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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 (출산전후휴가) (responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and Labour)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Ninety (90) calendar days: a minimum of 45 days must be taken after birth. In the case of a delayed birth additional days are provided to guarantee 45 days leave after the birth; however, additional days in excess of the 90 days are not paid. It is obligatory to take leave.
- In the case of a miscarriage or stillbirth, 5 to 90 days leave is provided depending on the length of pregnancy.

Payment and funding

- One hundred (100) per cent of ordinary earnings (i.e. for contractually agreed working hours excluding bonuses and/or overtime pay) at the time of taking leave paid by the employer for the first 60 days, and one hundred per cent of ordinary earnings by the Employment Insurance Fund with a ceiling of KRW1,600,000 [€1,280.46]³ for the last 30 days.
- To reduce the financial burden on small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), the Employment Insurance Fund⁴ pays for the first 60 days up to a ceiling of KRW3,200,000 [€2,560.92]. If an employee's ordinary earnings are higher than the ceiling for the first 60 days, the employer must pay the difference between the ceiling and the employee's ordinary earnings above the ceiling for that period. The definition

¹ Please cite as: Kim, H. (2018) 'Korea 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 The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, Korea.

³ Conversion of currency undertaken on 13 June 2018, using: <http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter>

⁴ The Employment Insurance (EI) does not cover government officials, teachers (both in public and private school), part-time workers working less than 60 hours per month nor domestic workers. EI also does not cover businesses in the agriculture, forestry, fishery, and hunting sectors with 4 or less employees nor does it cover small construction firms.

of an SME varies across sectors; for example, in the manufacturing sector the enterprise must have no more than 500 employees, and in the construction sector no more than 300 to be considered as an SME.

- The Employment Insurance Fund for Maternity leave benefit is financed mainly by employers' and employees' contribution with a small amount of government subsidy.

Flexibility in use

- Maternity leave can be taken from 45 days before the expected date of delivery. Women who have previously experienced or risk a miscarriage can take the first 45 days at any time for medical reasons.

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

- All women employees, whether permanent or temporary workers, are eligible for Maternity leave; but to be eligible for the maternity benefit from the Employment Insurance Fund, employees must have been insured for 180 days prior to the commencement of Maternity leave; for those not entitled to the benefit, the employer must pay for the first 60 days.
- Self-employed workers are not eligible.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature birth; 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 Maternity leave increases to 120 days.

b. Paternity leave (배우자 출산휴가) (responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and Labour)

Length of leave

- Three to five days, in order to give some flexibility to the employer who can decide the length of leave.

Payment and funding

- One hundred (100) per cent of ordinary earnings for the first three days. The remaining two days are unpaid.
- Paid by the employer.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be taken within thirty days after child birth

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

- All employees whose spouse gave birth.

c. Parental leave (육아휴직) (responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and Labour)

Length of leave

- One year for each employed parent. Leave is an individual non-transferable entitlement.

Payment and funding

- For the first three months of full-time Parental leave, 80 per cent of ordinary earnings, with a minimum of €560.20 a month and a ceiling of KRW700,000 [€1,200.43] a month; for the remaining nine months, 40 per cent of ordinary earnings, with a minimum of KRW500,000 [€400.14] a month and a ceiling of KRW1,000,000 [€800.29] a month.
- For part-time Parental leave, 80 per cent of ordinary earnings with a ceiling of KRW1,500,000 [€1,200.43] a month is applied for the whole period of leave, to encourage employees to use part-time Parental leave.
- In cases where both parents take Parental leave for the same child at different times, the allowance for the first three months of leave taken by the second parent increases to 100 per cent of ordinary earnings with a ceiling of KRW1,500,000 [€1,200.43] for the first child and KRW2,000,000 [€1,600.57] for subsequent children. This so-called 'Daddy month' (아빠의 달) aims to encourage fathers to take Parental leave by providing higher benefits when both parents participate in Parental leave consecutively.
- Twenty-five per cent of the Parental leave benefit is paid as a lump sum if the employee returns to the same employer upon expiry of leave and works for more than six months for the same employer afterwards.
- Funded from the Employment Insurance Fund.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be taken until the child reaches the age of eight years or the second grade in elementary school.
- Leave can be split once, i.e. it can be taken in two separate periods. In this case, employees can divide Parental leave into one period of full-time leave and one period of reduced working hours; or two periods of full-time Parental leave; or two periods of reduced working hours. However, the total period of leave taken cannot exceed one year.
- Instead of taking Parental leave on a full-time basis, employees can reduce their working hours; this part-time Parental leave is called Reduced Working Hours during Childcare Period. Reduced working hours must be a minimum of 15 hours per week and cannot exceed 30 hours per week. The Parental leave benefit is paid in proportion to the number of working hours.
- Both parents can take leave at the same time, subject to the agreement of both employers. If both parents take leave at the same time, only one parent receives the Parental leave benefit.

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

- Employers can refuse to grant Parental leave to employees who have not worked continuously for their firm for one year.

- In order to receive the Parental leave payment, employees must have been insured for at least 180 days prior to the commencement of Parental leave and take at least 30 days leave consecutively
- Self-employed workers are not eligible.
- Same-sex couples are not eligible, as same-sex marriage is not legally allowed.

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

- None

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

- None

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- The same Parental leave regulations apply in case of adoption.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Employees can take up to 90 days' unpaid leave per year to take care of a family member on account of illness, accident, old age, etc. This must be taken in blocks of at least 30 days.

Flexible working

- All female workers who are within the first 12 weeks or beyond the 36th week of their pregnancies can reduce their working hours by two hours a day without reduction in pay. This rule on shorter work hours for pregnant workers, previously applied only to companies with more than 300 employees, was extended to all businesses in March 2016.
- After childbirth, a female worker is entitled to a 30 minute break two times a day to feed a child under 12 months (including breast feeding and bottle feeding).

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

The maximum period of paid post-natal leave available in Korea is 27 months. From 2013 onwards, a childcare subsidy is available to all children aged five years or younger who wish to attend any type of formal ECEC facility regardless of family income level.

Levels of attendance at formal services for children under and over three years are slightly above the OECD average. 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 ceiling of the Maternity leave allowance was fixed at KRW1,350,000 [€1,080.39] for 15 years, but was increased for the last 30 days to KRW1,500,000 [€1,200.43] in 2017 and to KRW1,600,000 [€1,280.46] in 2018.

In September 2017, payment for the first three months of Parental leave increased from 40 per cent to 80 per cent of ordinary earnings and the minimum and maximum ceilings also increased from KRW500,000 [€400.14] to KRW700,000 [€560.20] and from KRW1,000,000 [€800.29] to KRW1,500,000 [€1,200.43], respectively. In January 2018, the allowance of part-time Parental leave increased from 60 per cent to 80 per cent of ordinary earnings with a maximum ceiling of KRW1,500,000 [€1,200.43].

From July 2018, the ceiling for the 100 per cent benefit paid for the 'Daddy Month' will increase from KRW1,500,000 [€1,200.43] to KRW2,000,000 [€1,600.57] for the first child; currently, this ceiling applies only to second and subsequent children.

4. Take-up of leave⁵

a. Maternity leave

In 2017, the number of employees taking Maternity leave was 81,093 (23 per cent of the total number of births). The number of births decreased from 406,200 in 2016 to 357,700 (provisional) in 2017. There are three main reasons why use of Maternity leave is low: female employment rates are low, so many women giving birth are not employed; the coverage of Employment Insurance is limited (see footnote 3); and self-employed workers are not eligible.

b. Paternity leave

No information.

c. Parental leave

In 2017, 90,123 employees took Parental leave, a slight increase on the number taking leave in 2016 (89,780), even though the number of births decreased from 424,563 in 2015 to 393,674 in 2016.

The proportion of male employees among the total number of employees taking Parental leave was 13.4 per cent (12,043) in 2017, compared with 8.5 per cent (7,616) in 2017. This proportion has been rising in recent years, from 2.0 per cent in 2010.

The number of 'Daddy months' users increased by 63 per cent from 2,703 in 2016 to 4,408 in 2017, with the large majority of users (3,895 or 88.4 per cent) being male employees; the remainder were female employees whose husbands had taken Parental leave before them (when these female employees took leave after their husbands, they received the 'Daddy months' payment for three months and then normal Parental leave payment for the remaining months). The increased popularity of the 'Daddy months' can be attributed to the

⁵ The numbers in this section relate to the number of employees taking leave covered by Employment Insurance.

fact that the period was extended from one month to three months in January 2016, and possibly also changing attitudes towards men taking Parental leave.

In 2017, the average duration of Parental leave taken by men was 6.6 months, compared with 10.1 months for women. The proportion of men who use Parental leave for 3 months or less was 41 per cent, while 40 per cent took between 9 and 12 months of leave. For women, the proportions were 9.5 per cent and 73 per cent respectively. The number of employees taking part-time Parental leave increased slightly from 2,761 in 2016 to 2,821 in 2017; male employees represented 11 per cent of all part-time Parental leave takers.

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

In 2008 and every year since 2011, the Ministry of Employment and Labour has conducted a survey on implementation of policies to support the work and family life balance (일가정양립 실태조사). The Ministry questionnaire covers gender discrimination, maternity protection and measures in the workplace to reconcile of work and family life, and the survey includes about 1,000 employers with 5 employees and more sampled by size, type of industry and region. While the survey is confined to employers, not employees, it gives an idea of how people are using the different types of leave and other means that support the work and family life balance.

b. Selected publications since April 2017

None reported.

c. Ongoing research

None reported.