

Family leave—maternity and parental leave provisions, approximately 2000

Nation	Maternal leave benefits (paid)	Parental leave benefits (unpaid and paid)
Nordic countries		
Denmark	18 weeks. 100% of wages up to flat-rate ceiling of DKK2,758 [US\$321] per week, equal in practice to about 60% prior wages. Owing to collective agreements, many employers “top up” so 80% of parents receive 100% wage replacement.	<p>Paid leave: Parents may share 10 weeks of parental leave. Benefit level same as maternity leave. Extended to 12 weeks if father takes 2 weeks. As with maternity, 80% receive full wage.</p> <p>Following parental leave, each parent entitled to 26 weeks of additional child care leave (13 weeks if after 1st birthday). Benefit level is 60% of parental leave benefit level; sometimes supplemented by local authorities. Available until child’s 9th birthday.^a</p>
Finland	18 weeks [105 days]. Benefit based on graduated replacement rate: approximately 70% at low income, 40% at medium income, 25% at high income (equal, on average, to approximately 66%).	<p>Paid leave: Parents may share 26 weeks [158 days] weeks of parental leave. Benefit level is 66% of earnings, flat-rate if not employed.</p> <p>Following parental leave, family entitled to 108 weeks home care leave, on the condition that the child is not in public child care. Benefit paid at a low flat-rate of approximately FIM2,900 [US\$475] per month. Available until child’s 3rd birthday.^b</p>
Norway	Paid leave: Parents may share 52 weeks of leave at 80% of wages, or, alternatively, 42 weeks at 100% of wages. (9 weeks exclusively for the mothers, 4 exclusively for the father). Benefits subject to maximum income of NOK290,261 [US\$26,876] per year. Benefit can be paid while parent is employed 50% -90% time, and leave time is extended accordingly. Available until child’s 3rd birthday. ^{c,d}	
Sweden	Paid leave: Parents may share 65 weeks [15 months] of leave. Benefit level is 80% of earnings for 52 weeks [12 months]; flate rate for remaining 13 weeks [3 months], at approximately SEK1,800 [US\$187] per month. Earnings-related benefit subject to maximum income of approximately SEK270,000 income [US\$28,000] per year. Benefit	

can be paid while parent is employed part-time, and leave is extended accordingly. Available until child's 8th birthday.^e

Continental countries

Belgium	15 weeks. 82% of wages for first 4 weeks [1 month], plus 75% of wages thereafter. Benefits during first month not subject to ceiling; thereafter, benefits subject to maximum income of approximately \$95/day. ^f	Paid leave: Each parent entitled to 13 weeks [3 months] full-time leave or up to 26 weeks [6 months] of half-time leave. Parents taking leave receive flat-rate benefit payment of BF20,400[US\$551] per month. Available until child's 4th birthday.
France	16 weeks for first 2 children, 26 weeks for 3rd and subsequent children. 100% of wages, up to maximum of FF387 [US\$59] per day. ^g	Paid leave: Parents may share 156 weeks [3 years] of leave. No benefit paid for 1st child; benefit level is flat-rate FF3,024 [US\$462] per month for second and subsequent children. Benefit can be paid at reduced rate while parent is employed part-time. Available until child's 3rd birthday. ^h
Germany	14 weeks. 100% of wages. ⁱ	Paid leave: Parents may share 156 weeks [3 years] of leave. Benefit is flat-rate of DM600 [US\$309] per month for 2 years or up to DM900 [US\$464] per month for 1 year. Benefits are income-tested, but majority of families qualify (during the first six months, then the income limits are lower and about half qualify). Benefits can be paid during part-time employment of up to 30 hours per week. Paid leave can be used until child's 2nd birthday; 3rd year of leave may be used until child is 8 years old. ^j
Luxembourg	16 weeks. 100% of wages.	Paid leave: Each parent entitled to 26 weeks [6 months] full-time leave; one parent can receive flat rate of LF60,000 [US\$1,471] per month. Benefit can be paid at half rate if parent works part-time. One parent must take parental leave directly following maternity leave; other

Netherlands	16 weeks. 100% of wages, up to daily maximum of 310 guilders [US\$154] per day. ^k	can take leave until child is 5 years old. Unpaid leave: Each parent entitled to leave of the equivalent of 13 weeks [3 months] at their usual hours of work per week. Standard take-up is 26 weeks [6 months] at 50% working time. Available until child's 8th birthday.
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English-speaking countries

Canada	15 weeks. 55% of previous average insured earnings, up to a maximum benefit of C\$413 [US\$350] a week. Family supplement for low-income earners (less than C\$25,921 [US\$21,967]) raises replacement rate to 80%. ^l	Paid leave: Parents may share 35 weeks of parental leave; combined maternity [15 weeks] and parental benefit cannot exceed 50 weeks. Benefit rate is same as for maternity (55% up to a maximum of \$413 [US\$350] a week.) Parents can continue to work, earning the greater of \$50 [US\$42] per week or 25 per cent of their weekly benefit rate without affecting their parental benefits. Available until child's 1st birthday.
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United Kingdom	Statutory Maternity Pay (stricter eligibility): 6 weeks at 90% of wages, plus 12 weeks at flat rate (£60.20 [US\$92]) per week. Maternity Allowance (broader eligibility): 18 weeks. Paid at lesser of 90% of wages or flat rate (£60.20 [US\$92] per week). ^m	Unpaid leave: Each parent entitled to 13 weeks full-time leave per child. No more than four weeks can be taken in any given year. Available until child is 5 years old.
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United States	No national policy of paid maternity leave. Some benefits paid under temporary disability insurance (TDI) laws in 5 states: California, Hawaii, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island. Approximately 23% of the US population resides in these states.	Unpaid leave: Each parent entitled to 12 weeks family and medical leave (if employer has 50+ employees and work history requirements fulfilled). Available until child's 1st birthday Several states extend federal leave; generally, state laws broaden coverage (including smaller employers) and/or
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Maximum duration: 26-52 weeks; average duration: 5-13 weeks.

Maximum weekly benefits: \$170 - \$487; average weekly benefits: \$142 - \$273.

increase duration.

California enacted paid parental leave in 2002. Pays approximately 55% wage replacement for six weeks, subject to earnings cap.

Reproduced from Gornick and Meyers (2003: 125-8).

Notes: All durations are expressed as weeks, to help with interpretation. Where authors converted from days, years, or months, original duration is given in square brackets. All currency amounts expressed as 2000 US dollars, adjusted for purchasing power parities.

a Danish parental leave reformed March 2002. Entitlement increased to 32 weeks (to be shared between the parents) at same pay as maternity; 80% of employers still top up. Other changes increased the flexibility of parents' take-up options.

b Finnish parents can replace home care leave payment with payment for private child care provider.

c Norwegian cap equivalent to approximately 1.9 times average annual earnings among working-age mothers (part-time and full-time combined).

d Norwegian parents can use cash benefit to pay for private child care (for children aged 1 or 2) if child is not in a public slot. In addition to paid parental leave, each parent is entitled to one year of unpaid leave.

e Swedish cap equivalent to approximately 2.2 times average annual earnings among working-age mothers (part-time and full-time combined).

f Earnings ceiling in Belgium as of 2002.

g French replacement rate is 100% of net wages (after social insurance contributions are deducted).

h French parents working 50% time receive 66% of full benefit; parents working 50-80% time receive 50% of full benefit.

i German maternity leave is paid about 25% by health insurance and about 75% by employer.

j German parental leave law as of January 2001.

k As of January 2001, the Netherlands government offers subsidies to employers who provide paid leave, to defray some of the costs.

l Canadian maximum pertains to benefit level, not maximum covered earnings. Maximum benefit of US\$350 a week converts to approximately US\$17,500 per year, or equivalent to 55% of about US\$32,000 in earnings. Also, the national government pays benefits, but rights to take leave are established at the provincial level.

m As of 2003, both maternity leave benefits in U.K. extended from 18 to 26 weeks.

Sources: Data from CAUT-ACPPU (2001); Clearinghouse on International Developments in Child, Youth and Family Policies (2003); ISSA (2000); Moss and Deven (1999); OECD (2001a, 2001d); Wisensale 2001; country experts.