

# Israel<sup>1</sup>

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April 2020

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)*

- 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*

- 100 per cent of the average earnings in the three months or six months prior to birth (the higher of the two) for the first 15 weeks, with an upper limit of five times the average salary (ILS1,485.83 [€371.95]<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 pay 0.4

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<sup>1</sup> Please cite as: Perez-Vaisvidovsky, N. (2020) 'Israel country note,' in Koslowski, A., Blum, S., Dobrotić, I., Kaufmann, G. and Moss, P. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2020*. Available at: [http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp\\_and\\_r\\_reports/](http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/)

Conversion of currency undertaken for 31 July 2020, using: <sup>2</sup> [https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/policy\\_and\\_exchange\\_rates/euro\\_reference\\_exchange\\_rates/html/eurofxref-graph-huf.en.html](https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/policy_and_exchange_rates/euro_reference_exchange_rates/html/eurofxref-graph-huf.en.html)

per cent, up to 60 per cent of average earnings; above which payment is 6.75 per cent and 7 per cent respectively up to a limit.

#### *Flexibility in use*

- Women may use the first six weeks of leave before birth. The leave may be shortened to 14 weeks, but no 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, phone calls 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)*

- 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-week 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 a person other than the mother*

- A mother who has been hospitalised for two weeks or more during her leave may extend her paid leave for the hospitalisation period (up to four weeks) or split her leave so that the hospitalisation period will not be included.
- A mother whose baby has been hospitalised for two weeks or more during the leave may extend her paid leave for the hospitalisation period (up to 20 weeks) or split her leave so that the hospitalisation period will not be included.
- In the case of multiple childbirths, 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 seven 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 on leave.

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

No statutory entitlement, though 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 last two 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 day is 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 half of the length of their employment with their current employer: up to one year of leave is allowed 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 must meet the same eligibility criteria.

*Time off for the care of dependents*

- In the 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, and 100 per cent from the fourth day). A single parent may use up to 16 days. In the case of malignant disease, the period of leave increases to 90 days (110 days 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 the case of the sickness of a spouse, workers may use up to six days per year out of their allotted sick leave (60 days for malignant disease).
- During the pregnancy of their spouse, a worker is entitled to use seven days of their allotted sick leave to attend medical examinations and treatments related to the pregnancy.

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

#### *Flexible working*

- During the first four months from 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 the 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. Places in government regulated and subsidised care are hard to come by: the demand for children under three years of age exceeds supply. 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; rely on family assistance; or expensive, unregulated private care.

There is no comparative information on levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years of age; but attendance for children over three years of age is above average both 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 2019 (including proposals currently under discussion)**

None reported.

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

#### *Childcare and schools*

- Childcare centres, both subsidised or regulated by the state and privately owned, and schools were closed from 13 March 2020. They were partially re-opened from 3rd May 2020, to be fully re-opened on 17th May 2020
- Schools were first re-opened for grades 1-3 and 11-12.

*Parental leave*

- No change.

*Other measures for parents and other carers*

- For parents, a one-off payment of ILS500 [€125.17] per child.

## **4. Uptake 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 information available.

### **c. Parental leave**

No information available.