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Parenting Leave Policies and Inequalities in Sweden





Parenting Leaves in Sweden: Types of Leave and Design Elements



Parenting Leave Policy in Sweden

- Maternity Leave – 2 weeks no pay
- Pregnancy benefit – 50 days if eligible
- Paternity Leave – gender neutral and 2 weeks with benefit
- Parental Leave – 8 months each with benefit replacement
- Temporary parental leave – 120 days/year up to 12 years



Parental leave

- 240 days each, 195 days with 77, 6% income-replacement, 45 days with flat rate
- 90 days non transferable (daddy and mummy months)
- Flexible in that can be mixed with unpaid days
- Can be used to child is 12 years
- 60 days can be taken together
- 45 days can be transferred to other carer

Parenting Leave Policy in Sweden: recent changes

- Parental Leave
 - Double days
 - Transfer to other than parent
 - Employers' top-ups





Inequality-Reducing and Inequality-Generating Elements of Parental Leave Design in Sweden



Who is eligible, who not?

- Income requirement for 8 months before delivery
- ...else low flat rate
- Sole custody means all 16 months to one parent, but no residential requirement for eligibility



What do we know about take-up rates?

- All mothers
- 90% fathers use the parental benefit (in 2005 it was 79%)



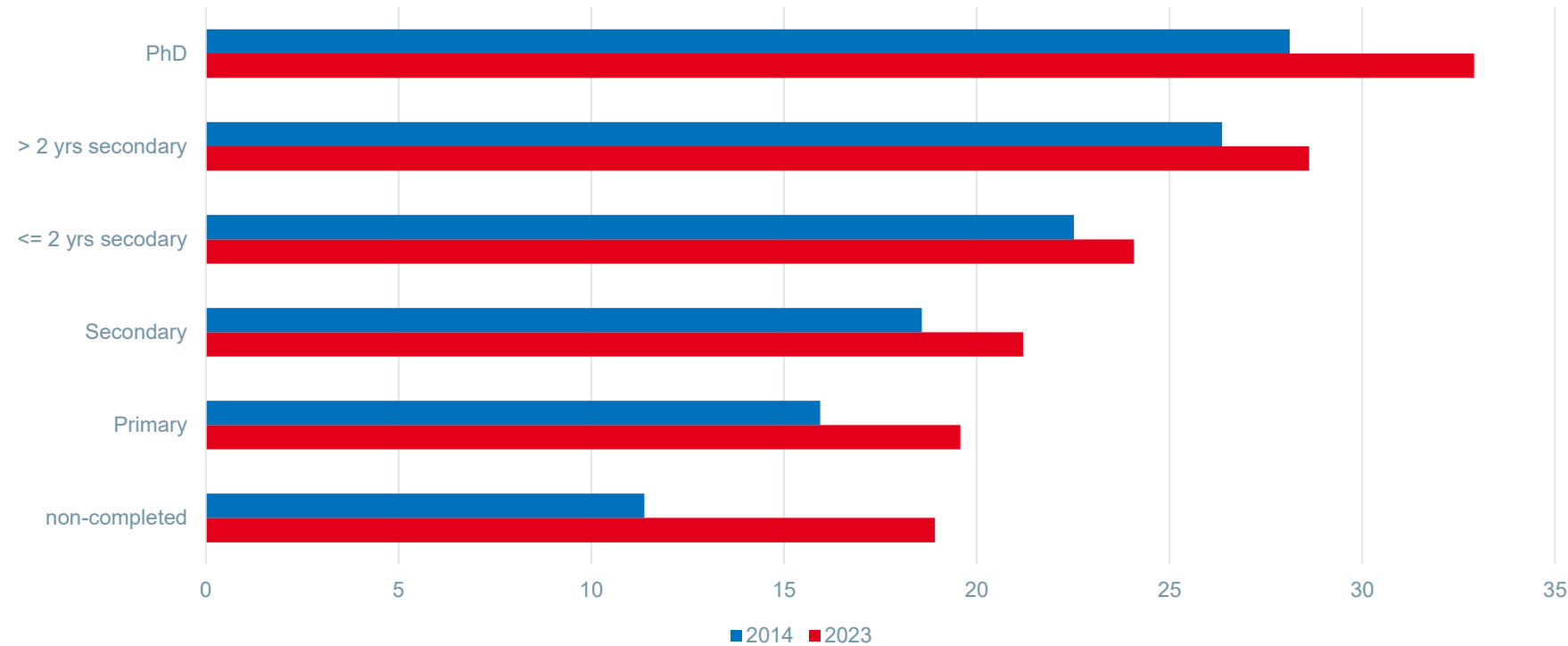
Parenting Leave Policy in Sweden and Gender Equality

- Mothers take 73%, fathers 27%
- 21% share equally (40-60%)
- Fathers average 77 days, mothers 253 days first 24 months
- Migrant background, income and educational level important!



Fathers' share of parental leave during the child's first 24 months.

By education, children born 2014 and 2023



Other

- Mothers use more unpaid leave
- ECEC guaranteed from 12 months
- Childcare gap for single parents (mothers) with shared custody





Final Discussion



Parenting Leave Policies in Sweden and Inequalities

- Gender, economic and social inequalities are interconnected
- Employers' top-ups make difference in payment large
- Research and data gap on single parents
- Current problems
 - Labour market positions among parents
 - Fertility (TFR 1,43 in 2025)

