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SURVEY REPORTS NEED FOR AND LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CALIFORNIA PAID FAMILY LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM

PRESS RELEASE

A recent survey conducted by the Berger Institute for Work, Family, and Children at Claremont McKenna College revealed that fewer than 31 percent of respondents are familiar with the new California Paid Family Leave Insurance Program, which became effective July 1. Although nearly 50 percent of Anglo and Latino respondents reported taking at least one day off work in the past three months to care for a sick family member, and nearly half expect to be responsible for the care of an elderly family member during the next five years, awareness of the new legislation is low, according to Berger Institute staff.

A two-year grant from the California Wellness Foundation is funding Berger research on the Family Leave Insurance Program. The study sampled 364 participants (45 percent male, 55 percent female) in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. The new legislation provides California workers up to 55 percent of their wages while taking up to six weeks of leave for self-care, or to care for a sick or injured family member, as well as the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a new child.

Results of the study indicate that having part of their salary paid would allow employees to keep their jobs while assisting in the care of a sick or injured family member—ultimately lowering the overall costs of illness by helping people get better, sooner. Of those who had reported taking a leave, 80 percent used their time in a manner that helped a family member recover faster, such as trips to the hospital.

“With health care for middle- and low-income workers becoming an increasingly volatile political issue in America, we hope this research informs the debate over the costs and benefits of providing working adults with paid leave to care for sick family members,” says Diane Halpern, CMC professor of psychology, director of the Berger Institute, and president of the American Psychological Association.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*Among the findings:*

- One-third of the individuals who have taken time off from work to care for a sick family member stated that their job had been threatened or they had lost their job as a result.
- 33 percent of Anglos, but only 14 percent of Latinos, are familiar with the new legislation.
- After they were informed about the California Paid Leave Insurance Program, close to 75 percent of the respondents reported either somewhat positive or very positive attitudes toward the program, with similar attitudes for employers and employees.

The survey also found that Latinos may have greater need for the program, with about 80 percent, versus 56 percent of Anglos, reporting children in the household. Twenty-three percent of Latinos, and 10 percent of Anglos, reported care responsibility for a live-in disabled person.

FACTS ABOUT CALIFORNIA'S PAID FAMILY LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM

- Covers all employees who are covered by State Disability Insurance (SDI) or a voluntary plan in lieu of SDI.
- Offers up to 6 weeks of benefits in a 12-month period, at up to 55% of the person's salary, to care for a new child (birth, adoption, or foster) or seriously ill family member (child, spouse, parent, or domestic partner).
- Payroll deductions began Jan. 1, 2004, and benefits began July 1, 2004.
- There is a one-week waiting period before workers can apply for paid leave; accrued sick time or vacation time may be used to cover this period.
- An individual is not eligible for Paid Family Leave if another family member is able and available to provide care during the same period of time.
- Paid Family Leave provides benefits but does not provide job protection or return rights (which may be protected under FMLA –Federal unpaid leave legislation – which applies to most places of employment with more than 50 employees).

Facts are taken from California Employment Development Department (EDD) publications. For additional information, visit the California Employment Development Department's website at www.edd.ca.gov, or call EDD at 1-877-BE-THERE (English), 1-877-379-3819 (Spanish), or 1-800-563-2441 (TTY for hearing-impaired). Information can also be found on the Berger Institute website at <http://berger.claremontmckenna.edu>.

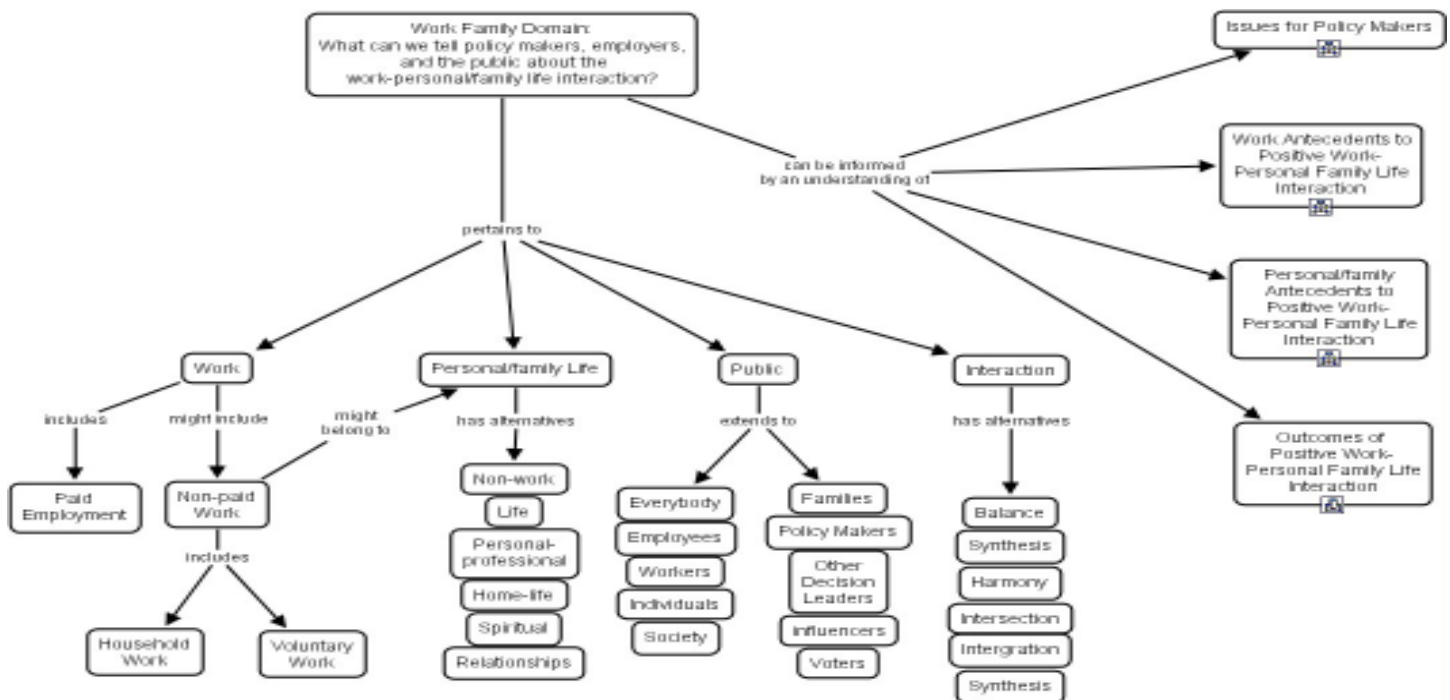
AN UPDATE ON DR. DIANE HALPERN'S PRESIDENTIAL WORK

MARIBETH LEHOX, '06

As part of her role as President of the American Psychological Association, Dr. Halpern assembled a task-force of leaders from various fields to help create her Presidential Initiative on work-family interactions. This nonpartisan group is working to assemble a “best evidence” data-base to support broad recommendations for working families, fiscally-sound business decisions, and public policies. Current public policies are not up to date with the numerous social changes in home and work life that have occurred over the past 30 years. Today, there are more working mothers, “nontraditional families,” and single fathers than ever before. With few families able to afford “luxuries” like health insurance, mortgage payments, and grocery bills on one salary, the two-parent, single wage-earner family is going the way of the dodo bird.

The changing nature of work is another factor addressed by the task-force. The spread of technology has made a “real” vacation virtually impossible for many workers, who check email from every location. Family-friendly policies are not only beneficial to employees, but can be economically sound because they reduce turnover and absenteeism. Gender segregation in job markets and wage gaps between the educated elite and unskilled workers are important social issues. Childcare and elder care remain the central issues for working families. Dr. Halpern’s initiative addresses the contemporary realities of work, family, and children by creating guides that can be used by individual families based on their own value systems and economic needs. Recommendations will be widely disseminated to the 2004 Congress and employers and families via various media.

Dr. Halpern and the task-force also worked to create a system of concept maps (example pictured below), which are a visual representation of various interdisciplinary ideas. They began with the focus question: *What can we tell policy makers, employers, and the public about the work-personal/family life interaction?* Because the intersection of work, family, children and public policy is a complex area of research theory with applications that cross the boundaries of traditional academic domains, this information is often hard to organize in a cohesive and comprehensive form. The concept maps offer a method of systematically arranging these complex and interrelated topics. Concept maps are a spatial array of information where knowledge is comprised of concepts that are labeled with symbols and words, which are connected by linking words to form propositions. Each concept has links to references, videos, and websites. *Come to our website, <http://berger.claremontmckenna.edu> to view the interactive concept maps.*



TAKE A KID TO COLLEGE DAY

MARIEL KYGER, '06

On April 22, the Berger Institute participated in the annual Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day by welcoming 18 children between the ages of 8 and 12 for Take A Kid to College Day at Claremont McKenna College. These children were from local schools, and many were from disadvantaged neighborhoods or families. The aim of Take a Kid to College Day was to expose these children to the college experience and to motivate them to start thinking about college and their educational future, as well as to informally provide them with information about financial resources and college planning. Each child was paired with a CMC student – there were 29 volunteers in all – to give them a one-on-one experience in which they could ask questions and get to know their “buddy.”

The Berger Kids arrived in the morning and were paired with their morning college mentor. Some were shy at first, but as they warmed up, they began to ask the important questions about college life, such as “Does Collins [Dining Hall] have pizza *every day*?” CMC students guided their buddies through the maze of the cafeteria and talked to them over lunch about their likes, dislikes, and future plans. Although most of these children were relatively young, almost all seemed to have a plan to go to college. One girl was considering being a veterinarian; another wanted to be a government official in DC. The CMC volunteers talked to them about what classes they would need

to take, both in high school and in college, to fulfill their goals. Students and mentors also discussed ways to pay for college, such as scholarships and grants, and ways to cut costs like application fees.

After lunch, the Berger Kids colored a thank-you card for Professor Zanella, who would perform a science demonstration later on, and were encouraged to write down any questions they had about science. After a quick game of touch football which showcased one sixth-grader’s NFL-worthy throwing arm, a CMC student tour guide led kids and volunteers on a campus tour, including the computer labs, dorms, and athletic facilities. The children

were then matched up with their afternoon mentors, who completed the day with them as the children watched Professor Zanella’s science demonstration and participated in a scavenger hunt, which led them around campus in a representation of a day in the life of the average college student. The scavenger hunt ended at Pitzer Hall, where the kids were given backpacks filled with donated school supplies, and buses picked them up to take them back to their schools after an enjoyable and useful day.

Take a Kid to College Day was a remarkable experience for both the college volunteers and the

visiting children. For the volunteers, it provided a chance to work with and get to know some children who are from low income families but who nevertheless have hope for their futures; for the Berger



Dr. Heidi Riggio and Mike Oshiro, '06 lead the Berger kids around the scenic Claremont McKenna campus.



Two Berger girls assist Dr. Zanella in the lab.

Kids, the day provided a glimpse into the world of college and let them know that there are ways to achieve their goals and there are people who want to help.

Special Thanks to Dr. Andrew Zanella, Claremont McKenna College Career Services Center, Walmart, Target, and the Kravis Leadership Institute for their support and donations. And a very special thank you to Mountain View Elementary and Sumner Elementary principals, Mike Lawshe and Maribeth Jacobs.

**If you would like to help make
Take A Kid to College an annual event please contact:**

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A Claremont McKenna mentor escorts his Berger kid around campus.

THE EXTENSION AND APPLICATION OF TAKE A KID TO COLLEGE DAY

DANA WEISER, '05

Expectations of educational goals are a significant factor as to whether students do or do not attend college. A study by Eccles, Vida, and Barber (2004) found that sixth-graders' certainty of college plans predicted college attendance rates even after controlling for family demographics, such as parental educational history and socioeconomic status, and sixth-grade GPA. According to a recent survey done by the Families and Work Institute, 85 percent of girls and 78 percent of boys say they expect to earn a four-year degree. Yet according to the U.S. Census Bureau only 25 percent of the population has obtained a four-year degree. This indicates that something causes these children's expectations to shift away from college as they get older. The more children are encouraged to attend college and told that college is a relevant goal, the more likely they will attend. This expectation is vital because it will motivate children to take the courses necessary for college admittance. A child preparing him or herself for college will take classes enriched with the tools for college and thus be able to attend college and excel. The goal of "Take a Kid to College Day"

was to ensure that these children from low income families were shown that college can and should be an attainable goal. The college students these children met with gave them tools and motivation necessary to go to college. In today's job market a college education is becoming more and more necessary. For these reasons, the Berger Institute would like to make "Take a Kid to College Day" an annual event so that the interaction with college students will cement children's college expectations and allow them to become reality. It is our hope that the fifth graders that came to Claremont McKenna College will meet their college expectations and we hope to expose more children to these experiences.

References

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A DISCUSSION OF THE WORK-FAMILY LINKAGE STUDY

STEPHAN DESROCHERS AND MARIBETH LEHOX, '06

With the division between work and family life becoming less distinct, individuals face a number of challenges when choosing how to either integrate or separate the various aspects of their lives. Though this decision is by no means a modern one, the diverse ways in which individuals attempt to strike a balance in their lives reflect the very personal nature of this struggle. Home offices, sleepless nights, and extra hours are all methods employed by those who hope to keep some semblance of separation between work and home life. Tactics aside, it is clear that nearly everyone who works must decide how strong an influence their job will have on their home lives. It is clear that almost all jobs linger in the minds (and often homes) of workers: work is hardly limited to the hours between 9 and 5.

Participants were asked the open-ended question of how they “decide to stop working and start doing family activities and when to stop doing family activities and start working.” Examples of responses are:

- “I have an office with a door at home,” one 40 year-old male replied. “My family knows when the door is shut, don’t interrupt. If open, it’s ok to interrupt if necessary.”
- “I usually set an amount of time to work to get done as my stopping point.” By limiting the amount of work accomplished in each at-home work time (e.g. after I finish this report, or after I’ve finished editing this paper), this individual does not allow work at home to take up indefinite amounts of time.
- One 58-year-old man reported that he and his wife “both have a good work ethic and do what’s necessary to get the job done; over-time, etc. We find it hard to stop working at home when behind or have deadlines.” Though possessing a good work ethic is inarguably viewed as a positive trait, allowing at-home work to cut into family and other home commitments is detrimental.

This raises the question of whether one can be both a good employee and a good family member. People often believe that the penalties they face if they fail to keep a promise or fulfill a commitment at home are less serious than those at work. Thus, pressures from work often cause home/family duties to be neglected. One man said that “individual work tasks are worked on and completed until they are done within the required deadline, even if it interferes with home activities.” While this attitude is common in the corporate world, its inverse would be unheard of. People do not often tell employers that they must leave in the middle of a meeting to watch a school play or that they’ll be coming in late tomorrow because they have to pack lunches for their children. Because the lack of stability or assuredness about one’s place in the working world, home and family activities are more likely to take a backseat to work duties.

Participants overwhelmingly voiced the opinion that they try to minimize the amount of carryover from work to home. In theory, home life seems to be the priority, while in practice, work ends up getting more of an individual’s time and attention. Though work at home cannot always be avoided, one man said that he does this extra work “late at night or early in the morning to least impact my family.” This idea of late night/early morning work was reported by many participants. Rather than sacrifice family time, these employees are forfeiting their sleeping hours. One man reported that “probably 90% of the time, I work when the rest of the family is asleep.” Consequently, he says that “I sleep or am a zombie while they are awake.” Rather than enjoy family activities, he “do[es] family activities only when ‘forced’ to— the rest of the time I am too tired or distracted or working.”

Try as they might, people who work extra office hours are often still not able to complete all the necessary work-related tasks. Most people who work more than 40 hours a week also spend quite a few hours working at home, even if they are putting in extra time at the office. In the professional world, it is simply expected that these tasks will be completed by assigned deadlines, regardless of the impact they may have on the worker and his/her other responsibilities. A major complaint voiced by respondents was the corporate habit of turning a blind eye to work/family struggles and expecting employees to make work and business concerns the number one priority in their lives. As one woman said, “to succeed in the corporate environment it is almost expected that you live an unbalanced life.”

To some, creating boundaries is a difficult task that cannot be accomplished, even when a desire for separation over blurring is expressed. One participant stated, “I do family activities before work, but if work comes up, I do that instead.” Priorities are in no way set in stone, and must be re-evaluated at each juncture. People constantly have to

ask themselves, “right now, what is more important. At the same time, however, they must also ask, to me— my work or my family commitments?” “What is more important and beneficial in the long run?” While playing with children or spending time with a spouse may seem more valuable at the time, anything less than guaranteed job security means that these would-be enjoyable moments are often clouded by a sense that time is being “wasted” and would be better spent on work-related activities. Like the man who reported feeling like a zombie when with his family, people are unable to enjoy activities when they are constantly worried about work, or perhaps worrying about the work they will have to complete after the fun is over and the kids are in bed. This “balancing” technique of working while the rest of the family sleeps may cause more stress and make family/ home time less enjoyable.

Come to our website

*<http://berger.claremontmckenna.edu>
and tell us how you manage work and
family and to read how other families do it.*

REDUCING WORK-FAMILY STRESS

MARIEL KYGER, '06

Research on work-family blurring is especially relevant because, today, parents are occupying themselves with both work and family issues on a day-to-day basis, making it difficult to separate the two. A father making calls from his office desk to find childcare while typing a document for work is the ultimate example of work-family blurring, and this scenario is not uncommon. Although combining work and family can be stressful, however, combining the two can also offer benefits as long as stress is minimized.

What You Can Do To Reduce Work-Family Stress:

Employers:

- Try to minimize work-related calls to employees on weekends or after-hours.
- Remember that it is cost-effective to promote healthy lifestyles. Employees who are under less stress will take fewer sick days and be more productive.
- Supportive supervisors are instrumental in reducing pressure and stress.
- Flexible job schedules allow workers to be productive when at work while still meeting their family's needs.

Employees:

- If you must bring work home, set aside a specific place and time in which to complete it.
- If you work from home routinely, create a “home office” designated for work.



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OUR MISSION

Integrating the fields of psychology, economics, sociology and public policy to effect change and to study the challenges that face working individuals, families, communities, labor and business.

The Berger Institute for Work, Family, and Children advances knowledge about the interactions between work and family through education, dissemination, research, and communication. Students, faculty, and staff research a broad range of work-family issues including the effects of changing demographics and diversity, conflict and support from multiple social roles, and the family, social, global, and technological factors that contribute to family-friendly workplaces and communities. Psychosocial, economic, public policy, and workforce issues are examined.

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