

Latvia¹

Inese Upite (Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia)

April 2023

For comparisons with other countries in this review on leave provision and early childhood education and care services, please see the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review (also available individually on the [Leave Network website](#)). To contact authors of country notes, see the [members](#) page on the Leave Network website.

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

a. Maternity leave (*grūtniecības un dzemdību atvaļinājums*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- One hundred and twelve calendar days: 56 days before the birth and 56 days after.
- It is prohibited to employ a pregnant woman two weeks prior to the expected birth and a woman two weeks after the childbirth. The time of the expected birth and the fact of birth shall be certified by a doctor's opinion.

Payment and funding

- For employed women: 80 per cent of earnings calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins.
- For self-employed women: 80 per cent of the gross insurance contributions made during the period of the 12 calendar months ending one quarter before the quarter in which the leave begins. The benefit is paid in two parts: the first part is calculated for the 56 days (or 70 days) before the due date, and the second part is calculated for the 56 days (or 70 days) after the actual birth date.
- The average amount of the maternity benefit (in total) in 2021 was €2,257.96 for the first part of the leave and €1,960.19 for the second part

¹ Please cite as: Upite, I. (2023) 'Latvia country note', in Blum, S., Dobrotić, I., Kaufman, G., Koslowski, A. and Moss, P. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2023*. Available at: <https://www.leavenetwork.org/annual-review-reports/>

of the leave. The number of recipients during the year was €15,799 (around €1,316 per month).

- Payments are not taxed.
- Funded from social insurance.

Flexibility in use

- If women have given birth before the prenatal leave, she is entitled to paid prenatal and postnatal leaves after the childbirth. Similarly, where the child was born before the prescribed date of birth, the period of Maternity leave and benefit will be extended accordingly.
- Flexibility regarding the start of the prenatal and the end of postnatal leave is agreed with the doctor and the employer.

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

- All women who have paid social insurance contributions in Latvia for at least three months in the period of the last six months before the first day of Maternity leave or for at least six months in the last 24 months.
- All women who are spouses of a self-employed man and who have joined the social insurance system voluntarily.
- In a case where employment has ended due to the company's liquidation, the benefit is provided if the leave has started no later than 210 days after the end of employment.
- All women who have lost the status of an employee or self-employed no later than 60 days before the first day of Maternity leave.
- For the period after the childbirth – the father of a child or any other person who takes care of a new-born at home and fulfils the social insurance criteria is entitled to paid Maternity leave of 56 or 70 days if:
 - the mother is unable to take care of the child until the 42nd post-natal day due to sickness;
 - the mother has refused to take care of the child;
 - the mother has died during childbirth or before the 42nd post-natal day;
 - the child is a foundling (the child has been abandoned, and the mother is unknown).
- The right to the Maternity benefit ends six months from the first day of the first part of the leave (if the eligible person fails to apply until the end of that period, the right cannot be exercised).

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 a person other than the mother

- If the mother has required medical supervision due to the pregnancy (no later than at the 12th week of the pregnancy) – 14 extra days of leave before the birth of a child are provided.
- In the case of multiple births or complications during pregnancy, childbirth, or the postpartum period, 14 extra days of leave after the birth are provided.
- In the case of premature birth, the maternity benefit is paid in the same amount as it would be if the birth would take place at the due date.

- If a person is entitled to the unemployment allowance and Maternity benefit for the same time period, the unemployment allowance is suspended for that particular period, that is, only the Maternity benefit is paid.

b. Paternity leave (*atvaļinājums bērna tēvam*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Ten working days.
- The leave has to be requested no later than six months after childbirth; the benefit has to be requested no later than six months after the first day of the leave.

Payment and funding

- For employed men: 80 per cent of previous earnings, calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins.
- For self-employed men: 80 per cent of the gross insurance contributions made during the period of 12 calendar months, ending one quarter before the quarter in which the leave begins.
- The average amount of the paternity benefit in 2021 was €405.97, and the number of recipients during the year was 9,700 (around 808 per month).
- Payments are not taxed.
- Funded from social insurance budget.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be used within six months period (six months after childbirth).
- The leave can be divided into parts as agreed with the employer.

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

- The father of a child if the Paternity leave is granted no later than six months after the birth. If the paternity of the child has not been acknowledged (determined) or the child's father has died, or the father's custody right has been terminated, another person who is not the child's mother has the right to a leave of 10 working days upon request of the child's mother.
- The same insurance period eligibility criteria needed as for Maternity leave.
- One of the adoptive parents until the child reaches eighteen years of age.
- The right to the Paternity benefit ends six months from the first day of the Paternity leave.
- No specific regulation regarding same-sex couples (i.e., the right to the leave and thus the benefit is attached to any person who falls under the eligibility criteria mentioned above).

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 a person other than the father

- None.

c. Parental leave (*bērna kopšanas atvaļinājums*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Eighteen months per parent.
- Leave is an individual entitlement paid according with the conditions for granting parental benefit.

Payment and funding

- There are three separate benefits that are paid after the birth of a child: Parental benefit, Childbirth benefit, and Child care allowance.

Parental benefit

- Only parents who are participating in the social insurance system are eligible.
- Parents are entitled to choose the total period of receiving the Parental benefit, which consists of the Parental benefit and the non-transferable part of the Parental benefit. It is possible to choose one of the following benefit periods:
 - 1) 19 months, of which 15 months can be used until the child is 1.5 years old. The non-transferable part can be used by each parent until the child reaches eight years of age (benefit amount is 43.75 per cent of previous earnings);
 - 2) 13 months, of which 9 months can be used until the child is one year old. The non-transferable part can be used by each parent until the child reaches eight years of age (the benefit amount is 60 per cent of previous earnings).
- The period of payment of the Maternity benefit, if the Maternity benefit has been granted to one of the parents, is included in the total Parental benefit period.
- Only one parent is able to use the whole period of Parental benefit, including the two non-transferable months: (1) if the child's paternity has not been determined, (2) the other parent has died, (3) custody rights have been revoked or discontinued for the other parent, or the Orphan's Court has ruled that one parent is actually not raising or caring for the child.
- Funded in the same way as Maternity and Paternity leave.
- Parental benefit is not taxable.
- The average amount of the Parental benefit in 2022 was €725.11 per month for parents who chose to receive the benefit until a child reaches one year of age (number of recipients: around 2,224 per month, 55.8

per cent of which women), and €529.84 for parents who chose to receive the benefit until a child reaches 18 months of age (number of recipients: around 17,489 per month, 87,5 per cent of which women).

- The amount of Parental benefit is reduced to 50 per cent of the benefit granted if the beneficiary discontinues Parental leave in order to resume working.
- Parental benefit payment period is extended by the period of the specified pregnancy leave if the child was born before the determined start of the pregnancy leave.

Childbirth benefit

- Paid to one of the parents or the legal guardian of a child, if the child has been taken under guardianship until they reach one year of age.
- The benefit is a lump sum allowance of €421.17 for each child, and it is available to all parents (also the parents not paying social insurance).
- The application for the childbirth benefit should be submitted within six months from the first day of the child's life or the day the guardianship has been granted.

Child care allowance

- Paid to one of the parents or the legal guardian of a child if the child has been taken under guardianship, or one of the adoptive parents, or a foster parent.
- The benefit is €171 per month for each child until a child reaches 18 months of age and then €42.69 per month for each child until a child reaches 24 months of age.
- The application for the child care allowance should be submitted within six months from the first day of the child's life or the day the guardianship has been granted.
- The child care allowance is granted to all parents raising a child under two years of age, that is, to socially insured persons as well as to parents who are not participants of the social contributions system. The benefit is not granted for the period in which the maternity benefit is paid.
- Additionally, one of the parents, guardians, or adoptive parents is entitled to receive the family state benefit. The amount of the family state benefit depends on the number of children that are actually raised by the benefit recipient. One of the spouses, on the basis of the mutual consent of the other spouse, may receive a family state benefit for all the children they raise together (including children from spouse former relationships/marriage).
- The amount of the family state benefit is €25 per month for one child; €100 per month for two children (€50 for each child); €225 per month for three children (€75 for each child); €100 per month per each child in the family with four or more children.
- The family state benefit is paid for every child raised in the family from the age of one to the age of 16, as well as for a child aged 16 to 20 if they are continuing with education in a general education or vocational training institution and are not married. The benefit is paid directly to the child after they reach 18 years of age, if prior to that they have been under guardianship.
- Families with disabled children or children diagnosed with coeliac disease are entitled to an additional benefit: €106.72 per month for each child with a disability or coeliac disease.
- Additionally, one of the parents, a guardian, or one of the adoptive parents

is entitled to receive the allowance for the care of a disabled child: €313.43 per month for each child with a disability, until the child reaches 18 years of age and €79.68 once every six months if the State Medical Commission for the Assessment of Health Condition and Working Ability has issued a conclusion on the necessity for a specially fitted vehicle (car) until the child reaches 18 years of age.

Flexibility in use

- Both parents are entitled to 18 months of leave until a child reaches eight years of age. Parental leave, upon the request of an employee, shall be granted as a single period or in blocks (a block cannot be shorter than one calendar week without interruption).
- The employee has an obligation to notify the employer in writing one month before the beginning of the leave about the intention to use the leave, including the length of the Parental leave they plan to use (as a single period or in blocks).
- Employee has the right to request to use the Parental leave flexibly. An employer has the obligation to assess such a request and, not later than within one month from the receipt of the request of the employee, to notify the employee of the possibility of using the Parental leave in a flexible manner.
- The leave can be used simultaneously by both parents, but only one parent can receive the benefit. The recipient is allowed to transfer the right to benefit to the other parent, if needed. Also, it is allowed to work and receive the benefit, however, in those cases, the amount of the benefit is reduced (see above).
- Parents are entitled to transfer the benefits right to one another, except for two non-transferable months.

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

- Only parents who are participants of the social insurance system (see Maternity leave).
- One of the parents (adoptive or biological) of the child;
- Child's foster family member;
- Child's guardian or any other person who takes care of a child according to the decision of an orphans' court.
- Women who are not (self-)employed at the date when the benefit is requested but were (self-)employed no later than 60 days before the first day of the Maternity leave, or 210 days before the first day of the Maternity leave in case of company's liquidation, or have lost the (self-)employment status during the Maternity leave.

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 a person other than mother

- A guardian, foster parent or adoptive parent has the right to request a change in the length of parental benefit if the biological parent has had

already used the right to parental benefit (only a remaining leave can be used).

- If the next child is born before the previous has reached three years of age, the parental benefit cannot be smaller than the benefit a parent received for the previous child.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

- No statutory entitlement.

e. Other types of leave and flexible working

Adoption leave and pay

- Adoptive parents are entitled to Paternity and Parental leave. Payment and funding are provided on the same grounds as for biological parents.
- In addition, for a family, which has adopted a child up to 18 years of age, one of the adopters shall be granted 10 calendar days of leave.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Parents who have joined the social insurance system (employed, self-employed, or parents whose spouse is self-employed) are entitled to sick leave and benefit for a child up to 14 years of age: 14 days per sickness episode if a child has been taken care of at home, or up to 21 days if a child has been admitted to hospital, or up to 30 days if a child has an injury caused by bone fracture;
- Parents whose child have been diagnosed with a severe illness and for whom the consilium has issued a respective decision; or parents who receive the allowance for the care of a disabled child if long-term hospital treatment is needed are entitled to sickness benefit for a period up to 26 weeks in case of a continuous sickness or for no longer than three years in five years period in case of various sickness episodes.
- Grandparents, foster parents, guardians, or any other person who takes care of a child according to the decision of an orphans' court are also entitled to sickness benefit.
- The sickness benefit is calculated in the same way as the Maternity and Paternity benefit and is taxable.
- An employer shall grant a leave without retention of the remuneration, if it is requested by an employee who has to personally care for a spouse, parent, child, or another close family member or the person who lives with the employee in the same household and who requires substantial care or support due to a serious medical reason (caretaker's leave). Such leave shall be granted for a period not exceeding five working days within one year. The employee has the right to use such leave in parts.

Specific provision for (breast-)feeding

- Parents (both mothers and fathers) with a child up to 18 months of age are entitled to a paid additional break for feeding their child – at least 30 minutes every three hours (or at least 60 minutes every three hours, if a parent has more than one child up to 18 months of age). Upon request, parents are entitled to combine these breaks, thus prolonging a lunch break or shortening their working day.

Flexible working

- On their request, pregnant women, women in the post-natal period up to one year after the birth, and employed parents who have a child up to 14 years of age (or up to 18 years if a child has a disability) are entitled to part-time work; breast-feeding woman is entitled to part-time work through the whole period of breast-feeding, while an employee with a disability or an employee who is a parent caring for an adult with a disability, requiring special care from childhood, are entitled to part-time work with the right to return to a full-time work pattern when they need to do so.
- A pregnant woman is entitled to leave the workplace to undergo a health examination in the prenatal period if it is impossible to undergo it outside of working time.
- Parents who have a child up to 18 years of age are entitled to temporary absence in the case of the sickness of a child or an accident, as well as for a doctor's appointment.
- Parents who have a child up to three years of age (or 18 years of age if a child has a disability) are entitled to annual leave during the summer months as a priority group or at any other time of their choice.
- Parents who have one or two children up to 14 years of age are entitled to additional annual leave – at least one working day (paid).
- Parents who have three or more children up to 16 years of age (or up to 18 years of age if a child has a disability) are entitled to additional annual leave – three working days (paid).
- An employee who has a child under eight years of age or who has to personally care for a spouse, parent, child, or another close family member or the person who lives with the employee in the same household and who requires substantial care or support due to a serious medical reason has the right to request from the employer to set an adaptation to the organisation of the working hours.

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave is 38 months, but only just over half of this is paid and only 1.9 months is well paid. According to the Law on Education, Article 17, municipalities are responsible for ensuring that all children from 18 months of age registered in their area receive Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in an institution that is closest to the child's home; a child can also attend an ECEC institution in another municipality and receive the same financial support

as those children who attend an institution in the municipality of their place of residence. In principle, therefore, there is no gap between the end of leave and entitlement to ECEC and a gap of around 16 months between the end of well-paid leave and an ECEC entitlement. However, in practice, there are no municipalities that can offer a place in a municipal ECEC institution for all children: for instance, in October 2022, there were around 6 868 children from the ages of one and a half to six years who did not receive a place in a municipal ECEC institution. The most difficult situation is in Marupe municipality, with 1,314 children waiting for a place in a municipal ECEC.

For ECEC attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on the [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

Since the uptake of Parental leave is mostly until a child reaches 18 months of age, municipalities provide financial support for fees in private ECEC institutions if no place is available in a municipal service when a child reaches 18 months of age. The amount of allowance is decided by calculating the average expenses for one child per month in a municipal ECEC institution and is thus different in each municipality. In 2023, the average support of municipalities for children from one and a half to four years of age was €309.38, and the local municipalities' support for children who are undergoing mandatory preparation for primary education was €218.62.

In some municipalities, parents who choose to employ a childminder are entitled to a municipal allowance: the allowance is usually provided for children who are at least 18 months of age, until a place in a municipal ECEC institution is available. The allowance amount offered differs in each municipality. In 2023, 15 municipalities provided such support. Average support is €210.06, and the amounts vary from €150 per month in Ādažu municipality and Ogre municipality to €295.63 per month in Kuldīgas municipality. The allowance in Riga municipality is €194.81.

3. Changes in policy since April 2022 (including proposals currently under discussion)

In order to transpose EU Directive 2019/1158 on the work-life balance for parents and carers, amendments to the Labour Law were adopted by the Parliament on 16 June 2022. According to the amendments, Paternity leave was extended from ten calendar days to ten working days. If the paternity of the child has not been acknowledged (determined) or the child's father has died, or the father's custody rights were terminated, another person who is not the child's mother has the right to leave of ten working days, upon request of the child's mother. Leave will be granted to the child's father/another person immediately after the child's birth, but no later than six months after the child's birth (before - two months). A new provision is also adopted which provide an employee with the right to request a flexible use of Parental leave. The employer will be obliged to evaluate such a request and inform the employee about the possibility of flexible use of Parental leave within one month from the date of receipt of the employee's request. The amendments also provided that Parental leave cannot be shorter than one calendar week without interruption (before it could be divided into days).

Provisions of the EU Directive 2019/1158 were also incorporated in the Law on Maternity and Sickness Insurance, adopted by the Parliament on 15 September

2022 and implemented from 1 January 2023. The amendments included changes regarding the Parental benefit: the payment period of Parental benefit was extended by one month (if used by both parents) and it can last 13 or 19 months (previously until a certain child's age). Parents are also entitled to choose the total period of Parental benefit, which consists of the Parental benefit and the non-transferable part, which is two calendar months for each parent. It is possible to choose one of the following periods of benefit:

- 1) 19 months, of which 15 months can be used until the child is 1.5 years old. The non-transferable part can be used by each parent until the child reaches 8 years of age (the benefit amount is 43.75 per cent of previous earnings);
- 2) 13 months, of which 9 months can be used until the child is one year old. The non-transferable part can be used by each parent until the child reaches 8 years of age (the benefit amount is 60 per cent of previous earnings).

According to the new regulation, the non-transferable part of the Parental benefit: 1) can be used while the other parent is receiving Maternity benefit and is on Maternity leave; 2) regardless of whether the non-transferable part is used simultaneously with the other parent or separately, the benefit will be paid for by both parents; 3) can be used in blocks, divided by weeks.

There are also determined cases where only one parent can use the whole period of Parental benefit, including the two non-transferable months: 1) if the child's paternity has not been determined, 2) the other parent has died, 3) custody rights have been revoked or discontinued for the other parent, or the Orphan's Court has ruled that one parent is actually not raising or caring for the child.

To support parents of premature babies, the Parliament also adopted a regulation (entered into force on 1 August 2022) that provides that the Parental benefit payment period is extended by the period of the specified pregnancy leave if the child was born before the determined start of the pregnancy leave.

4. Uptake of leave

Data on the uptake are from the State Social Insurance Agency, and the data on the average salaries are from the Central Statistical Bureau.

a. Maternity leave

- In 2022, 14,205 persons received the maternity benefit, which is around 10 per cent less than in 2021.

b. Paternity leave

- In 2022, 9,134 persons received the paternity benefit, which is around 7 per cent less than in 2021.

c. Parental leave

- The uptake of Parental leave (benefit) during the last five years has almost doubled. Most of the parents taking this leave are women (83.9 per cent of the total number in 2022).
- Most of the working parents who received parental benefits were men (77 per cent in 2022).

d. Other types of leave and flexible working

- No information is available.