

Family policies in Scandinavia ^[1]

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Full report PDF ^[2]

EXCERPTS

- Denmark, Norway and Sweden have all invested heavily in the creation of generous welfare states and have managed over time to develop encompassing and generous family policies for child families.
- With the child care and leave benefits in mind, the aim is threefold: to enable parents to reconcile work and family, to ensure a more gender equal sharing of paid and unpaid work and to provide care solutions in the best interest of the child.
- The three countries have developed a dual earner-dual carer model, which facilitates high labour force participation for both men and women, including for mothers with smaller children. Also, despite high female labour force participation pattern, the fertility rate has remained relatively high, at least until recent years.
- Whereas Denmark has traditionally offered short parental leaves and in general has applied a more pragmatic approach to child care, where the aim was to enable women's labour force participation in particular, both Sweden and Norway has offered longer parental leaves, stretching well beyond the first year of the child's life.
- Acknowledging that child care is important for the intellectual and social development of children, all three countries have introduced a child care guarantee, which ensures that children can obtain a place in child care regardless of their parents' labour market status. Child care is in this way considered a right of the child. In combination with maximum parental fees, this ensures that regardless of parental economic background all children may benefit from attending child care.

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