

Hungary¹

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For comparisons with other countries in this review – on demographic, economic, employment and gender equality indicators and on leave provision and early childhood education and care services - go to [cross-country comparisons](#) page on website. To contact authors of country notes, go to [membership-list of members](#) page on website.

1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

Note on terminology: the Hungarian terms for the two elements of the Parental leave arrangements discussed in 1c – GYES and GYED – include the word *gondozás*, that is ‘care’. By contrast, GYET - available after the child gets older than three (see 1d) - includes the word *nevelés*, that is ‘upbringing’. The Hungarian terms for these three leave arrangements (1c and 1d) literally refer only to the payment element, although in practice they cover both leave periods and cash benefits (e.g. GYES is *gyermekgondozási segély*, literally ‘childcare allowance’). The payment related to ‘Maternity leave’ has been re-named as ‘Infant care payment’ in 2015.

a. Maternity leave (*szülési szabadság*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Human Resources)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Twenty-four weeks: up to four weeks prior birth. Two weeks are obligatory.
- GYED is only available to mothers up to the end of the child’s first year (see section 1c for further details).

Payment (csecsemőgondozási díj) and funding

- Seventy per cent of average daily earnings, with no ceiling on payments. In cases when there has been previous employment (i.e. the pregnant woman is eligible), but no actual income can be determined on the first day of eligibility (e.g. the pregnant woman is on sick leave for several months, or is self-employed and does not have an actual income), the payment is twice the daily amount of the official minimum wage. In this case, the payment is made by the Treasury, not by the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF).
- Funded by the NHIF (National Health Insurance Fund), which is financed through contributions from employers, employees and general taxation; employers and employees both pay six per cent of gross earnings.

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Flexibility in use

- The starting date can be from four weeks prior to birth up to the birth itself.

Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)

- All mothers are entitled to 24 weeks unpaid Maternity leave.
- Employees and self-employed women with an employment record of at least 365 days within two years prior to the birth of a child are entitled to the benefit payment during the period of Maternity leave.
- Insured mothers having a second or third child while they are already receiving GYES or GYED, i.e. the receipt of GYES or GYED makes them eligible for Maternity leave rather than their employment record..

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the mother

- If the newborn is cared for in an institute for prematurely born infants for a year, the unused portion of the Maternity leave can be taken up after the child is taken home.
- Guardians who care for the child are eligible.
- The father (birth or adoptive) is eligible if the mother dies or is not present in the household due to health-related reasons.

b. Paternity leave² (responsibility of the Ministry of Human Resources)

Length of leave

- Five days.

Payment and funding

- Hundred per cent of father's average daily wage, with no ceiling on payments.
- Funding as for Maternity leave.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be taken during the first two months of the child's life.

Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)

- All employed fathers.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the father.

- Seven days in case of twins.

² Paternity leave has no separate name in Hungarian; it is just listed as one of the eligible reasons for leave days in the Code of Labour legislation.

c. Parental leave (responsibility of the Ministry of National Resources)

There are two types of leave and benefit: (1) for non-insured parents, *Gyermekgondozási segély* (GYES); and (2) for insured parents, *Gyermekgondozási díj* (GYED). Both are family entitlements, except for GYED up to the child's first birthday, which is an entitlement only for mothers.

Length of leave

- **GYES:**
 - a. Until the child's third birthday for parents who are not insured.
 - b. From the end of GYED (child's second birthday) until the child's third birthday, for insured parents.
- **GYED:** from the end of the Maternity leave period until the child's second birthday, for insured parents.

Payment and funding

- **GYES:** until the child's third birthday, a flat-rate benefit equal to the amount of the minimum old-age pension, HUF28,500 [€92³] per month in 2015. For multiple births, two hundred per cent of this amount is paid in the case of two children, 300 per cent for three children, with similar increases for additional children. Funded by the Treasury from general taxation.
- **GYED:** benefit of 70 per cent of average daily earnings, up to a ceiling of 70 per cent of twice the minimum daily wage (HUF147,000 [€476] per month in 2015). Funding as for Maternity leave.

Flexibility in use

- A parent taking **GYES** cannot work until the child's first birthday, but can then work unlimited hours while still receiving the full benefit until the child's third birthday. If the parent takes up GYES and works, she/he can still access public childcare for children under three years (*bölcsőde*).
- A parent taking **GYED** can work unlimited hours after the child's first birthday while still receiving the full benefit until the child's second birthday. If the parent takes up GYED and works, she can still access public childcare for children under three years (*bölcsőde*).

Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)

- **GYES:** all parents. Guardians are also eligible.
- **GYED:** only the mother may take this leave up to the child's first birthday. Otherwise either of the parents living with the child is eligible as long as she/he has been employed for at least 365 days within two years prior the birth of the child; however, only one parent at a time can actually take GYED. Foster parents are not eligible.
- **GYED:** women who would not be eligible under the above listed criteria but completed two semesters at a higher education institution recognised by the state within two years prior to the birth of the child. Eligibility in this case is for one year of payment, beginning at the birth of the child. They receive a payment equal to the minimum wage valid on the

³ Conversion of local currency into Euros undertaken on 1-5 June 2015, using <http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter/>

first day of their eligibility (HUF105,000 [€340] per month in 2015), except those studying for MA or PhD for whom the payment is 70 per cent of the guaranteed minimum wage (HUF85,400 [€276] per month in 2015).

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the parents

- **GYES:** parents of a child with a long-term illness or disability can take leave until the child's tenth birthday (or even longer in discretionary cases); parents of twins are eligible until the children begin elementary school and receive a double payment.
- **GYES:** can be taken by grandparents from the first to the third birthday of the child if the child is looked after in her/his own home and if the parents agree to transfer their entitlement. Grandparents taking GYES can work less than 30 hours a week, or without limitation if the work is done in the home and the child is older than three years.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

Either of the parents in a family with three or more children may take leave during the period between the third and eighth birthday of the youngest child (*Gyermeknevelési támogatás, GYET*). Benefit payment as for GYES. The person taking up GYET can work less than 30 hours a week, or unlimited hours if the work is done at home. While GYES and GYED are intended to promote childbirth and support reconciliation between work and childrearing, GYET is considered an acknowledgement of parenthood as paid work and consequently recipients are credited with social insurance contributions.

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- The same regulations regarding Maternity and Parental leave apply for adoptive parents as for other parents.

Time off for the care of dependants

- There is an entitlement to leave, the length of which depends on the age of the child: under one year, unlimited; 12-35 months, up to 84 days per child per year; 36-71 months, 42 days; six to 12 years, 14 days. Lone parents are entitled to a double period of leave. Leave is a family entitlement and a sickness benefit is paid at 50 or 60 per cent of actual earnings up to a ceiling.

Flexible working

- Mothers are entitled to two paid one-hour breaks per day for breastfeeding until a child is six months old; and to one one-hour break until a child is nine months old. The number of hours is doubled in the case of twins.

2. Relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy

The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Hungary is three years (except for families with three or more children, where leave can be taken until a child is eight years); the last year is paid at a low flat rate, but until a child is two years old, insured parents taking leave

are paid at a high earnings-related level. There is an entitlement to ECEC (*óvoda*/kindergarten) from three years of age and attendance is compulsory (for at least four hours a day) from the age of five years (attendance will be compulsory from the age of three years, from the start of the school year 2015/16). Children under three years are also entitled to an ECEC service (*bölcsőde*/nursery) place, but there is a shortage of spaces in Hungary; legislation is in place but implementation varies. So although, by legislation, there is no gap between the end of Parental leave entitlement and the start of an ECEC entitlement, such a gap exists in practice due to a shortage of places in nurseries. Otherwise there is a one year gap between the end of well-paid leave (GYED) and an entitlement for a kindergarten place for three-year-olds. Levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years are well below the average for the countries included in this review and OECD countries; but above average for children over three years. For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

3. Changes in policy since April 2014 (including proposals currently under discussion)

None reported.

4. Take-up of leave

a. Maternity leave

Statistics⁴ are available only on the number of women receiving benefits. The average monthly number of mothers was 24,230 in 2013, which is 10.4 recipients per thousand women of fertile age. It is supposed that almost all eligible women take the leave.

b. Paternity leave

The total number of fathers taking leave during 2013 was 22,510, using 112,152 days in total, i.e. most fathers taking leave used their full five day entitlement.

c. Parental leave

Statistics are available only on the number of recipients of the benefits. The average monthly numbers in 2013 were: 161,274, or 69.6 recipients per thousand women of fertile age for GYES; 81,234, or 35.0 recipients per thousand women of fertile age for GYED; and 37,411, or 16.1 recipients per thousand of women of fertile age for GYET. There is no information on the proportion of parents taking leave, how long they take or on the number of fathers taking Parental leave. An estimate can be made on the basis that 0.4 per cent of children under one year, 10.5 per cent of those between one and two years, and 54.2 per cent of those between two and three years were in childcare centres in 2013, so the remainder probably had a parent (predominantly the mother) taking up one of the Parental leave options.

It is thought that mothers with higher education and better paid jobs take shorter periods of leave, especially as the last year of GYES is paid at a flat rate and because of the implications of prolonged absence from work on their career prospects. Some indication on the extent of leave-taking is provided by data on the age of children entering *bölcsőde* (nurseries taking children under three years of age); most children enter between 18 months and two years of age.

⁴ All statistics in this section are from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (*Központi Statisztikai Hivatal*) Yearbook of Welfare Statistics (see section 5b) and website (<https://www.ksh.hu/?lang=hu>).

d. Other employment-related measures

In 2013, the total number of paid leave days to care for a sick child was 794,000, which represented 4.0 per cent of all paid sick leave days.

5. Research and publications on leave and other employment-related policies since April 2014

a. General overview

Research and publications on leave and employment related policies have been scarce in 2014, as in the previous year.

b. Selected publications since April 2014

Gyarmati, A. (2014) 'Some Aspects of the Intergenerational Changes in Grandparental Childcare in Hungary. A Qualitative Analysis', *Demográfia*, Vol.57, No. 1: 45–72. (In Hungarian).

The author examines one type of intergenerational transfers, grandparental childcare, on the basis of a secondary analysis of an interview study on multigenerational families carried out in Hungary in 2004. In this paper she examines why grandparents help or do not help with childcare, under what conditions grandparental help is more probable, what grandparental help consists of, what parents expect from the grandparents, how the institutional context, the changing or unchanging family policy affects all these. The main findings of the paper are the obviously changing role of grandparents, the increasing effect of individualisation on intergenerational transfers, the changing quantity and quality of childcare directly and indirectly influenced by family policy or the type of care system.

Központi Statisztikai Hivatal [Hungarian Central Statistical Office] (2014) *Szociálisstatisztikai évkönyv 2013 [Yearbook of Welfare Statistics, 2013]* (with CD-ROM). Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal.

This yearbook contains detailed data on a wide range of welfare measures and services including: social assistance, family benefits, child welfare provision, child protection, social benefits, basic social care and child care, social work activities and accommodation, rehabilitative employment, sick pay, retirement allowances and the social and guardianship authority administration in 2013, with a detailed methodology.

c. Ongoing research

Changing Families and Sustainable Societies: Policy Contexts and Diversity over the Life Course and Across Generations (FamiliesAndSocieties) (2013-2017). FamiliesAndSocieties Funded by the European Union. Hungarian partner: Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA TK).

The main objectives of this project are to investigate the diversity of family forms, relationships, and life courses in Europe; to assess the compatibility of existing policies with these changes; and to contribute to evidence-based policy-making. The project intends to extend the knowledge on how policies promote well-being, inclusion and sustainable societal development among families.