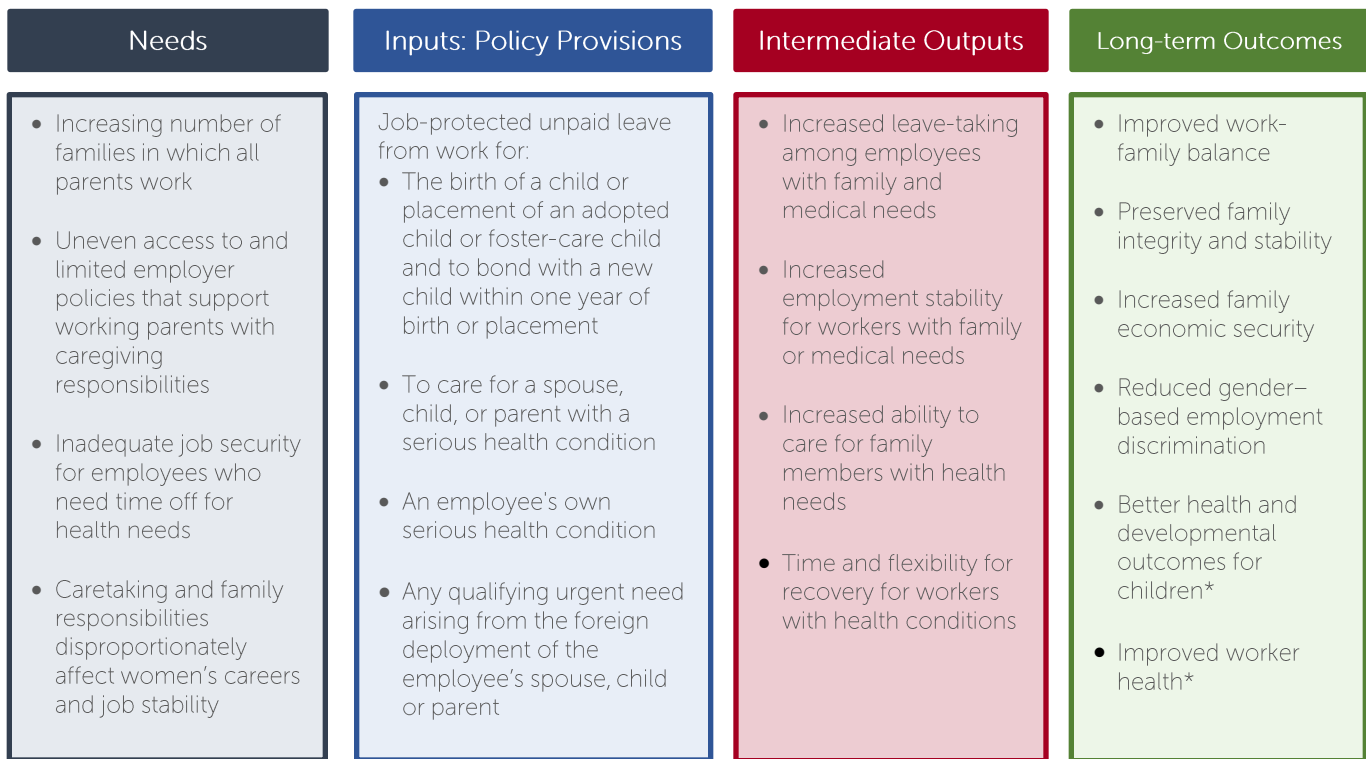


# Appendix B: The logic model of the FMLA

The Family and Medical Leave Act is designed to address employees' need to balance their work duties with their own health needs or caretaking responsibilities for newborns and seriously ill family members. When evaluating the effectiveness of programs and policies, logic models help illustrate how programs or policies are intended to address specified outcomes. A logic model provides a visual representation of the relationships between policies and regulations (inputs) and participant outcomes (outputs). The logic model below illustrates the problems or needs that the FMLA was designed to address, the specific inputs of the FMLA, as well as the intermediate outputs and longer-term outcomes the FMLA was designed to impact.

## Logic model of the FMLA



Source: diversitydatakids.org created this logic model based on the FMLA legislation and research evidence on key outcomes

\*Health outcomes are inferred from research evidence, but are not directly listed as a key outcome in FMLA legislation.<sup>1</sup>

There is no definitive evidence that many of the key goals listed in the FMLA – such as promoting economic security, preserving family integrity and promoting work-life balance – are causally linked to unpaid time off. While one may logically assume that job-protected leave would positively impact these outcomes, research has not fully established policy impacts, partially due to data limitations. Defining and measuring “work-life balance” and “family integrity” is challenging, and in general these outcomes have not been extensively studied in relation to the

FMLA. Other outcomes, such as economic security, have been measured in various ways, such as looking at the impacts of the FMLA on women's wages and employment stability and infant health, but have not been studied using an experimental design.<sup>2, 3</sup>

Finally, while the FMLA does include gender equality and reduced discrimination in its goals, researchers have not evaluated the Act's effectiveness in reducing gender inequities. The Act does not address its potential to exacerbate inequitable access and financial barriers to taking temporary leave from work that many lower-income and lower-educated workers face. This omission translates into the policy's design and implementation. The unpaid and unfunded design of FMLA leave makes it unaffordable for many low-income workers, and the eligibility requirements disqualify many low-income workers completely. These constraints highlight the importance of building equity into the foundation and goals of a policy. In the case of the FMLA, the lack of equity goals in the policy design and implementation translates into real repercussions for low-income workers that may exacerbate inequities in access to job-protected leave.

## Endnotes and citations

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3. Han, W. J., Ruhm, C., & Waldfogel, J. (2009). Parental leave policies and parents' employment and leave-taking. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 28(1), 29-54. doi:10.1002/pam.20398.