

Latvia¹

Inese Upite (Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia)

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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 (*grūtniecības un dzemdību atvaļinājums*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 112 days, of which 56 days are postnatal leave.
- According to the Labour Law, it is prohibited to employ a pregnant woman two weeks prior to the expected birth and a woman two weeks after the childbirth. The time of the expected birth and the fact of birth shall be certified by a doctor's opinion.

Payment and funding

- For employed women: 80 per cent of the previous earnings calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins.
- For self-employed women: 80 per cent of the gross insurance contributions made during the period of the 12 calendar months ending one quarter before the quarter in which the leave begins. The benefit is paid in two parts: the first part is calculated for the 56 days (or 70 days) before the due date, and the second part is calculated for the 56 days (or 70 days) after the actual birth date.
- The average amount of the maternity benefit (in total) in 2021 was €2,257.96 for the first part of the leave and €1,960.19 for the second part of the leave. The number of recipients during the year was 15,799 (around 1,316 per month).

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- Payments are not taxed.
- Funded from social insurance.

Flexibility in use

- If women have given birth before the prenatal leave, she is entitled to paid prenatal and postnatal leaves after the child birth. Similarly, where the child was born before the prescribed date of birth, the period of maternity leave and benefit will be extended accordingly.

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

- All women who have paid social insurance contributions in Latvia for at least three months in the period of the last six months before the first day of Maternity leave or for at least six months in the last 24 months.
- All women who are spouses of a self-employed man and who have joined the social insurance system voluntarily.
- In a case where employment has ended due to the company's liquidation, the benefit is provided if the leave has started no later than 210 days after the end of employment.
- All women who have lost the status of an employee or self-employed no later than 60 days before the first day of Maternity leave.
- For the period after the childbirth – the father of a child or any other person who takes care of a new-born at home and fulfils the social insurance criteria is entitled to paid Maternity leave of 56 or 70 days if:
 - the mother is unable to take care of the child until the 42nd post-natal day due to sickness;
 - the mother has refused to take care of the child;
 - the mother has died during childbirth or before the 42nd post-natal day;
 - the child is a foundling (the child has been abandoned, and the mother is unknown).
- The right to the maternity benefit ends six months from the first day of the first part of the leave (if the eligible person fails to apply until the end of that period, the right cannot be exercised).

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

- If the mother has required medical supervision due to the pregnancy (no later than at the 12th week of the pregnancy) – 14 extra days of leave before the birth of a child are provided.
- In the case of multiple births or complications during pregnancy, childbirth, or the postpartum period, 14 extra days of leave after the birth are provided.
- In the case of premature birth, the maternity benefit is paid in the same amount as it would be if the birth would take place at the due date.
- If a person is entitled to the unemployment allowance and Maternity benefit for the same time period, the unemployment allowance is suspended for that particular period, that is, only Maternity benefit is paid.

b. Paternity leave (*atvaļinājums bērna tēvam*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 10 calendar days after childbirth.
- The leave has to be requested no later than two months after childbirth; the benefit has to be requested no later than six months after the first day of the leave.

Payment and funding

- For employed men: 80 per cent of previous earnings, calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins.
- For self-employed men: 80 per cent of the gross insurance contributions made during the period of 12 calendar months, ending one quarter before the quarter in which the leave begins.
- The average amount of the paternity benefit in 2021 was €405.97, and the number of recipients during the year was 9,700 (around 808 per month).
- Payments are not taxed.
- Funded from social insurance budget.

Flexibility in use

- None, except for when the leave can be started.
- The leave can be divided into parts as agreed with the employer.

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

- The father of a child if the Paternity leave is granted no later than the first two months after the birth.
- The same insurance period eligibility criteria needed as for Maternity leave.
- One of the adoptive parents until the child reaches eighteen years of age.
- The right to the paternity benefit ends six months from the first day of the Paternity leave.
- No specific regulation regarding same-sex couples (i.e., the right to the leave and thus the benefit is attached to any person who falls under the eligibility criteria mentioned above). However, based on the Constitutional Court of Latvia decision, as of 1 June 2022, the same sex-couples will be eligible for paid 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 a person other than the father

- None.

c. Parental leave (*bērna kopšanas atvaļinājums*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 18 months per parent.
- Leave is an individual entitlement, but only one parent may receive payment (for a maximum period of 18 months).

Payment and funding

- There are three separate benefits that are paid after the birth of a child: parental benefit, childbirth benefit, and child care allowance.

Parental benefit

- Only parents who are participants of the social insurance system are eligible.
- Parents can choose between two options: 1) if a parent chooses to receive the benefit until a child reaches one year of age, the parental benefit is 60 per cent of the previous earnings, calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins; 2) if a parent chooses to receive the benefit until a child reaches 18 months of age, the parental benefit is 43.75 per cent of the previous earnings, calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins.
- Funded in the same way as for Maternity and Paternity leave.
- Parental benefit is not taxable.
- The average amount of the Parental benefit in 2021 was €641.05 per month for parents who chose to receive the benefit until a child reaches one year of age (number of recipients: around 2,260 per month, 56.7 per cent of which women) and €481.48 for parents who chose to receive the benefit until a child reaches 18 months of age (number of recipients: around 18,015 per month, 86.5 per cent of which women).
- The amount of parental benefit is reduced to 30 per cent of the benefit granted, if the beneficiary discontinues Parental leave in order to resume working.

Childbirth benefit

- Paid to one of the parents or the legal guardian of a child, if the child has been taken under guardianship until they reach one year of age.
- The benefit is a lump sum allowance of €421.17 for each child, and it is available to all parents (also the parents not paying social insurance).
- The application for the childbirth benefit should be submitted within six months from the first day of the child's life or the day the guardianship has been granted.

Child care allowance

- Paid to one of the parents or the legal guardian of a child if the child has been taken under guardianship, or one of the adoptive parents, or a foster parent.
- The benefit is €171 per month for each child until a child reaches 18 months of age and then €42.69 per month for each child until a child reaches 24 months of age.
- The application for the child care allowance should be submitted within six months from the first day of the child's life or the day the guardianship has been granted.
- The child care allowance is granted to all parents raising a child under two years of age, that is, to socially insured persons as well as to parents who are not participants of the social contributions system. The benefit is not granted for the period in which the maternity benefit is paid.
- Additionally, one of the parents, guardians, or adoptive parents is entitled to receive the family state benefit. The amount of the family state benefit depends on the number of children that are actually raised by the benefit recipient. One of the spouses, on the basis of the mutual consent of the other spouse, may receive a family state benefit for all the children they raise together (including children from spouse former relationships/marriage).
 - The amount of the family state benefit is €25 per month for one child; €100 per month for two children (€50 for each child); €225 per month for three children (€75 for each child); €100 per month per each child in the family with four or more children.
 - The family state benefit is paid for every child raised in the family from the age of one to the age of 16, as well as for a child aged 16 to 20 if they are continuing with education and are not married. The benefit is paid directly to the child after they reach 18 years of age, if prior to that they have been under guardianship.
 - Families with disabled children or children diagnosed with coeliac disease are entitled to an additional benefit: €106.72 per month for each child with a disability or coeliac disease.
- Additionally, one of the parents, a guardian, or one of the adoptive parents is entitled to receive the allowance for the care of a disabled child: €313.43 per month for each child with a disability, until the child reaches 18 years of age and €79.68 once every six months if the State Medical Commission for the Assessment of Health Condition and Working Ability has issued a conclusion on the necessity for a specially fitted vehicle (car) until the child reaches 18 years of age.

Flexibility in use

- Both parents are entitled to 18 months of leave until a child reaches eight years of age. Parental leave, upon the request of an employee, shall be granted as a single period or in several blocks.
- The employee has an obligation to notify the employer in writing one month before the beginning of the leave about the intention to use the leave, including the length of the parental leave they plan to use (as a single period or in blocks).
- The leave can be used simultaneously by both parents, but only one parent

can receive the benefit. The recipient is allowed to transfer the right to benefit to the other parent, if needed. Also, it is allowed to work and receive the benefit, however, in those cases, the amount of the benefit is reduced (see above).

- Only one of the parents can receive the parental benefit for the period of 12 or 18 months. Parents are entitled to transfer the benefit right to one another.

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

- Only parents who are participants of the social insurance system (see Maternity leave).
- One of the parents (adoptive or biological) of the child;
- Child's foster family member;
- Child's guardian or any other person who takes care of a child according to the decision of an orphans' court.
- Women who are not (self-)employed at the date when the benefit is requested but were (self-)employed no later than 60 days before the first day of the Maternity leave, or 210 days before the first day of the Maternity leave in case of company's liquidation, or have lost the (self-)employment status during the 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 a person other than mother

- A guardian, foster parent or adoptive parent has the right to request a change in the length of parental benefit if the biological parent has had already used the right to parental benefit (only a remaining leave can be used).
- If the next child is born before the previous has reached three years of age, the parental benefit cannot be smaller than the benefit a parent received for the previous child.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

No statutory entitlement.

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- Adoptive parents are entitled to Paternity and Parental leave. Payment and funding are provided on the same grounds as for biological parents.
- In addition, for a family, which has adopted a child up to 18 years of age, one of the adopters shall be granted 10 calendar days of leave.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Parents who have joined the social insurance system (employed, self-employed, or parents whose spouse is self-employed) are entitled to sick

leave and benefit for a child up to 14 years of age: 14 days per sickness episode if a child has been taken care of at home, or up to 21 days if a child has been admitted to hospital, or up to 30 days if a child has an injury caused by bone fracture;

- Parents whose child have been diagnosed with a severe illness and for whom the consilium has issued a respective decision; or parents who receive the allowance for the care of a disabled child if long-term hospital treatment is needed are entitled to sickness benefit for a period up to 26 weeks in case of a continuous sickness or for no longer than three years in five years period in case of various sickness episodes.
- Grandparents, foster parents, guardian, or any other person who takes care of a child according to the decision of an orphans' court are also entitled to sickness benefit;
- The sickness benefit is calculated in the same way as the maternity and paternity benefits, and is taxable.

Flexible working

- On their request, pregnant women, women in the post-natal period up to one year after the birth, and employed parents who have a child up to 14 years of age (or up to 18 years if a child has a disability) are entitled to part-time work; breast-feeding woman is entitled to part-time work through the whole period of breast-feeding, while an employee with a disability or an employee who is a parent caring for an adult with a disability, requiring special care from childhood, are entitled to part-time work with the right to return to a full-time work pattern when they need to do so.
- A pregnant woman is entitled to leave the workplace to undergo a health examination in the prenatal period if it is impossible to undergo it outside of working time.
- Parents who have a child up to 18 years of age are entitled to temporary absence in the case of the sickness of a child or an accident, as well as for a doctor's appointment.
- Parents who have a child up to three years of age (or 18 years of age if a child has a disability) are entitled to annual leave during the summer months as a priority group or at any other time of their choice.
- Parents who have one or two children up to 14 years of age are entitled to additional annual leave – at least one working day (paid).
- Parents who have three or more children up to 16 years of age (or up to 18 years of age if a child has a disability) are entitled to additional annual leave – three working days (paid).

Specific provision for (breast-)feeding

- Parents (both mothers and fathers) with a child up to 18 months of age are entitled to a paid additional break for feeding their child – at least 30 minutes every three hours (or at least 60 minutes every three hours, if a parent has more than one child up to 18 months of age). Upon request, parents are entitled to combine these breaks, thus prolonging a lunch break or shortening their working day.

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave is 38 months, but only just over half of this is paid and only 1.9 months is well paid. According to the Law on Education, Article 17, municipalities are responsible for ensuring that all children from 18 months of age registered in their area receive Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in an institution that is closest to the child's home; a child can also attend an ECEC institution in another municipality and receive the same financial support as those children who attend an institution in the municipality of their place of residence. In principle, therefore, there is no gap between the end of leave and entitlement to ECEC and a gap of around 16 months between the end of well-paid leave and an ECEC entitlement. However, in practice, there are no municipalities that can offer a place in a municipal ECEC institution for all children: for instance, in October 2021, there were around 7,788 children from the ages of one and a half to six years who did not receive a place in a municipal ECEC institution. The most difficult situation is in Riga municipality, with 1,596 children waiting for a place in a municipal ECEC.

For ECEC attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on the [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

Since the uptake of Parental leave is mostly until a child reaches 18 months of age, municipalities provide financial support for fees in private ECEC institutions if no place is available in a municipal service when a child reaches 18 months of age. The amount of allowance is decided by calculating the average expenses for one child per month in a municipal ECEC institution and is thus different in each municipality. In 2021, the average allowance was around €255.70, covering around 70 per cent of the actual costs.

In some municipalities, parents who choose to employ a nanny are entitled to a municipal allowance: the allowance is usually provided for children who are at least 18 months of age, until a place in a municipal ECEC institution is available. The allowance amount offered differs in each municipality. In 2021, only one-fifth of all municipalities provide such support, and the amounts vary from €78.63 per month in Iecava municipality to €254.79 per month in Carnikava municipality (both being relatively small municipalities). The allowance in Riga municipality in 2021 is €151.13.

3. Changes in policy since April 2021 (including proposals currently under discussion)

In order to transpose EU Directive 2019/1158 on the work-life balance for parents and carers, amendments to the Labour Law were adopted by the Government on 15 March 2022; the proposal has to be approved by the Parliament. These amendments foresee extending Paternity leave from 10 calendar days to 10 working days. In case a child's paternity is not recognized, a person other than the child's mother will be entitled to 10 working days' leave at the request of the child's mother. Leave will be granted to the child's father/another person immediately after the child's birth, but no later than six months after the child's

birth (currently two months). It is also proposed to include a new provision which would provide an employee with the right to request a flexible use of Parental leave. The employer will be obliged to evaluate such a request and inform the employee about the possibility of flexible use of Parental leave within one month from the date of receipt of the employee's request.

Amendments to the Law on Maternity and Sickness Insurance were also adopted by the Government on 22 March 2022; the proposal has to be approved by the Parliament. The amendments include:

- Paternity benefit is paid for 10 working days (previously 10 calendar days);
- Paternity benefit will also be granted to a person indicated by the mother, in case a child's paternity is not recognized;
- Each parent's right to a period of at least two months of non-transferrable Parental benefit.

4. Uptake of leave

Data on the uptake are from the State Social Insurance Agency, and the data on the average salaries are from the Central Statistical Bureau.

a. Maternity leave

In 2021, 15,799 persons received the maternity benefit, which is around 2.4 per cent less than in 2020.

b. Paternity leave

In 2021, 9,700 persons received the paternity benefit, which is around 0,7 per cent less than in 2020.

c. Parental leave

The uptake of Parental leave (benefit) during the last five years has almost doubled. Most of the parents taking this leave are women (83.2 per cent of the total number in 2021).

Most of the working parents who received parental benefits were men (78.1 per cent in 2021).

d. Other employment-related measures

No information is available.