

You never notice they've left

Fathers on leave in Iceland

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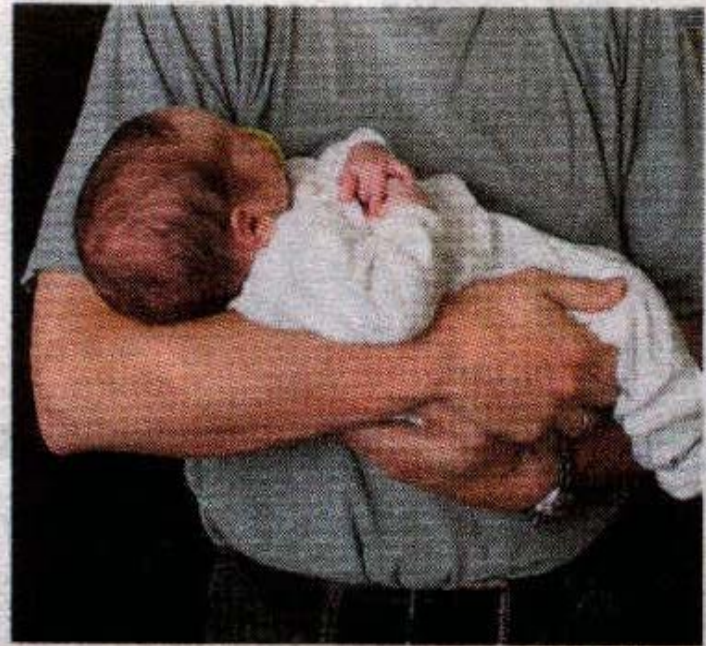
University of Iceland

Parental leave basis for equality

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24 stundir

Foreldraorlof grundvöllur jafnréttis

Feðraorlof eykur samkeppnishæfni, en gildi foreldraorlofs kemur einna helst í ljós þegar skoðuð er launaþróun hjá konum ásamt starfsframa. Telja norrænu jafnréttisráðherrarnir, sem nú funda í Helsinki, að Norðurlönd geti ýmislegt kennt öðrum þjóðum í þessum efnum. Feður taka frekar orlof ef rétturinn til þess fyrnist innan ákveðins tíma. ap



The promise it held

Working hours – men:	2000 50,9
1991 51,3	2001 49,6
1992 50,5	2002 48,8
1993 50,0	2003 46,9
1994 49,6	2004 47,1
1995 50,0	2005 47,8
1996 50,6	2006 47,5
1997 50,1	
1998 49,9	
1999 50,4	

The gender pay gap
“constant” for 12 years
(1994-2006)

Attitudes of those using it

- Attitude survey among parents
- Parents receiving payments from *The Birth Leave Fund* 2001 – 2004, random sample
- Over the phone and internet
- Response ratio 55%

Source: Bryndís Jónsdóttir (2007). *Upplifun foreldra á fæðingarorlofi* [Parents experience of birth leave]. Unpublished MA thesis, Department of Business and Economics, University of Iceland.

Hunting and fishing?

No, working of course!

- **Did you attend to your paid employment while on birth leave?**
 - Men: yes **35%** (women 17%), **42%** fathers of children born in 2004 when leave was 3 months

Doing what?

- 64% Were on call for those who were standing in for them
- 62% Had the mobile phone turned on and answered work related calls
- 49% Answered work related e-mails
- 48% Read company e-mails
- 30% Attended important meetings at work
- 31% Came in to work regularly to observe and to be informed
- 20% Worked from home on special assignments

“Pop out”

- **Divide their leave: men 51% (8% women)**
- **Were you and your spouse ever on leave for the same period? Yes 76%**
 - Of those on leave together 32% were together for four weeks, 20% were together on leave for 11-12 weeks.
- **Who did your work while you were on leave?**
 - Another employee was hired temporarily: men 13% (women 50%)

Home for Christmas?

- Extended holiday
- Enjoy the child at various times
 - Cream skimming?
- Secondary caregiver
- Designed around paid work
 - In interest of the workplace?
- How to proceed so it will be in the **child's interest?**

At their own discretion

- **Do you think that parents should be able to divide the birth leave at their own discretion so that for example one parent can take the whole leave?**
 - Men: 57% yes
 - Women: 66% yes

Suitable length

•For mothers		•For fathers	
9 months		3 months	
Men	Women	Men	Women
19%	19%	37%	32%
12 months		6 months	
Men	Women	Men	Women
57%	62%	31%	34%

Reaching the goal

- Basis for equality?
- Stronger forces pulling in the opposite direction?
- The breadwinner/male role - either or?
 - Being manly vs. being fatherly
 - Serious players *or* family men

In the child's best interests?