Support for Growing Families

Giving birth or adopting a child brings great happiness, but can also create stress, particularly when new parents think about balancing careers and family needs.

The University offers many family-friendly benefits that help faculty deal with all of life’s important events.

My wife and I certainly have benefitted from UM work-life policies. In fact, the existence of the Children’s Center was one of the reasons I found UMaine attractive. Our oldest son spent two wonderful years at the Child Study Center, and our two youngest will be enrolled in preschool this fall.

Mark Brewer
Political Science

Taking Family Time

After adding to your family, whether by birth, adoption, or fostering a child, you may want some extra time away from work. You have a variety of leave options - paid and unpaid - to fit every situation. Some faculty will use a combination of policies to receive time off, to make work more flexible, and to be paid for some or all of their leave. Consider the options outlined below, and talk to our campus Benefits Office to see if you might be eligible to utilize these policies.

* Short Term Disability Can Provide Income

Women faculty who purchased Short Term Disability during open enrollment may be eligible for additional paid benefits following the birth of a child. Refer to the summary plan description, and contact our campus Benefits Office for more information, or to initiate a maternity related short term disability claim.

* Long Term Disability

If a medical condition related to pregnancy and childbirth keeps you from returning to work within 6 months after the birth, you may be eligible for long term disability benefits. Contact our Benefits Office to discuss your long term disability coverage.

* Family and Medical Leave Act

New parents - mothers and fathers - may be eligible for extended leave under provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act. Meshing FMLA with other types of leave to keep a paycheck coming can be complicated, but FMLA offers flexibility, such as intermittent or reduced work schedule options. Contact our Human Resources office to sort out your leave options. And remember that while taking approved family medical leave your University benefits remain in effect with no increase in employee premiums.
Return to Work Simplified
It’s always difficult for new parents to go back to work. But UMaine’s family friendly policies might make the transition easier for mom and dad.

*Campus Childcare*

We know how difficult it can be to find a safe, loving daycare provider for your children. And leaving your infant or toddler there day after day can be hard. Fortunately, the University offers quality childcare programs where your child may be just moments away from your office. Take a walk between classes to visit your child, or have lunch with your toddler. You’ll be able to focus on your work knowing that your little one is close by in a safe, state certified program.

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**The UMaine Children’s Center pre-school is AMAZING! The fantastic staff and students make it possible for me to have work-life balance and get things done at work because I know my child is in good hands.**

*Michelle Smith*
*School of Biology & Ecology*

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Consider UMaine’s childcare and pre-school programs – they might give you peace of mind.

*Lactation Support*

Returning to work after childbirth poses many challenges for a new mother. Finding a private lactation space is one issue that the University can address. A comfortably furnished room in the Memorial Union has been designated for use by nursing mothers. And if you find the Memorial Union is not convenient, Human Resources will work with you to find a suitable alternative space. Call Human Resources at 581.1581 for more information.

In addition, CIGNA medical insurance benefits for new mothers covered by the University’s group insurance policy include the purchase or rental of a breast pump to help infants get off to a healthful start. Call CIGNA after your little one arrives for information about this new benefit of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. **CIGNA Customer Service: 1.800.244.6224**

**Benefits Enrollment**

When a new family member arrives, you’ll want to rethink your benefits enrollment and your previous Advantage Account elections. Giving birth or adopting a child triggers a one-month enrollment change period. Use this Benefits Checklist as a guide in making changes to your insurance coverage and your medical and dependent care reimbursement accounts. And consider enrolling your newborn in ChildLINK, a program offered by the Maine Center for Disease Control, to support healthy development!

**New Responsibilities**

Welcoming a new family member is both exciting and stressful. The arrival of a child often prompts reexamination of personal priorities and professional goals. It’s all part of the process of balancing work and life.
When family changes occur, employer support can facilitate the retooling that keeps us on track. UMaine faculty have temporary options that provide flexibility without derailing academic careers. See if the policies described below, which can also be utilized during times of crisis, might help you balance your professional duties and your family commitments.

**Stop the Tenure Clock**

Untenured faculty can temporarily extend their probationary period following the birth or adoption of a child, to care for oneself or a loved one, or to deal with other exceptional life circumstances. Read more about the Stop the Tenure Clock policy, review the current AFUM contract, and then consider how a little extra time could have a positive impact on your family and your career.

**Swap Teaching for Other Duties**

Following the birth or adoption of a child, parents and siblings must all make adjustments. Maybe your usual teaching schedule just doesn’t work with your new baby’s schedule, or your newly adopted child needs more of your time. You can request a temporary change in your assigned duties to help you meet your family responsibilities. Have a discussion about possible Alternatives to Teaching with your department chair, and then consider applying for this benefit.

Refer to Article 9 of the current faculty contract (AFUM), and then call our campus Human Resources office with your questions about utilizing Stop the Tenure Clock or Alternatives to Teaching policies.

**Resources**

**Child Study Center** (preschool) • Sebago Road • 207.581.3272
http://umaine.edu/psychology/child-study-center/

**Children’s Center** • 113 College Ave • 207.581.4076
http://www.umaine.edu/childrencenter/

**Employee Assistance Program** (CIGNA) • 1.877.622.4327
Logon at cignabehavioral.com with the employer ID ums

**Employee Benefits Center** (University of Maine System) • e-mail: benefits@maine.edu
Toll Free: 866.269-9635 • Local: 207.973.3373
http://www.maine.edu/about-the-system/system-office/human-resources/benefit-program-guides-orientation/

**Human Resources** • 5717 Corbett Hall • 207.581.1581 • e-mail: hr-um@maine.edu

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