

# Changes to Maternity/Parental Leave Benefits <sup>[1]</sup>

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## Overview

On November 9, the Government of Canada announced changes to Employment Insurance benefits for parental/adoptive leave that will take effect December 3, 2017 (as previously announced in the 2017 Federal Budget statement). Eligible parents in Canada, outside Quebec, can choose between the Standard Parental Benefit or the Extended Parental Benefit. The Standard Parental Benefit provides 35 weeks for a period of up to 12 months at a rate of 55% of an eligible parent's average weekly earnings, to a maximum of \$543 per week. With the Extended Parental Benefit, parents receive up to 61 weeks of benefits over 18 months at 33% of average weekly earnings, to a maximum of \$326 per week.

Outside of federally regulated workplaces, where the changes will take effect December 3, the provinces/territories must make legislative and policy changes to define the conditions of job-protected leave that will allow the extended leave to become an option for new parents.

Birth mothers will now be eligible to receive benefits 12 weeks prior to their due date, compared to the existing 9 weeks before birth.

The announcement stimulated considerable public debate about the form and function of maternity/parental leave benefits in Canada, particularly with regard to eligibility, duration, the amount of the payment, gender issues, the alignment of parental leave with affordable child care and equity.

This page presents the new policies, responses and associated news coverage.

[EI Maternity and Parental Benefits: Overview](#)<sup>[2]</sup>

Government of Canada, 7 June 2016

[Budget 2017: Building a strong middle class, Expanding Employment Insurance Benefits to offer more flexibility for families](#) <sup>[3]</sup>

Government of Canada, 22 March 2017

[Announcement: Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development](#) <sup>[4]</sup>

The Star, 9 November 2017

## Responses and Comments

[Parental-leave rich and parental-leave poor: Inequality in Canadian labour market based leave policies](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

CCAAC Responds to new EI Maternity and Parental Benefits: New EI parental benefits reinforce existing inequities and won't make up for the lack of affordable infant child care <sup>[6]</sup>

Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 24 October 2016

Proposed changes to Canadian maternity and parental leave: Response to the federal government consultation from the Childcare Resource and Research Unit <sup>[7]</sup>

Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 27 October 2016

Parental benefits in Canada: Which way forward? <sup>[8]</sup>

Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1 March 2017

News coverage

Should all employers match the federal government's new 18-month parental leave plan? <sup>[9]</sup>

CBC Radio One, 12 November 2017

Editorial: Ottawa should do better on improving parental leave <sup>[10]</sup>

Toronto Star, 9 November 2017

Longer parental leave could worsen gender equality, says UBC prof <sup>[11]</sup>

Metro News, 13 November 2017

New rules on parental leave miss the mark, Women's Network says <sup>[12]</sup>

CBC News, 9 November 2017

Opinion: New family care policies provide more flexibility, but for whom? <sup>[13]</sup>

Toronto Star, 13 November 2017

Researchers say longer parental leave misses the mark <sup>[14]</sup>

The Brock News, 23 March 2017

Expanded parental leave, new caregiver benefit to come into effect Dec. 3 <sup>[15]</sup>

The Globe and Mail, 9 November 2017

Why not all parents benefit from Canada's parental-leave program <sup>[16]</sup>

TVO, 15 January 2018

18 months an option for mat leave, but be prepared for lower weekly benefits <sup>[17]</sup>

The Telegram, 18 January 2018

**Region:** Canada <sup>[18]</sup>

**Tags:** maternity and parental leave <sup>[19]</sup>

benefit <sup>[20]</sup>

entitlement <sup>[21]</sup>

social policy <sup>[22]</sup>

child care <sup>[23]</sup>

investment <sup>[24]</sup>

budget <sup>[25]</sup>

government <sup>[26]</sup>

social policies and programs <sup>[27]</sup>

economics <sup>[28]</sup>

family <sup>[29]</sup>

mothers labour force participation <sup>[30]</sup>

gender wage gap <sup>[31]</sup>

birth rate <sup>[32]</sup>

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[4] <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/11/09/ottawa-to-announce-expanded-parental-leave-thatll-come-into-effect-next-month.html> [5]

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