

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.

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. Contact the [Employee Benefits Center](#) to see if you might be eligible to utilize these policies. (866.269.9635, benefits@maine.edu)



⌘ **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. Contact the [Employee Benefits Center](#) for more information, or to initiate a maternity related short-term disability claim.

⌘ **Long-Term Disability Protects Income**

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 the [Employee Benefits Center](#) 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 family medical leave with other types of leave to keep a paycheck coming can be complicated, but family medical leave offers flexibility, such as intermittent or reduced work schedule options. Contact the [Employee Benefits Center](#) 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.

⌘ **Finding Childcare**



We know how difficult it can be to find a safe, loving daycare provider for your children. The Maine Department of Health & Human Services can help you find options in our area. Visit [ChildCareChoices](#) or call 1.877.680.5866 to learn more, and to search online for providers by area, type of service, the age of your child, and licensure status.

⌘ **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.

Note also that CIGNA medical insurance offers special benefits for new and expectant mothers covered by the University's group insurance policy. Call CIGNA when you find you are pregnant, and after your little one arrives for information about the *Healthy Pregnancies, Healthy Babies* program. **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 19 and Appendix K 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.

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