CENTER FOR Parental Leave Leadership®

A DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR HR TEAMS & BENEFITS LEADERS

Parental Leave Program Self-Assessment

Find out where your organization stands and exactly what to do next.

How to use this self-assessment

Most organizations have a parental leave policy. Far fewer know exactly where that policy breaks down in practice, or what to do about it. This self-assessment is built to help you close that gap, and it takes about 10 minutes.

Across the next two pages, you'll score 15 statements spanning five key areas, from consistency of parental leave support to manager preparedness. Answer honestly (there's no passing score). Then, add up your total to uncover the best path forward based on where your organization stands today.

Scoring Key

Use this scale to score each statement on the next two pages.

0	1	2
No or Never/Rarely	*Somewhat or Inconsistently*	*Yes or Consistently*

Next Steps

When you're done, print it, share it, or bring it to your next team meeting. Use it to start a real conversation about how your organization handles parental leave.

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SECTION 1

Consistency of Support

Do you have a scalable way to support every employee through parental leave?

1. Every employee receives the same quality of support during parental leave, regardless of their manager, department, or location. ___ / 2
2. Parents and managers have access to structured guidance and resources—not just a policy document—before, during, and after leave. ___ / 2
3. If 10 employees went on leave next month, your organization could support all of them consistently without manual, one-off effort from HR. ___ / 2

Section 1 Total ___ / 6

SECTION 2

Policy & Practice Alignment

Is there a gap between what's written and what employees actually experience?

4. Your written parental leave policy reflects what employees actually experience —in practice—before, during, and after leave. ___ / 2
5. You have evidence (survey data, exit interviews, and anecdotal patterns) that shows how employees actually experience parental leave at your organization. ___ / 2
6. Your parental leave policy includes language on preparation, leave, and return to work, and it has been reviewed or updated within the last 18 months. ___ / 2

Section 2 Total ___ / 6

SECTION 3

Strategic Buy-In

Does your organization treat parental leave as a strategic priority?

7. Leadership at your organization views parental leave as a retention and talent strategy, not just a compliance requirement. ___ / 2
8. Your organization has a clear point of view on how parental leave connects to broader DEI, culture, or leadership development goals. ___ / 2
9. You have executive sponsorship and a budget allocated to improve your parental leave program in the next 12 months. ___ / 2

Section 3 Total ___ / 6

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SECTION 4

Data & Measurement

Do you have an existing process to prove what's working and show what isn't?

10. You can answer, with data, what percentage of employees, by gender, return from parental leave and stay at least 12 months. ___ / 2
11. You have a way to measure the financial cost of parental leave-related attrition at your organization. ___ / 2
12. You could confidently present parental leave outcomes data to your leadership team if asked tomorrow. ___ / 2

Section 4 Total ___ / 6

SECTION 5

Manager Preparedness

Are your managers actually equipped to navigate parental leave well?

13. Managers at your organization have received specific training on how to support an employee before, during, and after parental leave. ___ / 2
14. Managers know what to say (and what not to say) when an employee announces they're expecting or adopting. ___ / 2
15. Your organization has a consistent process for coverage planning and knowledge transfer when someone goes on leave. ___ / 2

Section 5 Total ___ / 6

> ***65%*** *of mothers who leave their employer do so within the first year of returning*
> -Starks, A. (2026). The future of working motherhood: Annual report. Executive Moms.
>
> ***68%*** *of returning parents say their manager had the biggest impact on their return*
> -Starks, A. (2026). The future of working motherhood: Annual report. Executive Moms.
>
> ***Up to 2×*** *an employee's annual salary to replace them*
> -Gallup, This Fixable Problem Costs U.S. Businesses $1 Trillion, March, 2019.

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Your Results

Add up your score across all five sections and enter it here: _____ / 30

Interpreting your results

24–30 — You have a strong foundation.

You're ahead of most organizations. Your policy, your data, and your manager readiness are largely working together. The right next step is usually Strategic Consulting—not because something is broken, but because you're in a strong position to refine what's working, close the gaps that remain, and turn a good program into a category-leading one.

15–23 — You have real strengths and real gaps.

This is the most common result, and it's a good place to be. Look at which of the five sections scored lowest—that's not a weakness to be embarrassed about, it's a roadmap. A score of 0–2 in any single section is a strong signal for where to start. Turn the page for a closer look at what each path involves.

0–14 — You're in the early stages, and that's a completely normal place to start.

Most workplaces in the United States have never had a structured, evidence-based approach to parental leave modeled for them—because until recently, one didn't widely exist. A low score here isn't a verdict on your organization. It's information: there's a real opportunity in front of you, and a clear, proven path to act on it.

A NOTE ON YOUR LOWEST-SCORING SECTION

Whatever section scored lowest for you, that's worth paying attention to first, not because the other sections don't matter, but because addressing the most urgent gap tends to create momentum and quick wins that make everything else easier. If two or three sections are tied for your lowest score, that signals the need for a broader conversation (rather than a single point solution).

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How we help organizations close the gap

A closer look at the five ways CPLL helps organizations of every kind close the gap between parental leave policy and parental leave practice.

If section 1 (Consistency of Support) was your lowest score, we recommend...

The RETAIN Coaching Hub™

A turnkey, scalable benefit for every employee touched by parental leave: parents, managers, HR, and leave navigators. The hub includes structured learning, expert-led workshops, peer communities and proven resources, grounded in the RETAIN Coaching™ methodology, available 24/7.

If section 2 (Policy & Practice Alignment) was your lowest score, we recommend...

The Lead on Leave™ Policy & Practice Audit

A comprehensive, expert-led review of your parental leave policy, practice, and culture, benchmarked against best practices and delivered as a clear, prioritized roadmap—urgent, near-term, and strategic.

If section 3 (Strategic Buy-In) or Section 4 (Data & measurement) was your lowest score, we recommend...

Strategic Consulting & Research

Led by organizational psychologists with PhD-level expertise: policy design, change management, custom research, and outcomes measurement to shift parental leave from a line item to a real talent strategy.

If section 5 (Manager Preparedness) was your lowest score, we recommend...

The Leave Leader™ Manager Training Series

A three-part training series that gives every people manager the vocabulary, tools, and confidence to show up well before, during, and after any type of leave. Each one can be completed in under an hour.

If you're still not sure where to start (or have multiple areas that need to be addressed), we recommend...

A Free Leave Leadership Advisory Call

Since 2014, CPLL has been the only consulting company devoted exclusively to helping organizations improve their parental leave policies, programs, and practices. We know what works (and what doesn't). Book a complimentary, no-obligation consult with a CPLL parental leave specialist. Bring your results from this self-assessment, along with your goals and ideas, and we'll help you make sense of them and point you toward the path that fits.

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