

# Finland<sup>1</sup>

**Minna Salmi, Johanna Närvi and Johanna Lammi-Taskula**  
(National Institute for Health and Welfare THL)

April 2018

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 (*äitiysvapaa/moderskapsledighet*<sup>2</sup>) (responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Labour)**

*Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- One hundred and five (105) working days (i.e. for all types of leave, one calendar week consists of six working days): between 30 and 50 days must be taken before the birth. It is obligatory to take two weeks before and two weeks after birth.

*Payment and funding*

- Earnings-related benefit. During the first 56 days of leave, the payment is equal to 90 per cent of annual earnings between €8,216 and €57,183, with a lower percentage (32.5 per cent) for earnings above this level. Mothers not employed and those whose annual earnings are less than €8,215 get a minimum flat-rate allowance of €24.64 per working day (€616 per month). After this initial period of leave, benefit is paid at 70 per cent of annual earnings between €10,563 and €37,167, with a lower percentage for earnings above this level (40 per cent until €57,183 and 25 per cent above this). Those whose annual earnings are less than €10,562 before the birth get the minimum flat-rate allowance. In 2016, 12 per cent of mothers received the minimum allowance. The proportion of recipients of minimum allowance has come gradually down from the maximum figure of 30 per cent in 1996<sup>3</sup>.
- Mothers are permitted to work, while on Maternity leave (except for the obligatory two weeks before and after the birth) but receive only the minimum

<sup>1</sup> Please cite as: Salmi, M., Närvi, J. and Lammi-Taskula, J. (2018) 'Finland 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/](http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/)

<sup>2</sup> Names of the different types of leave are given in Finnish and Swedish. Finland is a bilingual country with a Swedish-speaking minority.

<sup>3</sup> Social Insurance Institution (2017) *Statistical Yearbook 2016*. Available at: [www.kela.fi/statistics](http://www.kela.fi/statistics)

flat-rate allowance for the days they work. Working on Sundays does not affect the benefit.

- Earnings-related benefits are funded by the sickness insurance scheme, financed by contributions from employers (approximately 68 per cent of the total cost) and employees (approximately 27 per cent) while the remaining 5 per cent is funded by the state. In 2018, employers pay 0.86 per cent of their total salary bill and employees 1.53 per cent of their taxable earnings higher than €14,020; these percentages are subject to annual change in the state budget. The minimum flat-rate allowances and 0.1 per cent of the benefit expenditure are funded from state taxation.
- Pension: Maternity leave accumulates the beneficiary's pension based in 2018 on 139 per cent of the yearly earnings from which the leave benefit is calculated. These earnings accumulate the pension with 1.5 per cent a year. For an unemployed beneficiary or a student, the pension is accumulated as if the earnings were €728.34 a month.

#### *Flexibility in use*

- None.

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

- Entitlements based on residence, i.e. paid to all women who have lived in Finland, or been insured in another EU or EEA Member State, Switzerland or Israel, for at least 180 days immediately before the date on which their baby is due. The basic formula is that a person entitled to family benefits is also entitled to leave. A woman is entitled to maternity benefit after her pregnancy has lasted 154 days.

#### *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 case of premature birth, if the pregnancy has lasted at least 154 days and ends earlier than 30 days before the due day, the mother is entitled to benefit and leave from the next day on for the following 105 days.
- Leave can be delegated to the father if the mother, due to illness, is unable to care for the child; or to another person responsible for the care of the child, if the mother dies and the father does not care for the child.

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

- A brief made for the Committee on Parental Leave shows that in 2010, 96 per cent of employees in the private sector were covered by collective agreements guaranteeing full pay for part of the Maternity leave; in most cases (66 per cent) the full pay is for three months. In public sector collective agreements, coverage is also high. During periods of full pay, the daily benefit is paid to the employer. However, 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 mothers on Maternity leave receive pay from the employer.

## **b. Paternity leave (*isyysvapaa/faderskapsledighet*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Labour)**

### *Length of leave*

- Fifty four (54) working days (nine weeks), of which the father can take one to 18 days while the mother is on Maternity or Parental leave.

### *Payment (applied for the whole period of Paternity leave) and funding*

- Earnings-related benefit. Benefit is paid at 70 per cent of annual earnings between €10,563 and €37,167, with a lower percentage for earnings above this level (40 per cent until €57,183 and 25 per cent above this). Those whose annual earnings are less than €10,562 before the birth get the minimum flat-rate allowance. In 2016, three per cent of fathers received the minimum allowance.
- Fathers are not permitted to work while on Paternity leave. Working on Sundays is permitted as the benefit is paid only for weekdays and Saturdays.
- Funding as for Maternity leave.
- Pension as for Maternity leave.

### *Flexibility in use*

- One to 18 days can be taken in up to four blocks of time while the mother is on Maternity or Parental leave. Subsequently, all days or the remaining 36 days can be taken at most in two blocks after Parental leave. All 54 days can be taken until the child turns two years of age; and the child can be in day care between Parental leave/Home care leave and Paternity leave (if taken up later).
- Paternity leave is child-specific, so that the birth of the next child before the leave period has elapsed for the previous child does not cancel the father's unused leave entitlement; he can take 24 leave days based on the previous child during the Maternity or Parental leave period for the next child, but only in one segment.
- Fathers may only take 18 days of leave at the same time as the mother is on leave.

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

- As for Maternity leave, but the father must also live with the child's mother. The father is entitled to paternity benefit even if the parents do not live together, provided that the father is responsible for childcare. A single mother cannot use the Paternity leave herself.

### *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.

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

- As a result of collective agreements, 60 per cent of all fathers with an employment contract in the private sector, as well as all fathers employed by the state, receive full pay during the five or six first days of the Paternity leave.

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

#### *Length of leave*

- One hundred and fifty eight (158) working days, to be taken after the end of Maternity leave. This is a family entitlement, and parents can share the leave between themselves as they choose.

#### *Payment and funding*

- Earnings-related benefit. Benefit is paid at 70 per cent of annual earnings between €10,563 and €37,167, with a lower percentage for earnings above this level. Those whose annual earnings are less than €10,562 before the birth get the minimum flat-rate allowance.
- Mothers and fathers are permitted to work while on Parental leave but receive only the minimum flat-rate allowance for the days they work. Working on Sundays does not affect the benefit.
- Funding as for Maternity leave.
- Pension as for Maternity leave.

#### *Flexibility in use*

- Each parent can take leave in two parts, of at least 12 days duration.
- Leave can be taken part time, at 40-60 per cent of full-time hours and at least for two months at a time, but only if both parents take part-time leave and take care of the child themselves. Benefit payment is half of the benefit for full-time leave. To get the partial benefit the mother and father have to make an agreement with their employer on part-time work.
- Parents cannot be on leave at the same time.

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

- As for Maternity and Paternity leave. The father is entitled to Parental leave even if the mother does not fulfil the residence criteria; in this case the father's Parental leave period starts 75 days after the child's day of birth.
- The parental benefit is paid provided the mother has had a check-up by a doctor or a qualified nurse employed in the public health care within five to 12 weeks after the birth.

#### *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 case of multiple births, the length of leave is extended by 60 days for each additional child. Either the father or the mother can use the extended leave, partly or wholly during the Maternity leave or the Parental leave period.

- If due to premature birth the Maternity leave has started earlier than 30 working days before the expected date of delivery, Parental leave is extended by as many working days.
- If the mother does not take part in the care of the child, the father is entitled to parental benefit even if the parents no longer live together, provided that the father is responsible for childcare. If the mother dies and the father does not care for the child, the parental benefit can be paid to another person responsible for the care of the child.
- Entitlement to the parental benefit ends if a new entitlement to parental benefit starts due to a next child.

#### **d. Childcare leave or career breaks**

- Childcare leave, referred to as 'Home care leave' (*hoitovapaa/ vrdledighet*) can be taken from the end of Parental leave until a child's third birthday. This leave can be taken in two parts, the minimum length being one month. While taking leave, a parent can receive a Home care allowance (*kotihoidon tuki*) consisting of a basic payment of €338.34 a month, with an additional €101.29 for every other child under three years and €65.09 for every other pre-school child over three years plus a means-tested supplement (up to €181.07 a month). This Home care allowance can be paid to any parent – whether or not they are on 'home care leave' from their job – as long as their child is not in a childcare service provided or funded by the local authority. The average home care allowance per family in 2016 was €416 a month. Home care allowance is financed from municipal taxation with a state subsidy of 25 per cent of the costs.
- In 2016, 23 per cent of local authorities paid a municipal supplement to the Home care allowance; these supplements averaged €152 a month per child, with a range from €72 to €252<sup>4</sup>. The local authorities usually impose specific conditions on paying the supplement, most frequently that all children in the family below school age are taken care of at home.
- If a child under school age is taken care of in a private day care centre or by a private nanny or other person employed by the family and accepted by the local authority, the family is entitled to a private day care allowance (*yksityisen hoidon tuki*), which is €172.25 a month per child. An addition of up to €144.85 a month per child can be paid based on the size and income of the family. If the child is only entitled to 20 hours of early childhood education per week, the allowance is €63.38 a month and the addition is halved. In 2016, 43 per cent of municipalities paid a municipal supplement to the private day care allowance with a range from €50 to €860; these supplements averaged €220 a month per child in 2015. The local authorities usually impose specific conditions on paying the supplement, most frequently that the private day care is for over five hours per day.
- Pension: During Home care leave pension is accumulated as if the earnings were €728.34 a month. These earnings accumulate the pension with 1.5 per cent a year.

#### **e. Other employment-related measures**

##### *Adoption leave and pay*

---

<sup>4</sup> Lahtinen, J. and Selkee, J. (2016) Varhaiskasvatuskyselyraportti II: hallinto, kuntalist, palveluseteli [Report on early childhood education survey II: administration, municipal supplements, service voucher]. Kuntaliitto, Helsinki.

- Adoptive parents of a child younger than seven years are eligible for Parental leave of 234 working days after the birth of the child (or 200 working days if the child is older than two months when the adoptive parents assume care for the child). Fathers are eligible for the same Paternity and Parental leave as fathers having their biological children. A parent who adopts a child older than 12 months and is married to or co-habits with the parent of the child is not entitled to parental benefit. Adoptive parents are entitled to Home care allowance for a period which ends two years after the Parental leave period started even if the child is older than three years.

#### *Time off for the care of dependants*

- Parents of children under ten years can take up to four 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.

#### *Leave of absence to care for a family member or other close person*

- If an employee needs to be absent from work to care for a family member or other close person, the employer has to try to organise work so that the employee can be absent from work for a fixed time period. The employer and the employee agree on the length of the leave and other arrangements. Return to work has to be agreed on before the leave between the employer and the employee. If an agreement cannot be reached, the employee can, with reasonable grounds, interrupt the leave by announcing this to the employer a month before the return at the latest. The employee has to account for grounds of the absence and for interrupting it if the employer asks for it.
- No benefit or wage is paid during this leave.

#### *Special care allowance*

- An allowance for a parent who is not able to work on the following grounds:
  - because s/he has to engage in the hospital care of a child under seven, a severely ill child with ages between seven and 15 years-old, or in the rehabilitation of a child under 16.
  - because s/he cares at home for a severely ill child under 16, when home care is in connection to hospital care.
  - or because s/he has to 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 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 €1,428 and €30,394, with a lower percentage (20 per cent) for earnings above this level. Employees whose annual earnings are less than €1,427 get a minimum flat-rate allowance of €24.64 per working day (€616 per month). The allowance is

- paid for at maximum 60 working days for hospital care or rehabilitation of same illness and for 60 working days for home care.
- Receiving the allowance does not entitle to a leave of absence from work.

#### *Flexible working*

- Parents of children under three years are entitled to a 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 the respective field. The Flexible care allowance is €160.80 a month if the weekly working hours are no more than 30 hours or 80 per cent of the normal full-time hours, and €241.19 a 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 in different hours of the day or different days of the week.
- 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 s/he has 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 refuse only if the reduced working hours would lead to serious disadvantages for the organisation – in that case, working hours must be a maximum of 30 hours a week. Both parents can take Partial childcare leave during the same period, but cannot take leave during the same time in the day. Employees taking Partial childcare leave during the child's first and second year at school are entitled to a Partial home care allowance (*osittainen hoitoraha*) of €96.89 a month. Partial home 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.

#### *Specific provision for (breast-)feeding*

- None. Breast-feeding leave is not considered necessary, as Maternity leave and Parental leave last until the child is nine to ten months old.

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

The maximum period of paid post-natal leave available in Finland is 36 months (including low paid 'Home care leave'). The maximum period of high paid leave is 11.5 months after birth. As there is an entitlement to ECEC from the end of the Parental leave, there is no gap between leave and ECEC entitlements. However, from August 2016 on, the ECEC entitlement is restricted to 20 hours a week unless both parents work or study full-time. Levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years are about the average for the countries included in this review and for OECD countries; but below both averages for children over three years. 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)**

No changes in policy have taken place since April 2017. However, a heated debate on the need for reform to leave policies has continued. During 2016–2017, six political parties and three central labour market organisations presented their models to reform the leave system (see country note 2017). The government's programme from 2015 did not include plans for reform; but in response to the political pressure, the government decided to start preparing a reform in autumn 2017. The preconditions set by the government for reform were partly contradictory, including a rise in participation in ECEC services, but also no additional costs to public economy; and maintaining the possibility to home care until a child turns three years, but also a rise in the employment rate. Preparations for reform were broken off in February 2018.

The group of ministers preparing the reform worked originally with several models, reduced to two in the last stage. Both of these models aimed at a longer father's quota, to be achieved by shortening the Parental leave period. They both also included a considerable cut to Home care allowance and abolition of the means-tested supplement to the allowance after a child turns two years. The reform process was halted as it became clear that the financial consequences of the planned changes would hit families in a weaker socioeconomic position and where mothers have difficult to find employment, as in these families fathers use Paternity leave less often and mothers use long Home care allowance periods more often. Moreover, calculations of the Ministry of Finance showed that there would be only a small increase in the employment rate for mothers.

In its planning meeting for the 2019 budget in April, the government decided to propose a 13 per cent rise to the minimum flat-rate allowance for parental benefits; a lengthening of parental benefit days to 233 days for adoptive parents; an extension of the entitlement to all who adopt a child under 18 years of age; and for multiple births, an additional 18 days of paternity benefit for each additional child (a single mother would get a similar lengthening to her parental benefit days). These proposals will be drafted in a tripartite group as they add to the expenses of the sickness insurance scheme (see funding of the benefits in section 1.).

## **4. Take-up of leave**

### **a. Maternity leave**

Almost all mothers use the leave. Two weeks of leave before and two weeks after the birth are obligatory. Very few mothers entitled to Maternity leave work during the leave period.

### **b. Paternity leave<sup>5</sup>**

Paternity leave was reformed from the beginning of 2013 into a nine weeks leave, which includes the former one to 18 days Paternity leave and the former six weeks father's month (that is the bonus Paternity leave days plus the last two weeks of the preceding Parental leave available for fathers between 2003 and 2012). Statistics allow for a different review of the take-up of the first 18 days of the new Paternity leave, which can be taken while the mother is on Maternity or Parental leave (comparable with the old Paternity leave) and the remaining 36 days which are taken after the Parental leave. The analysis of the fathers' take-up of leave is based on the

---

<sup>5</sup> One to 18 days that can be taken while the mother is on leave.



THL study<sup>6</sup> where the respondents had their child in 2011 and still used the entitlements of the old scheme. These findings are thus comparable with findings from earlier research. A subsequent THL survey for fathers with a child born 2013 covers fathers' take-up of different forms of leave since the reform in 2013<sup>7</sup>.

Since the end of the 1990s, the great majority of fathers have taken the one to 18 days' Paternity leave, or, since 2013, the first one to 18 days of the Paternity leave. The proportion of fathers taking this leave increased from 40 per cent in 1990 and 76 per cent in 2000 to 84 per cent in 2012, with a slight drop to 83 per cent in 2013 and then a more significant drop in 2014 when only 78 per cent of fathers took this short period of Paternity leave. In 2016, again 80 per cent of fathers took the short Paternity leave<sup>8</sup>. Since 2013 it has been possible to postpone the take-up of Paternity leave until the child turns two years. Preliminary analysis of the take-up statistics suggests that a shift towards leave take-up nearer the child's second birthday is taking place<sup>9</sup>. THL study based on survey data indicates that for a majority of fathers (71 per cent) the possibility to postpone take-up was important for their taking the leave, and for a third it was decisive<sup>7</sup>.

Since 2008, the average length of the leave taken while the mother is on Maternity or Parental leave has been 15 working days.

Statistics indicate that one in five fathers do not take either Paternity or Parental leave.

The reasons for not taking the short Paternity leave are most often the father's work situation, the family economy or the father not being in work.<sup>7,10</sup>

### **c. Parental leave and fathers' individual leave (i.e. the days of Paternity leave to be taken after the Parental leave)**

The 158 days of Parental leave is mostly taken by mothers. Almost all mothers take Parental leave whereas only two to three per cent of fathers took a longer Parental leave than the two weeks of the father's month over the years it was available. Less than one per cent of mothers entitled to Parental leave did not take the whole leave period even if the father did not take Parental leave in 2004–2007. Less than four per cent of mothers work to some extent during the leave period.

Even if the popularity of the short Paternity leave is high, in 2013 only about 32 per cent of all fathers, took the father's month (still the entitlement for families where the

---

<sup>6</sup> Salmi, M. and Närvi, J. (eds.) (2017) *Perhevapaat, talouskriisi ja sukupuolten tasa-arvo [Family leave, economic crisis and gender equality]*. Raportti 4/2017, Helsinki: THL.

<sup>7</sup> Närvi, J. (2018) *Isä hoitaa – vai hoitaako? [Daddy takes care – or does he?]* Työpaperi 1/2018, THL, Helsinki

<sup>8</sup> The percentages given here are counted as proportions of the parental benefit periods that started in the respective year. It is presently studied, based on register data on children born 2015, which proportion of fathers took paternity leave taken all together, which proportion took it directly after Parental leave, which proportion postponed taking their leave days but used them until the child turns two, which proportion used only the days during Maternity or Parental leave, and which proportion used no leave at all. Preliminary findings indicate that the percentages of the final take-up differ from those based on annual statistics. Analysis by Miia Saarikallio-Torp and Anneli Miettinen, Social Insurance Institution.

<sup>9</sup> Analysis by Anita Haataja, Social Insurance Institution.

<sup>10</sup> Lammi-Taskula, J., Salmi, M. and Närvi, J. (2017) 'Isien perhevapaat [Fathers on family leave]', in: M. Salmi and J. Närvi (eds.) *Perhevapaat, talouskriisi ja sukupuolten tasa-arvo [Family leave, economic crisis and gender equality]*. Raportti 4/2017, THL, Helsinki 2017.

Maternity leave started before 1 January 2013) or the six weeks of the new Paternity leave to be taken after the Parental leave. In 2014 the proportion was higher, 34 per cent, and in 2015 the proportion jumped into 50 per cent of fathers and has stayed at the same level in 2016. The average length of leave taken by fathers after Parental leave has also risen from 21 days in 2012 and 2013 to 27 days in 2015 and 2016.

Like the earlier 'Father's month' (see country note 2017), the longer part of Paternity leave has become more and more popular, but its contribution towards equalising parental responsibilities is still called into question as in every third family the mother stayed at home during all of the father's Paternity leave weeks because she planned to continue to care for the child at home supported by the Home care allowance, and the father had to take his leave before the child's second birthday<sup>7</sup>. However, before the extension of the time limit for taking leave (the earlier Father's month was to be taken within six months of the end of the Parental leave), the majority of mothers stayed at home during this leave; with more flexibility in the use of the Paternity leave, more mothers have returned to work before the father took his leave, which has increased fathers' individual care responsibility.<sup>7 10</sup>

According to the two THL studies, men over 30, men with a good income, and men whose partners have a good income, as well as fathers of first-born children were more likely to take the earlier father's month or the longer Paternity leave. In families where the mother had been employed before the child was born, the mother's high employment status also increased the likelihood of the father taking the longer leave. The likelihood was halved if the father thought men to be mainly responsible for the family economy, or if the father had recently experienced unemployment. The most common reasons fathers with children born in 2011 or 2013 mentioned for not taking the longer part of Paternity leave, or the earlier 'Father's month', were that they thought the family economy did not allow it, or that their spouse was taking care of the child supported by Home care allowance. The spouse not having a job also hindered fathers from taking their leave quota. Work-related obstacles were also mentioned quite often. Highly educated fathers more often than other fathers did not take the longer leave because of work pressure or the nature of their work, while family economy was more often the reason among blue-collar fathers. However, family economy was mentioned more often than work-related reasons even by highly educated fathers. Hardly any father mentioned negative attitudes at their workplace as an obstacle, but rather themselves considered a long absence from work as difficult. This was related to the organisation of work at workplaces during fathers' leave: fathers reported that a substitute was seldom hired and work tasks were most commonly shared between fellow workers or, typically among white-collar employees, were left to be taken care of by the father himself despite taking leave, which made fathers hesitate to use the possibility of taking leave for longer than a few weeks<sup>7, 11</sup>.

In 2016, five per cent of fathers took Parental leave. Even if the number is low, it has doubled compared to earlier years when only one to three per cent of fathers took a longer Parental leave than the two weeks included in the 'Father's month'. The average length of fathers' Parental leave was 57 working days. Fathers with children born in 2011 more likely shared the Parental leave with the mother if they were over 30 and fathers of first-born children. The spouse's high education level had a significant if small effect on the likelihood of fathers sharing the Parental leave. Fathers with children born in 2013 more commonly took Parental leave if their

---

<sup>11</sup> Närvi, J. (2017) Perhevapaat työpaikoilla ja työelämässä.[Family leaves at workplaces and in working life], In Salmi, M and Närvi, J (ed) *Perhevapaat, talouskriisi ja sukupuolten tasa-arvo [Family leave, economic crisis and gender equality]*. Raportti 4/2017, Helsinki: THL

spouse had a high education level and income, especially if the father himself was not highly educated.<sup>7</sup>

The part-time option for taking Parental leave has not been popular. In 2003, the first year that it was available, 37 parents received the partial parental allowance, rising to 84 in 2004 and 117 in 2007. This means that less than 0.1 per cent of families with a new-born child used the new arrangement in its first five years. The use has not increased subsequently; 30–40 couples used it between 2008 and 2014, and 66 couples in 2017<sup>12</sup>.

#### **d. Childcare leave or career breaks**

Almost all families (87 per cent in 2016) take advantage of the Home care allowance (HCA), at least for some time after Parental leave. Since 2006, statistics are available of use by women and men, showing that HCA is used almost entirely by mothers. In 98 per cent of all families receiving HCA, one of the parents takes care of the child and in 97 per cent of these families the carer is the mother.

In the long run, HCA has become less popular; the proportion of children aged nine to 36 months taken care of at home supported by the HCA has dropped from 58 per cent in 2000 to 46 per cent in 2016. Recently the take-up has varied: HCA was paid to 87 per cent of families whose Parental leave ended in 2005, dropping to 84 per cent for 2006, rising again to 88 per cent from 2007 on, and 89 per cent in 2014 and 2015, but dropping to 87 per cent in 2016. At the same time the proportion of under three-year-olds taken care of and supported by the HCA has varied between 53 and 46 per cent. The year-to-year variation of HCA take-up is probably due to variations in female labour force demand and in the composition of women giving birth. The decreasing popularity in the long run matches the growing proportion of young children attending childcare services from 2000 to 2015: while the proportion of under-one-year-olds in these services has dropped to less than one per cent, the proportion of one- and two-year-olds has risen from 35 to 41 per cent<sup>13</sup>.

Statistics also enable an assessment of take-up periods of HCA. In families paid this allowance at some point before their child turns three years<sup>14</sup>, periods taken have divided rather evenly during the past years: 26-31 per cent take less than seven months, 22-26 per cent between seven and 12 months, 27-29 per cent between 13 and 24 months, and 15-25 per cent longer than 24 months (the maximum length being 26-27 months). However, the proportion taking the longest period declined from 2003 to 2013 from 25 to 15 per cent while the proportion taking the shortest periods rose from 26 to 30 per cent. From 2013 to 2014 the proportion of the longest periods again rose to 16 per cent but dropped again to 15 per cent in 2015 and 2016 while the proportion of the shortest periods dropped to 29 per cent in 2014 but rose back to 30 per cent in 2015 and to 31 per cent in 2016. The (few) male recipients of HCA took less of the longest periods than their female counterparts (10 per cent in 2016) but in 2014 the proportion of fathers taking HCA for longer than a year rose from 41 to 45 per cent, though dropping again to 42 per cent in 2015 and 39 per cent in 2016 (calculations based on Statistical Yearbooks of the Social Insurance

---

<sup>12</sup> See [www.kela.fi/kelasto](http://www.kela.fi/kelasto).

<sup>13</sup> Säkkinen, S. and Kuoppala, T. (2017) *Varhaiskasvatus 2016 [Early childhood education 2016]* Helsinki: THL Statistical Report 29/2017.

<sup>14</sup> 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 2-3 per cent of all recipients.

Institution 2004–2016). In the long run, from 1999 to 2010, the median length of HCA periods has been ten months<sup>15</sup>. Only 6–8 per cent of fathers annually have been recipients of the HCA during the years 2006–2016. The THL study on parents who had a child in 2011 shows that it was most likely taken by fathers whose spouses had a high employment status and a high income<sup>10</sup>.

The fathers who answered the THL questionnaire in 2013 had taken some form of family leave and were thus more active leave users than the average father. Of these fathers, however, three in four said that they had not used Home care leave with HCA when their child is two years old, and will not use it<sup>10</sup>. The main obstacle for taking the leave according to the two THL studies in 2013 and 2016 was the family economy, which more than a half of fathers mentioned hindered them from taking childcare leave. Other common reasons (from a fifth to a third of fathers) for not taking the leave were that their spouse did not have a job, that the father did not consider taking the leave necessary, and that the child started at day care. Work-related reasons such as nature of work or work pressure were mentioned by only one in six or one in five fathers.<sup>7, 10</sup>

The debate on possible cuts to the HCA period in 2013–2014 (see country note 2015) led to calculations on how many two-year-olds and their siblings are taken care of at home supported by the HCA. At the end of 2010, 36 per cent of two-year-olds belonged to this group either as the primary HCA recipient (69 per cent) or as a sibling of a younger HCA recipient (29 per cent). In 40 per cent of families the HCA covers the care of one child, in another 40 per cent two children, and in 19 per cent three or more children. Nine per cent of three to seven-year-olds (27,600 children) were taken care of at home as siblings of younger children receiving HCA<sup>16</sup>. According to annual statistics, in 2016, one in four children taken care of supported by the HCA was older than three years of age; thus presumably they were older siblings<sup>3</sup>. These 20,745 children comprised only seven per cent of three to seven-year-olds.

A study based on register data shows that half of women who had their first child in 1999 took Maternity, Parental and Home care leave at most until their child was 18 months old; while almost 30 per cent stayed on leave for 36 months or longer, ten per cent for almost five years. For these mothers, the leave that started with their first-born child continued without a break with successive children<sup>17</sup>. Another analysis based on the same data shows that 47 per cent of mothers who had their first child 1999–2006 had a second child within three years of the birth of the first child. However, less than half of these mothers (48 per cent) continued to a new Maternity leave direct from Home care allowance period with the first child, and half of the mothers stopped their Home care allowance period in between the children<sup>18</sup>. Thus, contrary to common beliefs, only a small majority of Finnish mothers stay at home on family leave for several years non-stop, and it is a minority that takes the maximum length of leave.

---

<sup>15</sup> Aalto, A. (2013) *Katsaus osittaisen hoitorahan käyttöön 2000-luvulla* [Review on the take-up of partial home care allowance in the 2000s]. Helsinki: Kela Työpapereita 43/2013.

<sup>16</sup> Calculations by Anita Haataja and Siru Keskinen, Social Insurance Institution.

<sup>17</sup> Haataja, A. and Hämäläinen, U. (2010) 'Viekö haikara tasa-arvon? Puolisoiden väliset tuloerot lapsiperheissä' ['Does the stork wash away gender equality? Income differences between spouses in families with children'], in: U. Hämäläinen and O. Kangas (eds.) *Perhepiirissä* [In the family circle]. Helsinki: Kela.

<sup>18</sup> Haataja, A. and Juutilainen, V.-P. (2014) *Kuinka pitkään lasten kotihoitoa? Selvitys äitien lastenhoitojaksoista kotona 2000-luvulla* [How long at home with children? A report on mothers' childcare periods at home in the 2000s], Kela Työpapereita 58/2014.

The THL study of parents with a child born in 2011 shows that 46 per cent of all mothers were employed and 40 per cent were at home taking care of the child/children when the child was two years old; the remaining 14 per cent were mainly students (7 per cent) or unemployed (3 per cent). One in four mothers of two-year-olds had already a younger child, and a majority (84 per cent) of them were at home taking care of the children while one in ten was employed. Of those mothers whose youngest child was two-years-old, only 24 per cent were still at home taking care of the child supported by the HCA while 59 per cent were employed and 17 per cent did something else such as studying or were unemployed. Further analysis indicated that a mother whose youngest child is the two-year-old was more likely to be employed if she was employed before the child was born and had a high-income level, if she had a high level of education, and if she had a permanent employment contract when the child was born. A mother was more likely to be still at home with a two-year-old if she was a blue-collar worker, had a low level of education, had a low-income level before the child was born, and also if she had three or more children. Of mothers who were still at home with a two-year-old youngest child, less than half had a job waiting for them while an ample half did not have an employment contract<sup>19</sup>. Still further analysis indicated that of mothers without an employment contract almost a third had no education after basic school; an ample third had vocational education, and also an ample third had more than vocational education. So, the employability of these mothers varies in the current labour market, where there are less and less jobs for people with a low level of education.<sup>20</sup>

This study also showed that when mothers' individual motivations for relying on the HCA were analyzed, the issues where at-home mothers and at-work mothers differed were views on (a) quality of day care services, with 29 per cent of at-home mothers but only eight per cent of at-work mothers mistrusting the quality; and (b) on 'mother's place' 59 per cent of at-home mothers thinking that mothers of young children should stay home, while only 35 per cent of at-work mothers did so. When the significance of the 'mother care ideal' for the mother's activity was analysed together with the factors related to education and position in the labour market, both types of explanatory factors proved to be important. Level of education and labour market experiences still predicted the mother's activity, but a traditional view on mother's place at home almost doubled the probability of a mother still being at home with the two-year-old. However, the strongest predictor proved to be that the mother mistrusts the quality of day care services; this triples the probability of a mother still being at home with the two-year-old<sup>19</sup>.

Earlier only a small number of families – 2,100 in 2003 – took advantage of Partial childcare leave. After the reform making parents of younger school children eligible for the Partial care allowance, the number of families increased and was 10,365 in 2008; the number then decreased to 9,995 in 2009 but was again 14,035 in 2013 (these figures describe the situation at the end of the year). Forty-three per cent of these families had a child under three years. The recent increase happened among the parents of school children (from 6,545 to 7,932 families), but especially among the parents of younger children. The take-up of Partial childcare leave for under three-year-olds increased after a small decrease between 2007 and 2008; at the end

---

<sup>19</sup> Närvi, J. (2017) Äitien perhevapaat ja osallistuminen työelämään [Mothers' family leave and participation in working life]. In Salmi, M. and Närvi, J. (eds) *Perhevapaat, talouskriisi ja sukupuolten tasa-arvo [Family leave, economic crisis and gender equality]*. Raportti 4/2017, Helsinki: THL.

<sup>20</sup> Salmi, M. and Närvi, J. (2018) *The Finnish family leave reform in the light of research: the rise and fall of a reform 2017–2018*. Presentation in the seminar of Nordic Gender Equality Network, Oslo, 14.3.2018

of 2009 it was paid to 3,449 families and in 2013 to 6,103 families, with 4.1 per cent of under three-year-olds and 6.8 per cent of seven to eight-year-old school children receiving the allowance in 2013. Partial childcare leave for under three-year-olds was mostly (94 per cent) used by mothers and was most usually taken (40 per cent) for not longer than six months; a third of the users took it for seven to 12 months and a quarter for more than 12 months. From 1999 to 2010, the median length of Partial care leave periods with children under three years was eight months. Partial care leave was taken more often by women with a high education level and high socio-economic status, less often by young mothers, perhaps because they are less likely to have permanent employment. In families with a child under three years, mothers almost always (80 per cent) took Partial care leave after a period of HCA taken after Parental leave; on average, the child was 18 months old when the mother started her partial care leave. Thus partial care leave did not function as an alternative to HCA but as a transition from full-time HCA to part-time employment.

The Flexible care allowance, available from the beginning of 2014, seems to be much more popular than the previous Partial care allowance for under three-year-olds. During the year 2014, 15,251 children (6 per cent of the age group) were taken care of supported by this allowance, while in 2013 only 10,927 under three-year-olds were taken care of supported by the Partial care allowance. During the year 2016, 17,370 families received Flexible care allowance compared to 15,800 families in 2014 and 11,300 families receiving Partial care allowance in 2013. Thus the popularity of the new part-time leave arrangement has risen with 54 per cent compared to the previous entitlement, even if the numbers still are low and still only six per cent of the age group are taken care of supported by this allowance. One in ten recipients of the Flexible care allowance were fathers<sup>3 15 21</sup>.

The THL study shows that of mothers with two-year-olds who had returned to employment, 28 per cent worked part-time (of all employed Finnish mothers with children below school-age, 18 per cent worked part-time in 2013<sup>22</sup>; in 2015 30 per cent of mothers to 1–2-year-old children did so<sup>23</sup>). A third of mothers still at home with the two-year-old planned to work part-time. Also one in three mothers were interested in working part-time but did not find it possible. The most common obstacle was family economy, but part-time work was also considered unsuitable in own work either because it would be difficult to arrange or because the mother thought she would have the same workload with less time and less pay<sup>24</sup>. The Partial childcare leave was used or planned more likely by mothers who had a valid employment contract before the child was born<sup>25</sup>. The rule that the employee can

---

<sup>21</sup> Kelan lapsiperhe-etuustilasto 2016 [Statistics on benefits for families with children 2016. Social Insurance Institution].

<sup>22</sup> Sutela, H. (2015) Pitkät työajat hankaloittavat perheen ja työn yhteensovittamista [Long working hours complicate combining family and work]. Tilastokeskus, *Tieto & trendit* 4/2015, pp.50–57

<sup>23</sup> Pärnänen, A. & Kambur, O. (2017) Suomi–Ruotsi-vertailu: Pienten lasten äitien työssäolossa ei suuria eroja [Comparing Finland and Sweden: No big differences in employment of mothers to young children]. Tilastokeskus, *Tieto & trendit* 25.4.2017

<sup>24</sup> Salmi, M., Lammi-Taskula, J. and Mäntylä, E. (2016) Pienten lasten äidit osa-aikatyöhön? Poliitiikan ja käytäntöjen ristiriitoja [More part-time work to mothers of young children? Contradictions of policy and practice] *Yhteiskuntapolitiikka*. Vol.81 No.2: 206–215. See also: [www.leavenetwork.org](http://www.leavenetwork.org) → Annual seminar 2015 → Presentations.

<sup>25</sup> Salmi, M., Närvi, J., Lammi-Taskula, J. and Mäntylä, E. (2017) Osa-aikaisten perhevapaiden ja osa-aikatyön käyttö, mahdollisuudet ja esteet [Take-up, possibilities and obstacles of partial childcare leave and part-time work], in M. Salmi and J. Närvi (eds) *Perhevapaat, talouskriisi ja sukupuolten tasa-arvo [Family leave, economic crisis and gender equality]*. Raportti 4/2017, Helsinki: THL.

take Partial childcare leave only if s/he has been working for the same employer for at least six months during the past twelve months effectively hinders mothers from choosing the partial leave as many mothers have to find a new job after their family leave.

In 2016, Partial home care allowance during the child's first and second year at school was used to take care of seven per cent of 7–8-year-old children.

The use of the private day care allowance for under three-year-olds has dropped: in 2016 only 3,510 families received this allowance for a child under three years, while the figure was 4,470 in 2011 and 4,209 in 2015. However, the lower number may be caused by a significant diminishing of the annual number of children born since 2010. Even this allowance is primarily used for the care of children over three years; 3.3 per cent of under three-year-olds and 4.6 per cent of under-seven-year-olds received the allowance in 2013.

The results of recent research confirm earlier findings that the length of leave periods taken by mothers depends on the mother's level of education, her employment status and her possibilities and experiences in the labour market as well as how easy it is to find employment especially for women with a low level of education; but also the values and attitudes of the mother play a role. The leave schemes also seem to create two categories of women in which a) women with a stable position in the labour market, higher levels of education and better employment prospects have more options, being able to choose between a shorter or a longer family leave period (and between a period of part-time and full-time work), while b) women with little education and less opportunities in the labour market have fewer alternatives. So, a woman with a fixed-term contract or without work prior to the birth of her child is more likely to stay at home for a longer period, and to be reliant on the Home care allowance. The HCA, therefore, has partly become an income source for unemployed women, even if it is lower than the basic unemployment benefit, while also functioning as an alternative to the use of childcare services for parents with an employment contract. It also serves as an alternative to unemployment, making room for mothers who identify with a strong mother as caregiver role, instead of the less socially-valued identity of the unemployed.

While statistics and research indicate that during the past ten years more and more fathers have taken the longer Paternity leave/'Father's month', the leave takers still tend to more often be men with a high level of education and a good position in working life, and especially men whose spouses have a high level of education and a good position in working life. Recent research strongly points to the importance of developing the leave schemes towards longer quotas for fathers. At the same time research shows that workplace practices in organising work during fathers' leave as well as gendered ways of perceiving only the ear-marked leave as father's leave play an important role in how fathers in practice consider themselves entitled to parental leave.

#### **e. Other employment-related measures**

There are no annual statistics available on the take-up of temporary childcare leave to care for a child fallen ill. In the Quality of Work Life Survey from 2013<sup>26</sup>, 67 per cent of employed mothers and 52 per cent of employed fathers with children under ten years had taken temporary childcare leave during the past 12 months, compared

---

<sup>26</sup> Sutela, H. and Lehto, A-M. (2014) *Työolojen muutokset 1977–2013 [Change of working conditions 1977–2013.]* Helsinki: Statistics Finland.

to 65 per cent of mothers and 52 per cent of fathers in 2003 and 72 of mothers and 56 of fathers in 2008. In families where both parents have full-time employment, 71 per cent of mothers and 60 per cent of fathers have taken temporary childcare leave, compared to 80 per cent of mothers and 68 of fathers in 2008. The researchers point out that the figures have dropped from 2008 back to the 2003 level; they ask whether this is due to parents not daring to take leave in times of economic crisis and the general insecurity of working life.

In the THL family leave study, 77 per cent of mothers of two-year-olds who had returned to work, and 54 of fathers had taken temporary childcare leave during the past year. However, many of the fathers' spouses were still at home taking care of the two-year-old. In families where both parents were employed, 79 per cent of mothers and 74 per cent of fathers had taken leave to care for a child fallen ill. One in four mothers and one in three fathers worked at home while being on temporary childcare leave. This has grown much more common compared to year 2006, when only ten per cent of mothers and 12 per cent of fathers did so. The increasing use of mobile technology, more prevalent in many branches could potentially explain this change.<sup>27</sup>

## 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

Research on statutory leave entitlements and on take-up is done at the initiative of individual researchers; no systematic follow-up takes place, except for basic statistics. Research has been focused on the take-up of Parental leave and Home care leave and their connections with women's labour market participation, as well as on fathers' take-up of different forms of family leave. Comparisons over time have been developed on the preconditions and obstacles faced in taking up leave. Recent research has compared leave schemes and their take-up and consequences in the Nordic countries; it has also widened the focus to workplace attitudes and practices in connection with leave take-up. In addition, decision-making between parents and fathers' and mothers' reasons for leave-taking have been studied, as well as the consequences of leave-taking to the economic position of families. Qualitative research has been done on mothers' choices of care and career in the context of insecure working life, and on various factors affecting the timing of mothers' return to employment from family leave. Recently, register-based data have been used to study longitudinally the consequences of mothers' leave-taking for their career and wage development, and more detailed register-based analysis is being undertaken on fathers leave take-up. Another recent study has focused on the consequences of the HCA for mothers, and leave take-up among immigrants.

---

<sup>27</sup> Närvi, J. (2017) Perhevapaat työpaikoilla ja työelämässä [Family leave at workplaces and in working life]. In Salmi, M and Närvi, J (eds) *Perhevapaat, talouskriisi ja sukupuolten tasa-arvo [Family leave, economic crisis and gender equality]*. Raportti 4/2017, Helsinki: THL



## b. Selected recent publications

Närvi, J. (2018) *Isä hoitaa – vai hoitaako? Väestökyselyn ja haastattelujen tuloksia isien perhevapaiden käytöstä*. Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos THL, Työpäperi 1/2018 [Daddy takes care – or does he? Results of a population survey and interviews on fathers' use of family leaves. National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). Working paper 1/2018]. Available in Finnish at: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-302-995-8>

The report analyses preconditions for and obstacles to fathers' use of different forms of family leave. The study, funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) program of the European Commission, provides information on who are the users of the nine weeks Paternity leave available since the beginning of 2013, and who comprise the approximately half of fathers who still do not use the longer part of Paternity leave, which can be taken after Parental leave. The study also investigates the one in five fathers who do not take any family leave with their child and their reasons not to do so. Furthermore, the study analyses practices which at workplaces support or impede fathers' use of family leaves.

The study is based on a population survey responded by over 900 fathers of approximately three-year-old children, and on interviews with 13 fathers and/or superiors. The findings of the study indicate that family leave was left completely untaken more often by fathers outside the labour market as well as 'distance fathers' who did not live with the child and the child's mother. Young fathers and fathers without academic degree, as well as entrepreneurs and fathers in blue-collar position and those whose spouses were in a lower socioeconomic position, more often took only the short Paternity leave but nothing more. A longer leave – the longer part of Paternity leave, Parental leave or Childcare leave – was taken more often by fathers older than 35, fathers with high level of education, wage earners and upper white-collar employees in particular, as well as by fathers whose spouses had a university degree, high income or were white-collar employees. Especially fathers who took the longer Paternity leave after Parental leave were more often fathers in a good socioeconomic position.

Almost two in three fathers who took the longer Paternity leave, after Parental leave, did so later than immediately after Parental leave. A majority of fathers assessed that the flexible time limit available since 2013 affected their choice to take Paternity leave. However, taking the longer Paternity leave does not necessarily support the development of fathers' independent care responsibility: only half of the fathers took care of the child mainly on their own while on longer Paternity leave, and in almost half of the families the child's mother was home during at least part of the father's Paternity leave.

A substitute was seldom hired for a wage earner father on family leave. His tasks were most usually shared between his fellow workers. Especially among upper white-collar employees, it was usual that their work was taken care of by the fathers themselves either before, after or during the leave. Fathers considered a long absence from work to be difficult more often if their tasks were not transferred to other employees but they were themselves responsible for the tasks also during their family leave. On the other hand, white-collar employees, with more independent work than fathers in a blue-collar position and responsible for their own schedules, more often take even longer family leaves. The study indicates that fathers' use of different forms of family leave is connected to not only the ways in which work is organised but also to cultural conceptions of parenthood and gender prevailing at workplaces and in families.

Tervola J. (2018) *Supporting gender equality and integration. Immigrant families' child care choices in the Nordic policy context. Studies in social security and health* 149. Helsinki: Kela. Available at: <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe201804036299>

This PhD study investigates immigrant families' care choices and their determinants in Finland and Sweden. The study is based on comprehensive administrative register data, and the choices are observed from the take-up of different benefits. Economic and demographic factors are considered through regression analysis. Immigrant fathers in both Finland and Sweden show clearly lower take-up rates of Paternity and Parental leave than native-born fathers. Generally, though, the take-up rates of immigrant fathers are much higher in Sweden than in Finland, and the gap between the countries is largely traced back to differences in policy systems. However, the study also provides evidence that social norms play a role in fathers' Parental leave use, even between Finnish-born and Swedish-born fathers. Moreover, immigrant families' choices between child home care and day care follow the pattern previously found in some European and US studies. In Finland, with strong policy support for both home and day care, immigrant families take care of their children at home longer than native-borns. However, after the child turns three years, immigrants demonstrate an increasing preference for day care, even more so than native families. This may reflect immigrant-specific preferences for children's integration and language acquisition. All in all, it seems that care choices in immigrant families have many distinct features compared to the majority families. Nevertheless, this study provides evidence that care choices can be steered and family policy goals approached through efficient and consistent policies also among immigrant populations.

Weckström, S. (2018) *Views of Finnish mothers on childcare and labour market participation: a cross-European comparison. Turun yliopiston julkaisu – Annales Universitatis Turkuensis Sarja – Ser B 452. Turku: University of Turku. Available at: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-29-7196-1>*

This PhD thesis examines childcare at home, work participation and unemployment from the viewpoint of mothers. In addition to the quality of life of the mothers, indications of neofamilialism are also examined. The aspects investigated are divided into four articles. Included in the first article are attitudes and behaviour related to the choice of home instead of work participation; in the second article, the perceived negative consequences of childcare at home on an occupational career; and in the third article, the perceived negative consequences of work participation on family domain roles. Also included in the third article is life satisfaction among working mothers and those staying at home. The self-assessed consequences of unemployment on wellbeing and on family life are investigated in the fourth article. With the exception of unemployment, the focus is on a European comparison. Of special interest are the differences and similarities between Finland and the two other Nordic countries included (Denmark and Sweden), which belong to the same welfare regime type but provide weaker access to very long family leave for mothers. The data used in the first three articles is based on the second round of the European Social Survey (ESS), conducted during 2004 and 2005, and the data regarding unemployment comes from a survey conducted by the University of Turku in 2000.

The Finnish mothers included in the investigation had stayed at home with their children for a relatively long time. In a cross-national comparison, their attitudes did not, however, appear familialistic. Mothers in only two – Sweden and Denmark – of the other 11 countries included here less commonly considered that a woman should be prepared to cut down on paid work for the sake of family. The results regarding unemployment further contradict the idea of (generalised) neofamilialism in Finnish

society. Finnish mothers did not report much detrimental effects related to childcare at home. Any negative consequences for an occupational career were perceived less commonly than in the other countries, and those mothers who took care of their children at home were satisfied with their life. Working mothers in Finland were also satisfied with their life, although out of these, the least satisfied were those whose work interfered with family roles. Negative perceptions regarding work in relation to family members were reported more often by Finnish mothers than by mothers in the other countries.

Despite the different routes regarding longer-term childcare leave, more similarities were revealed between Finland and the other two Nordic countries compared with Finland and the other European countries. Therefore, the idea that longer-term childcare leave differentiates Finland from the other two Nordic countries is not overall supported by the findings of this thesis.

### **c. Ongoing research**

*Finnish Childcare Policies: Inequality in Focus (2016–2020)*. University of Jyväskylä, University of Tampere and THL (National Institute for Health and Welfare). Funded by the Academy of Finland.

The project analyses the dualistic model of Finnish childcare policies in relation to issues of equality between regions, families, parents, children and genders. Contact: Maarit Alasuutari at [maarit.alasuutari@jyu.fi](mailto:maarit.alasuutari@jyu.fi) and Johanna Lammi-Taskula at [johanna.lammi-taskula@thl.fi](mailto:johanna.lammi-taskula@thl.fi)

*Father's uptake of family leaves (2018)*. Miia Saarikallio-Torp and Anneli Miettinen, KELA. Funded by the Social Insurance Institution (KELA).

A register-based study investigates fathers' use of family leaves, especially the father's quota, and patterns of take-up among fathers of children born in 2015. Since the latest family leave reform in 2013, fathers have been able to use their quota more flexibly, for example postpone it until the child turns two. The project provides information on which fathers do not use any parental leave at all as well as on the use and spreading of the father quota. Contact: Miia Saarikallio-Torp at [miia.saarikallio-torp@kela.fi](mailto:miia.saarikallio-torp@kela.fi) and Anneli Miettinen at [anneli.miettinen@kela.fi](mailto:anneli.miettinen@kela.fi).

*Flexible care allowance and part-time work: which families make use of the new legislation (2018-2019)*. Anneli Miettinen and Miia Saarikallio-Torp, KELA. Funded by the Social Insurance Institution. (KELA)

The project studies families' childcare and part-time work choices using register data on children's participation in ECEC, parents' employment situation and use of care allowances. Contact: Anneli Miettinen at [anneli.miettinen@kela.fi](mailto:anneli.miettinen@kela.fi) and Miia Saarikallio-Torp at [miia.saarikallio-torp@kela.fi](mailto:miia.saarikallio-torp@kela.fi).