
Paid Sick Days: A Tool for School Success for All Kids



“Too often, students are kept from school to assist parents in maintaining the well-being of a home, because a parent doesn’t have paid sick leave from their job.”

–Amy Lester, guidance counselor

Not all children have the ability to stay home when they are sick. By passing a Paid Sick Days ordinance in Tacoma, we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to be cared for when they need it the most.

Lucky Children vs. Unlucky Children:

Lucky	Unlucky
- Parents can pick up sick children at school and stay with them until they recover.	- Parents don’t have flexibility at work that allows for regular medical care.
- Parents can make & keep doctor appointments.	- Parents are unable to stay with sick children.
- Child recovers more quickly.	- Must miss school when younger siblings get sick.

Advice from the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department:

Staying home when sick is an important way to help prevent the spread of germs that cause illnesses. Children should be kept home because the illness causes an unsafe or unhealthy place for others at school.

Keep your child home if he/she has:

- A fever: Temperature over 100.4° F along with behavior changes or other signs and symptoms of illness such as sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, or irritability.
- Vomiting: 2 or more times within 24 hours.
- Diarrhea: 3 or more watery stools within 24 hours.

(TPCHD. <http://www.tpchd.org/files/library/95cef95e96e6fd48.pdf>)

Parental Involvement Matters:

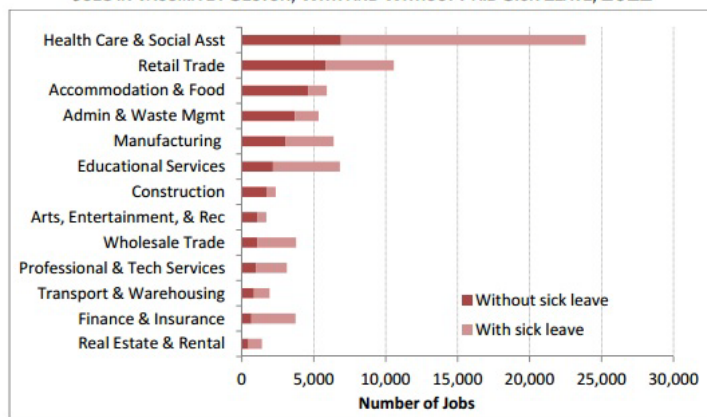
Kids do better in school when their parents have paid leave. They tend to recover more quickly from illness when a parent is present.

- Low income kids have worse health than middle class kids.
- Older kids stay home with siblings when parents can't
- Parents with paid sick days are 20% less likely to send a sick child to school.



Access to Paid Sick Leave in Tacoma:

JOBS IN TACOMA BY SECTOR, WITH AND WITHOUT PAID SICK LEAVE, 2011



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map; and Institute for Women's Policy Research Paid Sick Days Calculator

In Tacoma, only 40% of private sector workers earn paid sick days. In families with children under 18 in Tacoma:

- 77% of single moms are in the workforce
- 70% of married couples with kids have both parents in the workforce.
- 63% of kids in Tacoma

Public Schools are eligible for free or reduced lunch. –**These kids are most likely to have parents who don't have any sick leave.**

(US Census, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction)

Paid Sick Days Policy Options:

Together we can work to pass an ordinance so parents can earn leave for sickness, preventive care, and family health needs.

- Workers earn 5 to 9 days, depending on number of employees in business;
- For health needs of worker or family member;
- "Safe leave" for public health emergencies or to deal with domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.