

Proposed revision
(new or revised language underlined)

Presbytery of Southern New England
Parental Leave

Recognizing and celebrating that the addition of children to a family is a gift and blessing of God, the Presbytery of Southern New England offers the following best practices for churches, ministers, commissioned ruling elders, and staff enrolled in the Board of Pensions benefits plans, in the event of the addition of new children, regardless of how the child came to be in the family (including, but not limited to, birth, adoption, and long term foster placement). It should be noted that churches for whom the following provisions would be a financial hardship may apply to the Presbytery of Southern New England for assistance to help defray the costs of a supply pastor during the leave period.

Churches are urged to develop a paid Parental Leave Policy as part of their Personnel Policies Manual. The Presbytery recommends that the following provisions be included in such a policy manual:

- 1) Pastors should inform the session and the Committee on Ministry (who will provide guidance as needed), at least two months in advance of the projected leave.
- 2) The addition of a new child to a family brings risks of complications, unexpected needs, and other uncertainties. Thus it is the duty of the pastor/professional and the session to deal with these issues in an open and caring relationship.
- 3) The session should make provisions for the continuation of the pastoral/professional functions during the leave period.
- 4) Parental leave should be granted for a period of twelve weeks, with full salary, housing, and benefits as stated in the terms of call or contract, with the possibility of adding additional weeks of unpaid leave. Leave may start prior to the addition of the child.
- 5) Short term disability coverage, if provided by the church, may be used to meet the cost of paid leave. It should be noted that Board of Pensions provisions for disability are for long term situations, and begin only after ninety days.
- 6) Paid leave should be given in the case of a critical family situation related to the addition of a child (including, but not limited to the case of miscarriage, still birth, or infant death) up to the full twelve weeks, as needed.
- 7) In the case of two applicable parents (ministers, CRE or staff enrolled in the BOP) serving the same church, parental leave may be taken concurrently or consecutively.
- 8) The Session should consider a “baby to work” option for new parents, permitting them to bring a child to the workplace (in appropriate situations) for up to age six months or when the baby begins to crawl.