

# Parental leave: Parents demand Justin Trudeau fulfills election promise <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Woudstra, Kristy

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

More than 60,000 people have signed a petition demanding the Liberal government fulfill its election promise of extending Canada's parental leave to 18 months.

Back in August of 2015, now Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was on the campaign trail and made a pitch for more flexible parental leave.

Trudeau said the Liberals would work with the provinces on two things:

1. Providing new Canadian parents with a more flexible parental leave that stretched over 18 months (rather than the current 50 weeks);
2. Allowing moms and dads to access benefits in portions over that time.

"The workplace is changed, the families have changed, and it's up to the Canadian government to catch up," Trudeau said at the time.

The changes can't happen soon enough for some Canadian parents. But when the Liberal government announced its budget in March, parental leave wasn't included, which was noticed.

A petition on Change.org started by a group called "Toronto Mommies" is asking the prime minister to deliver on 18-months of parental leave, citing the fact that many daycares don't even accept children until they are a year and a half.

According to the petition: "Extending maternity/parental leave to 18 month[s] will allow parents to care for their children until they are ready to go to daycare. It will allow for families to survive during this difficult financial period of having a child."

While extending parental leave hasn't happened yet, Trudeau continues to talk about reform. In particular, Canada's leader believes in carving out time off specifically for new dads.

During a UN meeting on the status of women in March, Trudeau said having paternity leave would give families far more flexibility. Without a paternity leave, Canada ranked at the bottom of the list of OECD countries for fathers' leave entitlements in 2015.

While both moms and dads can take advantage of Canada's parental leave, only one in 10 dads take time off after they have a child, reports Maclean's magazine.

Following the budget unveiling, Labour Minister MaryAnn Mihychuk expressed interest in including dad-specific leave and hinted at extending parental leave overall.

In an interview with the Canadian Press, she said: "I'm open to promoting some fairly large changes in that whole sector because families have a tough time — especially when you have preschoolers. And if you have children under two, it's a real challenge for those families, so I think we want to modernize the system."

-reprinted from Huffington Post Canada

**Region:** Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** federal programs <sup>[4]</sup>

maternity and parental leave <sup>[5]</sup>

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