



Sustainability@Leave

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Parenting Leave Policies in Norway and Inequalities





Parenting Leaves in Norway: Types of Leave and Design Elements



Parenting Leave Policy in Norway

- **Mother's quota:** 15 weeks (100%) or 19 weeks (80%); first 6 weeks after birth reserved for the mother
- **Father's quota:** 15 weeks (100%) or 19 weeks (80%)
- **Shared period:** 16 weeks (100%) or 20 weeks + 1 day (80%)
- **Parental benefit:** 49 weeks at 100% or 61 weeks + 1 day at 80%, with earnings covered up to **NOK 780,960 per year**



Parenting Leave Policy in Norway: Recent Changes

- No major leave-policy changes since April 2025
- **From May 2025:** parental-benefit ceiling increased slightly
- **ECEC:** planned extension of kindergarten rights for December-born children



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



Who Is Eligible, Who Is Not?

- **Eligibility:** employed for at least 6 of the previous 10 months + minimum income requirement.
- **Not eligible?** One-off lump-sum benefit – substantially lower than earnings-related benefits
- **Access can depend on** family situation, legal recognition and the other parent's activity.
- **Coverage is unequal:** ~93% of Norwegian-born mothers vs. 83% of mothers overall.

What Do We Know About Take-Up Rates?

- **Fathers:** ~90% take parental leave — compared with <4% before the father's quota
- **But paid leave remains unequal:** fathers take ~1/3; mothers ~2/3
- **Unpaid leave widens the gap:** 48% of mothers vs. 11% of fathers

Parenting Leave Policy in Norway and Gender Equality

- **Father's quota:** helped normalise leave-taking among fathers.
- **Social norms:** leave availability is linked to more equal childcare norms.
- **Gender gap remains:** women still expect and take longer leave than men.
- **Workplace matters:** the same leave rights can be used very differently.

Leave, ECEC and Workplace Context

- Leave and ECEC are designed to connect, but admission timing can create gaps.
- Gaps are particularly relevant for children born late in the year.
- Unpaid leave and cash-for-care can bridge periods without ECEC.
- Formal leave uptake $\neq$ equal caregiving: workplace conditions shape leave in practice.





Final Discussion



Parenting Leave Policies in Norway and Inequalities

- High father uptake is a major achievement, but does not mean equal leave-taking or caregiving.
- Access to generous parental benefits depends on labour-market attachment.
- We need to study how leave is used, not only whether it is taken.
- Policy matters, but workplace conditions also shape equality outcomes.