

Czech Republic¹

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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

a. Maternity leave (*materska dovolena*) (responsibility of the Social Security system)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 28 weeks: six to eight weeks before the birth and 20 to 22 weeks following birth. It is obligatory to take 14 weeks, including at least six weeks after the birth.

Payment (applied for the whole period of Maternity leave) and funding

- Seventy per cent of daily earnings up to a maximum payment of CZK36,750 [€1,424.59]² per month.
- Payment is financed from sickness insurance contributions by employers, paying 2.3 per cent of earnings.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be started six to eight weeks before birth.
- From the start of the seventh week after childbirth, either parent may use the leave, i.e. the mother may alternate with the father of the child, with no restriction on the frequency of alternation. If the father uses the leave, he must do so for at least seven days.
- Parents on leave can work from the start of the seventh week after childbirth, but not on the same job from which he/she is taking leave.

¹ Please cite as: Kocourková, J. (2018) 'Czech Republic country note', in Blum, S., Koslowski, A., Macht, A. and Moss, P. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2018*. Available at: http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/

² Conversion of currency undertaken on 13 June 2018, using: <http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter>

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

- To be eligible for maternity benefit, an employee must have contributed to sickness insurance for at least 270 calendar days during the last two years.
- A self-employed worker must meet the same condition as an employee, and in addition have contributed to sickness insurance for at least calendar 180 days during the last year.
- Students are entitled to the benefit.

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

- In the case of multiple births, the length of leave is increased by nine weeks.
- When the child is stillborn, the mother is granted 14 weeks of Maternity leave.

b. Paternity leave

Length of leave

- Seven calendar days.

Payment and funding

- Seventy per cent of daily earnings up to a maximum payment of CZK8,575 [€332.40] per seven days.
- Payment is financed from sickness insurance contributions by employers, paying 2.3 per cent of earnings.

Flexibility in use

- It can be taken any time during six weeks after the birth of a child.
- All seven days have to be taken on bloc.

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

- Sickness insured workers, including employees and self-employed men.

c. Parental leave (*rodicovska dovolena*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs)

Length of leave

- Both parents can take leave until the child's third birthday. Leave is an individual entitlement, but only one parent at a time is entitled to the benefit.

Payment and funding

- A Parental benefit – *rodicovsky prispevek* – is available to all families who meet the eligibility condition whether or not they take Parental leave. It can be considered as a home-care benefit for at-home parents, as well as – partly – a benefit to subsidise care costs, since parents can work full-time or part-time while receiving Parental benefit (but access to publicly-funded childcare is then limited, see below).

- The period and amount of Parental benefit can be chosen from a number of options; the longest option is until the child is 48 months old and the shortest option is until the child is 12 months old. The maximum amount if taking the 12 months option is the maximum payment on Maternity benefit, i.e. CZK36,750 [€1,424.59] per month. The ceiling of Parental benefit corresponds to ceiling of Maternity benefit. If a parent did not participate in sickness insurance, the ceiling is CZK7,600 [€294.61] per month. The maximum amount payable for the whole period is CZK220,000 [€8,528.17].
- While Parental leave can only be taken up to the child's third birthday, the Parental benefit is paid until the child's fourth birthday.
- Parental benefit is funded from general taxation.

Flexibility in use

- The selected Parental benefit option may be changed after three months.
- Parents on leave can work without any limitation, but as they cannot make use of public childcare facilities, they are then responsible to assure the care of a child by another person.
- Both parents can take Parental leave at the same time, but only one of them is entitled to Parental benefit. They can alternate in receiving benefit as often they want.

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

- There are no special requirements for leave; however, each parent has to ask for formal approval of the employer.
- Parents can choose the period and amount of Parental benefit on condition that at least one parent in a family is a person participating in sickness insurance.
- Payment of Parental benefit is conditional, where there is a child under two years, on parents not using a publicly-funded ECEC service for more than 46 hours a month. There is no limitation on service use for older children.

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

- In the case of multiple births, the maximum amount payable for the whole period is CZK330,000 [€12,792.25]. The ceiling per month is 1.5 times higher than in case of single birth. Accordingly, if a parent did not participate in sickness insurance, the ceiling is CZK11,400 [€441.91].
- In the case of a disabled child, a parent is entitled to Parental benefit at the basic rate of CZK7,600 [€294.61] per month until the child is seven years of age. If the child is diagnosed as suffering from a long-term disability the parent is entitled to Parental benefit at the lower rate of CZK3,000 [€116.29] from seven to 15 years of the child's age.
- Parental benefit can be taken by grandparents or other persons where they provide day care for the child and the parents agree to transfer their entitlement.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

- No statutory entitlement.

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- For adoptive parents the same regulations for Parental leave apply as for other parents.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Employees can take leave to care for a sick relative at home (in all cases of illness for a child under ten years; otherwise, only in case of a serious illness). Leave is paid at 60 per cent of earnings up to a ceiling of CZK855 [€33,14] per day. A parent can take no more than nine days in one block of time, but there is no limit regarding the frequency of taking leave; parents are allowed to alternate with each other during the course of taking leave to care for a sick child.

Flexible working

- None.
- Pensions: Currently pensions are treated according to Act No. 306/2008 Coll. that is effective from 1 January 2010. The Act introduced, in particular, measures implementing parametric changes of the basic pension insurance system. Compared to the legislation in effect prior to the adoption of the above Act, among the important approved changes is “a step-by-step extension of the insurance period needed to establish a right to an old-age pension from 25 to 35 years” including non-contributory periods, or to 30 years without non-contributory periods. Non-contributory insurance periods include also the period of care of a child below four years of age, i.e. the whole period of take up Maternity leave and Parental leave.

Specific provision for (breast-)feeding

- None.

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

The maximum period of paid post-natal leave available in the Czech Republic is three years, but recently Parental leave has been systematically reformed so as to increase the degree of flexibility. Now parents can decide themselves about the length. There is an entitlement to ECEC for a child aged five (so only one year before the basic school attendance) for the whole day. Despite the introduction of possibility for parents to use the formal services also for children aged two and older since 2012, levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years are very low, well below the average for the countries included in this review and for OECD countries; levels of attendance for children over three years are much higher, around both averages. For actual attendance levels, see ‘relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements’ on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

3. Changes in policy since April 2017 (including proposals currently under discussion)

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs established in 2015 an expert committee on family policy, to propose new policies including leave arrangements and forms of childcare. This is part of the political programme of the new government established in 2014. The expert committee worked until the end of government term, i.e. the end of 2017. In contrast to her conservative predecessors, the Social Democrat Minister of Labour and Social Affairs aimed to develop the Czech family policy in line with EU recommendations. In September 2017 the new Concept of Family Policy was approved by the government. Besides changes in Parental benefit and new measure on Paternity leave were adopted and started to be effective since 2018. First, a new option to take up Parental benefit for a shorter period than up to the child's second birthday has been introduced. Since 1 January 2018, the shortest period is six months, with the maximum payment of the same amount as the maximum payment for Maternity leave. Second, the maximum amount payable for the whole period remained CZK220,000 [€8,528.17] for single childbirth but it has increased to CZK330,000 [€12,792.25] for multiple childbirth. Moreover, since 1 February 2018, a one-week Paternity leave (of seven calendar days) has been effective. It can be taken within six weeks after the childbirth. Fathers are entitled to the same conditions as mothers on Maternity leave.

4. Take-up of leave

a. Maternity leave

Nearly all mothers take Maternity leave.

b. Paternity leave

There is no statutory leave entitlement.

c. Parental leave

Legislation on Parental leave, so that fathers could take leave, was introduced in 1990, but truly equal conditions for both parents were not introduced until January 2001. However, the number of men receiving Parental benefit in comparison to women has remained negligible. In 2001, men accounted for 0.77 per cent of recipients of this benefit; since then, there has been a slight increase, but only to 0.99 per cent in 2003, 1.4 per cent in 2006, and 1.5 per cent in 2008 when 5,724 men received Parental benefit compared with 375,876 women. Since 2008, there has been no further increase; in 2010 4,986 men received Parental benefit compared with 328,777 women, i.e. 1.5 per cent of recipients were men, the same proportion as 2008. In 2015, 5,100 men received Parental benefit, i.e. 1.8 per cent of all recipients. There is no information about how long women or men take Parental leave. It is assumed that most parents taking leave stay on leave only until their child's third birthday (when entitlement to leave, though not benefit, ends) as they prefer not to lose their jobs.

5. Research and publications on leave and other employment-related policies since April 2017

Please be aware that this is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all publications or research in this area for this country. If you are aware of a publication or research that could be listed in this section, please contact the country note author(s) so that they can include it for the following year.

a. General overview

Recently research on work-life balance has been undertaken in particular by the Department of Demography and Geo-demography at Charles University, by the Department of Gender Studies at the Sociological Institute of the Academy of Science, and by the working group on family policy in the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs.

b. Selected recent publications

Höhne, S. (2017) `Změny v čerpání rodičovského příspěvku v demografických souvislostech` [‘Changes in Parental Allowance Take-up in a Demographic Context’], *Demografie*, Vol.59, No.1: 5-22.

The article analyses data on Parental allowance recipients in the last 15 years, during which eligibility criteria and the system of payments considerably changed. It points out changes in the structure of recipients in demographic and other contexts (e.g. labour market, childcare). It is evident that the period of Parental allowance uptake is getting shorter; however, there continues to be an interest in using it up to the time a child reaches the age of three.

Kuchařová, V. and Nešporová, O. (2017) `Česká rodinná politika - podpora rodin s nezaopatřenými dětmi a autonomie rodiny` [‘The Czech family policy – support of families with dependent children and autonomy of family’], *Forum sociální politiky*, 2: 3-13.

The article focuses on family policy in the Czech Republic. Firstly, it defines the basic principles of family policy and, secondly, it provides a discussion on the current situation and trends against the background of policy development over the last two decades. This broad theme has been narrowed down to the study of support for families with dependent children as an example of one of the key areas of contemporary family policy. The authors consider family policy to be a cross-sectional discipline and a specific area which exceeds the boundaries of social policy. The study begins by outlining the three main principles – the autonomy of the family, subsidiarity and participation considered by the authors to make up the cornerstones of Czech family policy, which is followed by a theoretical treatise on the definition of the family, family functions and the ideal of the functioning family. The second part of the article provides examples of specific family policy measures aimed at families with dependent children in the Czech Republic introduced over the last decade (2006–2016). Two specific areas are described – financial support and childcare services and education. The final discussion introduces the requirements and preferences of both those directly impacted by family policy and the wider public. The conclusion underlines the importance of the full participation of all the stakeholders involved.

c. Ongoing research

None reported.