



FATHERS GAIN WHEN WE CHANGE POLICIES TO VALUE CARE



“Fathers are becoming partners in care, enriching their lives, their families, and our economy. It is high time government and business policies support them, rather than stand in their way.”

– Riane Eisler, President of the Center for Partnership Studies, and author of
The Real Wealth of Nations: Creating a Caring Economics

The New Dad



Survey after survey reveals that work/family stress impacts men as well as women. Many men today want to be more involved with their families while also succeeding at their jobs. They expect to be as engaged in their careers and their children as their partners are. They

are trying to change the out-dated view of care as “women’s work” and the stigma of caregiving as not properly “masculine.”

But they face still another obstacle that keeps men from their families, blunting their most important personal relationships. This is the notion perpetuated by conventional economic measures, such as GDP, that care work is not “productive.”

The truth is that care work is enormously productive, yielding invaluable benefits to families – and our nation’s economy. Care produces social wealth. It is the economic engine that fuels our human capacity and lays the groundwork for the creativity and innovation required by our modern global economy.

To show the value of care – and provide more accurate metrics for fathers, mothers, advocates, and policy makers – the Center for Partnership Studies developed [Social Wealth Economic Indicators \(SWEIs\)](#).

Consider These Facts:

- ❖ The value of unpaid care work has been estimated at between 25 – 50% of GDP.
- ❖ Countries with a smaller gender gap are more economically competitive in the global marketplace.
- ❖ As women’s workforce participation rate rises, so too does a nation’s GDP.
- ❖ Societies that promote gender equity have stronger democracies.
- ❖ Involved fathers live longer, have fewer health problems, and are more productive at work.
- ❖ When men provide care for their children as infants, they remain more engaged as their children grow.
- ❖ Men’s involvement during and after their partner’s pregnancy promotes the mother’s physical and mental health.
- ❖ When men participate meaningfully in unpaid domestic labor, women’s opportunity to participate in the paid economy, and to earn more when they do, is increased.
- ❖ Care promotes economic expansion by increasing human capacity, and reduces public costs by decreasing the need for public assistance.



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Fathers Play Critical Roles



The notion that a Dad's role is limited to being "a good provider" has undergone a major shift. In most households, both mothers and fathers are providers of financial

support, and both mothers and fathers are also providers of care for their children - though the division of labor is not yet fully egalitarian. A recent longitudinal study of households with two full-time working parents suggests that following the birth of a child, the women logged 37 hours of housework and child care each week, while the men contributed 24 hours.

<http://digitalunion.osu.edu/r2/summer09/eskin/Index.html>

Policy changes can set the stage for a more equal division of labor in households. For example, in Canada, a small change in policy -- making it "normal" and expected for fathers to take parental leave -- not only increased the number of men taking paternity leave, it also increased their daily time in household work by 23 percent, an effect that lasted long after the leave period ended.

<https://contemporaryfamilies.org/ccf-briefing-report-daddys-home/>

When they fully engage as caregivers at home, fathers make an essential contribution to their children, their partners, and their own health and happiness. This makes families more secure, improves health outcomes, and enhances educational attainment for children. The SWEIs show that fathers' care work also makes a vital contribution to the "high quality human capital" so essential to economic success in our knowledge/service age.



Why the US Must Invest in Care Now

In spite of our status as the world's superpower and its largest economy, SWEIs show that we've already lost a tremendous amount of ground. The statistics are chilling:

- ❖ The US is the only industrialized nation with no nationally guaranteed paid maternity and paternity leave. SWEIS report: <http://caringeconomy.org/newindicators,2014>
- ❖ The US spends less than half as much as other industrialized nations on family benefits as a percentage of GDP. SWEIS report: <http://caringeconomy.org/newindicators,2014>
- ❖ A child in the US is over two times as likely to die before age 5 than a child in Iceland. <http://whale.to/b/deathchild.html>
- ❖ The 2014 US Census Bureau indicates 21% of US children live in poverty. <http://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-157.html>
- ❖ The estimated economic contribution of unpaid U.S. family caregivers was \$470 billion in 2013. <http://www.aarp.org/ppi/info-2015/valuing-the-invaluable-2015-update.html/>
- ❖ The US gender wage gap exists across all industries, occupations, education levels, races and ethnicities, largely because of the devaluation of care work still primarily done by women. National Partnership for Women & Families, Issue Brief, An Unlevel Playing Field, American's Gender-Based Wage Gap, Binds of Discrimination, and A Path Forward, April 2015
- ❖ The US ranks 33 - behind most European nations, as well as Japan, Canada, and Singapore - in the 2015 Mothers' Index Save the Children, based on 5 indicators: maternal health, children's well-being, educational status, economic status, and political status.

Now that most parents provide both cash and care for their families, our workplaces and our policies should help



rather than hinder them. Men have unique and valuable contributions to make towards enlarging our social wealth. Our next step must be ensuring that they can.

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