

# New Parents Resource Guide

The College of New Jersey

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## Introduction

Congratulations on the upcoming arrival of your child! The Office of Human Resources is pleased to provide you with information you may find helpful as you anticipate, plan for and begin your maternity or paternity leave of absence. Herein we have provided information pertaining to parenting resources, TCNJ benefits, State of NJ benefit entitlements, explanations of leaves of absence and where to find supports for new parents.

As questions arise, please contact the Office of Human Resources by submitting a ticket through the [HR Portal](#).

We look forward to assisting you during this joyous time!

## The Early Childhood, Parenting and Professional Resource Center

The Early Childhood, Parenting and Professional Resource Center is a New Jersey statewide initiative.

The focus of NJ Parent Link is to meet the information and resource needs of expectant parents, families with young children (newborns to children entering kindergarten) and also to provide support resources for families with older children, school aged to young adulthood.

Website content includes early childhood health, development, early learning, parenting and family support resources.

Family milestone topics include pre-conceptual/prenatal health, kindergarten readiness, back to work/staying at home and parenting older siblings.

For more about the resource center, click here: [NJ Parent Link](#)

## TCNJ Paid Time Off Benefits

The College of New Jersey recognizes employees may find it necessary to take a leave of absence to address family responsibilities, their own serious health condition or personal obligations. As such, TCNJ offers various leave programs to eligible employees.

### Sick Leave

During your maternity leave of absence, you will continue to receive a payroll check during the period you are considered disabled if you have enough accrued sick leave time to use. Or, if not, you may apply for temporary disability insurance (described later in the guidebook) under the State of New Jersey insurance program, after you use up to two weeks of accrued sick time.

### Vacation Leave

An employee who has accrued vacation leave may, at your discretion, elect to use vacation time to remain in paid status during a maternity or paternity leave of absence.

### Administrative Leave

Employees with an administrative leave balance may, at your discretion, use the leave balance during a maternity or paternity leave of absence.

For more information regarding use of paid time off, please contact the Office of Human Resources by submitting a ticket through the [HR Portal](#).

## Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 Overview

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides for 12 weeks of *unpaid* job protected leave in a 12-month period, provided the employee has worked for a covered employer for at least a year and has worked 1,250 hours in the previous 12 months.

FMLA leave is generally available for employees for the following reasons:

- Incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care of child birth
- To care for the employee's own "serious health condition" (as defined by the FMLA)
- To care for the serious health condition of an immediate family member (as defined by the FMLA)

Further information about FMLA may be found here: [Family and Medical Leave Act](#)

## New Jersey Family Leave Act Overview

The New Jersey Family Leave Act (NJFLA) is a state law that provides up to 12 weeks of *unpaid* job protected leave during a 24-month period, provided the employee has worked for at least one year and has worked 1,000 hours in the previous 12 months. NJFLA *excludes* an employee's own health status as a covered condition. A leave of absence under NJFLA may be taken for the following reasons:

- To care for the serious health condition of a family member
- To care for a newborn child or newly adopted child

The NJFLA facts may be found here: [NJ Family Leave Act](#)

## Frequently Asked Questions about FMLA and NJFLA

Many employees have questions about the similarities, differences and overlaps between FMLA (federally mandated job protection) and NJFLA (State of NJ mandated job protection). Below are questions and answers associated with the two regulations.

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**Q: How is *serious health condition* defined under FMLA?**

**A:** A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the function of the employee's job or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment required may be met by a period of incapacity of more than five (5), full calendar days combined with at least two (2) visits to a health care provider or one (1) visit of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy or prenatal care, or incapacity due to a chronic illness.

**Q: What are the eligibility requirements for FMLA?**

**A:** FMLA eligibility requires the following criteria: The employee must have been employed with the company for 12 months. The employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months prior to the start of FMLA leave.

**Q: What documents do I need in order to apply for an FMLA leave of absence?**

**A:** Depending on your type of leave, you would need to have your health care provider complete:

The [Employee's Serious Health Condition, Form WH-380-E](#) or;

the [Family Member's Serious Health Condition, Form WH-380-F](#)

**Q: How is *serious health condition* defined under NJFLA?**

**A:** The employee's own serious health condition does *not* qualify under NJFLA. NJFLA is for care of a family member, or for bonding with a new child (newborn or newly adopted child).

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents a family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment required may be met by a period of incapacity of more than five (5), full calendar days combined with at least two (2) visits to a health care provider or one (1) visit of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to a chronic illness.

**Q: What are the eligibility requirements for NJFLA?**

**A:** To be eligible for leave under the NJFLA, an employee must have worked for a covered employer for at least 12 months and have worked 1,000 base hours in the preceding 12 months.

**Q: What notice must I give to TCNJ in order for an FMLA or NJFLA leave of absence to be approved?**

**A:** When the need for an FMLA or NJFLA leave is foreseeable, you must provide 30 days of advance notice of the need for a leave of absence.

When the need for an FMLA or NJFLA leave is unforeseeable and the 30 days of advance notice is not possible, you must give notice as soon as possible and practicable.

When you become aware of a need for an FMLA or NJFLA leave fewer than 30 days in advance, you are required to provide notice on the same day you become aware of the need, or on the next business day.

## New Jersey Temporary Disability Insurance Benefits

During a maternity leave of absence (while disabled), you are entitled to apply for **New Jersey Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI)**. It is required that an employee use up to two weeks of accrued sick time prior to applying for TDI benefits. The State of New Jersey makes the determination as to eligibility for this paid benefit. Information pertaining to New Jersey temporary disability insurance is located here: [NJ Dept of Labor and Workforce Development](#)

Please note: You must file a claim within 30 days after the start of your disability. If you file later, benefits may be denied or reduced.

If you have no sick time available to cover the period immediately prior to the delivery of your child, you may apply for temporary disability insurance benefits for a period of up to four weeks pre-delivery.

The duration of temporary disability insurance post-delivery depends upon whether the baby is born naturally or via cesarean section. Temporary disability insurance benefits are available for six weeks post-delivery for a natural birth, and eight weeks post-delivery for a cesarean section birth.

## Maternity Leave

Below are frequently asked questions and answers related to time off under the TCNJ benefit plan, and as coordinated with State of New Jersey (NJFLA) and Federal (FMLA) leave of absence entitlements.

**Q: How does FMLA and NJFLA work when I request a leave of absence for a period immediately prior to the birth of a child, and to care for my newborn or newly adopted child?**

**A:** If eligible, you are typically entitled to a FMLA leave for up to four weeks before birth, and six to eight weeks (depending on type of birth) postpartum for maternity, labor and delivery, and recovery. This period, considered a period of disability, allows for utilization of sick time if you have accrued sick time available. During this period the associated leave of absence category would be **FMLA**.

You are also eligible to apply for State of **New Jersey Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI)** benefits for this period. TDI, if approved, replaces a percentage of your regular pay.

Once the postpartum period has come to an end, you are eligible to remain on a leave of absence to bond with your baby. If eligible, the leave of absence category, once the period of disability ends, is jointly considered FMLA and NJFLA leave.

Employees who have accrued vacation time available may elect to use vacation time in order to remain in paid status during this period. Employees who do not have vacation time available may apply for **New Jersey Family Leave Insurance (NJFLI)** benefits.

**Q: What is New Jersey Family Leave Insurance (NJFLI)?**

**A:** The NJFLI is a wage-replacement statute that provides benefits to both public and private sector workers for the purpose of bonding with a newborn child or caring for a sick family member.

**Q: Am I permitted to work until my expected due date?**

**A:** Yes. You are eligible to work until your expected due date as long as your health care provider does not indicate a medical need for your leave of absence to start prior to your due date.

An employee who opts to remain at work until her delivery date would forego the ability to apply for and receive temporary disability insurance benefits for the four weeks prior to the delivery date.

**Q: What type of paid leave is available while I am on maternity leave?**

**A.** If you have accrued sick time available, you will be required to use up to two weeks of your accrued sick hours prior to applying for Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) benefits. If approved, TDI benefits replace approximately 85% of earnings to a maximum dollar amount. The maximum dollar amount is periodically updated by the State of New Jersey. Once you have been released from medical care, if you have vacation time available, vacation time *may* be used for the duration of the leave of absence. You are **not** required to use vacation time during a maternity leave of absence.



For more information on wage replacement benefits offered by the State of New Jersey click here: [NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development](#)

**Q: What type of paid leave is available after my baby is born, or once I adopt a child?**

**A:** New Jersey Family Leave Insurance (NJFLI) is a provision of the New Jersey Family Leave (NJFLA) regulation. New Jersey Family Leave Insurance allows up to 12 weeks of benefits before your child's first birthday, if the benefits are claimed for one continuous period of unpaid leave. If you are claiming benefits on an intermittent schedule, whether it be a week, a month, or a day at a time, you may receive up to 56 individual days (8 weeks) of Family Leave insurance benefits before your child's first birthday.

If you are receiving TDI benefits, the State of New Jersey will contact you directly regarding your right to apply for NJFLI benefits.

If you are not receiving TDI benefits, you may submit your NJFLI application no earlier than the start date of your NJFLA leave.

Once the NJFLI application has been submitted to the State of New Jersey, it is your responsibility to maintain contact with the NJFLI department to learn the status of your application. Please be aware that the Office of Human Resources is not permitted to contact NJFLI on your behalf.

## Returning to Work Following a Maternity Leave of Absence

We look forward to your return following the birth or adoption of your child!

If you are returning following the birth of a child, please provide to the Office of Human Resources a medical release one week prior to your return to work date. The clearance should indicate that you are able to perform the duties of your position and should be signed and dated by your attending medical care provider. You should also contact your manager to inform her/him of your anticipated return to work date.

If you are returning to work at the end of a leave of absence following the adoption of a child, one week prior to your return, you should notify the Office of Human Resources to confirm your leave end date. You should also inform your manager of your anticipated return to work date.

## Paternity Leave

An employee whose spouse is expecting a child, or who is adopting a child, may take a leave of absence during this exciting time. Below we have provided the answers to frequently asked questions about a paternity leave of absence.

**Q: As an expectant father, am I eligible to apply for a leave of absence in order to care for my spouse and/or newborn or newly adopted child?**

**A:** Yes, you are eligible to apply for a FMLA/NJFLA leave of absence.

Since the leave of absence would be to care for someone besides yourself, the leave is applied to both FMLA and NJFLA. A maximum of 12 weeks of leave may be taken during the first year of your child's arrival. Many employees opt to take this leave of absence intermittently, rather than continuously.

**Q: What documents do I need to complete in order to apply for paternity leave?**

**A:** To provide care for your spouse, you would need to have the Certification of Health Care Providers for Family Member's Serious Health Condition form completed by your spouse's medical provider. To bond with your newborn or newly adopted child, you will need to provide proof of relationship (i.e., birth certificate, adoption documents, etc.).

### Q: What time will be used while I am on paternity leave?

A: If caring for your spouse, you may use earned sick time. If bonding with your newborn or newly adopted child, if eligible, you may elect to use earned vacation time or administrative leave (if you are eligible for any of these leave categories).

You may apply for New Jersey Family Leave Insurance (NJFLI).

Once the NJFLI application has been submitted to the State of New Jersey, it is your responsibility to maintain contact with the NJFLI department to learn the status of your application. Please be aware that the Office of Human Resources is not permitted to contact NJFLI on your behalf.

## Returning to Work Following a Paternity Leave of Absence

We look forward to your return following the birth or adoption of your child!

One week prior to the end of your approved paternity leave of absence period, you should contact the Office of Human Resources to confirm your leave end date. You should also inform your manager of your anticipated return to work date.

## Additional Considerations Following the Birth or Adoption of a Child

A consideration once your baby is here, or your newly adopted child has joined your family, relates to the process to obtain health care coverage for your child.

## Medical Insurance Once the Baby Arrives

You may be eligible to enroll in TCNJ sponsored medical coverage and/or add or delete dependents once your child arrives. You have up to 60 days after the birth or adoption of your child to enroll her/him as a dependent under your plan. If you are not already covered by a TCNJ sponsored medical plan, and you waived coverage when you were initially eligible to participate, you may elect health care insurance at this time.

Often, care providers will contact you to request insurance billing information associated with the new baby. If you have medical insurance under a TCNJ sponsored plan and are contacted by your health care provider before you have enrolled your child, or after you have completed the enrollment process, but before you have received updated medical plan identification cards, please contact the TCNJ benefits department for guidance navigating these medical insurance matters.

Please keep in mind that you have only **60 days to enroll** a new dependent under the health plan. Should you miss this enrollment time frame, you will not be able to enroll your child until the annual open enrollment period.

## Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

New parenthood brings a host of emotions and changes as you manage your personal, family and work commitments. TCNJ provides to employees, at no cost, an employee assistance program.

Penn Medicine EAP offers state-of-the-art facilities, advanced diagnostic and treatment tools, and exceptional physicians and clinical care professionals with sterling credentials.

The EAP works to provide barrier-free access to services that are convenient to the employee's home or work location, and on-site at The College of New Jersey. Find out more here: Penn Medicine EAP

Penn Medicine EAP affords employees, and their household family members, free and strictly confidential counseling for life challenges that may affect job performance, health, or personal well-being. Examples of issues for which people typically request assistance include:

- Work/life balance
- Depression or anxiety
- Marital tension
- Stress from work or family

## Lactation Rooms

TCNJ is dedicated to ensuring that nursing mothers have available spaces in which breast milk may be comfortably expressed. These locations, known as lactation rooms, are available to all TCNJ students, faculty, staff and campus visitors who need a private lactation space.

Lactation rooms are available across campus:

- STEM Building Room 209: Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.
- Education Building Room 2-B: Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m. and Saturday and Sundays from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Green Hall – Mamava Pod (lower level): Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Use link to access the [TCNJ Campus Map](#) and find additional info on lactation rooms at TCNJ.

## Child Care Resources

Several area child care facilities have agreed to offer TCNJ employees discounted services. Below we have provided a list of those organizations.

Child Care Facility	Contact Name	Phone Number	Website	Discount
The Malvern School	Michelle Sklar	609-654-4500	<a href="https://malvernschool.com/">https://malvernschool.com/</a>	10%
The Village Learning Center	Mary Innocenzi	609-737-7877	<a href="http://www.thevillagelearningcenter.com">www.thevillagelearningcenter.com</a>	10%
Lambertville Academy	Lisa Exrleben	609-397-8477	<a href="http://www.fishermansmark.org/lambertvilleacademy">http://www.fishermansmark.org/lambertvilleacademy</a>	\$75 waiver of enrollment and registration fees

## Additional Information about Child Care Centers

Licensed child care centers that offer discounts to New Jersey state employees are here:  
<http://www.state.nj.us/csc/employees/programs/discount/camps.html>

The directory of all licensed child care centers in the State of New Jersey:  
<https://www.nj.gov/dcf/families/childcare/>

The directory of licensed child care centers in Mercer County, New Jersey:  
<https://childcareexplorer.njccis.com/portal/>