

PF2.2: Parents' use of childbirth-related leave

Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents information on parent's use of childbirth-related leave through six main measures:

- *Recipients/users of publicly administered maternity leave benefits or publicly administered paid maternity leave per 100 live births*, that is, the number of mothers or other partners using publicly administered maternity leave or claiming publicly administered maternity leave benefits in a given year per 100 live births in the same year.
- *Recipients/users of publicly administered paternity leave benefits or publicly administered paid paternity leave per 100 live births*, that is, the number of fathers or other partners using publicly administered paternity leave or claiming publicly administered paternity leave benefits in a given year per 100 live births in the same year.
- *Recipients/users of publicly administered parental leave benefits or publicly administered paid parental leave per 100 live births, by gender*, that is, the number of men and women using publicly administered parental leave or claiming publicly administered parental leave benefits in a given year per 100 live births in the same year.
- *Gender distribution of recipients/users of publicly administered parental leave benefits or publicly administered paid parental leave*, that is, the male and female share of those using publicly administered parental leave or claiming publicly administered parental leave benefits in a given year.
- *Average number of days of leave allowances/benefits paid out per child born, by gender*, that is, the number of days men and women received publicly administered parental leave benefits in a given year.
- *Gender distribution in the total number of days of leave allowances/benefits paid out*, that is, the male and female share of all days publicly administered parental leave benefits were paid out in a given year.

All six measures are, in most cases, based on administrative data, that is, national administrative records on the numbers of individuals using paid leave or claiming paid leave benefits. These records are generally available only where there is some publicly administered paid leave scheme, so information is not available for countries without statutory paid leave (with the exception of the United States) or in countries with statutory schemes that are processed directly by the employer (e.g. paternity leave in Korea and the United Kingdom). Moreover, these data, with the exception of the United States, generally do not cover individuals using employer-provided schemes, so are likely to underestimate take-up even in countries with statutory schemes. Nonetheless, where available, these records can provide insight into how many men and women are making use of statutory leave.

Administrative data generally come in the form of the number of users of the given publicly administered leave or the number of recipients of publicly administered benefits attached to a given leave, so need to be standardised before they can be compared across countries. Because information on eligible populations is generally not available, measures are presented here either as the number of leave

Other relevant indicators: Family-friendly workplace practices (LMF2.4); Public spending on family benefits (PF1.1); Typology of family benefits (PF1.3); Key characteristics of parental leave systems (PF2.1); Additional leave entitlements of working parents (PF2.3); Public spending on childcare and early education (PF3.1) and; Enrolment in day-care and pre-schools (PF3.2).

This document, as well as any data and any map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

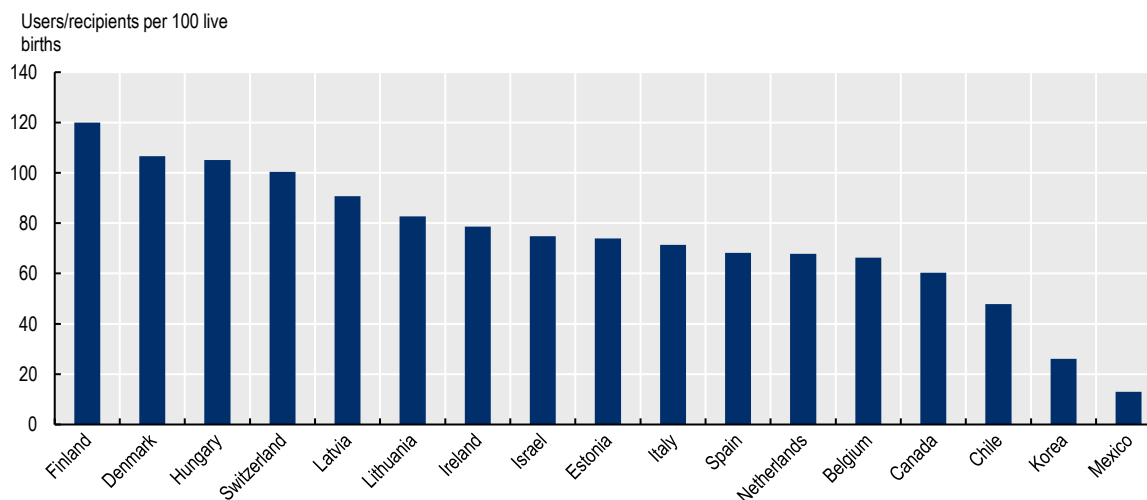
users/recipients per 100 live births in the given year or, for parental leave only, through the gender distribution of leave users/recipients.

Key findings

Where it is available – in just under half of all OECD countries - maternity leave is well used in OECD countries (Chart PF2.2.A). On average, in the countries for which data is available, in 2021 there were 68 users of paid maternity leave per 100 live births – in other words, more than two mothers are claiming publicly administered maternity benefits or using publicly administered maternity leave for every three children born. In some countries, take up of maternity leave/benefits is particularly high, even reaching 100 or more users/recipients for every 100 children born (e.g. Finland, Denmark, Hungary and Switzerland). This is potentially a result of wide-scale or general eligibility for maternity leave as well as long leave entitlements, so that mothers on maternity leave/benefits may be counted as users/recipients in two separate years. For example, if a birth occurs late in the year, mothers may be on maternity leave both in December and January, thus entering the statistics in separate years. The birth of their child, which enters the denominator of the recipients/users per 100 live births, is only counted once. In Chile, Korea and Mexico, take-up is below 50 mothers for every 100 children born, likely reflecting low female employment rates. However, as almost all countries have more than 60 users/recipients for every 100 children born means that maternity leave is well-used in OECD countries.

Chart PF2.2.A. Users of paid maternity leave

Recipients/users of publicly administered maternity leave benefits or publicly administered paid maternity leave per 100 live births, 2021 or latest year available



Note: Data refer to recipients/users of publicly administered maternity leave benefits or paid maternity leave only, and do not include individuals using only employer-provided leave or unpaid leave. For those countries where men are able to take maternity leave (e.g. Chile, Denmark and Spain) and/or it is possible to separately identify male recipients/users in the data, data include both men and women recipients/users. For Belgium, data refer to employed (including self-employed) and unemployed recipients of benefits during "repos de maternité". For Canada, data on users/recipients and live births do not cover parents in the province of Québec, which since 2006 has administered its own maternity benefits under the Québec Parental Insurance Plan. For Chile, data refer to recipients of 'permiso postnatal parental' (postnatal parental leave benefits) and include a small number of male users. For Denmark, data include male users. For Finland, data exclude recipients of special maternity allowance. For Hungary, data refer to total recipients of maternity allowances (anyasági támogatás). For Ireland, data refer to claims for maternity benefits. For Mexico, numbers are approximate and based on information from the Leave Network (see Koslowski et al., 2022). For the Netherlands, data refers to employees aged 15-75 with child(ren) younger than 1 year who have taken birth leave in the first four weeks after the birth of the child. For Spain, data refers to processes handled by the Spanish Social Security System and includes male users. Data refer to 2021 for Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands and Poland. Data refer to 2020 for Canada, Chile, Israel, Korea, Lithuania and Switzerland. Data refer to 2019 for Belgium, to 2018 for Spain, to 2016 for Denmark, and to 2013 for Mexico.

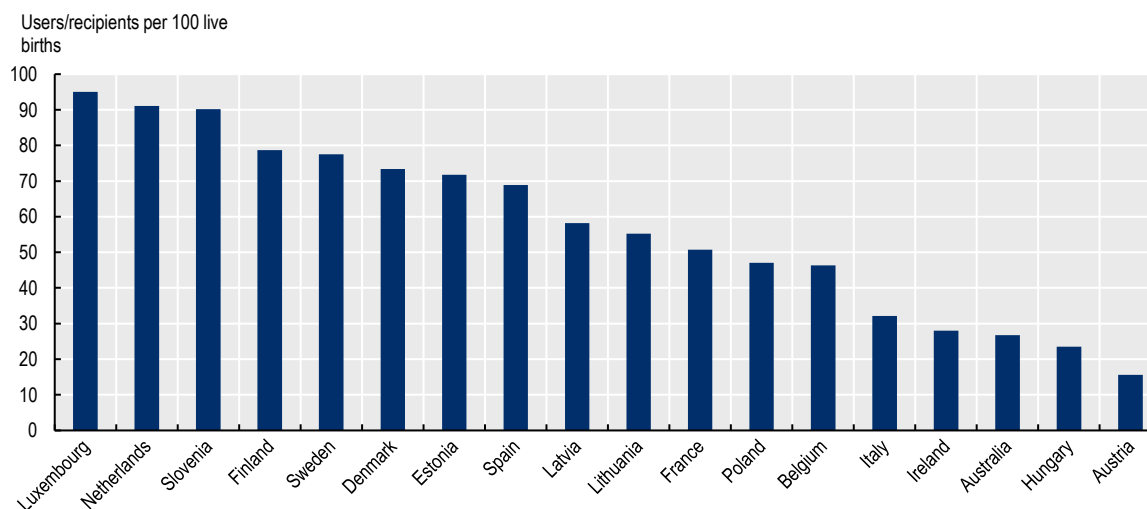
Source: OECD calculations based on information from national ministries, statistical offices, and an OECD questionnaire to national authorities.

Data on recipients/users of publicly administered maternity leave benefits or publicly administered paid maternity leave is not available for all countries (see a general discussion on *Comparability and data issues* below). A few countries integrate maternity leave into the general parental leave system through quotas or individual entitlements (e.g. Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Portugal), while in some others it is obligatory for the mother to take at least some of her maternity leave entitlement (e.g. in Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and Slovenia). Other countries do not publish any figures on maternity leave taking (e.g. the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom, Türkiye), sometimes because it is assumed that almost all eligible mothers take maternity leave.

Data on the use of paid paternity leave is also available for only about half of all OECD countries, and suggest that paternity leave is generally popular in many countries (Chart PF2.2.B). This is related to the overall short duration relative to maternity and parental leaves. On average across the 18 OECD countries with available data, there are 57 users of paid paternity leave per 100 live births.. In Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Slovenia, this was more than 90 users/recipients per 100 live births in 2021, while in Denmark, Estonia, Finland and Sweden the rate was above 70 per 100 live births. With between 15 and 31 users per 100 live births, the use of paid paternity is comparatively low in Australia, Austria, Hungary, Italy and Ireland. However, as some new fathers will not be eligible for statutory paid paternity leave, these rates point to fairly healthy usage and widespread take-up across countries overall.

Chart PF2.2.B. Users of paid paternity leave

Recipients/users of publicly administered paternity leave benefits or publicly administered paid paternity leave per 100 live births, 2021 or latest year available



Note: Data refer to recipients/users of publicly administered paternity leave benefits or paid paternity leave only, and do not include individuals using only employer-provided leave or unpaid leave. For those countries where women are able to take paternity leave and/or it is possible to separately identify women recipients/users in the data, data include both men and women recipients/users. For Australia, data refer to recipients of 'Dad and Partner Pay'. For Austria, data refer to recipients of the 'Familienzeitbonus' (family-time bonus) and include female recipients. For Belgium, data refer to paternity leave users in the private sector only and only concerns those who were on leave for at least four or more days. For Denmark, data refer to user of paternity/partners birth leave and include female recipients. For Finland, data refer to recipients of the paternity allowance during mother's maternity leave. For Lithuania, data refer to recipients of social insurance paternity benefits before the child turns 1 month old. For Luxembourg, data refer to the number of applications for reimbursement from the state for users of paternity leave. For the Netherlands, data refer to male employees with child(ren) younger than one year. For Sweden, data refer to the number of recipients of the temporary parental benefit in connection with the birth of a child or adoption and include female users. Data refer to 2021 for Austria, Finland, Latvia, the Netherlands and Poland. Data refer to 2020 for Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Sweden. Data refer to 2019 for Belgium and Italy. Data refer to 2018 for Spain. Data refer to 2017 for Australia, Estonia and Slovenia. Data refer to 2016 for Denmark and France. Data refer to 2014 for Hungary.

Source: OECD calculations based on information from national ministries, statistical offices, and an OECD questionnaire to national authorities.

Paid parental leave recipient rates vary more and differ considerably between men and women (Chart PF2.2.C, Panel A). Women's parental leave recipient rates are generally fairly high. In just below half of all countries with available data, female recipient rates are around or above 100 per 100 live births – that is, at least one woman user/recipient for every child born. In some countries, the female recipient rate well exceeds 100 per 100 live births. In the Czech Republic, Estonia and Germany, for example, there are more than 150 women claiming publicly administered parental benefits or using publicly administered parental leave for every 100 live births. In Sweden, the rate is even as high as 409 recipients per 100 live births. These very high rates reflect both high take-up and the ability of parents to take leave over several years and/or in multiple blocks.

Only two countries - Ireland and the United States - have a female parental leave recipient rate well below 50 per 100 live births. In Ireland, this low take-up reflects the short duration and low replacement rate of the recently introduced parent's benefits. In the United States, almost half of all women take up *some* form of paid parental leave benefits. While this includes recipients of paid leave insurance benefits for pregnancy and/or family caregiving in some US states (California (almost 40 million people) and New York (almost 20 million) are the most populous states with paid leave), unlike the data for other countries, it also includes recipients who solely rely on employer-paid leave schemes. As the data for the United States is not fully comparable to those for the other countries, it is presented separately (see Section on *Comparability and data issues* below).

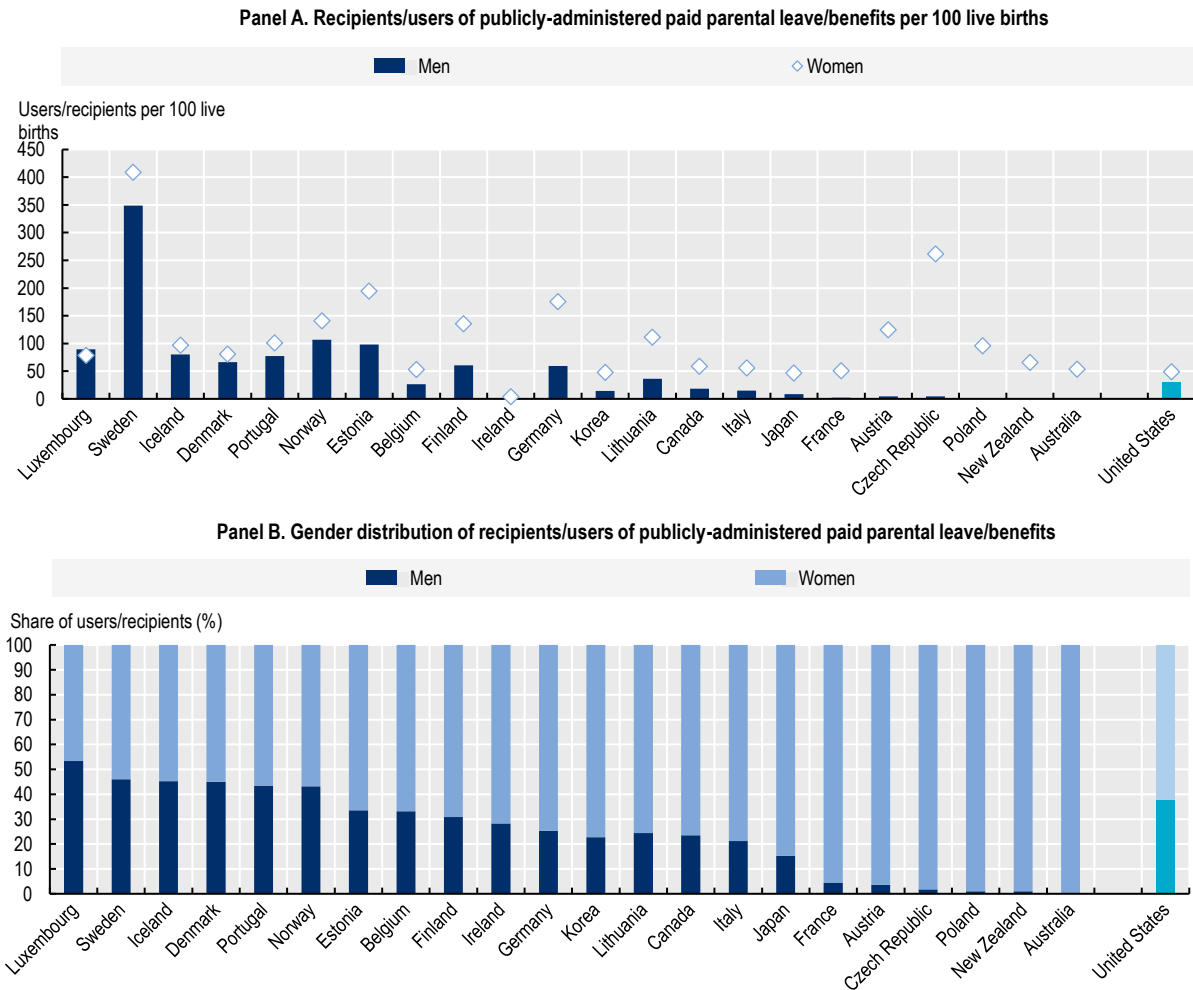
Paid parental leave recipient rates are generally much lower for men (Chart PF2.2.C, Panel A). Nevertheless, in some of the Nordic countries male recipient rates continue to exceed 100. In Sweden, for example, there are just under 350 male recipients of publicly administered parental leave benefits for every 100 children born (because they can spread it over multiple blocks in a given year/years). In most OECD countries however, fewer than 50 men claim publicly administered parental leave benefits or use publicly administered parental leave for every 100 live births. In eight OECD countries (Australia, Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Korea, New Zealand and Poland), the rate is below 10 users/recipients per 100 live births.

Regardless of how many men take paid parental leave, they are most often less likely to use it than women are (Chart PF2.2.C, panel B). In some countries, the disparity is only small. In Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Portugal and Sweden, around 45% of users/recipients of publicly administered parental leave benefits are men. However, on average across countries with available data, men make up only about one in every four users/recipients, with the share in several countries lower than one in ten. In Australia, New Zealand and Poland, even only one in every hundred users/recipients of paid parental leave or less is a man. Luxembourg is the only country in which men are more likely to take up parental leave, making up about 53% of users/recipients of publicly administered parental leave benefits. However, most of male users in Luxembourg opt for the part-time or fractioned version of parental leave, whereas most women take full-time parental leave (see Berger and Valentova, 2022). In addition, fathers in Luxembourg have substantially shorter paid paternity leave entitlements than what mothers have as maternity leave entitlements (see *OECD Family Database Indicator PF2.1*), so some men may rely more on parental leave when taking an absence from work for care of their new-born.

Despite their lower use/receipt of publicly administered parental leave benefits on average, the share of men among all users/recipients of publicly administered parental leave benefits has increased in some countries since 2010 (Chart PF2.2.D). For example, the male share of users/recipients increased by more than 20 percentage points in Estonia, Korea, Lithuania and Luxembourg, and by more than 10 percentage points in Italy and Japan. However, in almost half of the countries, the male share of users/recipients remained stable, neither falling, nor increasing by more than one percentage points. Only in Austria did the male share of users/recipients fall by one percentage point since 2010.

Chart PF2.2.C. Users of paid parental leave

Recipients/users of publicly administered parental leave benefits or publicly administered paid parental leave, by gender, 2021 or latest year available

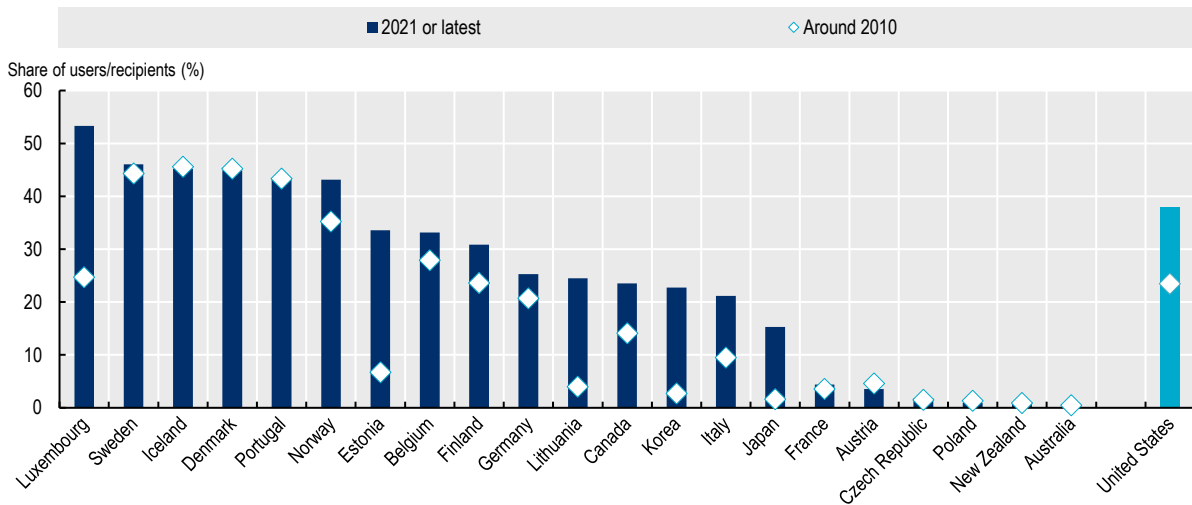


Notes: Data refer to recipients/users of publicly-administered parental leave benefits or publicly-administered paid parental leave, and do not include users of maternity or paternity leave unless the country in question does not make a distinction between the different leaves (i.e. in Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Portugal). For Australia, data refer to recipients of 'Parental Leave Pay' only. For Belgium and the Czech Republic, data is an average of users/recipients in each month of the given year and, in the case of Belgium include the 'corona parental leave' between May and September 2020. For Canada, data on users/recipients and live births do not cover Québec, which since 2006 has administered its own parental benefits under the Québec Parental Insurance Plan. For Denmark, data refer to recipients of any benefits the Maternity Act entitles parents to (maternity and paternity leave benefits, parental allowance). For Finland, data refer to recipients of the sharable parental allowance plus the paternity allowance after the parental allowance period. For France, data refer to recipients of PreParE (Prestation partagée d'éducation de l'enfant). For Germany, data include both recipients of 'Elterngeld' and 'ElterngeldPlus'. For Iceland, data refer to recipients of any benefits in relation to maternity/paternity (i.e. benefits paid during either the mother- or father-quota or during the sharable period of parental leave). For Ireland, data refer to recipients of parent's benefits (i.e. for parent's leave, not for parental leave, which is unpaid). For Korea and Japan, data refer to recipients of employment insurance parental leave benefits, and for Japan cover private sector employees only. For Lithuania, data refer to recipients of both the parental benefit for children under one year of age and the parental allowance for children aged between one and two. For Luxembourg, data refer to recipients of the first (right after birth) and second parental leave (before 6th birthday). For Norway, data refer to recipients of either the 100% or 80% parental leave option. For Portugal, data refer to recipients of benefits for 'Licença Parental Inicial' (Initial Parental Leave) only. Data for the United States are estimates of users of paid leave around birth of the first child, based on the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Besides public paid leave insurance benefits for pregnancy and/or family caregiving in some US states and districts, and contrary to other countries, this also includes employer-provided schemes. Data refer to 2021 for the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Norway and Poland. Data refer to 2020 for Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Korea, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal and Sweden. Data refer to 2018 for Iceland and Italy, to 2017 for Australia and New Zealand, to 2016 for France and to a pooled average between 2016 and 2020 for the United States.

Source: OECD calculations based on information from national ministries, statistical offices, the Survey of Income and Program Participation and an OECD questionnaire to national authorities.

Chart PF2.2.D. Trends in men's share of recipients/users of publicly administered parental leave/benefits

Men's share among all recipients/users of publicly administered parental leave benefits or publicly administered paid parental leave, 2021 and 2010 (or latest year available)



Note: See notes to Chart PF2.2.B. Data for the United States also includes employer-provided schemes. 'Around 2010' refers to 2011 for Australia, to 2013 for Belgium, to 2014 for Denmark, to 2015 for Poland and Portugal and to a pooled average between 2006 and 2010 for the United States. All other countries refer to 2010.

Source: OECD calculations based on information from national ministries, statistical offices, the Survey of Income and Program Participation and an OECD questionnaire to national authorities.

Even when the incidence of leave-taking is close to evenly shared between women and men, the intensity of use is still much higher for women (Chart PF2.2.E). Comparable information on the duration of paid parental leave taken by men and women is available for only for fewer OECD countries but where it exists, the data suggest men account for less than one-third of all days used. Of those countries for which data is available, the highest male share of days used is in Norway, where men account for 31% of the days for which benefits are drawn, and Sweden, where men take 30% of all days used. In Iceland and Portugal, men also claim above 20% of benefit days. However, in all of these countries where men account for 20% or more of the days of benefits drawn (except for Finland), data refer to use/receipt of maternity, paternity, and parental benefits, as their systems of data sources do not make a distinction between the different types of leaves. In Australia and New Zealand, fathers claim less than 1% of all leave days, but this does not aggregate multiple types of leave.

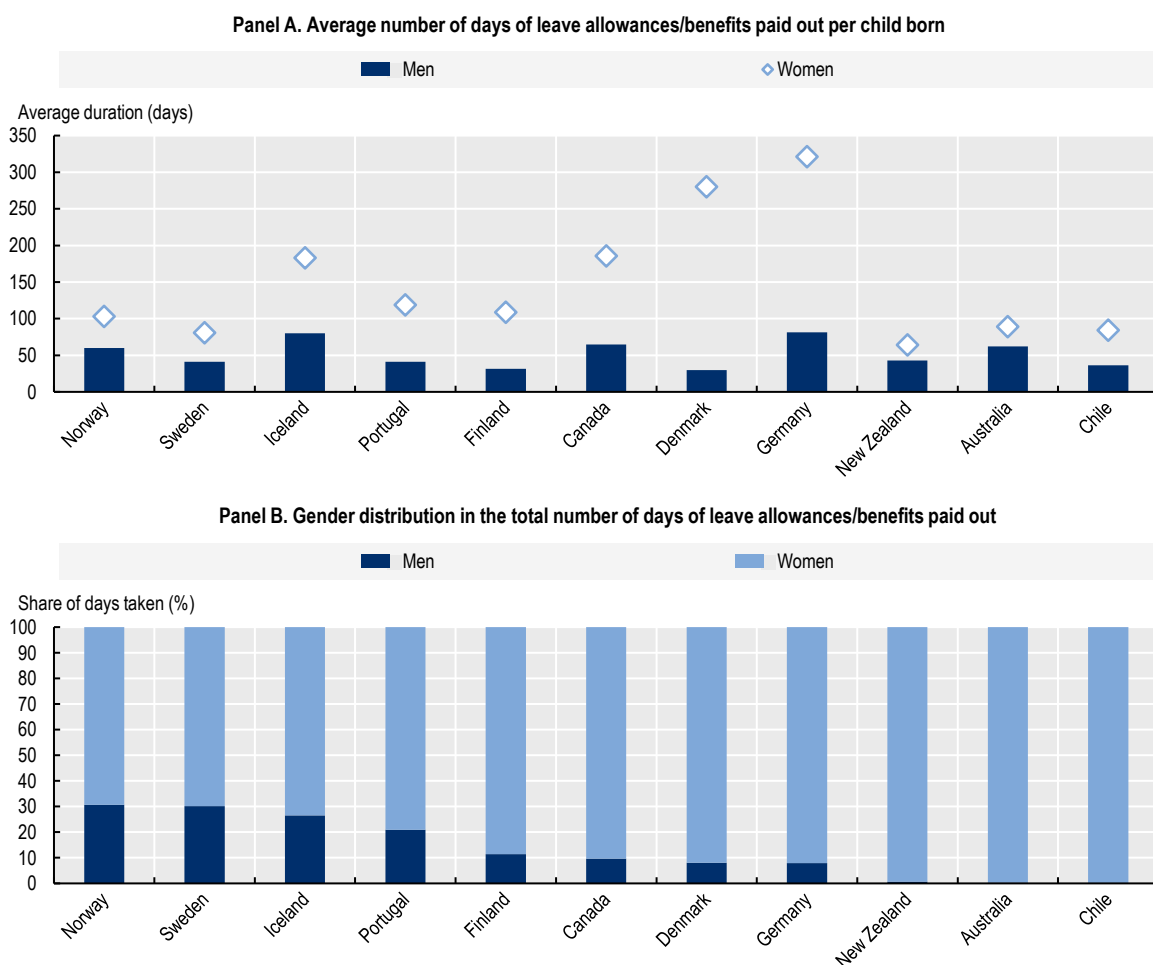
Comparability and data issues

The administrative data used in this indicator does have its limitations. As noted in definitions and methodology, administrative data are available in the first instance only where there exists some publicly administered paid leave scheme, but they are also limited by what countries record and publish. Only about half OECD countries issue statistics on the number of individuals taking maternity leave or claiming maternity leave benefits, perhaps because in many countries (e.g. Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and Slovenia) it is obligatory for the mother to take at least some of her maternity leave entitlement or because maternity leave is not available as a separate from individual parental leave entitlements (e.g. Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Portugal) (Koslowski et al., 2022). About as many countries publish statistics on the number of fathers or partners using paternity leave, perhaps because these entitlements have only recently been introduced in some countries.

Several more countries (although still not all) publish statistics on the number of people using paid parental leave or receiving parental leave benefits. However, in some countries (e.g. Hungary) numbers on parental leave are available only for the total number of recipients with no disaggregation between men and women. For Canada, data on parental leave use do not cover Québec, which since 2006 has administered its own parental benefits under the Québec Parental Insurance Plan and where the share of fathers who (intended to) use leave increased from 28% in 2005 to 86% in 2019. In others (e.g. Japan), the use of leave is monitored through specific government-run surveys with their own individual samples and definitions. This places limits on the number of countries that can be included in this indicator.

Chart PF2.2.E. Duration of paid leave for men and women

Number of days of maternity, paternity and parental leave benefits used by gender, 2021 or latest year available



Note: See notes to Chart PF2.2.B. For Denmark, the number of leave days are only counted until the child turns one year old. For Germany, average duration refers to average expected period of receiving parental allowance. For Sweden, the data refer to the number of net days of benefits paid out (days with 1/8, 1/4, 1/2 or 3/4 payments are counted as 0.125, 0.25, 0.5, and 0.75 days, respectively).

Source: OECD calculations based on information from national ministries, statistical offices, and an OECD questionnaire to national authorities

Moreover, even where data are available differences between countries in the structure and design of leave programmes can hamper comparability. In some countries paid maternity leave (e.g., Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal and Sweden) and, on occasion, paid paternity leave (e.g. Iceland and Norway) do not exist as separate entitlements but rather are integrated into an overall parental leave system (see OECD Family Database Indicator PF2.1 for more detail). In others (e.g., Austria and France) parental leave is theoretically unpaid, with benefits instead available through 'child-raising allowances' that are paid to

parents who meet eligibility conditions whether or not they are technically on leave. In some countries, users/recipients may be counted only once, even if they are on leave in two different years for the same child, while others may count them twice in such instances. In the case of the United States, data has been obtained from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and include users of paid leave around birth of the first child. Besides public paid leave insurance benefits for pregnancy and/or family caregiving in some states and districts, and contrary to other countries, this also includes employer-provided schemes. Because of a low sample-size of parents in the SIPP, data refer to a pooled five-year average.

These differences may influence the composition of those individuals taking paid leave or claiming the associated paid leave benefits. The notes to the various charts provide descriptions of the exact leave or benefits schemes covered by the data, with more information on cross-national differences in the design of leave programmes available in OECD Family Database Indicator PF2.1.

Sources and further reading:

Adema, W., C. Clarke and V. Frey (2015), "Paid Parental Leave: Lessons from OECD Countries and Selected U.S. States", OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 172, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5jrggvqgb4vb-en>.

Berger, F. and Valentova, M. (2022) 'Luxembourg country note', in Koslowski, A., Blum, S., Dobrotić, I., Kaufman, G. and Moss, P. (2022) 18th International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2022

Koslowski, A., Blum, S., Dobrotić, I., Kaufman, G. and Moss, P. (2022) 18th International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2022. DOI: [10.18445/20220909-122329-0](https://doi.org/10.18445/20220909-122329-0).

MISSOC (2021); Mutual Information System on Social Protection in the EU and EEA, Table IV – Maternity/Paternity and Table IX – Family Benefits, <https://www.missoc.org/missoc-database/comparative-tables/results>