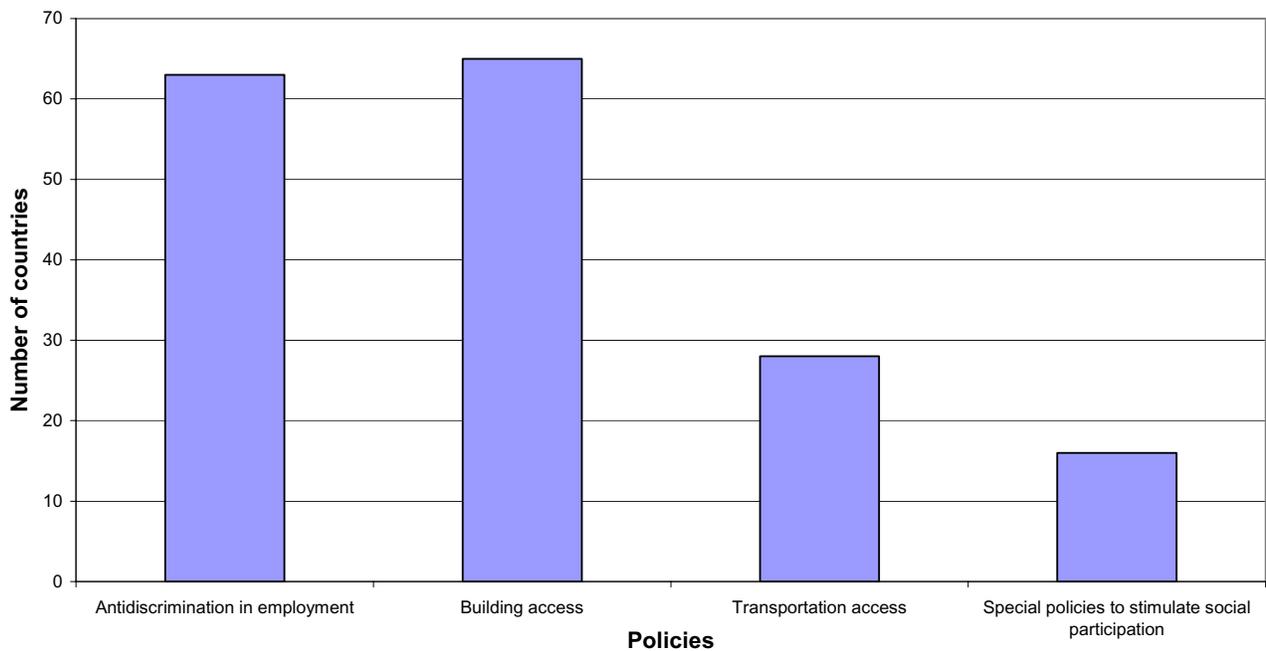
- The United States and at least 63 other countries have antidiscrimination legislation that protects the rights of the disabled in employment. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 prohibits discrimination in "job application procedures, the hiring, advancement, or discharge of employees, employee compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment."
- The U.S. compares favorably with other countries in terms of its antidiscrimination and equal pay legislation.
- Depending on the extent and nature of the disability, more supportive policies may at times be needed to facilitate employment. The wide range of models used in other countries include financial incentives such as grants and tax breaks for hiring disabled workers (at least 24 countries), special training and rehabilitation programs for the disabled (at least 34 countries), and reserved positions (at least 49 countries).

Access of adults with disabilities to participate fully in family and community activities (Item 12)

A wide range of factors affect the accessibility of community activities, from discrimination to public transportation.

- At least 60 countries have general antidiscrimination policies that protect disabled adults, including the U.S. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 covers a wide range of access issues.
- The U.S. and at least 28 other countries address transportation accessibility for disabled adults.
- At least 65 countries, including the U.S., address building accessibility for disabled people. (See Figure 12.)

Figure 12: Policies to Ensure Access of the Disabled to Employment and Community Activities



Note: The United States does mandate equal access to buildings and public transportation, and prohibits discrimination at work.

Data is based on an analysis of labor codes and national disability legislation.

Health supports for disabled adults (Item 13)

Disabled adults often have health care needs surpassing those of the average individual, thus increasing the importance of accessible and affordable health care and needed rehabilitative services.

- Global comparative data on the health needs of disabled adults and the services provided to them are extremely difficult to find. We have found no readily comparable global data on the percentages of adults that are disabled or on the extent of their disabilities. Comparable data are needed on a wide range of conditions and disabilities. In addition, global data on national health systems and coverage are key to determining the needs of the disabled population.

Access of older adults to equal employment opportunities (Item 14)

Older adults should be able to choose to continue working as long as they are able. However, discrimination related to age in hiring, training, promotion, and compensation practices have been a growing concern for older workers worldwide. Policies preventing age discrimination in the workplace are an important first step, but they need to be backed up by efforts to determine and meet older adults’ needs in the workplace.

- The United States is among at least 48 countries which prohibit discrimination in employment or pay based on age. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act is aimed at preventing age discrimination in hiring, promotion, termination, compensation, and working conditions.
- There was a striking lack of information about the workplace issues faced by older adults. Data on key issues such as the percentage of older adults still in the labor force were unavailable for most countries.
- While some data on legislation were available, the frequency of discrimination against older adults in the workplace and how well the legislation works on a globally comparative basis is not known.

Access of older adults to participate fully in family and community activities (Item 15)

Older adults, especially those living alone, are at risk of social isolation, which can decrease quality of life. Special measures are needed to ensure that they can participate fully in community life.

- The only available data were from 15 countries on the percentages of men and women over 65 living alone. In the United States, 36 percent of women and 17 percent of men over age 65 were living alone in 2000. This is comparable to the lower end of the range of European countries.
- Yet, these data were difficult to interpret, as the living situation preferences of older adults may vary between and within countries. Some may prefer to live alone but cannot afford to do so, while others would rather live with family members than alone.
- Data in this area were extremely limited. The question of what fraction of older adults needs care and who is caring for them worldwide will become even more pressing as the populations of many nations age. Little is known on a global level about how well older adults are integrated into community and family activities, whether they have access to social and community service programs, and how they perceive their quality of life.

Health supports for older adults (Item 16)

Policies can importantly address the needs of the elderly through health insurance, or exacerbate them by forcing older adults to pay out of pocket for expensive medicines or home health care.

- Adults over 65 in the United States are eligible for health insurance coverage under Medicare. Most Americans are automatically enrolled for Part A (hospital insurance) at the age of 65, as it is financed through payroll taxes paid by the individual or their spouse. Medicare Part B (doctors' services, outpatient hospital care, and some medical services that Part A does not cover, such as the services of physical and occupational therapists, and some home health care) coverage costs \$66.60 per month in 2004. Drug coverage has recently been added at higher costs.
- Comparable data on a global scale were not available.

Policies to meet basic needs of those unable to work (Item 17)

Old-Age Pensions

Pensions are a major source of income for older adults around the world. As many low-wage workers cannot save enough during their years in the workforce to support themselves in their later years and private pensions are declining, government pension plans are essential.

- The United States is one of at least 155 countries around the world that provide old-age pensions. (Countries that only provide pensions to public sector workers were not counted.)
- The U.S. Social Security Administration estimates that 96 percent of the U.S. workforce is covered by social security and lists the following categories of excluded workers:
 - Some domestic workers, farm workers, and self-employed workers whose income falls below the minimum level and who may not be covered under alternative pension plans.
 - Other workers that are excluded from social security coverage include those who do unpaid work in the home (including those who provide care to young, elderly, or disabled family members) and illegal immigrants.
- Ninety percent of those who are 65 or older receive social security benefits.
- As of 2003, the pensionable age in the U.S. is 65 years and two months for full benefits. This is the 5th highest qualifying age in the world after Denmark, Iceland, and Norway, which each have a qualifying age of 67, and Ireland, which has a qualifying age of 66. Over the next three decades, the U.S. qualifying age for old-age pensions will gradually increase to 67 in 2027.^D

Disability pensions

When an adult can no longer work due to a disability, the worker and his or her family are at risk of falling into poverty. Providing disability pensions to adults of working age is an important part of the social safety net.

- The United States is one of at least 153 countries around the world that provide disability pensions. (Countries that only provide pensions to public sector workers were not counted.)
- In order to qualify for a disability pension through the U.S. social security program, workers must meet a series of restrictions. They must be unable to engage in substantial work. The disability must have lasted or be expected to last for at least a year, or be expected to result in death. The disabled person must have at least one quarter of covered employment for each year since age 21 and 20 quarters of covered employment in the 10 years preceding disability.
- International data on disability pensions are not readily comparable because of the variety of definitions that are used to determine when a disabled person cannot work. More comparative international data are needed.

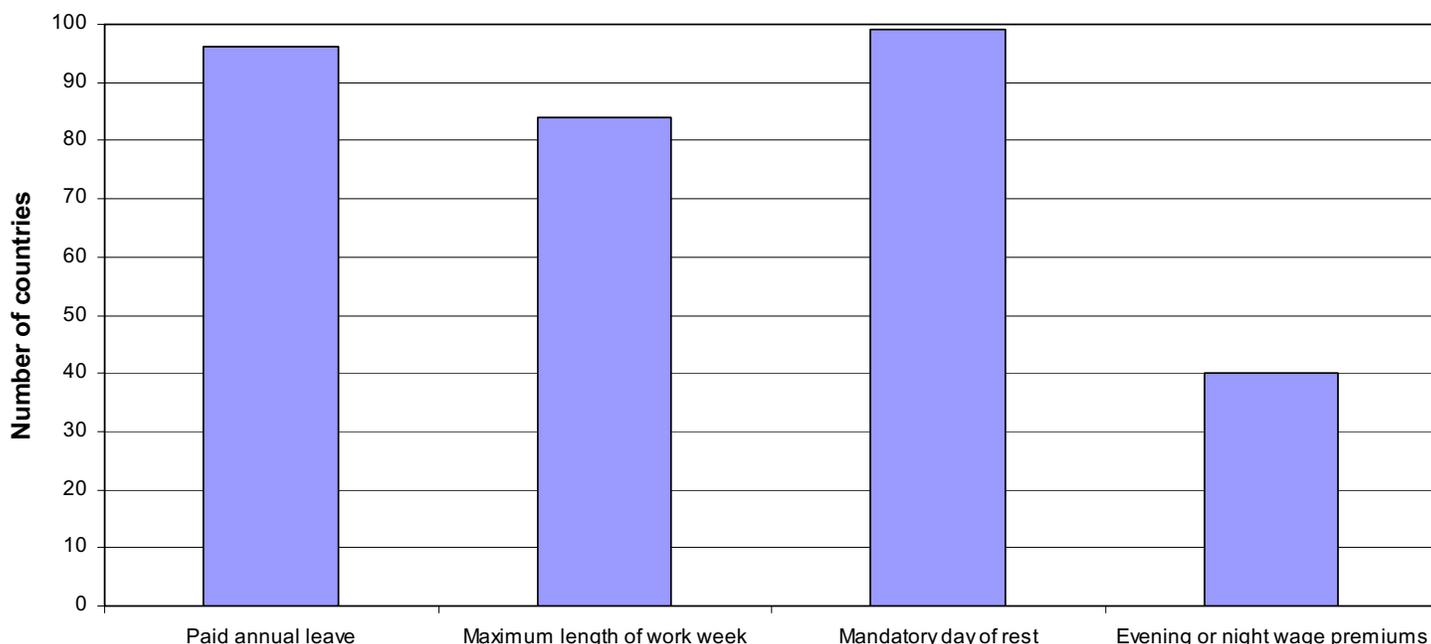
^D In order to qualify for an old-age pension, the applicant must also have worked for at least 40 quarters.

Working adults' availability to provide routine care for older and disabled family members (Item 18)

Currently, workplace policies are not designed to enable employees to care for adult dependents on a routine basis. While there is some consideration for the needs of new parents through maternity and/or parental leave policies in most countries, similar policies do not exist for adult care. In general, the same policies that help parents care for children on a routine basis (Item 4) apply to routine care for adults as well.

- Those caring for adults need reasonable work hours and weeks. The United States does not fix the maximum length of the work week or require a mandatory day of rest. (See Figure 13.)
- The United States does not guarantee paid annual leave.
- There is no evening and night wage premium in the United States. A premium would be a disincentive for employers to have workers on late shifts, and would better compensate caregivers for evening and night hours spent away from those who need their care.

Figure 13: Policies that Increase Availability to Care for Family Members



Note: The United States guarantees none of these.

Findings are based on an analysis of data from:

· Labor codes and other national legislation;

· Dennis, R. (2003) "Annual Leave in Australia: An analysis of entitlements, usage and preferences."

· Jorgensen, H. (2002). Give Me A Break: The Extent of Paid Holidays and Vacation. Center for Economic and Policy Research.

Paid leave and flexibility for adult family members' health and other essential needs (Item 19)

Leave to care for adult family members

Paid leave to care for adult family members is vital to helping workers meet the challenges of their multiple roles. Yet, workplace policies have been slow to reflect the fact that many working adults are caring for adults as well as children.

- At least twelve countries (eight in Europe and Central Asia, three in the Americas, and one in Asia and the Pacific) provide paid leave to care for adult family members. The United States is one of at least seven countries that provide unpaid leave.
- Through the FMLA the U.S. provides workers with 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for adult family members. Limitations of the FMLA include the following:
 - Not all workers are covered under the FMLA. To be covered, the worker must have been employed by the employer for at least 12 months, have worked at least 1,250 hours in the last 12 months, and the firm must employ at least 50 employees within a 75-mile radius.
 - The FMLA only provides leave to care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) who has “a serious health condition.”

Paid discretionary leave

Discretionary leave, defined as leave that can be taken at the employee's discretion for unspecified family or personal events and responsibilities, can be helpful to employees who have caregiving responsibilities. In some cases, discretionary leave may make up for a lack of leave, for example, to care for adult health needs.

- At least 34 countries provide employees with discretionary leave. Of these countries, at least 17 provide paid discretionary leave.
- The United States does not provide its workers with either paid or unpaid discretionary leave.

Paid leave for family events

Over the course of an individual's working life, important family or personal events arise which may require him or her to take time from work.

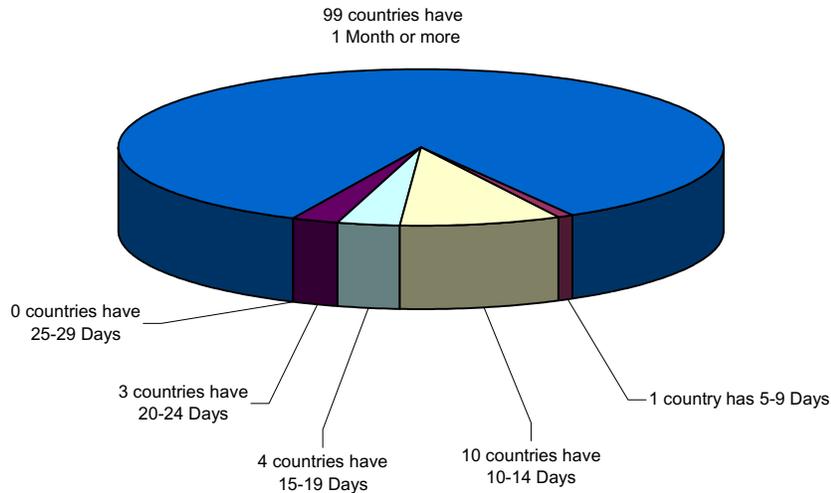
- At least 42 countries provide leave for family events such as weddings and funerals. Of these countries, at least 37 provide paid leave.
- At least 29 countries provide leave for weddings. Of these countries, at least 25 provide paid leave.
- At least 41 countries provide leave for funerals and bereavement periods. Of these countries, at least 36 provide paid leave.
- The United States does not provide its workers with either paid or unpaid leave for these events.

Paid leave and flexibility for personal health needs (Item 20)

Sick employees do not perform at their usual level, and can spread their illnesses to other employees. When workers are ill, they should be able to take leave to care for their health without risking job loss.

- At least 139 countries provide paid sick leave to employees.
- At least 117 countries provide paid sickness benefits for at least one week. (See Figure 14.)
- At least 76 countries provide paid sickness benefits for at least 26 weeks or until recovery.
- In some countries, sickness benefits may not begin until after an unpaid waiting period. Data on the length of waiting periods were available for 120 countries. Of these countries:
 - Seventy-seven countries had no waiting period.
 - Two countries had one-day waiting periods.
 - Six countries had two-day waiting periods.
 - Twenty-seven countries had three-day waiting periods.
 - Six countries had four-day to one-week waiting periods.
 - One country had a one-week to two-week waiting period.
 - One country had a waiting period longer than two weeks.
- Under federal law, the United States does not provide paid leave to sick employees. Unpaid sick leave provided by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is not available to all workers, and workers who are covered by the FMLA can only take leave for serious health conditions.
- Countries provide benefits to sick workers through a variety of mechanisms, such as: requiring employers to pay the wages of employees who are sick or injured; paying the employee sickness benefits through a national social security system; or using a combination of these approaches such that social security benefits either supplement employer benefits or begin when employer sponsored benefits run out.
- Of the 139 countries with paid sick leave, data about the rate at which that leave is paid were available for 126 countries. (See Figure 15). Of these countries, 47 paid a fixed percentage of a worker's wage to all workers who received sickness benefits, 76 paid a variable percentage of the worker's wage, and three paid a flat rate. Of these countries:
 - Twenty countries paid their workers a fixed rate of 100 percent of their wages.
 - Seventeen countries paid their workers a minimum rate that was between 75 and 99 percent of their wages.
 - Seventy-nine countries paid their workers a minimum rate that was between 50 and 74 percent of their wages.
 - Seven countries paid their workers a minimum rate that was between 25 and 49 percent of their wages.
 - Three countries paid a flat rate benefit to employees on sick leave.

Figure 14: Duration of Paid Sick Leave

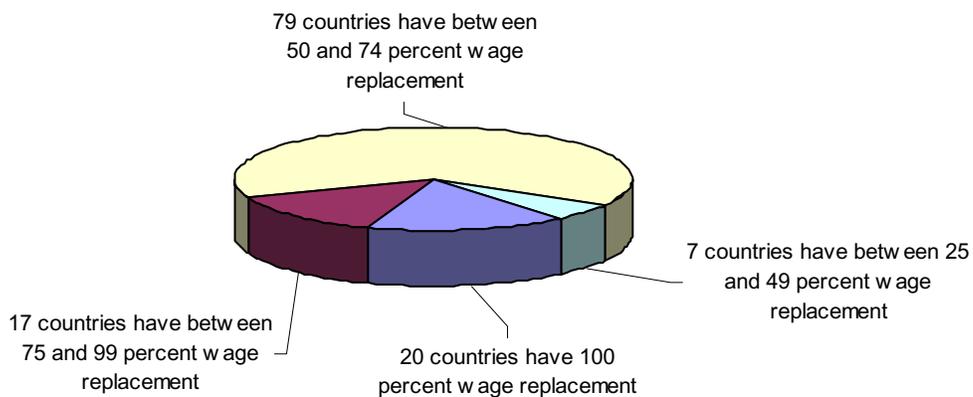


Note: The United States does not guarantee employees any paid sick leave.

Findings are based on an analysis of data from:

- Labor codes, other national legislation, and secondary sources describing relevant legislation.
- Social Security Administration. 2002-3. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas.

Figure 15: Minimum Wage Replacement Rate for Sick Leave



Note: The United States only guarantees unpaid leave (0 wage replacement) for the serious illness of those covered by the FMLA.

Findings are based on an analysis of data from:

- Labor codes, other national legislation, and secondary sources describing relevant legislation.
- Social Security Administration. 2002-3. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Africa, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas.

Role of equity

Currently, too little global data are available in this area to make many of the international comparisons that should be evaluated in respect to equity. However, a few important initial observations follow below.

- Critical social class divides in access to essential benefits and decent working conditions are readily visible. Moreover, these social class divides are particularly problematic in the United States. There are examples of this both in the area of working conditions and social programs and services.
 - Low-income families cannot afford to take unpaid leave. The United States is markedly behind the rest of the world in guaranteeing any form of paid leave. This includes, among others, paid leave to care for infants, paid sick leave, paid annual leave, and paid leave to address such needs as children's health.
 - Low-income families are markedly disadvantaged when there is not either public provision or adequate public funding of early childhood care and education and full-day, full-year opportunities for school-aged children. The United States is behind in both of these areas.
- Around the world, there are clear disparities in policies and programs available to men and women, girls and boys. The ability and length of parental leave is far greater for women than for men. This disparity disadvantages both men and women by diminishing the opportunities of men for equal roles in caregiving and by disadvantaging women in the workforce when they are seen overwhelmingly as the primary caregivers. At the same time, boys have greater access than girls on a global basis to a wide range of educational opportunities. While these gender disparities are found on a global basis, the United States has taken the important step of providing equal amounts of unpaid leave to men and women and equal access to educational services for boys and girls.
- There is a clear difference in the extent of policies developed that are relevant to different age groups and relationships within the family.
 - On a global basis, extensive paid leave is available for the care of infants. While available, leave to care for older children and disabled and elderly adults is less widespread.
 - Far more early childhood educational services are available for preschool children than for children aged 0-3. No consistent data were available on services available during out-of-school hours for school-age children. No consistent data were available on services available during the day for disabled or elderly adults.

Conclusions

Many assume that the working poor are better off in the United States than elsewhere in the world. After all, the U.S. is a very wealthy nation. However, wealth in the U.S. is nowhere near equally distributed, and the safety net for working families is weak.

The United States lags dramatically behind all high-income countries, as well as many middle- and low-income countries when it comes to public policies designed to guarantee adequate working conditions for families. One hundred-sixty-three countries around the world guarantee paid leave to women after childbirth; the United States does not. Forty-five countries ensure that fathers either receive paid paternity leave or paid parental leave; the United States does not. Seventy-six countries protect working women's right to breastfeed at work; the United States offers no such protection. Ninety-six countries offer paid annual leave; the United States does not require employers to provide any paid annual leave. One-hundred thirty-nine countries provide paid leave for short or long-term illnesses; the United States has no national policy regarding sick leave. The list of working conditions relevant to families where the United States lags behind goes on and includes, among others, maximum hour legislation, legislation guaranteeing minimum days of rest, and leave for major family events.

Where this comprehensive global data are available, the United States also appears to lag significantly behind in services available to children in working families. The United States ranks 39th in available data on early childhood education enrollment and 91st in student-to-staff ratios. The school year in the United States is shorter than that of 54 other countries around the world. While the United States has high rates of 0- to 3-year-olds in childcare, this is mainly due to families paying privately for care that is necessary in the absence of paid parental leave, not to either publicly-provided care or to parents choosing infant and toddler care when parental leave is available.

Initial inequities across social class are markedly exacerbated by the public policy decisions the United States has made, including, among others, the failure thus far to provide public preschool or early childhood education to parallel public school, the failure to extend the school day and school year, now that the economy is post-industrial rather than primarily agricultural, and the failure to ensure that employees have basic family-related leave from work. In most other nations, working families can count on publicly guaranteed parental leave; and in many, preschool childcare or early-childhood education is already publicly provided. Furthermore, many nations mandate that employers provide a minimum number of vacation and sick leave days, while others provide public insurance guaranteeing paid leave for families. These provisions limit what would otherwise be dangerous disparities across the social gradient. The United States does none of these. Consequently, as income levels decrease, American working families face much steeper rises in the number of obstacles to caring for dependents than do working adults in many countries around the world.

While it is essential to the well-being of middle-income families that solutions – namely, ensuring access to needed children's and family services and guaranteeing adequate working conditions – be universal, developing policy responses that cut across social class is even more critical to the welfare of low-income families.

Appendix: Data Sources

National labor codes and legislation

Excellent primary sources for national labor policies exist. To obtain data on national labor policies throughout the world, our research team first consulted the labor codes and other labor-related legislation of 128 countries. We obtained these data from several sources including: NATLEX, an online global database of labor, social security and human rights-related legislation maintained by the International Labor Organization (ILO); the ILO's on-site library at their headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland; the Harvard University Law Library; and the official websites of various governments. Between the NATLEX database and the on-site library, the ILO is the single most comprehensive source of labor legislation worldwide.

NATLEX

The database, maintained by the ILO, is navigable by topic as well as by country and contains information on legislation related to labor, social security and human rights. The database contains a bibliography of legislation for 186 countries and territories. Of these, 178 are independent countries according to UN and World Bank classifications. Seventy-four of these countries had labor legislation (labor codes, acts or secondary decrees) available in the NATLEX database in English, French, or Spanish. Legislation is organized into 72 categories. We examined legislation for each of these 74 countries, searching relevant categories.

We reviewed all labor codes for data contained in the following Index Items: Item 1 (Paid leave for childbearing and childrearing), Item 2 (Infant and toddler care), Item 3 (Early childhood education and care), Item 4 (Working adults' availability to provide routine care for children), Item 7 (Paid leave and flexibility for children's educational needs), Item 8 (Paid leave and flexibility for children's health needs), Item 11 (Access of adults with disabilities to equal employment opportunities), Item 14 (Access of older adults to equal employment opportunities), Item 18 (Working adults' availability to provide routine care for older and disabled family members), Item 19 (Paid leave and flexibility for adult family members' health and other essential needs), and Item 20 (Paid leave and flexibility for personal health needs).

ILO

While the NATLEX database contains links to the full texts of many labor codes and relevant acts and decrees online (including disability codes), it also references some that are available only in hard copy at the ILO headquarters in Geneva. These copies are available for on-site consultation and reproduction.

From the NATLEX database, we compiled a list of all labor codes and disability codes available only in the ILO library. Team members made two separate visits to the ILO to acquire copies of all such codes available in English, French, or Spanish. Legislation on an additional 41 countries was located there.

Additional Sources

The team conducted internet searches for specific countries for which no legislation was available in any of our three focus languages on NATLEX (74), at the ILO library (additional 41), or the Harvard University Law Library (additional 1). Through these searches we located legislation made available by Ministries of Labor and analogous bodies for an additional 12 countries

Social Security Programs Throughout the World²⁵

The Social Security Programs Throughout the World (SSPTW) database, published periodically by the Social Security Administration, is the most comprehensive source of global data on social security policies. This report includes country-level summaries of legislation and programs addressing health, disability, old age, and income security issues. As the paid leave policies of many countries are mandated by social security laws, we also consulted the SSPTW database in order to supplement the paid leave data we obtained from labor codes. The information in the SSPTW report is based on data collected in the Annual Survey on Developments and Trends conducted by the International Social Security Association (ISSA), as well as other supplemental sources^E under the sponsorship of the United States Social Security Administration.

The database consists of a series of individual country reports describing the major features of the social security system^F of each. Country data grouped according to regions and updates are published periodically. The volumes on which we relied are organized by region and have been updated within the past 2 years: The Americas (2003); Africa (2003); Asia and the Pacific (2002); Europe (2002). This resource contains data for 174 countries and territories in total, 160 of which are included within the Work, Family and Equity Index as independent countries.^G

^E Examples of other sources include: official publications, periodicals received from individual country institutions, embassies, or the Law Library of the United States Library of Congress, the International Labor Organization, the Permanent Inter-American Social Security Committee, and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Communities, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Inter-American Development Bank, in addition to foreign social security officials, and social security experts in the United States.

^FThe report defines the term *social security* as “programs established by statute that insure individuals against interruption or loss of earning power, and for certain special expenditures arising from marriage, birth, or death. Allowances to families for the maintenance of children are also included in this definition.” See: <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdsc/ssptw>

^GIn addition to the country reports, the Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Guide to Reading the Country Summaries for each region was consulted. This supplementary document accompanies the Social Security Programs Throughout the World and provides information about sources of information, methodology, and definition of terms in the individual country reports, and a series of tables summarizing some of the principle regional findings. This source was searched to ensure inclusion of all SSPTW data in our reports. Social Security Administration. 2003. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Guide to Reading the Country Summaries: Africa; Social Security Administration. 2003. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Guide to Reading the Country Summaries: Europe, 2002; Social Security Administration. 2003. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Guide to Reading the Country Summaries: Asia and the Pacific, 2002; and Social Security Administration. 2003. Social Security Programs Throughout the World: Guide to Reading the Country Summaries: The Americas, 2003. Available at: <http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/progdsc/ssptw/>

Searching for data within the SSPTW

- The database consists of a series of individual country reports describing the major features of the social security system of each. In addition, the database provides secondary information on labor laws in a number of countries. Our research team surveyed the SSPTW reports available for every independent country.
- Each country report includes the following topic headings: Sickness and Maternity; Old-Age, Disability and Survivors; Work Injury; Unemployment; and Family Allowances.
- From the “Sickness and Maternity” section, we retrieved data on paid leave for personal sickness, maternity and, in some cases, paid leave for family care.
- From the “Family Allowances” section, we retrieved data on government subsidies for childcare financing and care of disabled children.
- From the “Old-Age, Disability and Survivors” section, we retrieved data on pension policies, focusing on subsections: Regulatory Framework, Coverage, Source of Funds, Qualifying Conditions (for both old-age and disability pensions), Old-Age Benefits, and Permanent Disability Benefits.
- Data on qualifying ages for regular and early old-age pensions were taken from The Guide to Reading the Country Summaries.

Data from global intergovernmental organizations and databases

UNESCO Institute for Statistics database²⁶

The UNESCO International Statistical (UIS) database, maintained by the UNESCO National Commissions, contains data on the following topics: education, science and technology, and culture and communication. We examined this source for data on Item 3 (Early childhood education and care) for measures of pupil to teacher ratios and percentage of trained teachers. This is a large and virtually global data set.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Global Education Digest 2003²⁷

This report contains global education statistics, broken down by level of education: preprimary, primary, secondary, and tertiary. A summary report is also included. This source was used for Item 3 (Early childhood education and care) for measures of preprimary enrollment. Data are available for 105 countries or territories.

*UNESCO's World Data on Education*²⁸

This report provides brief country-specific reports covering topics such as the number of primary schools, the number of teachers, and the structure of the educational system. Tables regarding other issues, such as length of instructional time and the subjects studied during the first four years of primary school are also included. This source was used for Item 6 (Educational opportunities and supervision for school-age children throughout the year) for the number of days in the school year. Data on school-year lengths are available for many countries in every region and at every level of development.

*United Nations, The World's Women, 2000*²⁹

This source provides data on duration of maternity leave, wage replacement rate and provider of coverage for 150 countries. The data are presented in table format and was used for Item 1 (Paid leave for childbearing and childrearing).

*2003 World Bank World Development Indicators*³⁰

Developed and maintained by the World Bank, the World Development Indicators (WDI) of 2003 is a global database of approximately eight hundred development indicators including measures of urbanization, health, employment and labor, economic growth, use of resources, population, and integration in the global economy. Data on average hours worked per week were gathered for Item 4 (Working adults' availability to provide routine care for children) for the measure of average number of hours worked per week. Data were available on 53 countries.

*United Nations Population Division, World Population 2002*³¹

The Population Division is responsible for the monitoring and appraisal of the broad range of areas in the field of population. This source is a publication of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and includes detailed population data, including population density, percentage urban, crude birth and death rates, and percentages of the population under 15 and over 60. This source was used for Item 16 (Health supports for older adults) for the measure of percentage of the population over age 60. Data coverage was virtually global.

Data from national collections of international data

*U.S. State Department Human Rights Reports 2003*³²

The data in these reports were collected by U.S. embassies, in collaboration with local and international NGOs, labor organizers, government sources, lawyers, human rights workers, and others. The embassy drafts were supplemented at the State Department with data from the UN, international organizations, academics, and the media. This source was used for Item 11 (Access of adults with disabilities to equal employment opportunities) for measures documenting whether discrimination against the disabled was prohibited and whether there was legislation mandating building and transportation accessibility. There are 192 reports; one for every country we studied (as well as territories/protectorates/disputed areas we did not include in our list of countries, such as East Timor, Nauru, Tonga, San Marino, and Western Sahara).

Data from regional sources or sources covering a range of countries

Organization for European Cooperation and Development (OECD) publications

*The OECD Economic Outlook, Balancing Work and Family Life: Helping Parents Into Paid Employment*³³

The OECD Economic Outlook is a regular report published by the OECD. This chapter focuses on work-family issues. Data from this source are available on 23 countries and were used for Item 2 (Infant and toddler care) for the measure of percentage of children under three in formal childcare, and Item 3 (Early childhood education and care) for the measure of labor force participation rate of mothers with children under six.

*OECD. Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care*³⁴

This broad report from the OECD presents contextual issues and data on policies. In-depth information is given on the 12 countries included in the report (10 European countries, Australia, and the U.S.). The report covers 0- to 6-year-olds, so in some areas information on infant/toddler care is included with 3- to 5-year-old care. This source was used for Item 3 (Early childhood education and care) for a measure of the legal right to childcare and student-staff ratios.

*OECD. Education at a Glance 2003*³⁵

This report provides a wide variety of statistics and information about education in OECD countries. We used this report for data on student to staff ratios in Turkey for Item 3 (Early childhood education and care). Student-staff ratios were available for all levels of education: preprimary, primary,

lower secondary, upper secondary, all secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary, and tertiary. For the measure of percentage of trained teachers in early childhood education, we used data from this report on teacher training in preprimary education, including duration of training program, percentage of teachers who are trained, and type of final qualification. Data from Australia, Hungary, and Spain were obtained from this source.

UNESCO regional data

*UNESCO Asia & Pacific. National Policies and Programmes*³⁶

This source provides information on 32 countries. Data from Fiji were gathered from this source for Item 3 (Early childhood education and care) for the student-staff ratio measure.

*UNESCO/OECD, Financing Education*³⁷

This report, jointly produced by UNESCO and the OECD, analyzes connections between education and economic conditions and trends in developing countries participating in the UNESCO/OECD World Education Indicators Programme as well as in industrialized countries. The report provides expenditures on educational institutions from public and private sources, by level of education. These data were used for Item 3 (Early childhood education and care).

*Eurostat, Social Protection: Expenditure on pensions*³⁸

This publication by Eurostat, the research division of the European Commission, presents a series of statistics, graphs, and tables detailing expenditures on old-age, disability, and other pensions among selected European countries. A comprehensive search was conducted of all publications in the Eurostat collection “Statistics in focus” under the theme “population and social conditions.” This source was used for Item 17 (Policies to meet basic needs of those unable to work).

*Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies, Reflections of Recent Demographic Conditions on Family and Social Policies in Central and Eastern European Countries*³⁹

This source contains detailed descriptions of maternity, paternity and parental leave policies for eight Central and Eastern European countries: Belarus, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine. The source presents very detailed data on maternity, paternity and parental leave policies for the eight countries covered. It is one of only a few secondary sources

which contain comparative information on leaves for men as well as for women. It is also one of only a few sources that contains data on unpaid periods of leave such as optional maternity or parental leave extensions following the expiration of statutory paid leave periods. This source was used for a number of items including: Item 1 (Paid leave for childbearing and childrearing), Item 2 (Infant and toddler care) for a measure on availability of breastfeeding breaks, Item 7 (Paid leave and flexibility for children's educational needs), Item 8 (Paid leave and flexibility for children's health needs), and Item 19 (Paid leave and flexibility for adult family members' health and other essential needs).

*The Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies at Columbia University*⁴⁰

At the time we consulted it, this online resource presented in-depth data on various social policies, including maternity, paternity and parental leave for 23 countries, all of which are European except Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the U.S. This is the most in-depth secondary source we have found on paid leave, and one of only a few which address leaves for men as well as women. The site is regularly updated and most of the country reports are current as of 2003 or 2004. However, the information given in the country reports, while extremely comprehensive, is not as complete as the primary sources we located for some countries. This source contains data in table format as well as individual country reports; data in the country reports are organized by topic. This source was used for the following items: Item 1 (Paid leave for childbearing and childrearing), Item 2 (Infant and toddler care) for a measure on availability of breastfeeding breaks, Item 7 (Paid leave and flexibility for children's educational needs), Item 8 (Paid leave and flexibility for children's health needs), and Item 19 (Paid leave and flexibility for adult family members' health and other essential needs).

*Organisation Mondiale pour l'Education Prescolaire (OMEP)*⁴¹

This data source presents the responses to a questionnaire on preschool education filled out by participants at an organization seminar at UNESCO. Participants providing data were national specialists, academics, and officials. Data are available for 24 countries. This source contained data on countries for which we had not been able to locate data for one or both of the measures below, including Israel, Hungary, and Slovakia, among others. This source was used for Item 3 (Early childhood education and care) for the measure of student to staff ratios and the measure of teacher accreditation requirements.

Books and papers examining a particular region

Gornick, J. and Meyers, M. (2003). Families that Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment⁴²

This book provides an excellent overview of work-family issues and supportive policies, focusing on the U.S. and western European countries. Data from Canada, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and the U.K. were used in Items 2 (Infant and toddler care) and 3 (Early childhood education and care).

Jorgensen, H. (2002). Give Me A Break: The Extent of Paid Holidays and Vacation⁴³

This paper compares the United States' holiday leave policies to those of other industrialized countries, including data on length of annual paid leave, paid vacation days, and paid holidays. This source was used to obtain data for Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, and Sweden for Items 4 and 18 (Parental availability on a routine basis).

Denniss, R. (2003) Annual Leave in Australia: An analysis of entitlements, usage and preferences⁴⁴

This paper discusses paid annual leave in Australia, as well as actual usage of leave. This source was used for Items 4 and 18 (Parental availability on a routine basis) for the length of paid annual leave.

Franco, A. and Winqvist, K. (2002). Women and men working weekends and their family circumstances⁴⁵

This brief report discusses the movement towards a 7-days-a-week, 24-hours-a-day economy with gender comparisons. The data come from the EU Labour Force Survey. This source was used for Items 4 and 18 (Parental availability on a routine basis) for a measure of employees working on weekends (in the manufacturing sector).

Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. (2001). Disability and social participation in Europe⁴⁶

This is a report on disability issues in the European Union, including education, work issues, income, and benefits. Data were available for 14 European countries and was used for Items 10 and 13 (Access to and supports for the health of children and adults with special needs and disabilities) for a measure of the percentage of population reporting severe and moderate disabilities.

Eurostat. (2002). The life of women and men in Europe, A statistical portrait of women and men in all stages of life⁴⁷

This report provides selected data on men and women in 15 EU countries. The tables include data on education, age at marriage, earnings, elderly living alone, and participation of the elderly in a club or organization. This data set was for 15 European countries. This source was used for Item 15 (Access of older adults to participate fully in family and community activities).

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The complete bibliography for this initiative is available at www.globalworkingfamilies.org.