

Czech Republic¹

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For comparisons with other countries in this review on leave provision and early childhood education and care services, please see the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review (also available individually on the Leave Network website). To contact authors of country notes, see the [members page](#) on the Leave Network website.

1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

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

Length of leave (before and after birth)

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

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

- 70 per cent of daily earnings up to a maximum payment of CZK42,720 in 2020 [€1,627.55]² per month.
- Payment is financed from sickness insurance contributions by employers, paying 2.3 per cent of earnings.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be started six to eight weeks before birth.
- From the start of the seventh week after childbirth, either parent may use the leave, i.e. the mother may alternate with the father of

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² Conversion of currency undertaken for 31 July 2020, using: https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/policy_and_exchange_rates/euro_reference_exchange_rates/html/eurofxref-graph-czk.en.html

the child, with no restriction on the frequency of alternation. If the father uses the leave, he must do so for at least seven days.

- Parents on leave can work from the start of the seventh week after childbirth, but not on the same job from which they are taking leave.

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

- To be eligible for maternity benefit, an employee must have contributed to sickness insurance for at least 270 calendar days during the last two years. There are no further citizenship requirements.
- A self-employed worker must meet the same condition as an employee, and, in addition, have contributed to sickness insurance for at least calendar 180 days during the last year.
- Students are entitled to the benefit.

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

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

b. Paternity leave

Length of leave

- Seven calendar days.

Payment and funding

- 70 per cent of daily earnings up to a maximum payment of CZK8,575 [€326.69] per seven days.
- Payment is financed from sickness insurance contributions by employers, paying 2.3 per cent of earnings.

Flexibility in use

- It can be taken at any time during the six weeks after the birth of the child.
- All seven days must be taken as a block.

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

- Sickness insured workers, including employees and self-employed men.
- Must be officially registered as the father.

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

Length of leave

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

Payment and funding

- A parental benefit or **Parental Allowance** – *rodicovsky prispevek* – is available to all families who meet the eligibility conditions, whether or not they take Parental leave. It can be considered as a home-care benefit for at-home parents, as well as – partly – a benefit to subsidise care costs, since parents can work full-time or part-time while receiving this benefit (but access to publicly-funded childcare is then limited, see below).
- A parent who personally and duly cares for a child who is the youngest in the family is entitled to the Parental Allowance. The Parental Allowance is provided until the total amount of 300,000 CZK [€11,461.32] has been drawn, before the child's fourth birthday. In the case of twins or more children born at the same time, the total amount extends to 450,000 CZK [€17,191.98].
- A parent may choose the amount of monthly Parental Allowance they receive and thus the period of its drawing. The monthly amount of Parental Allowance is calculated based on the same daily assessment base as is used for the determination of Maternity benefit or Sickness benefit related to the child's confinement or adoption according to the act on sickness insurance. If at least one parent in a family is a person participating in sickness insurance, the amount of Parental Allowance can reach 70 per cent of 30 x the daily assessment base (in 2020, 42,720 CZK [€ 1,632.09] at the most). When the daily assessment base can be determined for both parents, the higher one is used for calculation. If the daily assessment base cannot be set for any parent, parents may elect the monthly amount up to 10,000 CZK [€382.04]. In the case of twins or more children born at the same time the monthly amounts are adjusted accordingly.

- While Parental leave can only be taken up to the child's third birthday, the parental benefit is paid until the child's fourth birthday.
- Parental benefit is funded from general taxation.

Flexibility in use

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

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

- There are no special requirements for leave; however, each parent must ask for formal approval of the employer.
- Parents can choose the period and amount of the parental benefit that they receive, on the condition that at least one parent in a family is a person paying sickness insurance.
- Non-Czech nationals must have been registered as resident for at least one year.
- Payment of the parental benefit is conditional: where there is a child under two years of age, parents must not use a publicly funded ECEC service for more than 92 hours a month. There is no limitation on service use for older children.
- Parental leave is available to registered partners.

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

- In case of multiple births, the maximum amount payable for the whole period is CZK450,000 [€17,144.16]. The upper limit per month is 1.5 times higher than in the case of a single birth. Accordingly, if a parent has not paid sickness insurance, the upper limit is CZK15,000 [€571.48].
- Parental Allowance can be taken by grandparents or other persons where they provide day care for the child and the parents agree to transfer their entitlement.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

- No statutory entitlement.

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- For adoptive parents, the same regulations for Parental leave apply as for other parents.
- Same-sex couples can legally adopt.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Employees can take leave to care for a sick relative at home (in all cases of illness for a child under ten years of age – otherwise, only in the case of a serious illness).
- Leave is paid at 60 per cent of earnings up to a ceiling of CZK855 [€32.57] per day.
- A parent can take no more than nine days of leave in one block of time, but there is no limit regarding the frequency of taking leave. Parents may alternate with each other in taking leave to care for a sick child.
- There are no length of service requirements in order to be eligible.

Flexible working

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

Specific provision for (breast)feeding

- None.

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

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

3.Changes in policy since April 2019 (including proposals currently under discussion)

From 1 January 2020 the total amount of the parental benefit (Parental Allowance) was increased from CZK220,000 [€8,381.59] to CZK300,000 [€11,429.44]for a single childbirth and from CZK330,000 [€12,572.39]to CZK450,000 [€17,144.16]for multiple childbirths. The increased amount became available not only for those who started to take this benefit from 2020 but also for those parents who already took this benefit before 1 January 2020 and were still entitled to this benefit, i.e. did not run out of the whole previous amount of CZK220,000 [€8,381.59]by the 1 January 2020. It means that those parents who took the shorter option of parental benefit period (less than the child reaching 48 months old) lost the entitlement to the increased total amount.

Policy response to the Covid-19 pandemic up to end June 2020

Childcare and schools

- ECEC was not closed officially; it depended on the decision of ECEC managers and municipalities. ECEC had to work in a limited regime with a lower number of children in a class and had to be available for children of parents working in the health and social services (key workers). Nevertheless, most municipalities decided to close ECEC as most parents did not use the service.
- All schools were closed from 11 March 2020 and they switched to online lessons and home schooling. Education (teaching) did not return to the usual mode of operation until 30 June 2020 despite schools re-opening step by step from 20 April 2020 (this included opening for individual consultation and exams of maximum five

final year university students), 27 April 2020 for individual consultation, practices, and exams of maximum five final year university students, 11 May 2020 for final year students at secondary and primary schools in order to prepare for graduation exams and entrance examinations, for all students at universities – max 15 students in a class), 25 May 2020 for pupils of compulsory school age (six to ten years old), optional, maximum 15 pupils, 1 June 2020 for graduation exams, entrance examinations, for all pupils of compulsory school but optional.

Parental leave

- All regular leave options were accessible and stayed unchanged. No modification of regular leave options were made due to the pandemic. No changes were made to existing leave policies.

Other measures for parents and other carers

- The main pandemic measure to support families was the modification of 'attendance allowance' (*ošetřovné*) - extension of 'time off for the care of dependants'. From 11 March 2020 until 30 June 2020 employees could take leave to care for a child under fourteen years of age as schools were closed. Before 11 March 2020 (and since 1 July 2020 again) it was (is) used by an insured employee who was (is) unable to work because she or he took (takes) care of a sick child under ten years of age. During the same time the possibility to take this leave was temporarily extended to self-employed parents, payment was increased from 60 to 80 per cent of earnings (counted from the reduced daily assessment base), and a parent could take the whole period from 11 March 2020 to 30 June 2020 in one block (before and after a parent could take no more than nine days of leave in one block).
- Employers could decide themselves regarding flexible working measures on an individual basis. There was no regulation at national level. Working from home was the most widespread measure when schools and childcare centres were closed.
- The Czech government implemented a programme of employment protection 'Antivirus' (kurzarbeit/reduced working hours).

4. Uptake of leave

a. Maternity leave

Nearly all mothers take Maternity leave.

b. Paternity leave

No information is available so far as the leave has only been introduced in 2018.

c. Parental leave

Legislation on Parental leave (so that fathers could take leave) was introduced in 1990, but truly equal conditions for both parents were not introduced until January 2001. However, the number of men receiving the parental benefit (Parental Allowance), in comparison to women, has remained negligible: in 2001, men accounted for 0.77 per cent of recipients of this benefit, and subsequently there was a slight increase, but only to 0.99 per cent in 2003, 1.4 per cent in 2006 and 1.5 per cent in 2008, when 5,724 men received the parental benefit (for context, 375,876 women received the benefit in that year). Since 2008, however, there has been no further increase: in 2010, 4,986 men received the parental benefit, compared with 328,777 women (i.e. 1.5 per cent of recipients were men, the same proportion as in 2008). In 2015, 5,100 men received the parental benefit (i.e. 1.8 per cent of all recipients).

There is no information about how long women or men take Parental leave for. It is assumed that most parents taking leave do so only until their child's third birthday (when their entitlement to leave, although not the benefit, ends) as they prefer not to lose their jobs.