

Swedes take a new step in parental leave. Grandparents can now get paid to take care of grandkids ^[1]

Sweden is launching a groundbreaking new law that allows grandparents to care for their grandchild and get paid

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Excerpts

Sweden launched a groundbreaking new law on Monday that allows grandparents to step in and get paid parental leave while taking care of their grandchildren for up to three months of a child's first year.

The development comes after the Swedish parliament, the 349-seat Riksdag, approved last December the government's proposal on transfer of parental allowance. This comes 50 years after the Scandinavian country became the first in the world to introduce paid parental leave for fathers and not just mothers.

Under the law, parents can transfer some of their generous parental leave allowance to the child's grandparents. A parent couple can transfer a maximum of 45 days to others while a single parent can transfer 90 days, according to the Social Insurance Agency, a government agency that administers the social insurance system.

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There are also other benefits for parents in Sweden — they can also work reduced hours until the child is 8 years old, while government employees can get those reduced hours until the child turns 12.

By contrast, the United States is one of only a handful of countries — and the only industrialized one — that does not have a national paid maternity leave policy. The Family and Medical Leave Act provides eligible American workers with up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave per year, but that time is unpaid.

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In 1974, Sweden replaced gender-specific maternity leave with parental leave for both parents. At the time, the so-called parental insurance enabled parents to take six months off work per child — with each parent entitled to half of the days.

However, after that move, only 0.5% of the paid parental leave was taken by fathers, according to the Social Insurance Agency. Today, fathers in Sweden take around 30% of the paid parental leave, the agency said.

Related link: Sweden: Where it's taboo for dads to skip parental leave ^[3]

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