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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 (תקופת לידה והורות, *Tekufat Leida VeHorut*, literally 'Birth and Parenthood Period') (responsibility of the National Insurance Institute)

*Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- Twenty-six (26) weeks: up to six weeks before the birth and the remainder following the birth. It is obligatory to take the first fourteen weeks.

*Payment and funding*

- One hundred per cent of earnings for the first 15 weeks, with a ceiling of five times the average salary (ISL1,463.83 [€347.61]<sup>2</sup> per day). The remaining 11 weeks are unpaid.
- The benefit is paid by the National Insurance Institute, funded by contributions from employers, employees and the state. Employers pay 3.45 per cent of earnings and employees 0.4 per cent up to 60 per cent of average earnings; above which payment is 6.75 per cent and seven per cent respectively up to a ceiling.

*Flexibility in use*

- Women may use the first six weeks of leave before birth. The leave may be shortened to 14 weeks, but not by less than that.
- Working is formally not permitted while on leave, and the National Insurance Institute is entitled to revoke benefits for those found to be working when on leave. However, maintaining a connection to the workplace (via email, phonecalls and even occasional visits) is considered acceptable for women. Enforcement of this regulation for men sharing their spouses' leave is much more stringent.

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

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<sup>1</sup> Please cite as: Perez-Vaisvidovsky, N. (2018) 'Israel 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> Conversion of currency undertaken on 13 June 2018, using: <http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter>

- All women are entitled to the first 15 weeks of leave (including job protection, if relevant), regardless of employment status.
- Only women who have worked with the same employer for a full year before birth are entitled to a full 26 weeks leave.
- Entitlement to benefits depends on prior participation in the labour force (and payment of social insurance) for ten out of 14 months or 15 out of 25 months prior to leave. Self-employed women are eligible.

*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*

- A mother who has been hospitalized during her leave for two weeks or more may extend her paid leave for the hospitalization period, up to four weeks, or split her leave so the hospitalization period will not be included.
- A mother whose baby has been hospitalized during the leave for two weeks or more may extend her paid leave for the hospitalization period, up to 20 weeks, or split her leave so the hospitalization period will not be included.
- In multiple child births, the mother is entitled to an additional three weeks of leave and benefits) for each child beyond the first.
- When the mother is unable to care for the newborn because of illness or disability, the full leave can be transferred to the father (and only to him). If both pass the eligibility criteria, benefits are then paid to the father, based on his income.
- The mother can transfer part of her leave to her spouse, as long as the following conditions are met:
  - The first six weeks after birth cannot be transferred.
  - Both the mother and her spouse must be eligible for leave and for benefits.
  - The minimum period to be transferred is 21 days.
  - The mother must return to work.
  - The mother has to provide written consent to transfer her leave.
  - Mothers in a same-sex relationship cannot transfer their leave to their (female) spouse.
  - One of the transferred weeks may be used by the spouse while the mother is at leave.

#### **b. Paternity leave (חופשת אבהות, Hufshat Abahut)**

Fathers are entitled to be absent from work from the beginning of their spouse's labour and for six calendar days after birth. The first day and two last days are treated and remunerated as sickness leave; workers receive no pay for the first day, and 50 per cent of their daily pay for the other two days, unless covered by collective agreements providing better conditions, and these payments are deducted from each worker's annual allotment of sickness leave days. The second, third and fourth days are treated and remunerated as annual leave, offering full pay. Fathers that have not accumulated enough sickness leave or annual leave days are not entitled to this leave.

#### **c. Parental leave (Tekufat Leida VeHorut, literally 'Birth and Parenthood Period') (responsibility of the National Insurance Institute)**

*Length of leave*

- Up to one year after childbirth for each parent. Leave is an individual and non-transferable entitlement.

### *Payment and funding*

- None.

### *Flexibility in use*

- Parents are not entitled to take leave at the same time.
- Both parents can take up to two leave intervals.

### *Regional or local variations in leave policy*

- None

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

- Parents are eligible to a leave period no longer than a half of the length of their employment with the current employer, up to a leave of one year for four years of employment.
- Eligibility is granted to the mother's spouse (and not necessarily to the child's father)
- Same-sex couples are eligible

### *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*

- None

## **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 Maternity leave apply as for other parents, as long as the adopted child is under 14 years of age.
- Same-sex couples enjoy the same eligibility criteria.

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

- In case of the sickness of a child (below 16 years of age), each parent may use up to eight days each year out of their own allotted sick leave (paid by the employer from the second day at 50 per cent of earnings, 100 per cent from the fourth day). A single parent may use up to 16 days. In case of a malignant disease, the period of leave increases to 90 days (110 for a single parent).
- Parents of a child with special needs are entitled to 18 days out of their own sick leave (36 days for a single parent).
- In case of the sickness of a spouse, workers may use up to six days per year (60 days for a malignant disease), out of their allotted sick leave.
- During the pregnancy of his spouse, a worker is entitled to use seven days of his allotted sick leave to attend medical examinations and treatments related to the pregnancy.

- A worker may use up to six days per year of his allotted sick leave to care for a parent over 65 years of age.

#### *Flexible working*

- During the first four months after the end of the Maternity leave, mothers employed full time are entitled to one paid hour of absence from work per day, in addition to break times defined by law. The father is eligible for this reduction if the mother is not using it.

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave in Israel is 12 months, but most of this is unpaid; leave paid at a high rate runs for 3.5 months. There is no entitlement to ECEC. Demand for children under three years exceeds supply, and places in government regulated and subsidized care are hard to come by. So when the initial birth leave of 26 weeks ends, parents have difficulties finding places in regulated ECEC centres, especially when the leave ends in the middle of the school year. Many parents, therefore, have to use the unpaid Parental leave, or else rely on family assistance or on expensive, unregulated private care.

There is no comparative information on levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years; but attendance for children over three years is above average for the countries included in this review and OECD countries. 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)**

None reported.

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

### **a. Maternity leave**

All eligible women use Maternity leave as it is obligatory; As of 2010, women taking this leave account for 62 per cent of all women giving birth. Only 0.35 per cent of women receiving Maternity leave benefit transfer part of it to their spouse.

### **b. Paternity leave**

No data exist on the use of the new Paternity leave program.

### **c. Parental leave**

No data exist on the use of the unpaid Parental leave.

## **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 Israeli leave policy is quite rare; few studies target this policy specifically, and as Israel is not a member state of the EU, and has only recently joined the OECD, few comparative studies include Israel in their sample. Leaves are generally understood by researchers within the context of wider family policy, which has in turn been understood as subject to the logic of the Israeli-Arab, and specifically the Israeli-Palestinian, conflict. The main role of women, according to this logic, is to 'fight the demographic battle', and they are rewarded for fulfilling this role and can make claims to common resources based on its demands. This explains the then-generous Maternity leave of 12 weeks, introduced in 1952. Its stagnation for 55 years – and the minor expansions afterwards – are understood, again, within the general framework of family policy, now focusing on 'rewarding childbearing while neglecting childcare' policy, providing generous measures to pregnant women and to women seeking to become pregnant, but giving minimal support to parents after the children are born.

### **b. Selected publications since April 2017**

None reported.

### **c. Ongoing research**

None reported.