



It's Not You: It's American Motherhood

With Melissa Wiley



Working Motherhood by the Numbers

- 32% of the overall workforce
- 70% of mothers are working mothers. Most of these women work full time.
- 44% of working mothers have a BA, compared to 38% of workers overall
- Working mothers make up **only 4%** in the field of public administration (more represented in education and healthcare)
- Black mothers are more likely to be in the workforce than any other race

What Americans Think of Working Mothers

75% of Americans reject the idea that women should be in traditional roles

BUT...

When asked about the impact the rise in working mothers has had on society:

- 54% of fathers said the ideal situation is to have a mother at home full time
- 44% of stay at home moms say the increase in working mothers with young children has been bad for society
- 72% of Americans believe too many kids are raised by daycare centers

“Women are a permanent part of the workforce, society has endorsed this historic change, but public opinion hasn’t yet fully come to terms with the tradeoffs inherent in working and raising young children.” Pew Research Center





Simple Ways Working Moms Can Make Evenings Less Stressful

How This Gap Impacts Working Mothers

- 86% of working mothers feel stressed, higher than stay at home mothers and working fathers
- Only 9% of working moms feel their employer provides enough support
- 62% would prefer part time work
- Even though fathers spend more time with their children than in past decades, **mothers still spend more than twice as much time** as fathers caring for their children. Those hours are not considered when looking at the country's economy and work data because **caretaking is invisible and undervalued**.
- The U.S. is the only country among 41 nations that does not mandate any paid leave for new parents. The smallest amount of paid leave required in any of the other 40 nations is two months.

Childbirth Outcomes and Cost

The average cost of birth in the U.S. with insurance is \$4,500. However, that cost can go as high as \$30,000 depending on the state and complications. Financial hardship leads women to avoid needed prenatal care and contributes to poor health outcomes for mother and infant. Black women are more likely to die in childbirth. One primary reason is systemic racism in healthcare.

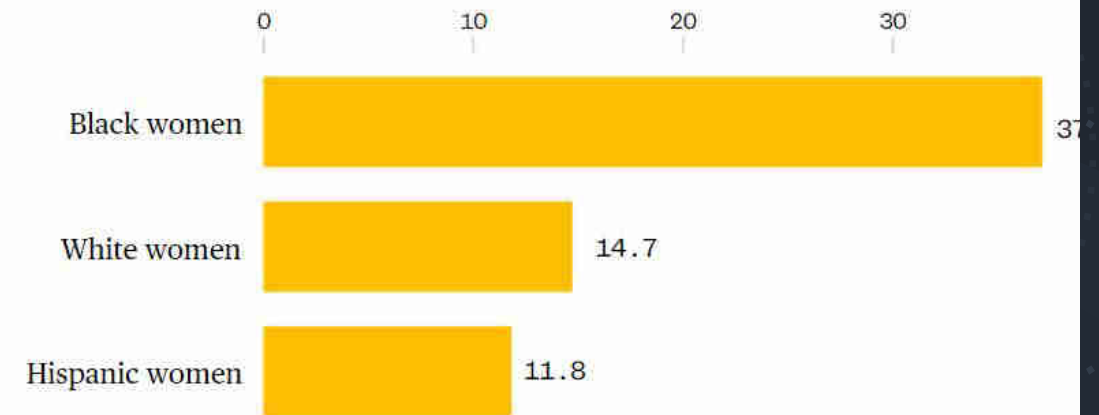
Trends in pregnancy-related mortality in the United States: 1987-2016



*Number of pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 live births per year

Pregnancy-related deaths by race in the U.S. in 2018

Number of deaths per 100,000 live births.



Source: National Center for Health Statistics

Graphic: Jiachuan Wu / NBC News

Breastfeeding: A Story of Maternal and Infant Health

Recommendation and Benefits

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that infants be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months with continued breastfeeding with food for 1 year or longer. The World Health Organization also recommends exclusively breastfeeding for 6 months with continued breastfeeding with food for up to 2 years or older.
- Women who breastfeed reduce their risk of breast cancer and high blood pressure

What Happens

- 86% of infants in the U.S. start out as breastfed. By 6 months, that percentage drops to 58.3. By one year, that percentage drops to 35.3. The top reasons why women stop:
- Issues with lactation and latching.
- Concerns about infant nutrition and weight.
- Mother's concern about taking medications while breastfeeding.
- Unsupportive work policies and lack of parental leave.
- Cultural norms and lack of family support.
- Unsupportive hospital practices and policies.

In 23 states, rates were significantly lower for black infants.



Public Opinion

- 32% of Americans think women shouldn't have the right to breastfeed in public.
- 33% of Americans think mothers shouldn't have any space in public buildings to pump or breastfeed.


Cost and Finding Childcare and Why it Matters

Cost and Search

- In more than half of U.S. states, the cost of child care exceeds public university tuition.
- Families with incomes of less than \$100,000 per year were significantly more likely than higher-income families to say that they were unable to find the child care program they wanted.
- Overall, mothers of color reported higher levels of difficulty finding child care than white mothers.
- 63% of working parents find childcare unaffordable.



“It drives me bananas when people say, ‘If you can’t afford to have a child, don’t have it,’” she says. “I can afford to have a child, I just can’t afford to pay for their care for the first three years of their life. That shouldn’t be the benchmark for whether or not you should have children.” Deveau, Interviewed by TIME Magazine



Who Works in Childcare and How are they Treated?

- 95% Women
- 18% immigrant
- Approximately 43% non-white
- The median annual income is \$23,240
- Many of these women do not have the time or resources to care for their own children
- A lack of livable wage means second jobs and government benefits are required to survive
- Childcare work is still among the lowest paid professions, and families of care-givers are more than twice as likely as other families to live in poverty, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

“I was a slave,” says Mendoza, 53. “They treated me as not fully human.”

-TIME Magazine



A History Lesson: Childcare in the United States

- 1933 first federal investment in childcare in response to the Great Depression
- 1935 aid to dependent children as part of the New Deal. During WWII, women's participation in the labor force was essential and federal funding was used to support working mothers when the country needed them. It was short-lived. This funding ended in 1946 and women were sent home to give up their jobs to returning veterans.
- 1965 Lyndon Johnson established Head Start for low income children
- 1971 Senator Walter Mondale introduced the Comprehensive Child Development Act. This bi-partisan bill argued that it was unfair to force families to choose between work and childcare obligations. Nixon vetoed it. And argued public child care would "Sovietize" American families and "commit the vast moral authority of the National Government to the side of communal approaches to child rearing over against the family-centered approach."
- The 1990s Bill Clinton signed FMLA (12 weeks of UNPAID leave). These benefits are available only to employees who have worked 1,250 hours in the past 12 months for companies that employ at least 50 employees. **Nothing has changed at a federal level 30 years.**

Working Mothers: Financial Literacy and Loss

Common approach: I will take this time off because I am spending more on daycare than I am earning.

What this lack of financial literacy and support does to women over a lifetime:

- Mothers miss out on wage increases, such as scheduled increases or bonuses
- Reduced contributions to Social Security and lower retirement savings
- **The consequence:** The poverty rate for women over 65 years old in the United States is almost double the poverty rate for men (11 percent versus 6.6 percent)
- More mothers are creating self employment because traditional jobs and companies aren't working for them but self employment often leaves them without retirement and regular wage increases
- Families with mothers who do not work are more likely to live in poverty



Working Mothers: Financial Literacy and Loss

A 2005 *Harvard Business Review* analysis found that 43% of highly qualified women with children left the workforce. The effect of this resonates through decades. If a 26-year-old American woman who earns \$40,508—the current average age for becoming a first-time mother, and the median salary for her age—leaves the labor force for five years for caregiving, she will lose more than **\$650,000** in wages, wage growth and retirement benefits over her lifetime, according to a CAP tool that calculates the “hidden cost” of childcare. And that doesn’t take into account the occupational toll: the lost years of experience and networking, the forgone promotions, the difficulties of re-entry. —TIME Magazine

Solutions: Value and Ease Unpaid Caregiving

“Making paid and unpaid care work visible and valuable while engaging men in the fight to value care in the U.S. and other countries can foster human well-being, build a stronger social network, and ultimately, promote greater economic growth. Bringing the global social, cultural, and policy implications for care out of the shadows will shine a light on the work that makes work possible”. The Atlantic

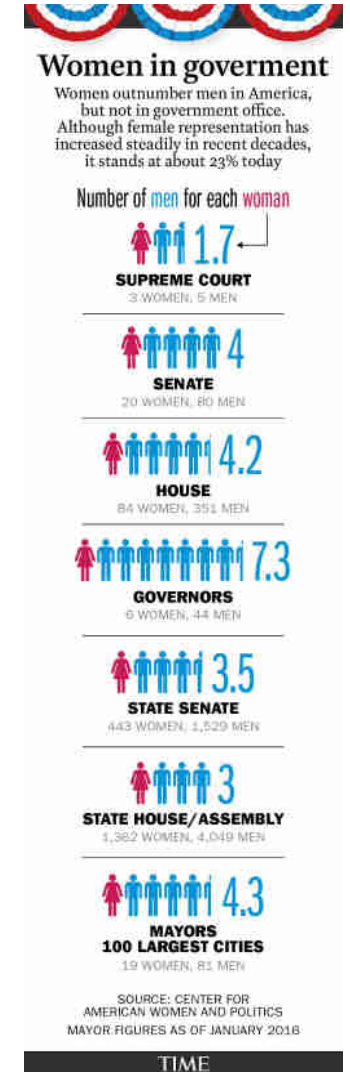
The data tell us that the unpaid caregiving work done by women in their households is, in fact, one of the biggest barriers they face to equal opportunity in the workforce. Post-pandemic, they risk falling even further behind. -Melinda Gates

If there were ever an excuse for inaction, there isn't one anymore. To ensure a fast and inclusive recovery, governments, business leaders and investors need to make caregiving a priority. -Melinda Gates

When asked why there are not more women in high political offices, more than a quarter of the public (27%) said a major reason for this is that women's responsibilities to family don't leave time for politics. -Pew Research

Changing Policy: We Need Mothers in Power

- The United States lags far behind other industrialized countries in family-friendly policies such as paid family leave, universal child care, workplace flexibility and retirement benefits for time spent out of the workforce caring for family members.
- Other countries have found ways to value the time parents spend caregiving and recognize the role parents play in developing human capital and shaping the future workforce, and give credit to women (or men) for time spent out of the workforce to care for children or other relatives. These types of programs exist in many European countries, including France, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Austria and Finland.
- U.S. women and their families could benefit from similar policies that reflect the vast changes in society.



Solutions: Leading Better



Advocate for paid leave policies, breastfeeding accommodation, flexible work schedules, on-site and subsidized childcare, better pay and benefits for childcare workers, and financial literacy for women.



Cross train team members



Build more accommodating workplace social events (team lunch instead of happy hour)



Performance metrics based on work performance and not time in the office



Fight Poverty and Racial Injustice

“Poverty is not being able to protect your family. Poverty is not being able to save your children when **mothers** with more money could. And because the strongest instinct of a **mother** is to protect her children, poverty is the most disempowering force on earth.” “If you want to **lift** up humanity, empower women.”

-Melinda Gates

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

A Game-Changing Solution for
When You Have Too Much to Do
(and More Life to Live)

FAIR PLAY



Eve Rodsky

It's Not You

“Indeed, what feels like a private calamity in each home is actually the result of some of society’s most thorny unsolved issues—the often ignored rights of immigrant workers, the persistently uneven division of labor between men and women, inequalities based on race and socioeconomic status, and the glass ceiling women face in the workplace.”

TIME Magazine

"We have to open up to others. We have to give up the need to be separate and superior."

Melinda Gates

In the workplace, daughters of employed mothers across 29 countries...



are **1.21 times** more likely to be employed



are **1.29 times** more likely to supervise others



spend **44 additional minutes** at work per week



have **higher** annual earnings

Relative to those raised by mothers who stayed home full time.

Sons of Working Mothers

For sons, their own mothers' employment is critical to how much they pitch in with their own children, even when they are raised around a lot of other employed women. -Dina Gerdeman, Harvard University



All that I am, or hope to be,
I owe to my angel mother.



Thank You

To my grandma, you deserved more.

To my mom, you sacrificed everything.

To my daughter, you are the reason.

