

# Improved employment policies can encourage fathers to be more involved at home <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## Excerpt

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Our research finds that Canadian fathers who worked remotely during the pandemic reported higher levels of involvement in household work and child care. Remote work and other flexible work policies may play a crucial role in encouraging a more equitable distribution of household and care work within families.

Remote work isn't the only policy pathway that facilitates men's involvement at home. Our research finds that fathers who have previously taken parental leave report sharing a wider set of household work and child-care tasks with their partners.

But there is a catch: access to these policies is limited in ways that diminish their full potential. Part of the problem stems from the way parental leave and remote work policies are structured.

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## Parental leave in Canada

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Outside of Québec, parental leave programs have low wage replacement rates and restrictive eligibility criteria. Paternity leave is both low-paid (five to eight weeks at a 33 to 55 per cent wage-replacement rate) and contingent on mothers (or birthing parents) also taking leave rather than being designed as an individual entitlement.

These differences exclude many low-income parents from receiving parental leave benefits.

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## Who benefits from these policies?

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To ensure more people benefit from parental leave and flexible work policies, our study suggests they must provide greater support for more people's work and care lives.

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When it comes to parental leave, the evidence is clear: from 2019 to 2020, only 23.5 per cent of recent fathers living outside of Québec took (or intended to take) parental or paternity leave, compared to 85.6 percent of fathers in Québec. If the rest of Canada adopted Québec's more inclusive policy framework, we could narrow the gendered gap in parental leave access.

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If more Canadians are to harness the benefits of parental leave and remote work, we need to design employment and care policies in ways that recognize individuals of all gender identities as not just workers, but as caregivers and care receivers throughout their lives.

**Related link:** How and why fathers in China are sharing more childcare duties than before <sup>[3]</sup>

**Region:** Canada <sup>[4]</sup>

**Tags:** parental leave <sup>[5]</sup>

father involvement <sup>[6]</sup>

unpaid care work <sup>[7]</sup>

fathers-be-more-involved

#### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/12/improved-employment-policies-can-encourage-fathers-be-more-involved> [2]

<https://theconversation.com/improved-employment-policies-can-encourage-fathers-to-be-more-involved-at-home-218337> [3]

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