

Finland²⁰⁹

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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

Note on terminology: a new leave scheme came into effect in August 2022 and major changes were introduced in leave policy. 'Maternity leave' was replaced with 'Pregnancy leave' and 'Paternity leave' was abolished as Parental leave was divided evenly between parents. Names of the different types of leave are given in Finnish and Swedish. Finland is a bilingual country with a Swedish-speaking minority.

a. Pregnancy leave (formerly Maternity leave, see note on terminology) (*raskausvapaa/graviditetsledighet*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Labour)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 40 working days (for all types of leave, one calendar week consists of six working days). Leave can start 30 days before and no later than 14 days before the estimated due date.

²⁰⁹ Please cite as: Närvi, J., Lammi-Taskula, J. and Miettinen, A. (2025) 'Finland country note', in Dobrotić, I., Blum, S., Kaufman, G., Koslowski, A., Moss, P. and Valentova, M. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2025*. Available at: <https://www.leavenetwork.org/annual-review-reports/>

- It is obligatory to take leave for the last 2 weeks before the due date and 2 weeks after the birth.

Payment, funding and taxation

- 90 per cent of the individual's annual earnings between €10,665 and €68,776, with a lower percentage (32.5 per cent) for earnings above this level. There is no ceiling to earnings or the benefit. Parents not employed and those whose annual earnings are less than €10,665 get a minimum flat-rate allowance of €31.99 per working day (€800 per month). In 2024, 13 per cent of pregnant/birthing parents received the minimum allowance, decreasing from 14 per cent in 2023.
- Pregnancy allowance is not paid for days when the pregnant/birthing parent is working, and the days cannot be saved and used later. Working on Sundays does not affect the benefit.
- A pregnant parent can receive the pregnancy allowance when studying during pregnancy. Receiving study grant payments does not prevent payment of the pregnancy allowance.
- Payments are made to the parent by the Social Insurance Institution (*Kela*). If an employer pays a salary to the parent during Pregnancy leave on the basis of collective agreements, the pregnancy allowance is paid to the employer.
- Payments are taxed.
- Pregnancy leave accumulates the beneficiary's pension based on 121 per cent of the yearly earnings from which the leave benefit is calculated (2025). These earnings accumulate the pension at 1.5 per cent per year. For an unemployed beneficiary or a student, the pension is accumulated as if the earnings were €876.00 a month.
- Earnings-related payments are funded by the sickness insurance scheme, financed by contributions from employers (in 2025, 64 per cent of the total cost), contributions from employees (in 2025, 29 per cent of the total cost), and the remaining 8 per cent is funded by the state. In 2025, employers pay 1.75 per cent of their total salary bill and employees pay 0.83 per cent of their taxable earnings higher than €16,871: these percentages are subject to annual change in the state budget. The minimum flat-rate allowances are funded from state taxation.

Flexibility in use

- None. Pregnancy allowance days must be taken consecutively and cannot be postponed until later.

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

- Entitlements are based on being insured under the Finnish Health Insurance Act.
- The basic formula is that a person entitled to family benefits is also entitled to leave.
- A pregnant/birthing parent is entitled to pregnancy allowance after the pregnancy has lasted 154 days.

- Benefits are based on annual income in the preceding 12 months regardless of length of service. In certain situations (for example, the parent has recently returned to work after Parental or Child Home Care leave), the allowance can be calculated on the basis of the last three months of the 12-month period. If the estimated due date of the new baby is before the previous child turns three years old, parental allowance can be based on the same annual or earned income that was used to calculate the allowance for the previously born child.

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

- In the case of premature birth, if the baby is born earlier than 30 days before the due date, the birthing parent is entitled to benefit and leave from the next day for the following 40 days.
- In case of miscarriage, if the pregnancy has lasted at least 154 days the parent who was pregnant can get pregnancy allowance for 40 days and parental allowance for 65 days if not working.
- Pregnancy allowance is paid only to the pregnant/birthing parent, it cannot be transferred to the other parent even if the beneficiary falls ill during pregnancy leave. If the beneficiary dies or is unable to care for the child, the other parent is entitled to parental benefit.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., frequent supplement of state benefit by collective agreements; employer exclusions or right to postpone)

- Many collective agreements now include full pay during Pregnancy leave and part of Parental leave for both parents. There is not yet information of the coverage. During periods of full pay, the daily benefit is paid to the employer. However, as shown in the 2020 Labour Force Survey, due to the high prevalence of fixed-term contracts for women of child-bearing age, a high proportion of women giving birth do not have an effective employment contract; so only 42 per cent of women on leave (called Maternity leave in the old system) received pay from the employer. In addition, according to a study by Kela on Family Leave Compensation paid to employers, around 2020 in only a half of the started leaves (called Maternity leave in the old system) was the benefit paid to the employer (on the basis of the employer paying full wage for the employee during leave).²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Miettinen, A., Mustonen, J. and Räsänen, T. (2022) *Perhevapaakorvauksen käyttöönotto. Tuloksia selvityshankkeesta* [Introduction of family leave compensation. Results from the survey project], Kela Työpapereita 167/2022.

b. Paternity leave (*isyysvapaa/faderskapsledighet*)

No statutory entitlement. But see Note on terminology and section 1c on Parental leave.

c. Parental leave (*vanhempainvapaa/föräldraledighet*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Labour)

Length of leave

- 160 working days per parent, counting 6 working days per calendar week.
- Leave is an individual entitlement, part of which (63 days) is transferable to the other parent or to a partner who is not the child's parent or to the partner of the child's other parent or to another person who is the child's legal guardian. The non-transferable leave per parent is 97 working days (approximately four months).

Payment, funding and taxation

- Ninety per cent of earnings to both parents for the first 16 Parental leave days (the amount is calculated as in Pregnancy leave, see a). For the remaining period, benefit is paid at 70 per cent of the individual's annual earnings between €13,713 and €44,702, with a lower percentage for earnings above this level (40 per cent up to €68,776 and 25 per cent above this). Those whose annual earnings are less than €13,713 before the birth get the minimum flat-rate allowance (€31.99 per weekday, approximately €800 per month). There is no ceiling to earnings or the benefit.
- Payments are taxed.
- Pension is the same as for Pregnancy leave.
- Funding is the same as for Pregnancy leave.

Flexibility in use

- The birthing parent can take Parental leave after the end of Pregnancy leave. The baby's other parent can take Parental leave from the day the baby is born.
- Parents can get parental allowance at the same time for a maximum of 18 days.
- Parental allowance can be used flexibly at the times of one's preference, in as many and as short periods (minimum one day) as requested until the child turns two years. However, employed parents can take Parental leave in four periods, each of a minimum duration 12 days per calendar year, and if the employer agrees, in more periods or even as individual days.
- 63 days of leave are transferable to the other parent or to a partner who is not the child's parent or to the partner of the child's other parent or to another person who is the child's legal guardian.

- Parental allowance is not paid for days when a parent is working more than 5 hours; but as parental allowance is only paid for weekdays (Monday to Saturday) a parent can be paid for work on Sundays or midweek holidays.
- Leave can be taken part-time if the daily working time is no more than 5 hours per day. Partial parental allowance is half of what the allowance is for full-time leave. To get the partial Parental leave, employed parents must make an agreement with their employer regarding part-time work.
- Parents can take partial Parental leave for the same period of time.

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

- Entitlement is based on being insured under the Finnish Health Insurance Act, just as it is for Pregnancy leave.
- Parental allowance is available to biological or adoptive parents, and to any legal guardian of a child. Same-sex couples have the same leave rights as other couples.
- Both parents are entitled to Parental benefit even if the parents do not live together, provided that the parent is not working and is responsible for childcare.
- A parent can get Parental benefit while studying during Parental leave, as long as she or he is able to take care of the child.

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

- In the case of multiple births, the length of leave is extended by 84 days for each additional child. Parental leave is divided equally between both parents: in the case of twins, both parents get 202 days and in the case of triplets for 244 days of Parental leave. A parent of twins can transfer 105 days and a parent of triplets 147 days to the other parent.
- In multiple birth families, in addition to the usual 18 days, 90 days can be taken out at the same time for the second and each additional child.
- If, due to premature birth, the Pregnancy leave has started earlier than 30 days before the expected date of delivery, Parental leave is extended by as many days. Both parents can use half of these additional days or transfer some or all of them to another person.
- If the child is stillborn, or dies shortly after birth, the birthing parent is entitled to Pregnancy allowance and an additional 65 Parental allowance days (the birthing parent is always entitled to 105 consecutive Pregnancy and Parental leave days if the pregnancy has lasted 154 days). The other parent is entitled to 24 Parental allowance days starting from the day following the child's death. If the child dies later, but before two years of age, each parent is entitled to 24 Parental allowance days, starting from the day following the child's death (if there are Parental allowance days left). Parents can use these 24 days at the same time.
- If the pregnant/birthing parent dies and the other parent does not care for the child, the Parental benefit can be paid to another person responsible for the care of the child.
- Parental allowance cannot be used for two different children at the same time. Parents can choose for which child they apply for the benefit.

Otherwise, there are no restrictions concerning the use of parental allowances payable on the basis of different children.

- If the right to parental allowance starts after a one year old (but below two years old) child has moved to Finland, the number of available parental allowance days is halved.
- Single parents can use all 320 days of Parental leave if the other parent has not been confirmed, the other parent is not the child's legal guardian, the other parent is not insured under the Finnish Health Insurance Act or the other parent is, due to illness or injury, unable to take care of the child and cannot therefore be paid parental allowance. Of the 320 days, 126 days can be transferred to another person.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., frequent supplement of state benefit by collective agreements; employer exclusions or right to postpone)

- See 1a 'Additional note'.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

- Childcare leave, referred to as 'Home-care leave' (*hoitovapaa/ vårdledighet*) can be taken after 160 Parental benefit days have been used, until a child's third birthday. While taking leave, a parent can receive Child home care allowance (*kotihoidon tuki/hemvårdsstöd*).
- Childcare leave can be taken in two parts, the minimum length being one month. Parents can alternate the use of Child home care allowance and Parental leave in the case that one parent (usually the father) uses their Parental leave days later and not right after the other parent (usually the mother) has used their quota days.
- The Child home care allowance can be paid to any parent – whether or not they are on Childcare leave from their job – as long as their child is not in a childcare service provided or funded by the local authority.
- The Child home care allowance consists of a basic payment of €377.68 per month, with an additional €113.07 for every other child under three years of age and €72.66 for every other pre-school child over three years of age, plus a means-tested supplement (up to €202.12 per month).
- The average Home-care allowance per family in 2023 was €451 per month.
- In 2024, 25.5 per cent of municipalities paid a municipal supplement to the Child home care allowance, most commonly in big municipalities. These supplements averaged €18,8 per month per child, with a range from €50 to €400.²¹¹ The municipalities usually impose specific conditions on paying the supplement, most frequently that all children in the family below school age have to be taken care of at home. Over the past few years, paying a

²¹¹ Lahtinen, J. and Svartsjö, M. (2024) *Selvitys kotihoidontuen ja yksityisen hoidon tuen kuntalisistä ja niiden maksuperusteista sekä palvelusetelistä 2024* [Municipal supplements of home care allowance and private care allowance and service vouchers], Helsinki: Kuntaliitto.

municipal supplement has started to increase again: in 2022, 21 per cent of municipalities offered it, in 2014, 30 per cent.

- If a child under school age is taken care of in a private day care centre, by a private nanny, or another person employed by the family and accepted by the local authority, the family is entitled to Private day care allowance (*yksityisen hoidon tuki/privatvårdsstöd*), which is €192.28 per month per child. An addition of up to €265.85 per month per child can be paid, based on the size and income of the family. In 2024, 34 per cent of municipalities paid a municipal supplement to the private day care allowance, the average varying between €281 to €418 in full-time care depending on the age of the child and the type of ECEC. The local authorities usually impose specific conditions on paying the supplement, most frequently related to the hours of private day care. In 2024, 39 per cent of municipalities offered a service voucher for private day care services, the average (for full-time care) varying between €426 to €1,344 (depending on the type of ECEC used, family income, and child's age): offering vouchers has grown more popular among the municipalities over the years⁴.
- Child home care allowance and municipal supplement are taxable income.
- During Childcare leave, pension is accumulated as if the earnings were €876.00 per month. These earnings accumulate the pension at a rate of 1.5 per cent per year.
- Child home care allowance is mainly funded by the municipalities. The state funds those allowances which are paid for a child who is not residing in Finland but at least one of the parents is working in Finland and is covered by employment pension insurance

e. Other types of leave and flexible working

Adoption leave and pay

- Adoptive parents of a child (under 18 years of age) are eligible for Parental leave of 320 working days. Each parent is entitled to 160 days of leave starting from the day the child comes to their care, up until two years have elapsed from that date.
- Entitlements are based on being insured under the Finnish Health Insurance Act.
- Adoptive parents in both same- and opposite-sex couples are entitled to Parental leave allowance.
- A single parent who adopts and takes care of a child is entitled to all 320 days of Parental leave the same way as single parents having biological children.
- An adoptive parent can receive parental benefit also during studies as long as the parent is able to take care of the child.
- Adoptive parents are entitled to Child home care allowance for a period which ends two years after the day when the child comes to their care, even if the child is older than three years of age (but below school-age).
- A parent who adopts their partner's child (intra-family adoption) is entitled to the same Parental allowance and parental leave days as parents having biological children when their parentage has been confirmed. If the biological parent has already used more than 160 days, the adoptive parent is entitled to the remaining days.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Parents of children under 10 years of age can take up to 4 days **leave when a child falls ill** ('temporary childcare leave'; *tilapäinen hoitovapaa/tillfällig vårdledighet*). There are no limits on how often parents can take leave for this purpose during the course of a year. Payment is dependent on collective agreements but is often at full earnings for three or four days at a time. A parent with joint custody who does not live with a child is entitled to the leave.
- If an employee needs to be absent from work in order to **care for a family member or other close person**, the employer must try to organise work so that the employee can be absent for a fixed time period. The employer and the employee agree on the length of leave and other arrangements. Return to work must be agreed upon between the employer and the employee prior to the leave commencing. If an agreement cannot be reached, the employee can, with reasonable grounds, interrupt the leave by announcing this to the employer one month before their return at the latest. The employee must account for the grounds of the absence and for interrupting it, if the employer requests it. No benefit or wage is paid during this leave.
- A 'Special care allowance' is available for a parent who is not able to work on the following grounds:
 - because they must engage in the hospital care of a child under 7 years, a severely ill child between the ages of 7 and 15 years, or in the rehabilitation of a child under the age of 16 years.
 - because they provide home care for a severely ill child under the age of 16 years, when home care is in connection to hospital care.
 - because they must be available during the school or day care assessment of a severely ill child.

Both biological and adoptive parents are entitled to the allowance. It can also be granted to employees who care for the child of their spouse. During hospital care or rehabilitation, the allowance can be paid to both parents if the child's physician considers the participation of both parents to be necessary. The allowance is not paid to parents who receive parental, sickness, or unemployment benefit. The payment is equal to 70 per cent of annual earnings between €13,713 and €44,702, with a lower percentage (40 per cent for annual earnings up to €68,776, and 25 per cent above this) for earnings above this level. Employees whose annual earnings are less than €13,713 get a minimum flat-rate allowance of €31.99 per working day (€800 per month). The allowance is paid for at maximum for 60 working days for hospital care or rehabilitation of the same illness and for 60 working days for home care. Receiving the allowance does not entitle the beneficiary to a leave of absence from work.

Specific provision for (breast)feeding

- None. Breastfeeding leave has not been considered necessary, as Parental leave available to the mother lasts until the child is nine to ten months old.

Flexible working

- Parents can work reduced working hours (Partial Childcare leave, *osittainen hoitovapaa/partiell vårdledighet*) from the end of Parental leave until the end of the child's second year at school. The employee is entitled to Partial Childcare leave if they have been working for the same employer for at least six months during the past 12 months. The employee should negotiate the reduction in hours with the employer, and the employer can only refuse if the reduced working hours would lead to serious disadvantages for the organisation – in which case, working hours must be a maximum of 30 hours per week. Both parents can take Partial Childcare leave during the same period but cannot take leave during the same hours of the day.
- Parents of children under 3 years are entitled to Flexible care allowance (*joustava hoitoraha/flexibel vårdpenning*) if, after taking Parental leave, they work less than 80 per cent of the normal full-time hours in their respective field. The Flexible Care allowance is €179.49 per month if the weekly working hours are no more than 30 hours, or 80 per cent of the normal full-time hours, and €269.24 per month if the weekly working hours are no more than 22.5 hours, or 60 per cent of the normal full-time hours. Flexible care allowance can be paid to both parents at the same time if they take care of the child during different hours of the day or different days of the week. Parents can receive Flexible care allowance even if the child attends municipal ECEC. Flexible care allowance is paid for only one child, even if the family has more than one child entitled to the allowance. The allowance is not paid for a leave period shorter than one month.
- Employees taking Partial Childcare leave during the child's first and second year at school are entitled to Partial care allowance (*osittainen hoitoraha/partiell vårdpenning*) of €108.15 per month. Partial care allowance is paid for only one child, even if the family has more than one child entitled to the allowance. The allowance is not paid for a leave period shorter than one month.
- Partial care allowance and Flexible care allowance are taxable income.
- Partial care allowance and Flexible care allowance are funded by the municipalities.

Antenatal appointments and care

- During pregnancy, employees can visit maternity clinics during working hours without loss of pay if it is not possible to do so outside working hours. Paid leave for antenatal appointments may be covered by collective agreements in some sectors.

Other provisions

- **Compensation for employers for indirect leave costs.** Employers are able to claim compensation for indirect leave costs such as finding and training a replacement for a female employee taking Maternity/Pregnancy leave. The compensation is available to employers who pay full-time employees a salary during at least 1 month of their leave. A prerequisite for family leave compensation is that the employee must have at least 3 months service before the leave or, in the case of an adoptive parent, before the Parental leave, and that the employment must last at least one year. The

amount of the lump-sum compensation is €2,500. In 2024, the Social Insurance Institution (*Kela*) paid compensation to 4,040 employers for over 20,400 parents²¹², less than half of the parents taking Maternity/Pregnancy allowance.

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

The maximum period of paid post-natal leave is 36 months (including low paid Home-care leave). The maximum period of highly paid leave is 13.8 months after birth. As there is an entitlement to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) from the month the child turns nine months old, there is no gap between the end of well-paid leave and an ECEC entitlement.

If a parent takes part of her/his Parental leave days after the child has started in ECEC, the child is entitled to return to the same daycare place if the leave is no longer than 13 weeks.

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 2024 (including proposals currently under discussion)

No changes reported.

4. Uptake of leave

Due to the leave reform in 2022 being so recent, the following information on uptake is partly based on the previous leave scheme. Therefore, in this section both the old and the new leave terminology are used, and leave users are called 'mothers' and 'fathers'.

a. Pregnancy leave

Almost all pregnant mothers use the entire leave.

b. Paternity leave²¹³

After the 2022 leave reform, there is no longer a leave called Paternity leave. Parents can take 18 days of simultaneous parental leave which practically corresponds to the same amount of Paternity leave days of the old leave scheme

²¹²Social Insurance Institution, statistical data Perhevapaakorvaus [Compensation for family leaves]. Available at: <https://tietotarjotin.fi>

²¹³ 1 to 18 days which can be taken while the mother is on leave.

that fathers could take when the mother of the child was on Maternity or Parental leave.

After the 2022 reform, about 71–72 per cent of fathers have taken one to 18 days of parental leave simultaneously while the mother is on her leave.²¹⁴ Also before the reform, about 70–74 per cent of fathers used their leave simultaneously with the mother.²¹⁵

Since 2008, the average length of the leave taken while the mother is on Maternity or Parental leave has been 15 working days, increasing to about 17 days among fathers with children born in 2023²¹⁶).

According to a survey in 2022, just before the latest leave reform, the take-up of Paternity leave (simultaneously with the mother) was less typical among fathers not in employment or with very low income (see previous country notes for more information on non-take-up). In addition, some employed fathers who did not take Paternity leave simultaneously with the mother, took annual vacation instead.²¹⁷

c. Parental leave and fathers' individual leave

Before the 2022 reform, Parental leave (158 days to be used by either parent) was mostly taken by mothers. Almost all mothers took all days of Parental leave, whereas only a small and slowly growing share of fathers (seven per cent among fathers of children born in 2021) took Parental leave.⁸ The average length of fathers' Parental leave was about 57–61 days.²¹⁸ After the 2022 reform, mothers still take the majority of the parental leave days apart from the days which are earmarked to the father. However, according to preliminary information, among fathers of children born in 2022 (who were eligible for the new parental leave scheme), the proportion of fathers who took more leave than their earmarked days has increased to 16 per cent.⁷

The popularity of the fathers' individual leave (97 days of Parental leave after the 2022 reform, 36–54 days of Paternity leave before the reform) increased gradually since its introduction in 2003, reaching 56 per cent of fathers of children born in 2021, calculated in relation to started maternity allowances.⁸ Annual statistics show that the average length of leave taken by fathers after Parental leave was 33 days in 2022.²¹⁹ After the 2022 reform, the proportion of fathers taking individual (earmarked) parental leave has risen to about 70 per cent.⁷ Of all Parental leave days paid to parents, fathers used 12 per cent in 2022 and 21 per cent in 2024

²¹⁴ Unpublished information from the statistical database of the Social Insurance Institution (Kela)

²¹⁵ The Social Insurance Institution (Kela), statistical database ([Kelasto](#)): *Vanhempainrahojen kertymätiedot* [Cumulative information on parental leave allowances].

²¹⁶ The Social Insurance Institution (Kela), statistical database ([Kelasto](#)): Daily allowances for parents by child's year of birth.

²¹⁷ Saarikallio-Torp, M., Lammi-Taskula, J. and Närvi, J. (2024) 'Isien perhevapaiden käyttö' [Fathers' use of parenting leaves], in Kinnunen, A., Lammi-Taskula, J., Miettinen, A., Närvi, J. and Saarikallio-Torp, M. (eds.) *Perhevapaat ja työn ja perheen yhteensovittaminen muuttuvassa työelämässä* [Parenting leaves and the reconciliation of work and family in changing working life], Helsinki: Kela.

²¹⁸ *Statistical Yearbook of the Social Insurance Institution 2021*. Helsinki: Kela 2022.

²¹⁹ *Statistical Yearbook of the Social Insurance Institution 2022*. Helsinki: Kela 2023.

(note that the data for both years include parental leave allowances paid under the old and new scheme).²²⁰

Statistics indicate that before the 2022 reform, about one in five fathers did not take any Paternity or Parental leave.²²¹ After 2022, the share of non-users has decreased to about 15 per cent.⁷

According to a survey in 2022, half (52 per cent) of the fathers using Paternity leave after Parental leave period took the opportunity to postpone the take-up, and 61 per cent took the leave in several parts.²¹⁷

The fathers' individual leave has also contributed to their growing independent care responsibility: in 2013, in the majority of families the mother, even if not on leave, stayed at home during at least part of the father's Paternity leave weeks, whereas in 2022, only one in four mothers stayed at home and most were either working or studying.²¹⁷⁰ Significantly more fathers thus now seem to use the leave to care for the child alone, without the mother being present.

According to a register-based study and a survey in 2022 (on fathers with children born in 2016 and in 2019–2021 and therefore before the latest leave reform), fathers of a first- or second-born child as well as fathers with high education level or a good income, and especially those whose partners have a high education level and a good income were more likely to take the fathers' individual leave, (the part of Paternity leave to be taken after Parental leave), whereas the leave was less typically taken by self-employed or unemployed fathers or young fathers under the age of 25.²¹⁷ Among employed fathers, the take-up of this leave was more common if the father worked in a female-dominated workplace, or in a workplace with a large number of employees.²²²

The most common reason that fathers gave, in a survey in 2022, for using the Paternity leave after Parental leave was to be able to spend more time with the child; this was mentioned by nearly all fathers who took the leave (fathers with children born in 2019–2021). Other commonly mentioned reasons (by more than 60 per cent of fathers) were that taking Paternity leave felt right and self-evident, that parenthood was considered as a joint responsibility, and that it is fathers' job to take care of young children. Slightly less than half of fathers also mentioned that they wanted to help the child's mother. The two most common reasons that fathers gave for not taking the Paternity leave after Parental leave were that their spouse was taking care of the child supported by the Child home-care allowance, or that they thought the family's finances did not allow it. The spouse not having

²²⁰ The Social Insurance Institution (Kela), statistical database ([Kelasto](#)): Allowances for parents: Number of recipients and allowances paid out 2022–

²²¹ Miettinen, A. and Saarikallio-Torp, M. (2020) 'Isälle kiintiöidyn vanhempainvapaan käyttö ja sen taustatekijät' [Trends and socioeconomic determinants in the use of father's quota], *Yhteiskuntapolitiikka*, Vol.85, 4

²²² Närvi, J., Saarikallio-Torp, M. and Miettinen, A. (2024) 'Vanhempien työmarkkina-asema, työn laatu ja perhevapaiden käyttö' [Parents' position in the labour market, quality of work and the use of parenting leaves], in Kinnunen, A., Lammi-Taskula, J., Miettinen, A., Närvi, J. and Saarikallio-Torp, M. (eds.) *Perhevapaat ja työn ja perheen yhteensovittaminen muuttuvassa työelämässä* [Parenting leaves and the reconciliation of work and family in changing working life], Helsinki: Kela.

a job as well as work-related obstacles such as the nature of work, the work situation or pressure also hindered fathers from taking their leave quota, but these reasons were mentioned significantly more rarely. Very few fathers mentioned negative attitudes at their workplace as an obstacle.²¹⁷⁰ Work-related reasons for not taking the leave could be explained by how fathers' work tasks are generally organized during leave or other absence from work: fathers have reported that a substitute is seldom hired, and work tasks are most commonly shared between fellow workers or, among white-collar employees, are left to be taken care of by the father himself, even when taking leave.²²²⁵

According to the above-mentioned 2022 survey, besides fathers' individual leave, the Parental leave that could be used by either of the parents was more typically taken by highly educated fathers, fathers of first-born children, and those with a spouse who had a higher education level and income.²¹⁷⁰

The part-time option for taking Parental leave was not popular before the 2022 reform. Statistics show that in 2022, only 463 parents used it.²²³ After the 2022 reform, the proportion of parents using Partial Parental allowance has increased. In 2023, it was used by 1,261 parents.²²⁴

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

Almost all families (87 per cent in 2020²²⁵) take advantage of the Child home care allowance (HCA) at least for some time after Parental leave. Since 2006, statistics are available regarding its use by parents, showing that HCA is used almost entirely by women. Only six to nine per cent of the recipients of HCA per year (2006-2021) have been men. In 2024, 8.7 per cent of the recipients of HCA were men.²²⁶

In the long run, HCA has become less popular; the proportion of children aged zero to two years taken care of at home supported by HCA has dropped from 51 per cent in 2010 to 30 per cent in 2023.²¹⁶ The overall decreasing popularity matches the growing proportion of young children attending childcare services: the proportion of under three year old children in these services has risen from 30 per cent in 2015 to 42 per cent in 2023.²²⁷ Among families receiving HCA at some point before their child turns three years of age²²⁸, the proportion taking the

²²³ *Kelan Lapsiperhe-etuustilasto 2022* [Social Insurance Institution Statistics on Family Benefits, 2022] Official Statistics of Finland, Social Security 2023.

²²⁴ *Kelan Lapsiperhe-etuustilasto 2023* [Social Insurance Institution Statistics on Family Benefits, 2023] Official Statistics of Finland, Social Security 2024.

²²⁵ Statistical Yearbook of the Social Insurance Institution 2020; Take-up of child care subsidies before the child's 3rd birthday, Helsinki: Kela 2021.

²²⁶ The Social Insurance Institution (Kela), statistical database ([Kelasto](#)): Child care allowances: Number of recipients and allowances paid out 2007-

²²⁷ Statistics Finland, Early Childhood Education and Care. Available at: <https://stat.fi/julkaisu/cln2tn5dg2xie0bvz67v1dkhh>

²²⁸ These statistics exclude families receiving home-care allowance where the person taking care of the child is not a parent; however, these families only comprise 2 to 3 per cent of all recipients.

longest period of leave has declined and the median length of HCA period decreased.²²⁹

The proportion of fathers taking HCA has remained low. The (few) male recipients of HCA took much more often the shortest periods than their female counterparts (71 per cent in 2020), and of all men taking HCA, 9 per cent took it for more than 12 months.²²⁵⁸

A survey in 2022 with parents who had a child between 2019–2021 shows that HCA was more typically taken by fathers with a high education level and high income on one hand, and by fathers outside the labour force or with low income on the other hand. The use of HCA was also more common among those fathers whose spouses had a high education level and a high income (see previous years' notes for more details).¹⁰

Mothers' take-up of child-care leave or HCA is related to their education and position in the labour market as well as their family type. A study using Kela's register data on parents of children born 2010–2018 found that highly educated mothers and those with high income (before the birth of the child) were more likely not to use HCA at all, or used it for shorter periods than lower-educated/low-income mothers. Longer periods of HCA were also more common among mothers with many children, with immigrant background, if the mother was a single-parent or had been unemployed before the childbirth.²²⁹³

Findings from a survey in 2022 to parents with a child born between 2019–2021 show that while the use of HCA among mothers was almost equally common despite their socioeconomic or demographic background, longer HCA periods were more often taken or planned by single mothers, mothers with low education level, low income, who were unemployed, or by those who did not have an effective employment contract (and were not working as entrepreneurs) at the time of the birth of their child (one fourth of the respondents).^{230 231} However, an insecure position in the labour market can have a twofold effect as mothers who had experienced several periods of unemployment or even a threat of unemployment in their job also more typically than other mothers did not use HCA at all. Among mothers who had been employed before the birth of their child, longer HCA periods were taken among those working in the municipal sector and in female-dominated workplaces.²²²⁵

²²⁹ Miettinen, A. and Saarikallio-Torp, M. (2023) 'Äitien kotihoidon tukijaksot lyhentyneet - väestöryhmittäiset erot yhä suuria' [Mothers' home care allowance periods have become shorter - large differences between population groups], *Yhteiskuntapolitiikka*, Vol.88, 2.

²³⁰ Miettinen, A. and Närvi, J. (2024) 'Äitien kotihoidon tuen käyttö' [Mothers' use of home care allowance], in Kinnunen, A., Lammi-Taskula, J., Miettinen, A., Närvi, J. and Saarikallio-Torp, M. (eds.) *Perhevapaat ja työn ja perheen yhteensovittaminen muuttuvassa työelämässä* [Parenting leaves and the reconciliation of work and family in changing working life], Helsinki: Kela.

²³¹ Kinnunen, A. and Miettinen, A. (2024) 'Yhden vanhemman kotitaloudet ja perhevapaat' [Single parent households and parenting leaves], in Kinnunen, A., Lammi-Taskula, J., Miettinen, A., Närvi, J. and Saarikallio-Torp, M. (eds.) *Perhevapaat ja työn ja perheen yhteensovittaminen muuttuvassa työelämässä* [Parenting leaves and the reconciliation of work and family in changing working life], Helsinki: Kela.

Values and attitudes also play a role as especially longer periods of HCA seem to be taken by women who identify strongly with the role of mothers as caregivers, instead of the less socially valued identity of the unemployed. In the 2022 survey, the most common reasons for mothers to use HCA were the wish to spend more time with the child and to care for the child longer at home, that the mother considered the child too young to start in early childhood education and care and that she considered home care as important for the child.²³⁰⁴ As for a suitable age for a child to start in ECEC, mothers in the survey commonly reported it to be between 1.5 to 2 years, fathers between 1 to 2 years. Parents' views have also changed in recent years; especially mothers are now more positive than a few years ago towards younger children participating in ECEC.²³²

The Flexible Care allowance, available from the beginning of 2014, has gradually increased its popularity. In 2014, 15,766 families, and in 2024, 21,524 families received Flexible Care allowance¹⁹, although the proportion of children under 3 years being taken care of by this allowance is low, about 7 per cent. Flexible Care allowance has been more popular among highly educated mothers and those whose spouse has high income level, although, compared to the previous Partial Care allowance with a lower benefit, the new allowance has increased the take-up also among mothers with lower education levels.²³³ In 2024, 11 per cent of the Flexible Care allowance recipients were men.¹⁹

In 2023, 30 per cent of employed mothers with children aged 1 to 2 years worked part-time. Among employed fathers, only 4 per cent worked part-time irrespective of the age of the child.²³⁴

In 2024, Partial Home-care allowance during the child's first and second years at school was used by 14,892 families, to take care of seven per cent of children seven and eight years of age. 11 per cent of the recipients of Partial Home-care allowance were men.

The use of the Private Day Care allowance for children under the age of three is relatively rare. Altogether 9,037 families received Private Day Care allowance in 2024 for children aged zero to seven years. Two per cent of one-year-olds and three per cent of two-year-olds were taken care of supported by this allowance in 2024.

²³² Saarikallio-Torp, M., Närvi, J., Miettinen, A. and Kinnunen, A. (2024) 'Neuvottelu lapsen hoivan jakamisesta' [Negotiations on child-care arrangements], in Kinnunen, A., Lammi-Taskula, J., Miettinen, A., Närvi, J. and Saarikallio-Torp, M. (eds.) *Perhevapaat ja työn ja perheen yhteensovittaminen muuttuvassa työelämässä* [Parenting leaves and the reconciliation of work and family in changing working life], Helsinki: Kela.

²³³ Pekkarinen, T. and Tuomala, J. (2019) 'Joustavan hoitorahan työllisyysvaikutusten arviointi' [An assesment of the effects of the Flexible care allowance on employment]. *Valtioneuvoston selvitys- ja tutkimustoiminnan julkaisusarja* 2019:46, Helsinki: Valtioneuvoston kanslia.

²³⁴ Statistics Finland, Labor Force Survey 2023. Available at: <https://stat.fi/julkaisu/cln0fvd43884u0avtkiua21yu>

e. Other types of leave and flexible working

There are no annual statistics available on the uptake of temporary childcare leave to care for an ill child. In the Quality of Work Life Survey (2023),²³⁵ 70 per cent of employed women and 66 per cent of employed men with children under ten years of age had taken temporary childcare leave for 1–4 days during the past 12 months – this is compared to 67 per cent of women and 52 per cent of men in 2013. In families where both parents have full-time employment, 71 per cent of mothers and 73 per cent of fathers had taken temporary childcare leave, compared to 71 per cent of mothers and 60 per cent of fathers in 2013. The gender gap has thus decreased or even disappeared over the years.

²³⁵ Sutela, H., Viinikka, J. and Pärnänen, A. (2024) *Työolot murrosten keskellä – Työolotutkimuksen tuloksia 1977–2023* [Quality of Work Life Surveys 1977–2023], Helsinki: Statistics Finland.