

Fixing Parental Leave: The Six Month Solution

Gayle Kaufman

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The United States is one of three nations that do not offer parental leave to new parents. *Fixing Parental Leave* forwards a viable plan for changing that.

Inducing fury as it exposes American workplaces that give lip service to family leave laws, but that do little to support new families, the book shows that having children penalizes working parents, who are shunted into “mommy track” jobs, miss out on promotions, and depend on employers’ goodwill as they adapt. Forwarding a nuanced perspective on the real consequences of leave policies, the book compares the US to nations including Sweden and the UK, and finds that most successful leave policies take fathers into account, too.

This in-depth look at parental leave policies evaluates the benefits and drawbacks of leave policies in each country that it examines. It finds that there is more to parental leave policies than whether a country provides time off around the birth or adoption of a child. While most policies are designed to help women return to work, Kaufman shows, this is only half of the puzzle. The second half requires men to be meaningful partners, encouraging them to take equal time at home. New parents’ stories are shared in a way that’s impactful; they describe leveraging coworkers’ pregnancies and advocating for themselves in order to get the bare minimum of time away with their babies.

Kaufman’s deliberate, data-based dissection of nations’ leave policies shows that nobody is perfect; there’s always room for improvement. The book’s suggestions are enlightening, big picture ones that keep in mind the fact that babies need parents who provide love and stability. *Fixing Parental Leave* suggests steps toward a better system.

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