

# Research on parental leave policies and children's development: Implications for policy makers and service providers <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Available in print for order (see SOURCE) and online for download.

- Full paper in pdf <sup>[3]</sup>

Excerpt from introduction:

Maternity and parental leave policies date back more than 100 years and are now established policy instruments in over 120 nations. Typically, national policies include a period of job-protected leave (averaging 44 weeks across OECD countries) and some degree of income replacement (benefits) in order to enable mothers and (increasingly) fathers to take a period of time off of work following the birth or adoption of a child. Parental leaves and benefits are variously referred to as family policies that protect maternal and infant health; as employment policies that promote gender equity and respect the rights of workers to combine work and family responsibilities; and as "an essential ingredient in early childhood education and care policies." Current trends include extending the period of available leave (as per recent changes in Canada, where eligible parents can share up to a full year of maternity and parental leave benefits), promoting paternal leave, and adding more flexible options. Until recently, much of the research in this area has focused primarily on use patterns and the economic consequences of leave policies. However, there is now considerable interest in the effects of leave policies and leave duration on mothers' physical and mental health and on children's development.

The purpose of this review is to underscore what we do and do not know about parental leave policies as factors that affect parent-child interactions and young children's development, and to identify potentially helpful complementary policy changes and service approaches.

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

**Tags:** child development <sup>[5]</sup>

maternity and parental leave <sup>[6]</sup>

mother's labour force participation <sup>[7]</sup>

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**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/03/02/research-parental-leave-policies-and-childrens-development>

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