

# Spain<sup>1</sup>

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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 (*Permiso y prestación por maternidad*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security)

*Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- Sixteen (16) weeks: six weeks are obligatory and must be taken following the birth, while the remaining ten weeks can be taken before or after birth.

*Payment and funding*

- One hundred (100) per cent of earnings up to a ceiling of €3,751.20 a month in 2017 and 2018.
- A flat-rate benefit (€537.84 per month or €17.84 per day) is paid for 42 calendar days to all employed women who do not meet eligibility requirements (a mere increase of 18 cents per day since July 2016, after being unchanged since 2010).
- Financed by social insurance contributions from employers and employees. As a rule, employers pay 23.6 per cent of gross earnings and employees pay 4.7 per cent to cover common contingencies which include pensions, sickness and leaves (*contingencias comunes*), with an additional contribution paid to cover unemployment. In the case of public servants, all contributions are paid by their employer.

*Flexibility in use*

- The start date for taking leave before birth can vary.
- Mothers, including those who are self-employed, may take leave part-time except for the six weeks following birth.

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<sup>1</sup> Meil, G., Lapuerta, I. and Escobedo, A. (2018) 'Spain 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/)

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

- All employed women (employee or self-employed; working on open ended or fixed term contract; working full or part-time) are entitled to Maternity leave, but conditions must be met to qualify for the earnings-related Maternity leave benefit (non-eligible employees receive a flat-rate payment for 42 calendar days after delivery): the mother needs to be making social security contributions at the beginning of the leave; or be receiving an unemployment contributory benefit; or be in the first year of the Parental leave, *and* have contributed to social security at least 180 days in the previous seven years (or 360 days during working life). Women under 21 years do not need to have had a previous period of social security contribution, and women between 21 and 26 need only 90 days in the previous seven years, or 180 days during their working life. This requirement is more flexible for women who work part-time. Self-employed mothers are exempt from paying social security contributions while on Maternity leave.

*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 (or multiple adoption or fostering), or birth (or adoption or fostering) of a child with some disability, or birth (or adoption or fostering) into a large family, mothers have the right to two extra weeks of leave for a new child from the second one onward, and to family benefits from an additional lump-sum benefit.
- In the case of a premature birth or infant hospitalisation, Maternity leave is extended up to 13 weeks.
- If the baby dies, Maternity leave is not reduced.
- If the mother dies, the father can take the Maternity leave entitlements, independently of the mother's previous employment situation and entitlements.
- Employed mothers have the right to transfer up to ten of their 16 paid weeks of Maternity leave to the father on condition that mothers take six weeks after giving birth, that their partner fulfils contributory requirements, and that the transfer does not endanger mothers' health. Leave can be completely or partly transferred, so both parents may share full or part-time leave simultaneously.
- The non-contributory benefit is extended to 14 calendar days (from 42 to 56 calendar days) for lone mothers, large families, multiple births or disabilities.
- In case of same sex parents, as is in case of adoption and foster care, partners must agree which one takes Maternity and Paternity leave.

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

- Employed and self-employed pregnant women and mothers breastfeeding babies less than nine months old are entitled to be relocated to another workplace if working conditions are not compatible with women in such circumstances or it is a risk for the baby. If this cannot be reasonably accommodated, the working contract or activity has to be interrupted, and leave can be taken with payment of 100 per cent of earnings. Such leave correspondingly lasts until the beginning of Maternity leave or until the baby reaches the age of nine months.
- Several regional and local governments have improved entitlements for public sector employees. For example, women working for the municipality of Madrid

have a right of up to eight additional weeks of Maternity leave and those working for the regional government of Madrid have a right of up to ten calendar days.

**b. Paternity leave (*permiso de paternidad, permiso por nacimiento*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Immigration)**

*Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- Two days of Birth leave (*permiso por nacimiento*) for employees, except public servants, and four uninterrupted weeks of Paternity leave (*permiso de paternidad*) for all employed fathers, including self-employed, which can be taken at any moment till the end of the Maternity leave or just after following it. Public servants have the right to four weeks Paternity leave to be taken just after the birth of the child.

*Payment and funding*

- One hundred (100) per cent of earnings, paid by the Social Security Fund with the same ceiling as for Maternity leave. In the case of public servants, all contributions are paid by their employer.
- Paternity leave is funded as Maternity leave; however, Birth leave is still paid by employers.

*Flexibility in use*

- The two days of Birth Leave (*permiso por nacimiento*) must be used at the time of birth. Fathers who need to travel for their work have two extra days, paid by the employer (this does not apply in the public sector).
- The four weeks of Paternity leave (*permiso de paternidad*) can be taken during or immediately after the end of Maternity leave and on a full-time or part-time basis. This does not apply in the public sector, where the four weeks are considered as a whole, to be taken full-time from the time of the birth, as a general rule (except when the specific regional government or institution - *Comunidades Autónomas* - regulates differently). Fathers who take part-time Paternity leave need their employer's agreement.

*Regional or local variations in leave policy*

- A number of regional and local governments have improved entitlements for public sector employees. Since 2006, in Catalonia they receive five days at birth (as Birth leave), and a month of Paternity leave that must be taken at the end of Maternity leave, which fulfils the new 2017 state standard. The same applies for male employees of the municipality of Madrid (collective agreement, 2012-2015, though the leave has to be taken at birth or after adoption) and from other cities. This latter improvement has been offset by the extension of Paternity leave from two to four weeks since 1 January 2017.

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

- All employees have the right to Birth leave (the self-employed are excluded, as this is provided by their employers).

- All employed fathers or partners (employees and self-employed) fulfilling contributory requirements (i.e. at least 180 days in the previous seven years, or 360 days during working life) are entitled to Paternity leave.

*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 father*

- Leave is extended by two extra days per child from the second one onward, in the case of multiple births (or adoption or fostering) or if the child has a disability.
- The entitlement is gender neutral, to encompass homosexual and lesbian couples; this leave can be taken by the member of the couple who did not use the Maternity leave (or most of it) (see 1e below).
- In the above-mentioned case of public employees in Catalonia, lone mothers who assume the sole custody of the child can use the extra month for fathers at the end of Maternity leave.

*Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone) or delegation of leave to person other than the parents*

- See 'regional or local variations' for improved conditions offered by some regional governments or municipalities for their employees.

### **c. Parental leave (*Excedencia por cuidado de hijos*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security)**

*Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- Each parent is entitled to take leave until three years after childbirth. Leave is an individual right. During the first year, return to the same job position is protected. After the first year, job protection is restricted to a job of the same category.

*Payment and funding*

- None. Since 2011, all employees taking leave are credited with social security contributions for the whole period, which affects pension accounts, health cover and new Maternity or Paternity leave entitlements. However, unemployment benefits and sickness leave are excluded.

*Flexibility in use*

- There are no limits to the number of periods of leave that can be taken until the child is three years old, with no minimum period required.

*Regional or local variations in leave policy*

- Since 2000, seven out of 17 regional governments - *Comunidades Autónomas* - have introduced flat-rate benefits (Navarre in 2000; Castile and León in 2001; Basque Country and Castile-La Mancha in 2002; La Rioja in 2003; and, finally, Balearic Islands and Murcia in 2008). However, these benefits have been reduced or abolished since 2010 because of the fiscal crisis. For example:

- Basque Country: €277.08 per month for families with an annual income below €20,000 per person (€232.92 for families with an annual income above the latter amount) in 2018, compared to €291 in 2011 for all families, regardless of the earnings. The amount of the benefit was not updated between 2012 and 2017 and income ceilings were introduced in 2015.
- La Rioja: €250 per month in 2018 but restricted to families with an annual income below €40,000 or €50,000 in case of large families (the amount of the benefit remains stable since it was introduced, but the income ceiling has been increased).
- Balearic Islands abolished benefits in 2010; Murcia in 2011; Castilla-León and Castilla-La Mancha in 2012; and Navarre in 2013.

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

- All employees. Employees on temporary contracts can only claim leave that is shorter than their contract period. Unemployed and self-employed workers are not 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)*

- The period of job-secured leave is extended to 15 or 18 months in large families, which are those with three or more children or with two children, one of whom has a disability.

*Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone) or delegation of leave to person other than the parents*

- If both parents work for the same company, the employer can put restrictions on both parents using leave at the same time if this is justified for production reasons.
- In the public sector, the job position is protected for two years, and in the third year within the same municipality.

*Pension credits*

- For the calculation of the retirement or permanent disability pension, parents who have left employment, voluntarily or not, between the ninth month before birth (third in case of adoption or fostering of a minor) and the sixth year after, are given between 116 days (four months) and 260 days (nine months) from the social security credits per child<sup>2</sup>. The number of days will be increased gradually from 2013 to 2019 (with 243 days recognized in 2018), until all children reach the maximum limit of five years. These credits apply not only for calculating the aforementioned pensions, but also for all other social security benefits (except for the minimum payment period) and covers only the period spent outside of employment. It also applies to all births, after or before the law took force. Only one of the parents has the right to these pension credits; in case of dispute, it is attributed to the mother.

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<sup>2</sup> Regulated by RD 1716/2012. Available at: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2012-15765>

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

- Unpaid career breaks are recognised in the labour and public employees' regulations (*excedencia voluntaria*). The only protection offered is claiming the right of return to an equivalent job before the end of the leave, once there is a vacancy. This job protection works much better in the public than in the private sector.

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

### *Adoption leave and pay*

- The same regulations as for other parents for the adoption or fostering of children under six years or older children with additional needs (e.g. disabilities, international adoptions).
- Either parent can benefit from the Maternity leave entitlement in the case of an adoption.
- Public employees involved in an international adoption have the right to two months of paid leave; these include basic payment without benefits, and the process requires that the adoptive parents stay in the country of origin of the future adoptive child.

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

- During the first nine months after the child's birth (12 months in the public sector), employees (mothers or fathers) are entitled to one hour of absence during the working day without a loss of earnings; this part-time leave (*permiso de lactancia*) was originally to support breastfeeding. It is a family entitlement that can be used by either parent, but if both parents are working, only one can use it. Self-employed parents are excluded. The period can be divided into two half-hours or be replaced by a half-hour shortening of the normal working day, or by an equivalent period on full-time days. The public sector and many collective agreements allow for a full hour shortening of the normal working day. By consolidating this entitlement, families can, in practice, extend Maternity (or Paternity) leave by two to four weeks (depending on the terms established by collective or company agreements). In the case of multiple births (or multiple adoptions or fostering) this leave is recognized for each child, although the length can vary depending on collective or company agreements in the case of using it on full-time basis. This absence is paid for by the employer.

### *Leave to care for sick children*

- Parents are entitled to full-time or part-time leave (with a minimum reduction of 50 per cent of working time) to take care of a seriously ill child under 18 years old during the period the child is in hospital or in need of continuous treatment at home (with certification by the public health service); 109 types of illness are included. The scheme is paid at 100 per cent of the earnings (subject to the same ceiling as Maternity leave) from professional sickness insurance schemes, with previous contributory requirements as for Maternity and Paternity leave. This entitlement is extended to parents working part-time, in which case leave must be at least equivalent to 25 per cent of full-time hours. The leave is an individual right, but only one of the parents is entitled to take leave at any one time. Parents can alternate its use on a monthly base. In

case of divorce, when there is no agreement, the parent with legal custody has the right to take this leave; if they have joint custody, it is the one who makes the claim first.

### *Flexible working*

- The law also guarantees that employees can postpone their annual holidays and use them after Maternity or Paternity leave, so they do not lose them.
- A working parent can reduce his/her working day by between an eighth and half of its normal duration to care for a child until the twelfth year or to look after a disabled child (*reducción de jornada por guarda legal*). Employees may decide, within their usual work schedule, the extent and period of the working time reduction. It is defined as an individual right and there is no payment, but workers taking this 'part-time leave' are credited with up to two years full-time social security contributions (which affect pension accounts, unemployment benefits and new leave entitlements). In addition, public employees have guaranteed some working time flexibility to adapt (for example, to school hours). Self-employed parents are excluded from this right.
- Since 2000, a number of regional governments have introduced payments to parents reducing their working hours. For example: Basque Country, Navarre, La Rioja, Galicia, Castilla La Mancha or Castilla-León have provided flat-rate payments to support this measure proportional to the working time reduction, though Navarre has abolished these payments in 2011 and Castilla-Leon and Castilla La Mancha in 2012. Since 2002 public employees in Catalonia (both fathers and mothers) can reduce their working hours by a third with a 20 per cent earnings reduction, or by a half with a 40 per cent earnings reduction, if they have a child less than six years or care for a disabled relative. Since 2012, they can consolidate this reduction in working time during the first year as a full-time leave, to extend in practice their Maternity or Paternity leave.

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

- Two days leave per employee, per event (*permiso por enfermedad grave de un familiar*) to care for a seriously ill child or for other family reasons (serious illness, hospitalisation or death of a relative to a second degree of consanguinity or affinity), paid by the employer. The entitlement is extended to four days if travelling is required for work. However, there is no agreement on what 'serious illness' means. For public sector employees this entitlement is extended to three days (five days if travelling is required) for the care of first degree relatives (e.g. partner, children or parents, including in-laws).
- Each employee may take up to two years of leave (*excedencia por cuidado de un familiar*) or reduce working hours by between an eighth and a half (*reducción de jornada por cuidado de un familiar*) to take care of a dependent relative (up to the 'second degree of consanguinity or affinity') due to severe illness, disability, accidents or old age. In cases of chronic dependency, the informal carer on leave may receive a payment if he/she is co-resident, which varies depending on the region of residence, the relative's level of dependency recognised by a public agency, and the household income (e.g. in the case of Navarre, one of the regions with the highest benefits, the payments are between €60 and €542.85 per month in 2018). The payment is claimed by the dependent relative. Workers taking leave are credited with social security contributions, which affect pension payments, health cover and new leave entitlements, for the first year of full-time or part-time leave.

- Public employees can extend the unpaid leave to care for a relative for up to three years, with the whole period credited with social security contributions and related social protection benefits. Furthermore, they can work half-time for up to one month without a loss in earnings in the case of a very serious illness for a first degree relative (child, partner or parent including in-laws); they can also benefit from extra flexibility in working time, as do parents of children under 12 years.

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Spain is three years, but most of this period is unpaid; leave paid at a high rate ends after Maternity and Paternity leave (around five months after birth, including the consolidation of reduced working hours related to the Breastfeeding leave or *permiso de lactancia*, see section 1e).

The 2006 Spanish Education Law (*Ley Orgánica de Educación*), modified in 2013 by the Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality (*Ley Orgánica para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa*), provides an entitlement to ECEC from three years onwards, and nearly all children over this age attend early education. So, there is no gap between the end of Parental leave and an ECEC entitlement, but a substantial gap of approximately two and half years between the end of well-paid leave and this *de facto* entitlement. Levels of attendance at formal services for children under and over three years are above the average for the countries included in this review and for 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)

No substantial changes have taken place during the period. The interparty agreement signed in 2016 to support the election of the actual conservative government, which included the gradual equalization of the duration of Maternity and Paternity leaves, hasn’t been implemented further than the increase of Paternity leave from two to four weeks introduced in January 2017. The regional government of the Basque Country, however, plans to grant its employees the right to 18 weeks Maternity and Paternity leave.

## 4. Take-up of leave

### a. Maternity leave

After a long period of continuous coverage increases (from 31 per cent of total births in 1995 to 68 per cent in 2009) due to growing maternal employment and better attention of atypical employment situations, coverage has been decreasing till 66 per cent in 2014 as a consequence of economic crisis and atypical employment. Since then a slowly increase can be observed reaching 68 per cent in 2016. It is worth highlighting that in the context of crisis and very high general unemployment, maternal employment is hardly diminishing while female activity rate in central adult age groups has sharply increased. According to the survey *The social use of leave in Spain, 2012* (see section 5c in the 2014 Annual Report), 80 per cent of mothers aged 25 to 60 who were in paid employment when pregnant, benefited from Maternity leave, with this percentage was higher among younger women than among older

ones (89 per cent for those aged less than 40 and 72 per cent for older women). This result is very close to that obtained using official statistics: 85.6 per cent of mothers, who were active in the labour market at the moment of the birth of the child, benefited from Maternity Leave in 2014 (authors' own calculations). Fathers share some Maternity leave in around one-quarter of adoption cases (27.5 per cent in 2005), but around two per cent of all such leaves (2.1 per cent in 2016 and 1.9 in 2017).

In 2017, an average of 6,856 women per month were on leave because of a risk during pregnancy, with an average duration of 90.9 days, equivalent to 20 per cent of all live births in 2016. Since 2008 (the first year for which there are available take-up data) there is a steady increase in the number of women who take this kind of leave, from 2,546 per month to 6,856 in 2017), while the average number of days of leave taken has decreased (from 120 to 90.9 in the same period). The mean number of women per month taking leave for breastfeeding because of a potential risk (introduced in 2007) reached a mean of 62.2 per month in 2017. The mean number of days of leave was 135.6 days.

## **b. Paternity leave**

Most fathers are eligible for Paternity leave according to the Labour Force Survey data. While Paternity leave was restricted to two days (*permiso por nacimiento* i.e. Birth leave) paid by employers, there was no information on take-up rates. But from March 2007, fathers have received a 13 days payment from Social Security funds, and coverage was 59.8 per cent in 2016 (authors' own calculations based on the ratio number of fathers who took a leave to total number of births), 1.6 percentage points more than the previous year. In 2017, leave duration doubled from two to four weeks and the number of leave users increased by 8.25 per cent to 264.632. Since the total spending increased by 94 per cent, only a small amount of leave users took less time than they were entitled to. According to the survey *The social use of leave in Spain, 2012* (see section 5c in the 2014 Annual Report), the take-up rate among those eligible for Paternity leave is much higher: 74 per cent of men who became fathers after the introduction of this leave and were working at that time report having used it.

Those who were working when they fathered a child and did not take it are mostly men who work without contract or are self-employed. The difference between take-up rates can be attributed to the high proportion of unemployment among young adults (the proportion of unemployed men aged 30 to 34 years increased from 9.2 per cent in 2008, to 25.9 percent in 2012, and was still 15.4 per cent in 2017) and to the fact that the social security institution does not register the Paternity leave of some public servants.

## **c. Parental leave**

In 2016, 40,517 people started some period of Parental leave (11.9 per cent more than in the previous year, the maximum reached since data are available). This corresponds to 9.9 per cent of the births in that year, but still higher than in the recent past (in 1995 it was only 1.7 per cent). However, this represents only 3.2 per cent of children under three years old; the age is relevant since leave can be taken until children reach three years. Fathers made up 7.4 per cent of users, with 0.7 percentage points more than in 2015<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social (2016) *Anuario de Estadísticas del Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social, 2015*. Available at:

According to the survey *The social use of leave in Spain, 2012*<sup>4</sup>, only 0.5 per cent of men aged 25 to 59 who were working when they became fathers made use of Parental leave, compared to 10.4 per cent of women. In most cases leave was taken for the first child (69 per cent); and women mostly took it just after Maternity leave (64 per cent) for a maximum of one year (85 per cent), and most commonly for six months or less (46 per cent), i.e. until a childcare arrangement was available. After leave, all men returned to a full-time job, but only 55 per cent of women did so, while a third returned to part-time job or part-time leave (35 per cent) and only seven per cent gave up paid work altogether or lost their jobs (three per cent).

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

The fact that Parental leave and working time reduction are not paid, limits their use, even among those who have a secure job. The influence of payment can be seen from the high and gender-equal use of the fully-paid working time reduction of one-third of usual working hours, for parents of children under one year old; this was available for public employees in Catalonia between 2002 and 2012 (see section 3 in the 2013 Annual Report); otherwise the use of unpaid working time reductions is limited.

According to the survey *The social use of leave in Spain, 2012*, 19.9 per cent of women and 1.8 per cent of men aged 25 to 59 years, employed at the time when they became parents made use of the right to reduce their working hours. As in the case of Parental leave, most working time reduction is taken for the first child (61 percent among those with two or more children) and, among women, mostly taken just after Maternity leave (55 per cent) or during the first year of the child (79 per cent). Men reduce their working hours mostly for less than one year (72 per cent), while women tend to do it for a longer period (61 per cent for more than one year).

According to the Spanish Social Security Statistics<sup>5</sup>, the number of parents who have taken the leave to care for seriously ill children, introduced in 2011, has increased from 1,114 in 2012 to 2,642 in 2017. However, the mean number of days of leave taken has risen sharply from 176.9 to 381.4, during this period.

Unpaid leave to care for dependent relatives has been available from 2001 onwards. Between 2001 and 2005 about 9,000 employees have used it: 82 per cent were women, with a median duration of 62 days, and 18 per cent were men with a median duration of 55 days (Escobedo and Navarro, 2007). Since 2006, the number of users has grown, increasing to 10,020 new users in 2016, a 6.9 per cent more than 2015 (compared with 3,332 in 2005). The proportion of new male users remained stable at around 15 per cent between 2010 and 2016.

The statistical yearbook of the Ministry of Labour does not provide details on the duration, nor on the extent to which the leaves to care for dependent relatives are connected to the benefit for informal carers, introduced since the 2006 Spanish Law to support dependents. In January 2018, 32.5 per cent of all benefits provided under this law were used for paying informal family carers (384,504 benefits, 27.2 per cent more than one year ago). However, it seems difficult to link care leave to benefits, because these usually require a long administrative process.

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<http://www.empleo.gob.es/es/estadisticas/contenidos/anuario.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Meil, G. (2014) See sections 5b and 5c in the 2014 Annual Report.

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.seg-social.es/Internet\\_1/Estadistica/Est/Otras\\_Prestaciones\\_de\\_la\\_Seguridad\\_Social/index.htm](http://www.seg-social.es/Internet_1/Estadistica/Est/Otras_Prestaciones_de_la_Seguridad_Social/index.htm)

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

### a. General overview

Leave arrangements have become a research topic in Spain, particularly their use by mothers and fathers, and their impact on gender and social equality in the labour market, and on fertility decisions. Fathers' use of leave arrangements is presently a main research focus, as is leave in the organisational context of the workplace and companies.

Since 2006, a fund on Social Protection has supported research on leave arrangements and the Ministry of Labour created a continuous database with a sample of four per cent of all social security contributors, including selected life-course data on work and social security (*Muestra Continua de Vidas Laborales, MCVL* - the Continuous Sample on Working Lives), supplemented with tax and household data. The Ministry still provides limited information on leave arrangements but has allowed researchers to produce detailed information about unpaid leaves such as Parental leave, leave to care for a relative, and working time reductions.

Otherwise, the indicators published on a yearly basis since 1995 by the National Institute of Social Security provide updated information on paid leaves (e.g. total social security expenditure by region and the number of administrative records initiated each year, with the percentage of those for fathers), but with no information on other items such as duration of leave, flexibility in use or the characteristics of users. There is a data gap on the uses and impacts of the various regional flat-rate benefits and full-time or part-time additional schemes, which research projects have partially filled (see Lapuerta in Spain country note, sections 5b and c, of the 2013 Annual Review). There is increasing research interest in the benefits addressed to long-term dependants and family informal carers implemented since 2007 onwards, in the framework of a new public care system for the support of dependency and autonomy, primarily for the elderly but also covering adults and children with severe dependency. Further research is needed in this area.

### b. Selected recent publications

Farré, L. and González, L. (2017) *The effects of paternity leave on fertility and labour market outcomes*. IZA Discussion Paper Series, n° 10865, Bonn: IZA Institute of Labour Economics.

This paper studies the effects of a father quota in the parental leave period on households' labor market and fertility decisions. Identification is based on the 2007 reform of the Spanish family benefit system, which extended the sixteen weeks of paid parental leave by two additional weeks exclusively reserved for fathers and non-transferable to mothers. Using a regression discontinuity design, we show that the reform substantially increased the take-up rate of fathers (by as much as 400 per cent), as well as the re-employment probability of mothers shortly after childbirth (by about 11 per cent). However, it did not affect parents' longer-term leave-taking or employment behavior. We also find that the introduction of the two weeks of Paternity leave delayed higher-order births and reduced subsequent fertility among older women (by about 15 per cent). These results suggest a limited scope for the father quota to alter household behaviors beyond the parental leave period and reduce gender inequality at the workplace.

Fernández-Cornejo, J.A., Del-Pozo, E.V. and Escot, L.; Castellanos-Serrano, C. (2018) 'Can an egalitarian reform in the parental leave system reduce the motherhood labor penalty? Some evidence from Spain', *Revista Española de Sociología*, Vol.27<sup>6</sup>. Available at: <http://www.fes-sociologia.com/journal/online-first.php/>

The article explores parental leave policies as a possible mechanism for furthering male involvement in childcare and the effectiveness of this approach among Spanish fathers with children under the age of six. The data collected with the survey *Use of parental leave, 2012* showed that fathers who took Paternity leave devoted more time to caring for their children than those who did not (5.1 hours/day compared to 4.6 hours/day). Fathers who reduced their working hours as part-time parental leave devoted even more time to their children (5.5 hours), while those who took a full-time parental leave invested more hours (6.6) than any other group. Those findings attest to the effectiveness of leave specifically targeting fathers as a mechanism for promoting parental co-responsibility.

Meil, G. (2017) 'Permisos parentales para hombres y corresponsabilidad en el cuidado de niños' ['Parental leave and Spanish fathers' co-responsibility for childcare'], *Revista del Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social*, Vol.131: 15-34. Available at: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/ejemplar/477228>

The article explores Parental leave policies as a possible mechanism for furthering male involvement in childcare and the effectiveness of this approach among Spanish fathers with children under the age of six. The data collected with the survey *Use of parental leave, 2012* showed that fathers who took Paternity leave devoted more time to caring for their children than those who did not (5.1 hours/day compared to 4.6 hours/day). Fathers who reduced their working hours as part-time parental leave devoted even more time to their children (5.5 hours), while those who took a full-time parental leave invested more hours (6.6) than any other group. Those findings attest to the effectiveness of leave specifically targeting fathers as a mechanism for promoting parental co-responsibility.

Meil, G., Romero-Balsas, P., Rogero-García, J. (2018) 'Parental Leave in Spain: Use, Motivations and Implications', *Revista Española de Sociología*, Vol.27. Available at: <http://www.fes-sociologia.com/journal/online-first.php/>

In Spain as in other countries, advances in childcare leave policy have aimed to encourage leave-taking by both parents. Based on the survey *Social use of parental leave 2012*, this study explores the characteristics of and underlying motivations for leave-taking, as well as the implications for careers, focusing in particular on gender differences. While the analysis reveals only moderate gender-based differences where paid leave was concerned, unpaid leave was taken primarily by women or by the parent with the most favourable working conditions. The reasons for using unpaid leaves revolved essentially around a desire to spend more time with or breast-feed the baby beyond the termination of paid leave, although contributing to the partner's job security also entered into the equation. The study showed that in addition to economic costs, taking unpaid parental leave entails a setback in a significant percentage of men and women's careers.

### c. Ongoing research

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<sup>6</sup> This paper can be found in Meil, G. and Escobedo, A. (2018) Introduction to the Special Issue Gender Equality and Leave Use, *Revista Española de Sociología (RES)*o. 27. Available at: <http://www.fes-sociologia.com/journal/online-first.php>

*Fathers on Leave Alone in Spain (2014-2017)*, Gerardo Meil (coordinator), Department of Sociology, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. Funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

The research focuses on use by fathers of any kind of leave to care for children while the mother returns to paid work for at least one month. A first objective is to examine fathers' negotiations and experiences of leave taking 'alone' in dual earner families with a child under three years. Research will tap into the reasons why some men take a larger share of leave and the consequences of leave taking on fatherhood and work-family balance: Are the new measures tailored to their needs and preferences, in terms of work-family balance and well-being? What are the factors that promote or hinder men's take up of leaves? How are father's perspectives influenced by mother's attitudes or their workplace cultures? What is the impact of leave, in particular of stay-at-home-alone fathering, when the mother returns to work, on family dynamics and on the father-child bond? And what is its impact on men's professional career? This study is part of a collaborative research project 'Fathers on Leave Alone' coordinated by Prof. Karin Wall and Prof. Margaret O'Brien, which adopts a comparative perspective among several industrialized countries. Contact: Gerardo Meil at [gerardo.meil@uam.es](mailto:gerardo.meil@uam.es).

*The role of men in family dynamics from an international perspective (2014-2017)*. Teresa Martín-García (coordinator), Center for Human and Social Sciences (CCHS), Spanish Council for Scientific Research (CSIC). Funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

This project aims to analyze the role of men in family dynamics, with special emphasis on fertility. The first objective is to assess the differences in family formation/dissolution (cohabitation, marriage, divorce) and fertility (delay, number of children, infertility) between men and women, explaining what distinguishes family and reproductive choices, preferences and behavior at an individual level. The second objective is to study the relevance of gender (in)equality in such decisions, taking into account the institutional and contextual aspects and specifically the Parental leave and childcare policies. Contact Teresa Martín at [teresa.martin@cchs.csic.es](mailto:teresa.martin@cchs.csic.es), or visit the project website <http://www.menrolesproject.com/>

*Shared-responsibility woman-man in caring from the perspective of companies: Organizational culture and corporate responsiveness towards men who want to reconcile (2015-2017)*, José Andrés Fernández Cornejo and Lorenzo Escot (coordinators), Department of Economy at the Universidad Complutense. Funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation.

This research aims to analyze the phenomenon of effective inclusion of male workers in the work-life balance policies of companies. That is, its objective is the analysis of the shared-responsibility between men and women in caring, from the perspectives of organizations. The purposes of these surveys are to better understand: what the needs of male workers are in the work-life balance domain; what kind of work-life balance policies are applied by organizations; to what extent these policies effectively include male workers; the organization-culture regarding work-life balance; what might be "good practices" that encourage men to use the reconciliation practices; and what are the costs and benefits for companies of men achieving work-family balance. Contact José Andres Fernández Cornejo at [jafercor@ccee.ucm.es](mailto:jafercor@ccee.ucm.es)

*Working time, paternity and childhood. How can business policies promote father involvement in care and maintain gender equality? (2015-2018)* Teresa Jurado (coordinator), Department of Sociology II at Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), in cooperation with researchers in other Spanish Universities

(UDIMA, UPF, UPO and UPNA). Funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.

The objective of this project is to analyze the employment context in order to understand under which circumstances a family responsible management of human resources, without gender bias, is found. This study intends to identify the degree of diffusion of equal-sharing couples in the Spanish society, their socioeconomic characteristics, and the existence of good practice among enterprises, with respect to work-family balance and its feasibility from a perspective of profit and competitiveness. Contact: Teresa Jurado at [tjurado@poli.uned.es](mailto:tjurado@poli.uned.es) and the project website is <http://implicaproject.org>