

Family-friendly policies in rich countries: How Canada compares

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AVAILABILITY

Full access online [2]

EXCERPTS

This Canadian Companion to the UNICEF Research Brief, Family-Friendly Policies in Rich Countries, finds that significant gaps remain between Canada and its peer countries in key family-friendly policies, and too many Canadian children are left out of the benefits of these policies and services. Canada ranks in the middle among other rich countries in the provision of parental leave available to mothers (19th of 41) and in the provision of dedicated leave available to fathers and second parents (16th* of 41). We lack sufficient data to report on early childcare and education, but it is fair to say with the data we have that Canada falls far behind. Many of the world's richest countries fail to offer comprehensive solutions for all families.

**Estimated ranking based on the 2019 policy that introduced paid leave reserved for fathers; it is not directly comparable to other countries given the 2016 base year for their policies*

Canada's ranking in key family-friendly policies in 41 countries

- Parental leave available to mothers: RANK: 19
- Dedicated leave available to fathers and second parents: RANK: 16TH

About this report

Family-friendly policies including paid parental leave and high-quality early child education and care (ECEC) help parents reconcile their child care, employment and other responsibilities. They should also, and primarily, be good for children. Canada has been advancing family-friendly public policies at all levels of government for decades, including significant changes over the past few years. How good are our policies? International comparison can help answer that question.

The UNICEF Research Brief reviews key family-friendly policies in 41 countries that are part of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and/or the European Union (EU). The analysis draws on the most recent comparable data and focuses on childcare-related leave for parents and centre-based early childcare and education services for children. The focus is on four basic dimensions of these public policies. A lack of data prevents measuring countries in relation to important employment and parenting reconciliation policies such as support for breastfeeding, and important policy dimensions such as the quality of early childcare and education. The review does not include other important, public, child-focused policies such as income benefits and compassionate care benefits, or broader public policies that directly affect families and children such as those shaping employment and income inequality. Likewise, it does not review private services and policies.

Related link: Are the world's richest countries family friendly? Policy in the OECD and EU [3]

Region: Canada [4]

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Links

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