Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

The Balance of Employment and Parenting a Child with Medical Complexity

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Children with medical complexity are a subgroup of children with special health care needs whose conditions typically require frequent and intense care. The complexity of their conditions places these children at risk for recurrent hospitalizations, creating additional caregiving demands that make it challenging for their parents to maintain employment.

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) may allow some parents to balance the competing demands of employment and caregiving, but how its protections are accessed and perceptions of the policy's value among parents of children with medical complexity—given their unique caregiving responsibilities—have not been previously well articulated.

This *Research at a Glance* brief highlights PolicyLab qualitative research that sought to better understand the obstacles and concerns faced by parents of children with medical complexity and emphasizes the need for future research to assess whether paid leave policies provide new options to parents of children with medical complexity and allow for caregiver employment stability.

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