

Employment Insurance and women: What you should know ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Fact sheet in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts from the fact sheet: Many women are not eligible for maternity and parental benefits under the EI program, because they haven't worked 600 hours in the previous year, or can't take full advantage of the extended benefits offered since 2001 because they are unable to live on 55% or less of their average earnings. Canada has one of the lowest wage replacement levels for maternity/parental benefits in the world. Most beneficiaries of the up to 50 weeks of combined maternity/parental benefits (35 weeks for adoptive mothers or shared between mothers and fathers) are older women in permanent, better-paid jobs – they may have an employer who provides salary “top-ups” – who are having their first child. Low income earners overrepresented in non-standard work arrangements – including lone mothers, Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, less educated women and immigrant women – tend to be shut out. More than one in three Canadian mothers of newborns did not receive any maternity benefits in 2007. In fact, more men than women are entitled to parental benefits, but very few fathers take them, not surprising given low wage replacement levels, potential job penalties and lingering social stigma regarding stay-at-home dads. While the number of New Brunswick fathers taking parental leave jumped from less than 30 in 2000 to about 230 in 2008, more than 9 in 10 parental leave-takers are still women.

Tags: maternity and parental leave ^[3]

mother's labour force participation ^[4]

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