



Sustainability@Leave

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Parenting Leave Policies in Türkiye and Inequalities





Parenting Leaves in Türkiye: Types of Leave and Design Elements



Parenting Leave Policy in Türkiye

- **Maternity Leave (Doğum izni)**
 - 24 weeks (8+16); Art. 74, Labour Law 4857.
- **Paternity Leave (Babalık izni)**
 - 10 days, fully paid by employer (equalised across sectors in 2025). Art. 2, Annex Labour Law 4857; Law 657.
- **Parental Leave (no true OECD-style entitlement)**
 - 6 mo unpaid + half-time leave (complex)+ part-time right until school age (Law 6663, 2016).



Parenting Leave Policy in Türkiye: recent changes

- **2016 — Law 6663 (Omnibus reform)**
 - Introduced half-time leave with allowance (60/120/180 days), part-time right to school age, adoption leave (8 wks).
- **2025 — Paternity equalisation & military maternity**
 - Private-sector paternity raised 5→10 days; female military postnatal 8→16 wks; new 10-day foster-care leave.





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



Who is eligible, who not?

- **Eligible**

- Registered employees under Labour Law 4857 • Civil servants (Law 657) • Maritime & Press Labour Law workers
 - Adoptive parents of children < 3 (since 2016) • Foster parents of children < 3 (since 2025).

- **Not eligible (the exclusion gap)**

- Informal / unregistered workers (~26% of women, TÜİK HLFS 2023) • Self-employed without sufficient 4/b premiums • Most agricultural & domestic workers • Unemployed women
- → *Coverage gap correlates strongly with education, region and household income (Toksöz, 2011).*



What do we know about take-up rates?

- **What we know**

- Maternity leave: near-universal among eligible women (statutorily compulsory). Paternity leave: high anecdotal take-up in the formal sector, but no national registry.

- **What we do not know (data gaps)**

- Half-time leave (Law 6663) & part-time return-to-work: qualitatively reported low; no aggregate official statistics. TÜİK HLFS does not include a dedicated leave-take-up module.
- → *SGK administrative data could in principle close this gap; not yet routinely linked to labour-force outcomes.*



Parenting Leave Policy in Türkiye and Gender Equality

- **Design is structurally mother-centred**
- Mothers: 16 wks + 6 mo unpaid + half-time + part-time. Fathers: 10 days. No “use-it-or-lose-it” father quota.
- **Labour-market consequences**
- FLFP 36.3% (TÜİK, 2024) vs male 71%. Mothers of children < 3: only 25% employment. Statistical discrimination against fertile-age women in hiring (Phelps, 1972; İlkaracan, 2012).



Inequality-Reducing vs. Inequality-Generating Elements

■ Inequality-reducing

- Universal eligibility for formal women • SGK / Unemployment-Fund financing (not employer-dependent) • Job protection & annual-leave accrual preserved (Art. 55) • 2025 paternity equalisation across sectors.

■ Inequality-generating

- Excludes informal women • Public–private wage replacement gap (full pay vs. 2/3 SGK) • Strongly mother-centred design • Part-time right requires both parents to work (penalises single-earner households) • Fuels statistical discrimination in hiring (IMF WP/24/171).





Final Discussion



Parenting Leave Policies in Türkiye and Inequalities

■ Research & data gaps

- No causal evaluation of Law 6663 • TÜİK HLFS has no leave-take-up module • Informal sector invisible • No motherhood-penalty estimates with SGK–HLFS linked data.

■ Current problems

- Mother-centred design • weak father involvement • informal-sector exclusion • statistical discrimination • FLFP stuck near 36% — among OECD's lowest.

■ Possible solutions

- Father quota (“use-it-or-lose-it”) • universal cash maternity benefit for informal/self-employed • subsidised childcare • enforce Art. 5 anti-discrimination • TÜİK leave-take-up module.

