

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

April 2024

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 2 weeks prior to the expected birth and a woman 2 weeks after the childbirth. The time of the expected birth and the fact of birth must be certified by a doctor.

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 2 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 2 parts: the 1st part is calculated for the 56 calendar days (or 70 calendar days) before the due date, and the 2nd part is calculated for the 56 calendar days (or 70 calendar days) after the actual birth date.
- The average amount of the maternity benefit (in total) in 2023 was €2,785.79.96 for the first part of the leave and €2,417.72 for the second part of the leave. The number of recipients during the year was 12 875 (around €1,072 per month).

³⁶⁰ Please cite as: Upite, I. (2023) 'Latvia country note', in Dobrotić, I., Blum, S., Dobrotić, I., Kaufmann, G., Koslowski, A., and Moss, P. and Valentova, M. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2023*. Available at: <https://www.leavenetwork.org/annual-review-reports/>

- Payments are not taxed.
- Funded from social insurance, which is financed by contributions from employees (9.25 per cent of earnings) and employers (20.77 per cent).

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 3 months in the period of the last 6 months before the 1st day of Maternity leave or for at least 6 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 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 6 months from the 1st day of the 1st 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; single 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 calendar 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 6 months after childbirth; the benefit has to be requested no later than 6 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 2023 was €602.33, and the number of recipients during the year was 8.478 (around 771 per month).
- Payments are not taxed.
- Funded from social insurance, which is financed by contributions from employees (9.25 per cent of earnings) and employers (20.77 per cent).

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be used within 6 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 6 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; single 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, non-transferable entitlement, but only one parent may receive payment, for a maximum period of 17 months.

Payment and funding

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:
 - i. 19 months, of which 15 months can be used until the child is 1.5 years old, with benefit at 43.75 per cent of previous earnings. The non-transferable part can be used by each parent until the child reaches 8 years of age;
 - ii. 13 months, of which 9 months can be used until the child is 1 year old, with benefit at 60 per cent of previous earnings.. The non-transferable part can be used by each parent until the child reaches 8 years of age.
- 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 2 non-transferable months: (i) if the child's paternity has not been determined; or (ii) the other parent has died; or (iii) 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.
- Parental benefit is not taxable
- Funded in the same way as Maternity and Paternity leave.
- The average amount of the Parental benefit in 2023 was €800,37 per month for parents who chose to receive the benefit 13 months (number of recipients: around 1 988 per month, 54.01 per cent of which women), and €604.68. for parents who chose to receive the benefit 19 months (number of recipients: around 16 124 per month, 86,7 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.

Childcare 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 6 months from the 1st day of the child's life or the day the guardianship has been granted.
- If the parent is not a socially insured person (non-working), the benefit is granted from the date of the child's birthday, provided that no maternity benefit, parental benefit or child care benefit for the same period has been granted to the other parent due to the birth and care of this child.
- If the parent is a socially insured person (working), parental benefit and child care allowance are granted simultaneously for the care of the same child. Both benefits can be received at the same time, unless a maternity benefit for the same period has been granted due to the birth of this child. Parental benefit and childcare allowance for caring for the same child, for the same period of time, are granted to one person. Therefore, the parents in the family must agree on who receives child care benefits, as both benefits are given to one parent at the same time.

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 continuous period or in several periods (a period cannot be shorter than 1 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 1 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)

- One of the parents (adoptive or biological) and who are participants of the social insurance system (see Maternity leave).
- 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; single 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 3 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 that has adopted a child up to 18 years of age, one of the adopters can take 10 calendar days of leave.

Time off for the care of dependents

- 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 3 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 3 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 1 or 2 children up to 14 years of age are entitled to additional paid annual leave of at least 1 working day.
- Parents who have 3 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 paid annual leave of 3 working days.
- An employee who has a child under 8 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 2023, there were around 6 401 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 Riga municipality, with 916 children waiting for a place in a municipal ECEC.

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 2024, the average support of municipalities for children from one and a half to four years of age is €370.03, and the local municipalities' support for children who are undergoing mandatory preparation for primary education is €243.35.

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 2024, 14 municipalities provide such support. Average support is €222,22., and the amounts vary from €125 per month in Liepāja municipality and Ogre municipality to €310.80 per month in Talsu municipality. The allowance in Riga municipality is €242,66.

For ECEC attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' in the cross-country tables at the front of the review.
--

3. Changes in policy since April 2023 (including proposals currently under discussion)

Discussions and work are currently underway to make a conceptual decision about: (i) changing the funding for the parental benefit from the social insurance budget to the state budget, and so reducing the social insurance contribution rate by 1.16 percentage points; and (ii) increasing the amount of childcare allowance.

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 2023, 12,875 persons received the maternity benefit, which is around 9,3 per cent less than in 2021.

b. Paternity leave

In 2023, 8,478 persons received the paternity benefit, which is around 6 per cent less than in 2022.

c. Parental leave

The uptake of Parental leave benefit during the last 5 years has almost doubled. Most of the parents taking this leave are women (82.8 per cent of the total number in 2023). However, most of the working parents who received parental benefits were men (76 per cent in 2023).

d. Other types of leave and flexible working

No information is available.