

China¹⁵⁶

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N.B. There are 31 provincial administrative regions in mainland China (including provinces, municipalities directly under the central government, and autonomous regions). These provinces are subordinate to the leadership, authority, and direction of the central government. The central government formulates national policies, which are nationally binding. Provincial local governments, in line with these central policies, can independently develop their own policies based on their respective conditions.

For comparisons with other countries in this review on leave provision and early childhood education and care services, please see the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review (also available individually on the [Leave Network website](#)). To contact authors of country notes, see the [members page](#) on the Leave Network website.

1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

a. Maternity leave (产假) (responsibility of State Council at a national level and Local People's Congresses at a provincial level)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 98 calendar days: 15 days before the birth and 83 days after the birth. Individual provinces offer additional days (see Table 1)
- It is not obligatory to take leave.

Payment and funding

- 100 per cent of earnings, or the average salary of the workplace, whichever is higher.
- Funded by the Maternity Insurance Fund for employees included in maternity insurance; and/or by employer (employer covers the balance if the maternity allowance is higher than the female employee's salary; and they pay the full benefit if the female employee did not participate in paying maternity insurance).

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- In provinces such as Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, the provincial government subsidises part (50 per cent – 80 per cent) of the employer's contributions for up to 6 months, sharing the cost with employers.
- In most provinces, the maternity allowance (生育津) is paid directly to individual mothers (instead of processed through the employer).

Flexibility in use

- None, except in Beijing and Guangdong where Maternity leave can be transferred to Paternity leave.

Eligibility

- All female employees are entitled to 98 days of paid Maternity leave, whether they meet the requirements of fertility policies or not (see Section 3). Female staff who conform to fertility policies can (in most parts of the country) get a reward of extended paid Maternity leave or other additional social benefits in addition to the 98 days of Maternity leave (see 'regional or local variations' above).
- Unemployed, flexibly employed, self-employed, or agricultural workers are not eligible for Maternity leave. In 2025, certain provinces began to include flexibly employed women who have paid for medical insurance for a certain period of time (e.g., 12-24 months) in maternity allowance.
- All female employees are entitled to the national provision of 98 days of paid maternity leave regardless of marital status. Unmarried female employees are entitled to the same provincial extensions in Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Anhui Provinces.
- China does not legally recognise same-sex marriage, so all family policies refer to heterosexual couples.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; single parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the mother

- Female employees who suffer from dystocia can have an additional 15 days of leave (20 days in Chongqing, 30 days in Guangdong Province).
- Female employees who have multiple births are entitled to an additional 15 days of leave for each additional birth.
- Five provinces (Hebei, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Guangxi, Zhejiang) adopt tiered maternity leave for higher-order births: In Hebei, Inner Mongolia, and Zhejiang Province, mothers giving birth to the first child are entitled to 158 days of maternity leave (98 days national standard + 60 days provincial extension), and those giving birth to the second and third child are entitled to 188 days (98 days of national standard + 90 days provincial extension). In Shaanxi Province, mothers giving birth to the first or second child are entitled to 158 days of maternity leave (98 days national standard + 60 days provincial extension), and those giving birth to the third child are entitled to 173 days (98 days of national standard + 75 days provincial extension). In Guangxi, mothers giving birth to the first child are entitled to 158 days of maternity leave (98 days national standard + 60 days provincial extension), those giving birth to the second child are entitled to 168 days (98 days of national standard + 70 days provincial extension), and those

giving birth to the third child are entitled to 178 days (98 days of national standard + 80 days provincial extension).

- Female employees who miscarry within 4 months of pregnancy can have 15 days of maternity leave; female employees who miscarry after four months of pregnancy shall have 42 days of maternity leave.
- In four provinces, female employees who still cannot work after the end of Maternity leave, due to physical problems or other difficulties, can (with the approval of their employer) obtain additional leave. In Zhejiang, Jilin, and Chongqing, leave can be extended to one year after birth (including statutory Maternity leave), with the salary continuing to be fully paid (Zhejiang) or paid at 75 per cent or above (Jilin and Chongqing).

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- There are provincial extensions of 60 to 267 days, totalling 158 to 365 days. See Table 1 below for variations by province.

Table 1. Maternity Leave, Paternity Leave, and Parental Leave Days by Province/Region

Province/ Region	Maternity Leave (98 days National offering + Local Extension)	Paternity Leave (Days)	Parental Leave (Days per Year per Parent)
National Standard	98 days	None	None
Anhui	158 days	30 days	10 days (0-6)
Beijing	158 days (can extend 1-3 months upon employer agreement)	15 days	5 work days (0-3)
Chongqing	178 days	20 days	5–10 days (0-6) (or one of the parents until child is 1)
Fujian	158 days (can be extended to 180 days)	15 days	10 days (0-3)
Gansu	180 days	30 days	15 days (0-3)
Guangdong	178 days	15 days	10 days (0-3)
Guangxi	158 days (1st birth); 168 days (2nd birth); 178 days (3rd birth)	25 days	10 days (0-3)
Guizhou	158 days	15 days	10 days (0-3)
Hainan	188 days	15 days	10 days (0-3)
Hebei	158 days (1st/2nd birth); 188 days (3rd birth)	15 days	10 days (0-3)
Heilongjiang	180 days	15 days (work day)	10 days (0-3)

Henan	188 days	30 days	10 days (0-3)
Hubei	158 days	15 days	10 days (0-3)
Hunan	188 days	20 days	10 days (0-3)
Inner Mongolia	158 days (1st/2nd birth); 188 days (3rd birth)	25 days	10 days (0-3)
Jiangsu	158 days	15 days	10 days (0-3)
Jiangxi	188 days	30 days	10 work days (0-3)
Jilin	180 days (can extend to one year upon employer agreement)	25 days	20 days (0-3)
Liaoning	158 days	20 days	10 days
Ningxia	158 days	25 days	10 days
Qinghai	188 days	15 days	15 days (0-3)
Shaanxi	158 days	15 days (20 days for couples living in different cities)	10 days (0-3)
Shandong	158 days	15 days	10 days (0-3)
Shanghai	158 days	10 days	5 work days (0-3)_
Shanxi	158 days	15 days	15 days (0-3)
Sichuan	188 days (1st/2nd birth); 218 days (3rd birth)	30 days	10 days (0-3)
Tianjin	158 days	15 days	10 work days (0-3)
Tibet	365 days (1 year); 1.5 years in border regions	30 days	15 days (0-3)
Xinjiang	158 days	20 days	10 days (0-3)
Yunnan	158 days	30 days	10 work days (0-3)
Zhejiang	158 days (1st birth); 188 days (2nd/3rd birth)	15 days	10 work days (0-3)

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusion, or rights to postpone)

- No data available.

b. Paternity leave (陪产假) (responsibility of State Council at a national level and Local People's Congresses at a provincial level)

Length of leave

- No statutory entitlement nationally. Individual provinces offer leave of varying lengths (see Table 1 above).

Payment and funding

- 100 per cent of earnings.

Flexibility in use

- Whereas there is no national guideline on the flexibility of Paternity leave, some provinces require that Paternity leave be taken within the period of Maternity leave and in one period of time (e.g., Shanghai).

Eligibility (e.g., related to employment or family circumstances)

- All male employees who conform with fertility policies are eligible.
- China does not legally recognise same-sex marriage, so all family policies refer to heterosexual couples.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; single parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the mother

- None.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- All provinces now provide Paternity leave, ranging from 10 to 30 days, with 15 days being the most common length (see Table 1 above). Provinces vary in whether Paternity leave includes work days only or calendar days. In Shaanxi, where the provincial standard Paternity leave is 15 days, additional days are granted to fathers who live in a different city from their partners (20 days instead of 15) and those who are having 3 children (25 days instead of 15).

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusion, or rights to postpone)

- None.

c. Parental leave (育儿假)

Length of leave

- No statutory entitlement nationally. However, China's Population and Family Planning Law (2021 revision) encourages provincial offering of Parental

leave, and individual provinces offer leave of varying lengths (see Table 1 above).

Payment, funding and taxation

- 100 per cent of earnings.

Flexibility in use

- None.

Eligibility (e.g., related to employment or family circumstances)

- All employees who conform with fertility policies are eligible.
- China does not legally recognise same-sex marriage, so all family policies refer to heterosexual couples.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the parents

- None.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- In all provinces, Parental leave is provided to parents with children under 3 years, ranging from 5 days (e.g., Beijing and Shanghai) to 20 days/one month (e.g., Jilin) per parent per year. The days are typically calculated according to the child's birth time (e.g., see Beijing) although some provinces calculate according to calendar year (e.g., see Anhui). See Table 1 above.
- Regional variations exist in the age limit of the child, and the possibility of accumulating Parental leave in families with multiple children. For example, in Anhui and Chongqing, parents enjoy annual Parental leave up until their child turns 6 years of age. In Beijing and Shanghai, parents with two children have double the number of days per person per year for parental leave; in Yunnan, parents with multiple children under 3 can take up to 15 days per parent per year, whereas in provinces like Anhui, Jiangxi, Guangdong, and Shaanxi, parents with multiple children under the age threshold do not get additional days.
- In Chongqing, it is also possible, upon employer's agreement, for one of the parents (no specification on parental sex) to take parental leave after maternity/paternity leave until the child is one year of age, at no less than 75 per cent of salary and no less than the minimum monthly wage. In Guangdong, parental leave can be taken in no more than two blocks per year. In Shanghai, parental leave can be taken flexibly within the year.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusion, or rights to postpone)

- None.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

- No statutory entitlement.

e. Other types of leave and flexible working

Adoption leave and pay

- None

Time off for the care of dependants

- In China, adult children are legally responsible for the care of their aging parents. Currently, 25 provinces entitle adult children to care for their aging parents that are above 60 years of age and are receiving in-patient treatment at a hospital (elder-care leave, or 陪护假 or 护理假), with singleton adult children entitled to slightly more days than non-singleton adult children. Elder-care leave for singleton adult children ranges from 5 days (Zhejiang and Guangdong) to 20 days (Henan, Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia, Yunnan, Anhui, Shandong, Tianjin, Xinjiang), with 15 days being the standard in Hainan, Guangxi, Hubei, Shanxi, Sichuan, Guizhou, Liaoning, Hunan, Hebei, Shaanxi, Gansu and Ningxia. Elder-care leave for non-singleton adult children is typically 7 days (Anhui, Hebei, Jiangxi, Shandong, Sichuan, Ningxia) or 10 days (Guizhou, Hubei, Heilongjiang, Yunnan Provinces, Tianjin, Xinjiang).
- Employees taking leave receive full earnings.

Specific provision for (breast)feeding

- For working mothers with infants under 1 year of age, employers should arrange at least 1 paid hour of feeding time, regardless of whether the infant is breastfed or bottle fed. Employers must not extend work hours or arrange night shifts for such mothers. Female employees with multiple births are entitled to an extra paid hour of feeding time per infant per day.
- In some provinces, additional breastfeeding leave can be applied for after the end of Maternity leave. In Shaanxi, if employers are unable to guarantee breastfeeding time and provide breastfeeding conditions due to special circumstances, three to six months of paid breastfeeding leave can be granted. In Shanghai, with the employer's agreement, 6½ months of breastfeeding leave can be granted. In Hainan and Guangxi, after Maternity leave, upon negotiation with the employer, female employees can take breastfeeding leave until the child's first birthday, paid at no less than 80 per cent of the employee's basic wage; Hainan explicitly includes temporary and contract workers.

Flexible working for carers

- No statutory entitlement. From early 2025 certain provinces (Guangdong, Zhejiang, Shandong, Shanghai) piloted 'childrearing friendly workplaces', allowing flexible and remote work for parents in certain professions (e.g., new media and digital workers).

Antenatal appointments and care (slobodan radni dan za prenatalni pregled)

- Female employees are entitled to fully paid antenatal appointments during work hours (usually starting from the initial check-up at around 12 weeks of pregnancy). In Shaanxi Province, mothers who take antenatal appointments receive 10 additional days of Maternity leave. In Guangxi, fathers are entitled to 5 days to accompany their partners to antenatal appointments.

Other provisions of leave

- Bereavement leave. 1 to 3 days.

2. Relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy

As Chinese children are entitled to ECEC only from 3 years of age, there is a gap of at least 2 years between the end of well-paid leave and an ECEC entitlement, even considering the recent expansions in Parental leave. This means informal care is dominant for children under 3 years. Nation-wide, two-thirds of elderly people have been involved in childcare; in Shanghai, three-quarters of families with children under 3 years live with grandparents, and more than 80 per cent have grandparents involved in their care.

Currently, the last year of kindergarten (for children 5-6 years old) is free of charge for those attending public kindergartens (and similarly subsidised for those attending private kindergartens).

No information for ECEC attendance levels in 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' in the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review.

3. Changes in policy since April 2025 (including proposals currently under discussion)

Whereas there have been no national-level policy changes in the length of Maternity, Paternity and Parental leaves since April 2025, from 2026, in most provinces, the maternity allowance (生育津贴) is paid directly to individual mothers (instead of being processed through the employer).

From September 2025, China has made the last year of kindergarten (for children 5-6 years old) free of charge for those attending public kindergartens (and similarly subsidised for those attending private kindergartens).

A national provision of 30 days for Paternity leave was proposed to the National People's Congress in 2025.

4. Uptake of leave

a. Maternity leave

Most Chinese mothers have taken some leave after childbirth. A survey on the implementation of Maternity leave for female employees in 2021 found that, when

asked 'how long have you taken Maternity leave', about four-fifths of female employees take the full amount. However, several recent studies also reveal a significant policy-implementation gap. The same survey as above showed that nearly 22 per cent of female employees take fewer than 98 days of Maternity leave. Similarly, [a study by All China's Women Federation in 2024](#) found that approximately one-third of female employees (35.1 per cent) have taken fewer than 98 days of Maternity leave, due to concerns about the consequences of leave-taking on income, job security, and career development, and also due to requests from the workplace. A latest study conducted by [Peking University \(2026\)](#) suggested that more than half of mothers have not taken the entire Maternity leave that they are entitled to, an issue particularly severe among women working in the private sector, where women also suffer from a significant income reduction during Maternity leave.

b. Paternity leave

According to the Fourth Survey of Chinese Women's Social Status (2020), among working women under 35 years of age, 81.2 per cent of their spouses have taken paid Paternity leave, and 70.8 per cent took more than 7 days of leave, reflecting a significant increase from statistics from the Third Survey of Chinese Women's Social Status (2010).

c. Parental leave

According to [the study by All China's Women Federation in 2024](#), 15.8 per cent of female employees have never taken the Parental leave they were entitled to when their children were under 3 years of age. Women working in the private sector are less likely to have taken Parental leave (18.4 per cent) than those working in the public sector (9.9 per cent). Among the spouses of the surveyed women, even a higher percentage of the fathers (24.1 per cent) have never taken parental leave.

The predominant reasons for both fathers and mothers not taking Parental leave include disapproval from the workplace, lack of knowledge about the policy, and concern about job security and career development.