Poland[440]

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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 *(urlop macierzyński)* (responsibility of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 20 calendar weeks: no more than 6 calendar weeks can be taken before the birth.
- It is obligatory to take 14 calendar weeks after birth.

Payment, funding and taxation

- 20 weeks at either 100 per cent or 81.5 per cent of the mother's average earnings for the 3 months (or 12 months if the level of remuneration varies significantly from month to month) before the birth (in the form of maternity benefit, *zasiłek macierzyński*), with no upper limit. If the mother chooses to take the 100 per cent option, Parental leave (if taken afterwards) is paid at 70 per cent of average earnings (for details on Parental leave see 1c). Mothers, however, can opt for a combined Maternity and Parental leave (52 weeks) and then the 81.5 per cent payment option is used.
- If the maternity benefit in a given month is lower than PLN1,000 [€230.84],[441] the difference is paid to the parents. Female farmers are not covered by this system; they are paid the benefit of PLN1,000 [€230.84] during the first year after their child is born, regardless of income.
- If an employer has more than 20 employees, payments are made to the eligible mother by the employer who claims back from the Social Insurance

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[441] Conversion of currency undertaken for 20 July 2026, using: https://data.ecb.europa.eu/currency-converter.

Institution. Otherwise, payments are made to the parent by the Social Insurance Institution.

- Payments are taxed.
- Maternity leave is considered a fully contributory period under the social insurance system for retirement or pension scheme.
- Funded from the Social Insurance Fund, financed by contributions by employees (2.45 per cent of earnings), self-employed workers, and other insured persons (i.e., working in atypical forms of employment), with some additional finance from the state to cover pension contributions. There is no contribution from employers.

Flexibility in use

- No later than 21 days after the birth, the insured mother may declare if she wants to take the 81.5 per cent option, i.e., an option of combined Maternity and Parental leave, for the total of 52 weeks of leave.

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

- Insured workers, including all employees and self-employed men covered by social security insurance at the start of the leave.
- There is no explicit ruling about eligibility for same-sex couples, though the way that the provision is worded might lead to such a possibility: in some parts the legislation refers to the 'mother', but in others it refers to the 'other parent'. even if certain provisions governing parental leave could be interpreted more broadly, other elements of the legal framework render such interpretations ineffective in practice. However, even if certain provisions governing leave could be interpreted more broadly, other elements of the legal framework render such interpretations ineffective in practice.
- There are no eligibility criteria related to citizenship or additional residency requirements beyond those necessary for legal employment in Poland. Entitlement to maternity leave is based solely on coverage under the Polish social insurance system (ZUS).

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

- In the case of multiple births, Maternity leave is extended to 31 weeks for twins, 33 weeks for triplets, 35 weeks for quadruplets, and 37 weeks for quintuplets and more.
- As mentioned above, the mother may share this leave with other members of her family, if they are employed or insured and if the mother is not able to take care of a child.
- In the case of the death of a baby before the end of the 8^{th} week, the mother has the right to 8 weeks of leave in total, and to at least 7 days after the death of a child who was older than 8 weeks of age.
- In the event of the birth of a premature child, an employee-mother or an employee-father raising a child (in some cases also other members of the closest family as mentioned above) is entitled to a supplementary Maternity leave, immediately after using Maternity leave. The supplementary leave is:
  - 1 week for each week of the child's stay in hospital until the end of the 15^{th} week after delivery if the child was born before the completion of the

28th week of pregnancy or with a birth weight of no more than 1000 g;
    - 1 week for each week of the child's stay in hospital until the end of the 8th week after delivery if the child was born after the completion of the 28th week of pregnancy and before the completion of the 37th week of pregnancy and with a birth weight of more than 1000 g;
    - 1 week for each week of the child's stay in hospital from the 5th day until the end of the 8th week after delivery if the child was born after completion of the 37th week of pregnancy and child's stay in hospital after delivery was at least 2 consecutive days.
- The mother can transfer non-obligatory periods of Maternity leave, i.e., 6 weeks, to the father.
- In rare cases, when the mother is unable to live independently, is in hospital due to illness, has died or abandoned the child, maternity leave can be taken by another insured family member;- this may be the father of the child, or another person, whether related or not.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

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

- Individuals who are not eligible to receive maternity benefit (thus also parental allowance, see 1d) are eligible for parental benefit of PLN1,000 [€230.84] per month. The benefit is addressed particularly to unemployed people, students, and people working on some types of civil law contracts (uninsured); but economically inactive mothers and fathers (those not officially registered as unemployed) are also eligible. The benefit is not means-tested and is paid for 52 weeks for one child; 65 weeks for twins; 67 weeks for triplets; 69 weeks for quadruplets; and 71 weeks if five or more children were born. The first 14 weeks of benefit are available only for mothers.

b. Paternity leave *(urlop ojcowski)* (responsibility of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy)

Length of leave

- 2 calendar weeks.

Payment, funding and taxation

- 2 weeks at 100 per cent of the average 3 months (or 12 months if the level of remuneration varies significantly from month to month) pay before the birth, with no upper limit (also called '*zasiłek macierzyński*').
- If an employer has more than 20 employees, payments are made to fathers by the employer who claims back from the Social Insurance Institution. Otherwise, payments are made to the parent by the Social Insurance Institution.
- Payments are taxed.
- Paternity leave is considered a fully contributory period for retirement or pension schemes.

- Funded by the Social Insurance Institution.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be taken any time during the 12 months after the birth of a child.
- Leave can be taken in two separate parts, i.e., each part must be at least 1 calendar week.
- Leave can be taken if the mother is on Maternity or Parental leave.
- Non-transferable to mothers or other members of family

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

- The same as for Maternity leave, i.e., insured workers, including all employees and self-employed men covered by social security insurance at the start of the leave.
- Same-sex couple eligibility remains unclear: there have not yet been cases in Poland where two men have had the legal status of being the father of the same child.
- There are no eligibility criteria related to citizenship or additional residency requirements beyond those necessary for legal employment in Poland. Entitlement to paternity leave is based solely on coverage under the Polish social insurance system (ZUS).

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 father

- None.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

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

- None reported.

c. Parental leave *(urlop rodzicielski)* (responsibility of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy)

Length of leave

- 41 calendar weeks.
- 23 weeks of leave is a family entitlement; the remaining period of 18 weeks is an individual, non-transferable entitlement with 9 weeks for mothers and 9 weeks for fathers.

Payment, funding and taxation

- Payment for the mother depends on the payment option chosen by the mother taking Maternity leave. If, during Maternity leave, the mother opts to be paid at 100 per cent of earnings, Parental leave is paid at 70 per cent of average earnings for 12 months preceding the birth, with no upper limit on payment; if the mother opts for the combined maternity and parental leave, she is paid at 81.5 per cent of earnings for the entire combined period of leave.

- Payment for the father is 70 per cent of earnings.
- If the average monthly benefit on Parental leave would be lower than PLN1,000 [€230.84], the difference is paid to the parent. Female farmers are not covered by this system; they are paid the benefit of PLN1,000 [€230.84] during the first year after their child is born, regardless of income (see point a).
- If an employer has more than 20 employees, payments are made to parents by the employer who claims back from the Social Insurance Institution. Otherwise, payments are made to the parents by the Social Insurance Institution.
- Payments are taxed.
- Parental leave is considered a fully contributory period for pension and retirement scheme.
- Funding is the same as for Maternity leave.

Flexibility in use

- The 41 calendar week period can be taken as one continuous period of leave (up to 32 calendar weeks for the mother and up to 9 calendar weeks for the father), or as up to five separate periods. Parents can use the leave until the end of the calendar year in which the child turns 6 years.
- Parental leave may be combined with part-time working, with a maximum of working half-time hours. In this case, payment is proportional to the working time, and leave is also extended proportionately, up to 82 weeks.
- Both parents can take leave at the same time, though the overall length of leave must not exceed 41 weeks in the case of a single birth.
- Parental leave can be taken by the other parent (father) when the mother is still on Maternity leave.
- In some cases, when the mother or the other parent is unable to live independently, is in hospital due to illness, has died or abandoned the child, leave can be taken by another insured family member.

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

- The same as for Maternity leave: i.e., insured persons, including all employees and self-employed people covered by social security insurance at the start of leave.
- Parental leave must be taken before the end of the year when a child turns 6 years. A mother's non-eligibility for Parental leave does not cause the loss of the eligibility of an employed or insured other parent or employed or insured other member of the family (i.e., grandmother, uncle, brother, child etc.).
- If the employment contract expires during the Parental leave, the parent loses a right to the remaining part. However, s/he does not lose the right to maternity allowance, which s/he will receive until the end of the original period of this leave.
- Same-sex parenthood is not recognized in Polish law, making it impossible for same-sex parents whose child is born in Poland to share Parental leave.
- There are no eligibility criteria related to citizenship or additional residency

requirements beyond those necessary for legal employment in Poland. Entitlement to parental leave is based solely on coverage under the Polish social insurance system (ZUS).

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 parent

- In the case of multiple births, Parental leave is extended to 43 weeks, regardless of the number of children born.
- Parents of a child holding a '*Za życiem*' ('For Life') certificate have the right to take Parental leave in order to take care of the child for up to 65 weeks, in the case of one child, or 67 weeks, in case of multiple births. The certificate is issued in cases where a child has an incurable or life-threatening illness.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

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

- None reported.

d. Childcare leave *(urlop wychowawczy)* (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy)

Length of leave

- Up to 36 months can be taken as Childcare leave. It is not dependent on the Parental or Maternity leave, but the parent must have worked for over 6 months with any employer. Thirty-four months are a family entitlement, with 1 month as an individual entitlement for the mother and another month for the father.
- A further 36 months can be taken for a disabled child. The same rules as for regular childcare leave applies, except for the age of eligibility, which is extended until the child turns 18 years old.

Payment and funding

- A parental allowance (*Dodatek z tytułu opieki nad dzieckiem w okresie korzystania z urlopu wychowawczego*) of PLN400 [€92.34] per month is paid for 24 months to parents taking leave as a supplement to family benefit if monthly household income per capita does not exceed PLN674 [€155.59] or PLN764 [€176.36] in the case of a family with a child with a disability.
- Funded from general taxation.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can be taken until the end of the calendar year in which the child turns 6 years old.
- Parents can take leave in one continuous period or in a maximum of five separate periods (up to four parts for one parent).

- Parents can reduce their working time up to half of full-time hours during the period in which they take the leave (with the proportional reduction of remuneration, non-refundable).
- Parents can take leave at the same time.
- Both parents have an individual, non-transferable right to one month of leave. However, it could be transferable due to certain legal circumstances, such as the father being unknown, the other parent dies, the other parent hasn't acquired or is deprived fully or partially of parental rights.
- During the leave period, parents may be employed and claim parental allowance (if they are eligible due to social assistance scheme), if working does not prevent them from caring for their children. A working parent can switch employment while on leave.
- Persons on leave are obligatory subject to retirement and disability insurance from the date they meet the conditions for being subject to such insurance until the date they cease to meet these conditions.
- Non-transferable to other members of the family

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

- Employees with a work record of at least 6 months.

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 parents

- The basic payment can be extended to 36 months where there is more than one child.
- Leave may be extended for another 36 months if a child is disabled or chronically ill and requires care, but can be taken no later than the child's 18th birthday. A means-tested payment of PLN400 [€92.34] per month is made in these cases, and the payment period can be extended up to 72 months.

e. Other types of leave and flexible working

Adoption leave and pay

- The same regulations apply as for parents having biological children.
- Parental allowance is paid if the adopted child is seven years old or younger (and in some cases up to 14 years because Poland has two different schemes for adoption).

Time off for the care of dependants

- An employee can take leave of up to 14 calendar days per year to provide **personal care for a family member** (child or adult) living in the same household, paid at 80 per cent of earnings. The care benefit (*zasiłek opiekuńczy*) is paid by the employer and refunded by the Social Insurance Institution when the employer has over 20 employees (insured); in the case of an employer with less than 20 employees, the Social Insurance Institution pays the employee directly.
- An employee can take leave to care for **a child up to eight years of age** (14 years of age if the child is disabled or chronically ill) in the case of an

unforeseen closure of a nursery school, kindergarten, or school; or the illness or childbirth of the spouse caring permanently for the child. This leave is paid at 80 per cent of earnings for up to 60 calendar days.

- An employee with a **child under 14 years** is entitled to 2 working days (or 16 hours) of fully paid leave per year.
- An employee is entitled to two working days or 16 hours off work during a calendar year due to *force majeure* arising from **urgent family matters** caused by illness or accident, if the employee's immediate presence is necessary. This leave is paid at half of earnings.
- An employee is entitled to **carers' leave** of 5 working days during a calendar year to provide personal care or support to a person who is a family member or lives in the same household and who requires care or support for serious medical reasons. This leave is unpaid.

Specific provision for (breast)feeding

- Mothers who work at least 4 hours per day and breastfeed are entitled to breastfeeding breaks at work, which are included in their working time. The number of breaks depends on the number of hours at work, and the length of the break depends on the number of children being breastfed (i.e., children not necessarily born at the same delivery and with no limit for the age of child breastfed). A mother of 1 child working full-time would be allowed 2 breaks per day of 30 minutes each. Breaks could be combined and granted at the beginning or end of the working day.

Flexible working for carers

- An employee has the right to apply for flexible forms of work or remote work in certain conditions, such as: a pregnant employee or a pregnant employee's spouse in the case of a complicated pregnancy; an employee who is the parent of a child who has a *'For Life'* certificate (see 1c) or other certificate for a disability. The right to apply for flexible forms of working time is also available to employees whose children have already turned 18 years of age.
- The employer has the right to refuse the application submitted by the employee if it is not possible due to the organisation of work, or the type of work performed by the employee. In which case, the employer must inform the employee about the reason for refusal.

Time off for antenatal appointments and care

- The employer is obliged to grant a pregnant employee time off from work for medical examinations recommended by a doctor, conducted in connection with the pregnancy, if these examinations cannot be conducted outside working hours. The employee retains the right to remuneration for the period of absence from work for this reason.

Other provisions of leave

- None reported.

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave is 4 years, but most of this is means-tested and low paid; leave paid at a high rate runs for maximum of 14 months. There is an entitlement to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) from 3 years of age. There is, therefore, no gap between the end of leave and an ECEC entitlement, but there is a nearly 2 year gap between the end of well-paid leave and an ECEC entitlement.

For ECEC attendance levels, see '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)

None reported.

4. Uptake of leave

The Social Insurance Institution (*Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych, ZUS*) collects limited data on the amount and average level of benefits received by parents on Maternity, Parental and Paternity leave.

a. Maternity leave

As 14 weeks of Maternity leave is obligatory, it is likely that all women take some period of this leave. In 2023, 66,900 women took Maternity leave with an average benefit of PLN111.52 [€25.74] per day.

b. Paternity leave

According to recent reports published by ZUS and Share the Care foundation,[442] the share of fathers using Paternity leave increased from 60 per cent in 2022 to 67 per cent in 2023. In 2025 this share dropped to 58 per cent, probably due to a 'crowding-out effect' of the higher use of earmarked Parental leave by fathers (see below). The average benefit for fathers on Paternity leave in 2024 was PLN228.19 [€52.68] per day, nearly twice as high as the benefits received by mothers on Maternity leave.

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[442] *Równi w domu, równi w pracy – równość rodzicielska w Polsce trzy lata po wdrożeniu dyrektywy unijnej Work-Life Balance* [Equal at home, equal at work – parental equality three years after the implementation of the EU Work-Life Balance Directive], Warszawa: Share the Care, ZUS, March 2026. Available at: https://rowni.sharethecare.pl/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Rownosc-rodzicielska-w-Polsce-2026_raport.pdf; *Tata na rodzicielskim. Co mówią liczby o ojcostwie w Polsce* [What do the numbers say about fatherhood in Poland], Warszawa: Share the Care, ZUS, April 2024. Available at: https://sharethecare.pl/tata-na-rodzicielskim/; ; *Mama i tata w domu i w pracy. Równość rodzicielska w Polsce w szerszym kontekście społeczno-gospodarczym* [Mom and Dad at Home and at Work: Parental Equality in Poland in the Broader Socio-Economic Context], Warszawa: Share the Care, ZUS, May 2025. Available at: https://sharethecare.pl/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/05_25-Raport_mama-i-tata-w-domu-i-pracy.pdf

c. Parental leave

The data indicate that the transferable part of Parental leave is mostly taken by women.

As a result of the introduction of 9 weeks of paid Parental leave reserved for each parent in April 2023, more fathers make use of their Parental leave rights, up from 3,700 in 2022 to 19,000 in 2023. In 2024 this number rose further, to 41,900. Nevertheless, still only a limited share of eligible fathers - about 24 per cent in 2025 - use their rights. The average time fathers took Parental leave in 2025 was 43 days, compared to 143 days for mothers.[443] The benefit on Parental leave in 2025 when taken by mothers was, on average, PLN175 [€40.40] per day, while for fathers it was PLN255 [€58.86] per day.

443 https://sharethecare.pl/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/05_25-Raport_mama-i-tata-w-domu-i-pracy.pdf; https://rowni.sharethecare.pl/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Rownosc-rodzicielska-w-Polsce-2026_raport.pdf