



# Maximizing Data to Improve the Human Side of Parental Leave

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CENTER FOR  
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# Agenda

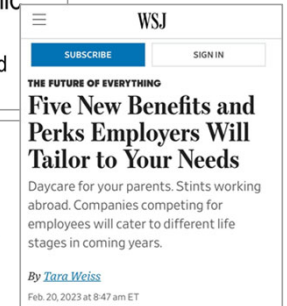
- **Overview: The Parental Leave Landscape**
- **Our New Research Highlights**
- **Planning Your Research**
- **Data-driven Solutions for Improving Parental Leave**
- **Case Study**
- **Evidence-based Best Practices**
- **Q&A**

# Overview: The Parental Leave Landscape

# There is a shifting narrative on parental leave

Parental leave *is not*

- ✗ *Only for moms having babies*
- ✗ *Just for big companies or certain states*
- ✗ *A vacation*
- ✗ *A black hole in a person's career*
- ✗ *Simply a policy benefit*



# There is a shifting narrative on parental leave

## Parental leave is

- ✓ *For all parenting identities*
- ✓ *For all stakeholders*
- ✓ *Vital to personal and professional development*
- ✓ *A 3-phase transition that happens over time*

## The 3-phases of parental leave



Source: Center for Parental Leave Leadership

# Becoming a working-parent is a major life milestone

Each new child requires parents to discover their “new normal”.

## Emotional Passage to Working Parenthood





# Parental leave is about more than policy and logistics

Employers are trying to gain control of the evolving parental leave landscape; focusing on organizational challenges



The **human element** is getting lost.

**“The *practices* that organizations build on the foundation of their parental leave policy can nurture the human experience at the core of this complex timeframe.”**

- Dr. Amy Beacom, Founder and CEO  
Center for Parental Leave Leadership

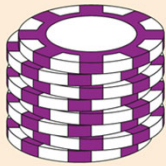


# Parental leave practice is the new table stakes for top employers. Policy + Practice = Transformation.

## What Stakeholders **Need**

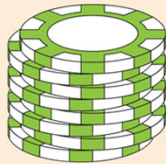
## What Stakeholders **Say**

POLICY

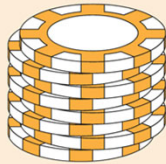


**TIME** to transition, bond, adjust, adapt, and recover.

PRACTICE



**MONEY** to create space and feel stable, safe, and supported.



**SUPPORT** and resources to navigate this complex transition

**For many Americans, at least one of these three critical pillars of support is missing.**

**75%** of respondents agree that they are more likely to **remain with their employer** because of the **leave policy**.

- Boston College Center for Work & Family (2019)

Only **27%** of private sector workers in the US had access to **paid family leave** through their employer.

- Center for American Progress (2024)

**50%** of employees **didn't feel** supported to work their jobs and attend to their caregiving at home.

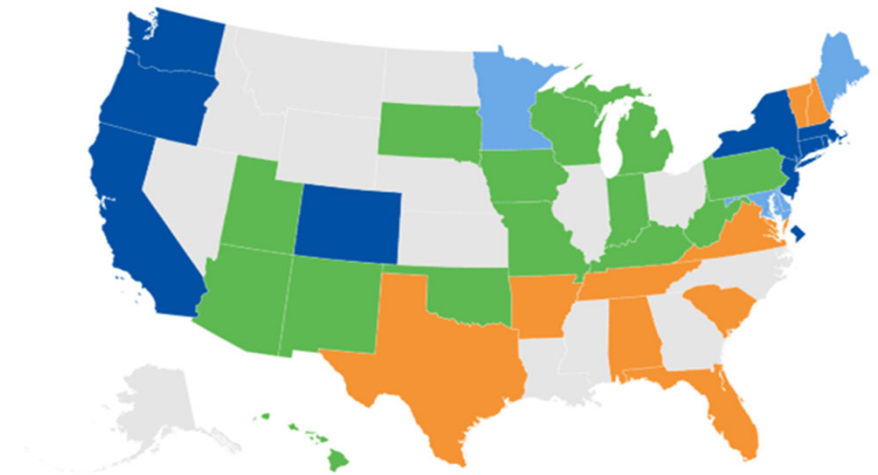
- Harvard Business Review (2019)

**1 in 5 new moms and 1 in 10 new dads** are diagnosed with a perinatal mood or anxiety disorder.

- Postpartum Support International (2023)

# The paid leave landscape is creating a patchwork of new challenges in the workplace.

- Paid leave is exceptionally complicated – both administratively and culturally – especially for diverse and multi-state employers.
- HR teams, employers, and parents are already overwhelmed.
  - They need programs and resources to support these leaves.



- PFL or PFML in force
- PFML passed, not yet in force
- PFML proposed
- Active study on PFML
- Alternative policy passed or proposed
- PFL not required

Source: The Standard

# Our New Research Highlights

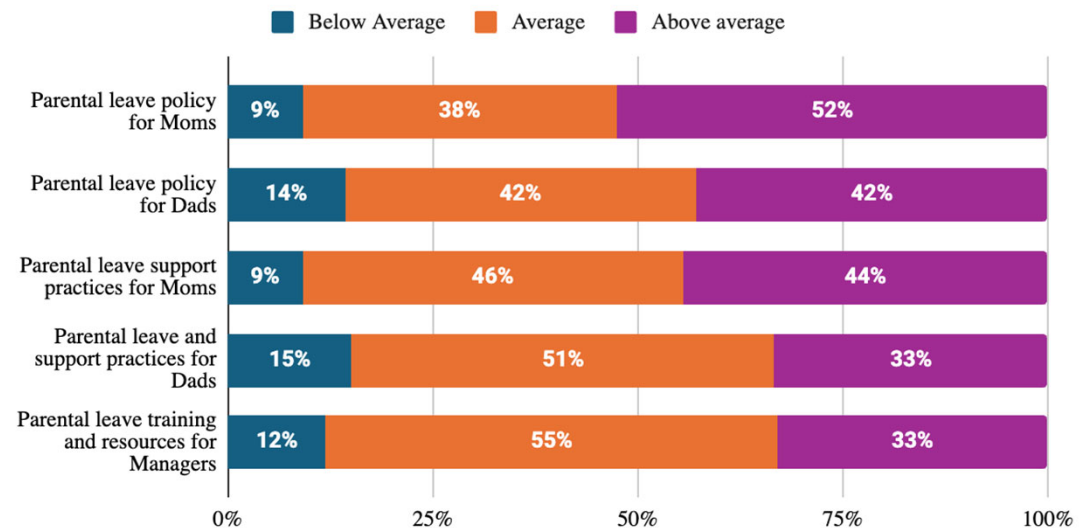
# Comparison to Industry Standards

Companies are **most confident about their support of:**

1. Moms
2. Managers and teams
3. Dads

They are doing **better with policy vs. practices.**

How do you believe your organization compares to industry standards when it comes to each of the following?



# Evolving Requirements & Expectations

They **recognize shifting employee expectations:**

- **Paid** leave
- **Longer** leave
- **More equitable** access to leave
  - gender-neutral and inclusive
  - across PFML and non-PFML states

**More than half do not feel prepared** to evolve to the changing landscape.



*“Fair parental leave policies that don’t discriminate based on gender or family structure are expected.”*

*“In some locations, we have had to offer paid leave based upon state requirements... This has led to feelings of inequity among employees.”*

# Inaccurate Perceptions of Success

- **Policies** stop at bare minimum compliance
- No leave **compensation** other than PTO/vacation days
- Inequitable **access to leave** including eligibility and utilization
- **Confusion** around vague and ever-changing policies
- Lack of **training and support**

# Missed Opportunities

**Not integrating** with other HR functions and business strategies such as:

- Training and development
- Workforce forecasting and succession planning
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion

**Not measuring** or utilizing key metrics such as:

- Talent attraction and retention
- Employee morale, health, and wellbeing
- Productivity and operational continuity
- Risk mitigation



# Planning Your Research

Using data to identify gaps and strengths in current parental leave policies and practices to influence positive change.

# Identify key stakeholders and their needs

- Who are the impacted stakeholders and what is their experience?
- Who influences or makes the decisions about parental leave programming?
  - What resistance or barriers might be faced?
  - What do they need to know to overcome barriers?
- Who can provide support?
  - Develop a leave committee.
  - Include an external leave expert for legitimacy and guidance.

# Define your priorities

- Which metrics will be most meaningful and impactful?
  - for employees
  - for decision-makers
- Which metrics will give you results that can lead to action?

# Three tips for where to start - # 1

## Policy Audit

- Never make your policy exclusively about compliance
- This is a human experience of the sacred
- Craft something that honors and capitalizes on that truth



# Three tips for where to start - #2

## Ask!

- Check you are getting it right
- At minimum: Add two questions to your annual survey with open-ended response options:
  - “How satisfied are you with our paid leave policy?”
  - “How satisfied are you with our paid leave support?”
- Consider other existing opportunities such as exit interviews and enrollment fairs



# Three tips for where to start - #3

## Paychecks

- Do you have 100% pay for time away?
- Look at pay and comp structures through the lens of parental leave
- Consider different ways or places employees are (or aren't) compensated and work to make those whole



## Explore parental leave specific options:

- Parental leave experience surveys and needs assessments
- Parental leave focus group or employee resource group, or ERG, consultation
- Leave utilization rates
- Benchmarking
- External sources
- Attraction, retention and career progression of new parents

# Data-driven Solutions for Improving Parental Leave

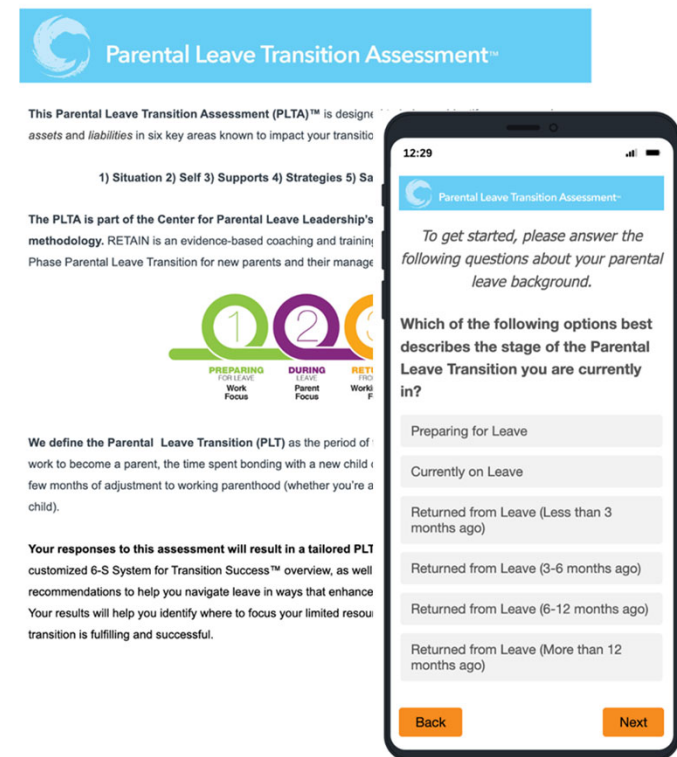
Example: The Parental Leave Transition Assessment (PLTA)



# Parental Leave Transition Assessment (PLTA)

Evidence-based assessment that explores six key areas proven to shape the parental leave experience:

- Situation
- Self
- Supports
- Strategies
- Sabotages
- Suggestions



# Individual PLTA Data Report

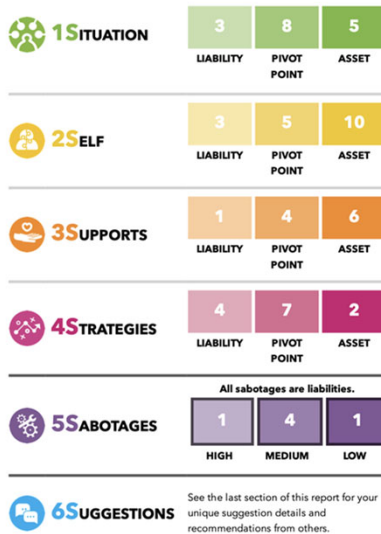
## Your Personalized 6S Snapshot

This page is a high level snapshot of your report results. This overview enables you to see at-a-glance which areas are resources to draw from (assets), and which areas require targeted mitigation (liabilities and sabotages) to maximize your transition success.

Whether or not your assets outweigh your liabilities, you're in a good position to start your transition when you're armed with information from your six S areas.

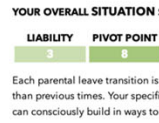
Your overall Risk Score utilizes our proprietary algorithm to analyze your responses and calculate how at risk your transition success is at this time.

The pages that follow delve deeper into each section, providing you personalized insights and recommendations for taking action to ensure a smooth transition.



### 1SITUATION

The context surrounding your transition



LIABILITY	PIVOT POINT	ASSET
Work Engagement	Perception of Self	Coworker Support
Work Autonomy	Expectations of Self	Supervisor Support
Work Satisfaction	Ability to Focus	Organizational Support
Life Satisfaction	Difficulty with Change	Support Network Outside of Work
Work Flexibility	Sense of Control Over Life	Spouse/Partner Support
Work Demands	Hopeful Outlook	Spouse/Partner Leave

### 2SELF

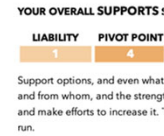
Your unique knowledge, transition



LIABILITY	PIVOT POINT	ASSET
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### 3SUPPORTS

The help available to you



LIABILITY	PIVOT POINT	ASSET
Work Engagement	Perception of Self	Coworker Support
Work Autonomy	Expectations of Self	Supervisor Support
Work Satisfaction	Ability to Focus	Organizational Support
Life Satisfaction	Difficulty with Change	Support Network Outside of Work
Work Flexibility	Sense of Control Over Life	Spouse/Partner Support
Work Demands	Hopeful Outlook	Spouse/Partner Leave

### 4STRATEGIES

Your "go-to" methods for navigating your parental leave transition



We all have our own ways of coping with the changes life brings. Every individual will use a different combination of techniques to navigate his or her transition. Some of those strategies will be used because they work and some simply because they are habits. When building your plan, consider which strategies you would like to rely on during your parental leave transition and which ones may not serve you well.

	LIABILITY	PIVOT POINT	ASSET	YOUR SCORE SUGGESTS
Proactive Coping		●		While at times you may proactively plan for solving difficult challenges or take stock of the resources you have available to you you can also find yourself reacting to stress rather than planning for it. Consider seeking help from a friend mentor or...
Reframing the Situation		●		At times you may try to think differently about a challenge by focusing on what you are grateful for where there is opportunity in the challenge or looking for humor in the situation but this may not be your go to strategy all of the time. Build into...
Changing the Situation	●			You rarely attempt to seek out the root cause of what is making you stressed and try to change the situation. You are more likely to rely on other coping strategies when you are stressed. Consider seeing a therapist or working with a coach to expand...
Help Seeking		●		You may be hesitant to seek out support from others when faced with a stressful situation. Build into your leave plan opportunities for you to ask for support from others you can trust and rely on.
Prioritizing	●			You do not make time for the things that matter most to you. Consider working with a therapist or coach who can help you with strategies to move your priorities to center stage [this is your life].
Switching Off From Work	●			You have difficulty completely letting go of work when you are at home. Look for ways to mentally and physically disengage from your work tasks while at home and off of work (e.g. minimizing how often you check work email). It may also help to speak ...

# Aggregated PLTA Data

Perinatal Mental  
Health Concerns

**55%**

Missed  
Promotion  
Opportunities

**12%**

Inappropriate  
Comments

**11%**

Parental Leave  
Knowledge

Benefits: **33%**

Process: **24%**

Resources: **21%**

Turnover Risk

(n=72)

**25%**

# Case Study

Open Discussion: Parental Leave Opportunities

# Case Study: Paid Parental Policy

<b>Policy Statement</b>	This policy sets forth policy and procedures for parental leave.
<b>Reason for Policy</b>	Parental leave allows for time off from work for Parents and Adoptive Parents to care for a newborn or newly adopted child following the birth or legal adoption of a child on or after October 1, 2022.
<b>Eligibility</b>	<p><b>A. Parent:</b> The biological mother or father of a child or the same sex spouse of the biological mother or father of a child.</p> <p><b>B: Adoptive Parent:</b> A person who has custody of a child by virtue of an order of adoption. If the adoption process is underway but a final order of adoption has not yet been entered, an adoptive parent may include a person who has received authorized placement of the child in the parent's home, for adoption (excluding foster care).</p> <p><b>C. Child:</b> A biological or legally adopted child age 17 or under of an eligible employee.</p> <p><b>D. All Regular Full-time/Part time:</b> Employees employed at least twelve (12) consecutive months immediately preceding the commencement date of the leave are eligible to receive parental leave with pay for four (4) consecutive weeks.</p>
<b>Leave Provisions</b>	<p><b>Birth Parent</b> must use four (4) weeks of parental leave during the benefit waiting period of the short-term disability benefits.</p> <p><b>Non-Birth Parent/Adoptive Parent</b> must use four (4) weeks of parental leave within one year of the date of birth or placement.</p>

# Case Study: Recap

## What was positive?

- All employees included
- Entitlements equitable
- Relationships and definitions are clearly defined



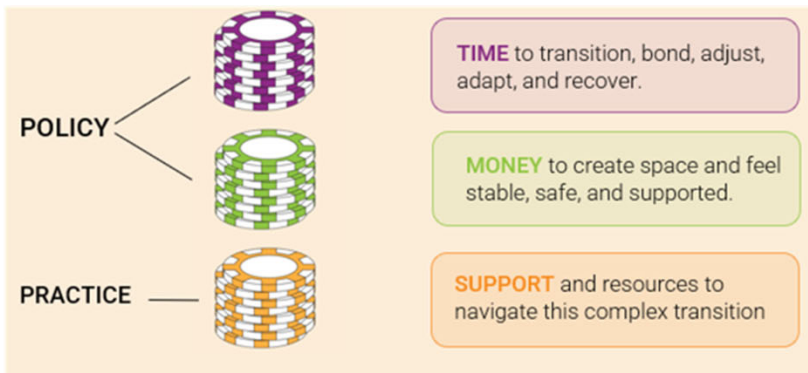
## Where were there opportunities?

- Birth mothers are required to use parental leave during STD benefit waiting period
- Adverse experience for birth parents
- Benefit integration/STD plan design



# Case Study: Reevaluating with the Human Element

- 1** Review what human need is not being met.
- Time, money, support



Source: Center for Parental Leave Leadership

- 2** Consider stakeholder needs and priorities.
- Does the parental leave benefit integrate well with other employee benefits (ex. STD, state paid leave)



# Case Study: Reevaluating with the Human Element

3

Seek employees' feedback on their experience to measure success.

- Ex. free surveys, ERGs, annual employee engagement survey

4

Redefine metrics and priorities.

- Consider subjective and objective measures

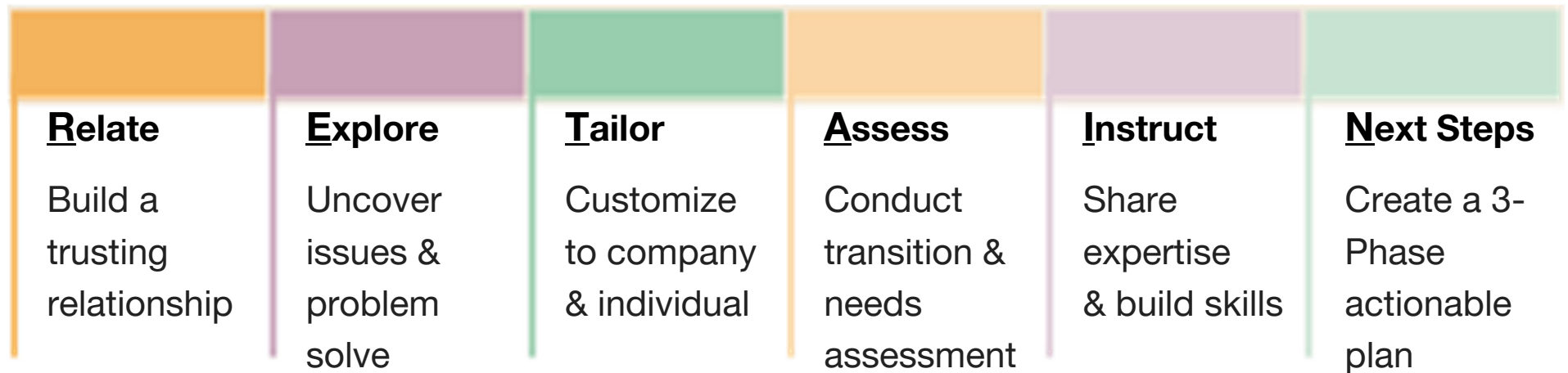
Policy  
+  
Practice  
=  
Transformation



# Evidence-based Best Practices

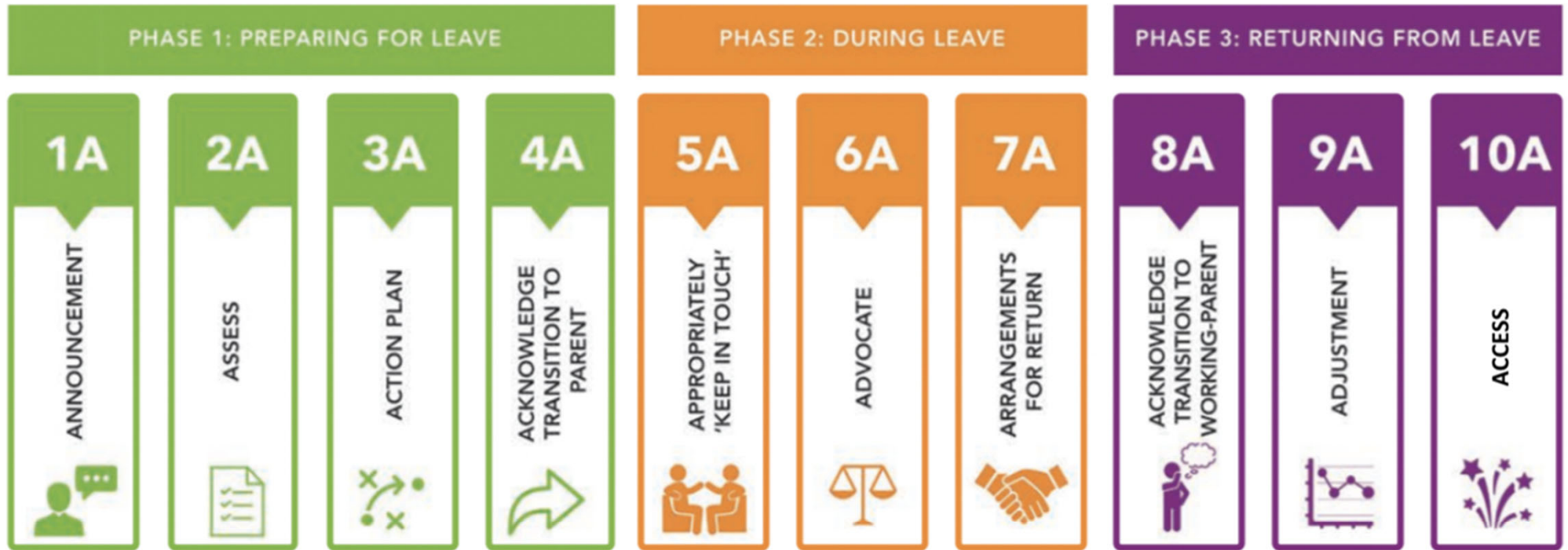
Bringing the Human Experience Back into Parental Leave

# RETAIN Parental Leave Coaching Model



Source: Center for Parental Leave Leadership

# THE 10A TRANSITION TOUCHPOINTS FRAMEWORK™



Source: Center for Parental Leave Leadership

# Policy + Practice = Transformation

With best practices such as these:

## Much Improved:

**100%**

Retention (intention to stay increased ~53%)

**100%**

Program Effectiveness

**100%**

Recommend the Program to Others

## Moderately to Much Improved:

**87%**

Increased Sense of Being Valued by Organization

**67%**

Increased Health and Well-being

**80%**

Increased Work/Non-Work Integration Confidence

**60%**

Increased Confidence at Work

**67%**

Increased Productivity

**60%**

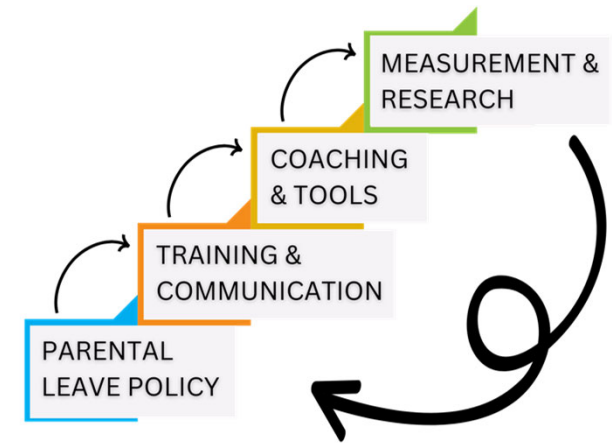
Increased use of Internal Resources



Source: Center for Parental Leave Leadership

# General Guidelines

- Thoughtfully examine your policy
- Develop a communication plan
- Proactively train all stakeholders
- Seize the developmental opportunities for all stakeholders
- Monitor regularly and iterate for continuous improvement
- Consider partnering with parental leave experts





# Thank You!



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