

Switzerland⁵³⁸

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Switzerland is a federal state with three political levels: the communes, the cantons, and the Confederation. In principle, family policy follows the principles of federalism and subsidiarity: the Confederation cedes responsibility for many areas of family policy to the cantons and the communes, insofar as they are able to perform these tasks, and retains an ancillary and enabling role. The Swiss Constitution defines the areas of responsibility of the Confederation. Pursuant to article 116 of the Swiss Constitution, in fulfilling its tasks, the Confederation shall take due account of the needs of the family and may legislate on family allowances; this article also provides the legal basis for maternity insurance.

Family policy may be organised very differently from one canton to another. Various cantons have also set up special family commissions. In their respective areas of responsibility (e.g., schools, childcare), many cantons and communes also implement family policy measures. Many non-governmental organisations are, in part, subsidised by the state and carry out specific tasks related to family policy. The division of responsibilities among political levels and the number of actors involved is, therefore, complex. For instance, each political level intervenes in early childhood education and care: for example, though most childcare services stem from the market, they are regulated and partially subsidised by the communes and/or the cantons. Finally, the federal level is also involved through a temporary programme, which subsidises new childcare initiatives and the creation of additional places for pre-school children.

The Swiss political system is a direct democracy: through referendums and initiatives, citizens may challenge any law passed by parliament and propose amendments to the federal constitution. In the case of an amendment proposed to the federal Constitution, a referendum is mandatory.

Note on Leave policies in private law vs. public law: the information provided in this report refers, unless explicitly stated, to the rules applicable for persons working under private law contracts. Leave policies in the public sector of the Confederation, the cantons, and the communes may vary considerably.

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

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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 (*Congé et allocation de maternité*) (responsibility of the Federal Department of Home Affairs, namely the Federal Social Insurance Office)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 14 weeks (98 calendar days), starting on the day of delivery.⁵³⁹
- It is obligatory to take 8 weeks leave.
- Between the weeks 9 and 16 after birth, women covered by the Employment Act cannot be compelled to return to work. However, only 14 weeks are covered for payment by the statutory Maternity leave insurance.
- Employed women can be exempt from work before birth for medical and health reasons and, in this case, salary payment continues for a limited period, provided the employment relationship has lasted for or was concluded no longer than 3 months prior.

Payment, funding and taxation

- 80 per cent of earnings up to an upper limit of CHF220 [€214.70]⁵⁴⁰ per day. The highest income thus covered at 80 per cent are monthly salaries of CHF8,250 [€8051.14]; the annual income upper limit for employed and self-employed workers is CHF99,000 [€96,613.64].
- Payments are taxed. The maternity compensation (as any other form of parental compensation for childcare) is subject to the ordinary tax regime and not tax exempt.
- The period spent on Maternity leave counts for the establishment of pension credits.
- Funded by the Loss of Earnings Compensation fund, which also provides benefits for people carrying out military service, civil defence, or civil service. It is financed by equal contributions from employees and employers, each paying 0.25 per cent of earnings (0.5 per cent of earnings in total).

⁵³⁹ In country notes prior to 2017, the length of statutory leave reported was 16 weeks. The right not to return to work up to 16 weeks after giving birth is guaranteed by the Employment Act. However, the Employment Act does not apply to all companies and all workers (it excludes, for instance, home workers and public administrations). As of 2017, we therefore report 14 weeks of statutory Maternity leave.

⁵⁴⁰ Conversion of currency undertaken for 16 July 2025, using: <https://data.ecb.europa.eu/currency-converter>.

Flexibility in use

- In principle, there is no flexibility in leave and compensation: the claim for compensation starts on the day of the delivery.
- However, if the new-born child needs to stay for at least 2 weeks in the hospital and a medical certificate has been presented, maternity allowances can be prolonged for the corresponding time, but by 56 days at most.
- If the mother deceases while giving birth or during the 97 following days, the other parent is entitled to 98 additional days of allowances.

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

- Eligible for maternity compensation are: employed women, whether employed under a fixed-term or open-ended contract; self-employed workers; women working in their husbands' or partners' businesses (or that of a family member) and who are paid a salary; and women who are on unemployment, sickness, accident, or invalidity benefits or allowances are also entitled to maternity compensation.
- For maternity compensation, women must have in principle (shorter periods apply in case of early birth) a record of nine months of contribution to Old Age and Survivors Insurance; and must have worked for a minimum of five months, during the nine months preceding the birth. The insurance and employment periods completed in a member state of the EU, of the EFTA, or in the United Kingdom will be considered.
- If the maternity compensation criteria are not met, a mother may make a claim against her employer for the continued payment of her salary, based on Article 324a of the Swiss Code of Obligations.⁵⁴¹ Moreover, certain cantons provide for specific maternity benefits for mothers who do not meet the federal eligibility criteria.
- Only biological mothers are eligible.
- Eligibility does not require citizenship or permanent residency. A permission to work will however be a prerequisite, since only employed or self-employed women are entitled to maternity compensation.

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

- The leave is currently only available to birth mothers.⁵⁴²
- Maternity allowances can be prolonged up to 56 additional days if the new-born is hospitalised for at least 2 weeks after birth.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- The cantons may complement the basic statutory Maternity leave and payment, e.g., in the canton of Geneva, all working mothers are granted 16

⁵⁴¹Bundesgesetz betreffend die Ergänzung des Schweizerischen Zivilgesetzbuches (Fünfter Teil: Obligationenrecht, SR 220 [Federal Action on the Amendment of the Swiss Civil Code (Part Five: the Code of Obligations)]).

⁵⁴² A draft act is under preparation in order to enable fathers to benefit from maternity allowances in the event the mother dies after giving birth to a child.

weeks of Maternity leave, paid at 80 per cent of earnings. A cantonal Loss of Earnings Compensation fund pays for the 2 additional weeks, which are not covered by federal dispositions.

- The Confederation, cantonal public employers and communes are not subject to the basic legislation, but to specific regulations of their own. However, these regulations generally provide more generous maternity benefits for their employees.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusions, or rights to postpone)

- Maternity leaves are often supplemented by collective agreements, which can grant full wage replacement and/or extended lengths of leave (approximately 2 additional weeks, i.e., 16 weeks of paid Maternity leave). Companies, which often take out private supplementary insurance for such cases, cover these expenses.

b. Leave for the other parent (*congé de l'autre parent* ⁵⁴³) (responsibility of the Federal Department of Home Affairs, namely the Federal Social Insurance Office)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 2 weeks

Payment, funding and taxation

- As for Maternity leave.

Flexibility in use

- Paternity leave cannot start until the baby is born and must be taken within 6 months of the baby's birth.
- The leave can be taken in one continuous period or on a daily basis.
- If the father (or the other parent) deceases within 6 months after the birth of the child, the mother is entitled to 14 additional days of allowances. These days can be taken within 6 months after the death.

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

- Employed workers are entitled to Paternity leave if they are legally the father of the child (or the mother's wife) at the time of birth or within the 6 months after birth, no minimum employment relationship is required.
- For payment during Paternity leave, fathers (or mothers' wives) must, in principle, also have a record of 9 months of contribution to Old Age and

⁵⁴³ Since 1 January 2024, the terminology has changed from 'Paternity leave and 'paternity allowance' to 'leave for the other parent' and 'allowance for the other parent' in response to the change in the Civil Code introduced in 2022, which enables same-sex marriage. If the mother is married to a woman at the time of the birth and if the child was conceived through sperm donation in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Law on medically assisted procreation, the mother's wife is the other parent of the child (Civil Code, art. 255a al.1). In that case she can benefit from Paternity Leave.

Survivors Insurance and must have worked for a minimum of 5 months, during the nine months preceding the birth.

- Eligibility does not require citizenship or permanent residency. A permission to work will however be a prerequisite, since only employed or self-employed men (or mothers' wives) are entitled to paternity compensation.

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

- None

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusions, or rights to postpone)

- Pre-existing Paternity Leave allowances granted through collective labour agreements or work contracts may supplement federal Paternity Leave.

c. Parental leave

No statutory entitlement. There is some indication that a minority of companies in the private sector grant their employees unpaid Parental leaves.⁵⁴⁴ Many cantonal public employers also grant unpaid Parental leaves – ranging from a few days up to 24 months – but in a few cases with gendered eligibility criteria (i.e., leaves are exclusively or predominantly addressed to female civil servants)⁵⁴⁵.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

No statutory entitlement. The years spent out of the labour market to care for children under 16 years of age are credited for old-age pension to the parent who was the main carer during this time (it is split between parents, if both were equally responsible). The amount corresponds to 3 times the amount of the minimum annual retirement pension. It increases the average annual income from which the retirement pension is calculated (up to an upper limit) when individuals reach retirement age. This Parenting Credit system, is regulated in the Federal Act on Old Age and Survivor's Insurance and in the Ordination to the Federal Old Age and Survivor's Insurance.

⁵⁴⁴ Swiss Federal Council (FN **Error! Bookmark not defined.**), 14.

⁵⁴⁵ Swiss Federal Council (FN **Error! Bookmark not defined.**), 15 f. ; Fuchs, G. (2008) *Prestations en cas de maternité et initiatives parlementaires sur les congés et prestations offerts aux parents (notamment congé paternité, congé parental et congé d'adoption): rapport sur la situation actuelle dans l'administration fédérale, les cantons et quelques municipalités* [Maternity allowances and parliamentary initiatives about Parental leaves and benefits (Paternity leave, Parental leave and adoption leave): report on the current situation at the federal administration, the cantons and several municipalities]. Available at: <http://www.equality.ch/f/publications.htm>, 14 ff.

e. Other types of leave and flexible working

Adoption leave and pay

- Working parents who are adopting a child below the age of 4 years are entitled to two weeks of adoption leave.
- Adoption leave is to be taken within the 1st year following the child's arrival. It can be taken by one parent or the right to paid leave can be shared between the parents, however, the maximum length remains two weeks, sharing does not prolong the right to paid adoption leave
- Payment as for Maternity leave.
- Some cantons⁵⁴⁶ have implemented gender-neutral adoption allowances for all working parents, available to only one of the adoptive parents. The cantons of Vaud and Geneva entitle adoptive parents to 14 and 16 weeks of pay, respectively, at 80 per cent of the salary. Such cantonal allowances are provided only if one of the parents interrupts their employment.
- In the public sector, at present, about half of the cantons offer their employees paid adoption leave between 2 days and 16 weeks in length.⁵⁴⁷

Time off for the care of dependants

- Employees are entitled to paid **leave for the time necessary to care for a family member, domestic partner or partner with a medical condition**. However, the leave cannot exceed 3 days per event and 10 days per year. The upper limit of 10 days does not apply for the care of a child with health impairment.
- Parents of seriously ill children are eligible to a 14 week paid **Care leave** (financed through the Loss of earnings compensation Act, as for Maternity and Paternity Leaves). The leave can be shared between parents and should be taken within an 18-months' time-frame, in one or several periods/days. Payment is the same as for Maternity leave.

Specific provision for (breast)feeding

- During the child's first year, the time taken by mothers to breastfeed or express milk during a working day counts as working time. Salary payment is mandatory within the following limits: for a working day of up to 4 hours, 30 minutes minimum; for a working day over 4 hours, 60 minutes minimum; and for a working day over 7 hours, 90 minutes minimum.⁵⁴⁸

Flexible working

- There is no statutory entitlement to reduced or flexible working hours for employed parents. However, the Employment Act states that the employer should consider the employee's 'family responsibilities' when fixing work and

⁵⁴⁶ More information can be found in the corresponding cantonal laws. The following page contains a link to all cantonal online legislation catalogues: <http://www.lexfind.ch>.

⁵⁴⁷ For more information, see: Pärli (Fn 6), S. 953.

⁵⁴⁸ Art. 60 Verordnung 1 zum Arbeitsgesetz (ArGV 1) [Ordination 1 to the Employment Act], SR 822.111.

rest hours. Family responsibilities are defined as the education of children up to 15 years of age and the charge of other family members in need of care.

- Some collective labour agreements specifically include the right to reduced working hours for parents and there is some indication that a significant proportion of companies allow flexible working hours.⁵⁴⁹
- The Confederation grants its employees the right to reduce their working time by 20 per cent, however the lowest part-time work allowed is at 60 per cent.⁵⁵⁰

Antenatal appointments and care

- None.

Other provisions

- None reported.

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

The maximum period of paid post-natal leave is just over 3½ months, all paid at a high rate, with the possibility in some cases of an additional two weeks of unpaid leave. In the majority of Swiss cantons (17 out of 26), statutory provision for two years of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is available, with the implementation of an inter-cantonal agreement for the harmonisation of education systems (HarmoS). In these cantons, compulsory schooling now starts when children reach 4 years of age, while in the rest of the country it starts between 5 and 7 years of age.⁵⁵¹ There is a gap, therefore, of more than three years between the end of well-paid leave and any entitlement to ECEC.

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

⁵⁴⁹ See Bühler, S. (2004) *Bébés et employeurs - Comment réconcilier travail et vie de famille. Version abrégée de l'étude comparative de l'OCDE portant sur la Nouvelle-Zélande, le Portugal et la Suisse: aspects suisses* (Vol. 1f). [Babies and Bosses – Reconciling Work and Family Life. Summary version of the OECD comparative study on New Zealand, Portugal and Switzerland: Swiss aspects (Vol. 1f)]. Berne: Secrétariat d'Etat à l'économie.

⁵⁵⁰ Art. 60a of the Bundespersonalverordnung (BPV) [Federal Personnel Ordination (FPO), SR 172.220.111.3.

⁵⁵¹ With HarmoS, pre-primary or elementary programmes are included in obligatory schooling. See EDK. (2019). *Bilan 2019. Harmonisation des éléments visés par l'art. 62, al. 4, Cst. dans le domaine de la scolarité obligatoire*. Bern: Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education: http://edudoc.ch/record/204716/files/Bilanz-Bericht_II_f.pdf

3. Changes in policy since April 2024 (including proposals currently under discussion)

In the past years there have been many proposals and debates in Swiss Parliament to reform and improve existing Maternity and Paternity leave policies. Since the implementation of Paternity Leave in 2021, the question of implementing a Parental leave has become increasingly topical. While this section focuses on proposals at the federal level, it should be noted that in the last few years, several proposals and votes in favor of a Parental Leave at the cantonal level have also been discussed or are currently under discussion (e.g., in Bern, Geneva, Vaud, Ticino, Neuchâtel, Vaud, Zürich). There are however legal obstacles that prevent the implementation of Parental Leave at the cantonal level (see below the section on Parental leave).

Proposals concerning Maternity leave

Maternity leave benefits for mothers of children who must stay in hospital for at least 2 weeks directly after birth was improved as of 1 July 2021. The payment of maternity allowances are prolonged by the length of hospitalisation of the child (up to a maximum of 56 days) if a new-born is hospitalized for at least 2 weeks. Between January 2022 and February 2023, interventions were submitted (by the Canton of Vaud and by the Committee for Social Security and Health of the Council of States) proposing to extend this law to the event of mothers' own hospitalisation for a long period. As of April 2025, this proposal is still in the hands of the Federal Council, which is working on a project of law amendment of the Loss of Earnings Compensation Act (LECA).

In May 2019 two Motions were submitted aiming to allow the full coverage of medical expenses due to pregnancy. Currently, pregnant women have to contribute to these expenses until the 13th week of pregnancy. These Motions were adopted by a majority in the National Council in September 2019 and by the Council of States in November 2020. A law amendment has been accepted by the Federal Assembly in March 2025. It is subject to referendum until July 2025. Another Proposal submitted by a Green MP in March 2023 asked that the deadline for the full coverage of medical expenses related to pregnancy and birth be extended from eight weeks to one year after birth. It was rejected by a majority of the National Council in September 2024.

In September 2023, the Council of States accepted the proposal to examine the introduction of a Maternity Leave in the case of miscarriage, including when it happens before the 23rd week of pregnancy (currently Maternity Leave is only granted after the 23rd week of pregnancy). A report will be mandated in order to evaluate the number of cases possibly concerned and related financial costs, as well as to provide a comparison of existing practices in other countries.

In 2019 and 2022, Motions submitted by Socialist MPs asked to increase the maximum daily allowances during Maternity leave. The LECA regulates allowances in case of military or civil service and, since 2005, in case of maternity, and since 2021, in case of paternity. Yet, the maximum amount of allowances differs in case of military and civil service (it increased from CHF 245 [€239.09] to CHF275 [€268.37] per day as of 1 January 2023) and in case of maternity (and paternity) (it increased from CHF196 [€191.28] to CHF220 [€214.70] per day as of 1 January

2023). The Motion considers this difference to be discriminatory and asks that the same compensation conditions be applied to women on Maternity leave as to people performing their military or civil service duties. The latest Motion was accepted by the Council of States in December 2022 and by the National Council in May 2023. It is now in the hands of the Federal Council, which is examining the different allowances financed via the Loss of Earning Compensation fund, in order to ensure equal treatment.

In June 2024, a Socialist MP deposited a Motion asking to improve Maternity protection at work for pregnant women. The Federal Council recommended to reject the Motion in September 2024. It has yet to be treated by the Committee for Social Security and Health of the Council of States.

In December 2024, the MPs from the Green Party submitted a Motion asking for a 3-week pre-birth leave and allowance, to be financed through the LECA. In February 2025, the Federal Council recommended to reject this Motion, arguing that mothers are already covered sufficiently during the period preceding birth, via the Health insurance. The Motion has yet to be treated by the Parliament.

Proposals concerning Paternity leave

In June 2021, March 2022, September 2022 and June 2024 four Motions (two by Green MPs, one by a Socialist MP and one by a Centre MP) asked for Paternity Leave to be granted to fathers in case of the death of the baby, in the same way as Maternity Leave is granted to mothers in this event (i.e., as of the 23rd week of pregnancy). This proposal will be examined in the frame of the report to be produced regarding Maternity Leave provision in case of miscarriage (including before the 23rd week of pregnancy; see above).

Proposals concerning Parental leave

A Postulate submitted in June 2021 by the Committee for Social Security and Health of the National Council and accepted in September 2021 asked that a cost-benefit analysis be mandated on different Parental Leave models. The report was published in February 2025. The analysis consisted in a literature review on the economic costs and benefits of two hypothetical Parental leave models that could be implemented in Switzerland (a "*flexible model*", enabling a flexible use between parents, and a "*gender-equal*", with reserved weeks for each parent)⁵⁵². Its main conclusions were that Parental leave could have both positive (e.g. improved work-life balance, mothers' health, children's development) and negative consequences (e.g. increased expenditure and costs for employers). It was noted that the "*gender-equal*" model would be most beneficial in terms of maternal labour force participation, compared to the "*flexible model*". The Federal Council concluded that the report would be useful in future discussions about a possible Parental leave in Switzerland⁵⁵³.

In January 2024, a cantonal parliamentary intervention asking that cantons are enabled to implement Parental leave at the cantonal level was submitted by the Canton of Geneva. In Geneva a majority of the electorate accepted in June 2023 to introduce a Parental leave of 24 weeks in total (including the existing 14 weeks of Maternity Leave and 2 weeks of Paternity Leaves). In September 2024, the Parliament voted against the possibility that the Canton of Geneva can implement

⁵⁵² [Link](#) to the full report.

⁵⁵³ [Link](#) to the report published by the Federal Council.

Parental Leave. This decision is temporary. After the Loss of Earnings Compensation Act (LECA) is modified accordingly (enabling cantons to finance Parental leave allowances), Geneva should be able to implement a cantonal Parental leave.

In December 2024, a Socialist MP asked that the Federal Council adapts swiss legislation in order to comply to the EU directive 2019/1158 on work-life balance for parents and carers. The Federal Council recommended to reject this Motion in February 2025. It has yet to be treated by both Chambers of Parliament.

Between May 2024 and January 2025 several parliamentary initiatives were deposited by cantons (Neuchâtel, Jura, Ticino and Valais) asking that the Federal assembly implements a Parental leave at the national level. In January 2025, the Committee for Social Security and Health of the Council of States recommended to reject two proposals (Valais and Ticino⁵⁵⁴), but to accept the two others (Geneva and Neuchâtel), since they left open to the Parliament to determine precisely the length and details of a possible Parental leave. Following this recommendation, the Council of States rejected the cantonal initiatives of Valais and Ticino in March 2025. The cantonal initiatives of Geneva and Neuchâtel have yet to be treated.

Finally, in April 2025, a popular initiative in favour of a Parental leave was launched by left wing and centre parties, as well as women's and workers' associations⁵⁵⁵. In order for the proposition to be submitted to a national vote, 100'000 signatures must be collected within 18 months. The proposition of a new article in the Swiss constitution lists the following elements: Parental leave should serve children's well-being and gender equality; parents should have equal leave-lengths; parents can take max. 25 per cent of the leave-length together; leave is paid and financed similarly as current allowances in case of military and civil service (but allowances can reach 100 per cent for low income parents). If the principle of a Parental leave is accepted in national vote but that no law is implemented within 5 years after the vote, the following Parental leave model will enter into force: 36 weeks in total (including existing leaves), i.e. 18 weeks for each parent.

4. Uptake of leave

a. Maternity leave

Approximately 80 per cent of women giving birth met the eligibility criteria for maternity allowances in 2022 and 77 per cent benefitted from them.⁵⁵⁶ This means

⁵⁵⁴ The reason was that both cantonal initiatives were said to be too precise in their formulation. They listed the following characteristics that a Parental leave at the national level should entail: it should be at least 20 weeks; current Maternity leave should be guaranteed, the leave-length reserved to fathers should be at least 20 per cent of the total Parental leave length; both parents should be able to use their leave in a flexible manner.

⁵⁵⁵ <https://www.conge-familial.ch/>.

⁵⁵⁶ Roth, A. and Unterhofer, U. (2025) "Maternité et paternité : les mères prennent plus souvent leur congé que les pères". [Maternity and Paternity : mothers take more often their leave than fathers] *Sécurité sociale*, Jnaury 16th 2025 <https://sozialesicherheit.ch/fr/maternite-et-paternite-les-meres-prennent-plus-souvent-leur-conge-que-les-peres/>).

that 94 per cent of eligible mothers used Maternity allowances and 6 per cent forfeited their right. Roth and Unterhofer (2025) identify three characteristics which could explain the fact that 6 per cent of mothers forfeited their rights. First, these mothers have on average lower incomes than those who use their rights, which could mean they more often have irregular or multiple contracts (and a more difficult access their rights), or may return soon after giving birth for economic reasons (since Maternity allowances are compensated at 80 per cent of the salary only). Second, the number of mothers with very high income (more than CHF250,000/year) who forfeit their rights is also slightly higher, which could also be explained by an early return to work (for economic reasons and/or related to high job-related responsibilities). Third, the number of mothers forfeiting their rights is much higher among self-employed women (17 per cent vs. 6 per cent among salaried women). Recipients use the maximum available days (99 days on average in 2023).⁵⁵⁷ The number of recipients has been increasing since Maternity leave was introduced, probably because of an increase both in births and female employment. In 2013, 62,107 mothers benefited from allowances, 67,547 in 2017, and 73,794 in 2021. In 2022 and 2023, the number of recipients reduced, with 67,640 and 64,726 women benefiting, respectively.⁵⁵⁸ Maternity benefit expenditure was about CHF888 million [€866,595,101.01] in 2023, about the same as in 2021 (CHF883 million [€861,715,624.09] (+0.6 per cent)).

In 2023, the average amount of the daily indemnities granted to mothers was CHF139 [€135.65] per day, well below the ceiling of CHF220 [€214.70]. According to register data, in 2023 the mean age of maternity benefit recipients was 33 years and 63 per cent of recipients were Swiss nationals and 37 per cent were foreigners.

Employed women tend to take a longer Maternity leave than the legal minimum of 14 paid weeks following childbirth. A survey conducted in 2012 with 335 employed women who had had a child in the last 5 years, revealed that over 60 per cent of them had taken leave that exceeded 14 weeks. But, for only half of them, this additional leave was paid by the employer, while for 37 per cent of the sample, this leave was unpaid.⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁷ In order to provide a complete picture, the average number of leave days are not calculated based on a calendar year; the calculation takes into account the number of days used up to two years following the year of birth of the child. Data for the most recent year are based on an estimation. The fact that the average number of days exceeds 98 days (corresponding to 14 weeks of Maternity allowances) can be explained by the fact that allowances can be extended up to 56 days max. in case the newborn child is hospitalized after birth.

⁵⁵⁸ In recent years, the Swiss Statistical Office changed several times its way of counting recipients for loss of earnings compensation allowances. In addition, allowances can be requested retrospectively, up to 5 years after leave uptake. The figures reported in previous country notes to 2025 edition can therefore differ. The figures reported here correspond to the number of Maternity leave recipients for births that occurred a given calendar year (residing in Switzerland or abroad), according to available data in September 2024. All data is available at this [link](#).

⁵⁵⁹ Aeppli, D. C. (2012) *Wirkungsanalyse. Mutterschaftentschädigung* [Analysis of effects. Maternity benefits]. 95. Available at: https://www.bsv.admin.ch/dam/bsv/fr/dokumente/eo/studien/wirkungsanalyse_mutterschaftentschaedigung.pdf.download.pdf/analyse_des_effetsdelassurance-materniteenallemand.pdf

b. Paternity leave

Paternity Leave entitlement was first introduced in 1 January 2021. In 2021, 67,215 fathers received Paternity benefits, in 2022 they were 62,635 and 61,845 in 2023.⁵⁶⁰ The mean number of days taken by recipients in 2023 is 14 days (as in 2021 and 2022). This corresponds to the maximum length available. Leave can be taken within the child's first six months, in one block or individual days. First results suggest that fathers make use of this flexibility: 36 per cent of fathers whose children were born during the first trimester of 2021 took their leave in piecemeal ways, either in weeks or days.⁵⁶¹

Regarding Paternity leave recipients' characteristics, available data indicate that their mean age at uptake was 35 years old and that 57 per cent were Swiss nationals while the rest (43 per cent) were foreigners.

As regards expenditures, the average amount of the daily indemnities granted to fathers was CHF180 [€175.66] per day, corresponding to a total expenditure of CHF155 million [€151,263,784.52] in 2023.

In 2022, 89 per cent of fathers who had a child were entitled to Paternity allowances, and 67 per cent used their rights.⁵⁶² This means that only 74 per cent of eligible fathers used their rights (vs. 94 per cent of eligible mothers). Roth and Unterhofer (2025) analysed possible explanations for fathers foregoing their rights. They identified a diversity of reasons. First, fathers less involved in the child's birth could be one reason, as data show that about half of fathers not living in the same household as the mother forfeited their right. Second, as for mothers, fathers with low income (less than CHF50,000/year) or very high income (more than CHF250,000/year), and self-employed workers less often take Paternity allowances. Moreover, the share of fathers who were benefitting from unemployment benefits before the birth of the child making use of Paternity Leave is very low. The reason could be that because the compensation is identical in both insurances (80 per cent of salary), fathers do not bother to request their Paternity allowances. First analyses identify regional and cantonal uptake differences. However, these differences are not linked to prevailing social norms about Paternity leave. Indeed, cantons where people had voted most in favour of adopting a Paternity Leave in 2020 are those where leave uptake rates are the lowest. Further research will be needed in order to understand more precisely cantonal uptake rate differences.

c. Parental leave and parental benefit

No statutory entitlement.

⁵⁶⁰<https://www.bsv.admin.ch/bsv/fr/home/assurances-sociales/eo-msv/statistik.html#accordion1712068845809>

⁵⁶¹ <https://soziale-sicherheit-chss.ch/fr/la-majorite-des-peres-profitent-du-conge-de-paternite/>

⁵⁶² <https://sozialesicherheit.ch/fr/maternite-et-paternite-les-meres-prennent-plus-souvent-leur-conge-que-les-peres/>