

## PF2.1: Key characteristics of parental leave systems

### *Definitions and methodology*

Parental leave systems are diverse and complex, and individual systems do not always fit neatly into classifications suitable for cross-national comparison. In this indicator, national parental leave programmes are classified according to four main general types:

- **Maternity leave** (or pregnancy leave): employment-protected leave of absence for employed women at around the time of childbirth, or adoption in some countries. The ILO convention on maternity leave stipulates the period of leave to be at least 14 weeks. In many countries beneficiaries may combine pre- with post-birth leave; in some countries a short period of pre-birth leave is compulsory, as is a 6 to 10 week leave period following birth. In most countries, workers on maternity leave are entitled to some form of public income support.
- **Paternity leave**: employment-protected leave of absence for employed fathers at or in the first few months after childbirth. Paternity leave is not stipulated by international convention. In general, periods of paternity leave are much shorter than for maternity leave. Because of the short period of absence, workers on paternity leave often continue to receive full wage payments.
- **Parental leave**: employment-protected leave of absence for employed parents, which is often supplementary to specific maternity and paternity leave periods, and frequently, but not in all countries, follows the period of maternity leave. Entitlement to the parental leave period is often individual (i.e. each parent has their own entitlement) while entitlement to public income support is frequently (but not always) family-based, so that in general only one parent claims such income support at any one time. An increasing number of countries are though offering at least a portion of the parental leave period as an individual non-transferable entitlement for each parent.
- **Home care leave** (or childcare or child raising leave): employment-protected leaves of absence that sometimes follow parental leave and that typically allow at least one parent to remain at home to provide care until the child is two or three years of age. Home care leaves are less common than the other three types of leave and are offered only in a minority of countries. They are also often unpaid, and where a benefit is available the home care leave tends to be paid only at a low flat-rate.

In addition to these common types, a couple of additional working definitions are used in this indicator to allow for full and consistent cross-country comparison of leave entitlements:

- **Parental and home care leave available to mothers**: covers all weeks of employment-protected parental and home care leave that can be used by the mother. This includes any weeks that are an individual entitlement or that are reserved for the mother, and those that are a sharable or family entitlement. It excludes any weeks of parental leave that are reserved for the exclusive use of the father.

- **Father-specific parental and home care leave:** covers any weeks of employment-protected parental or home care leave that can be used only by the father or 'other parent'. This includes any weeks of parental leave that are and individual non-transferable entitlement for the father or 'other parent', plus any weeks of sharable leave that are effectively 'reserved' because they must be used by the partner of the main leave-taker (often the father) in order for the family to qualify for bonus weeks. Weeks are included here only if they are fully non-transferable. Any entitlements that are initially given to the father but that can be transferred to the mother are not included.

Tables PF2.1.C-PF2.1.E – shown towards the end of this document – detail the key characteristics of maternity, paternity, and parental and home care leaves across the covered Asia/Pacific countries. First, however, tables PF2.1.A and PF2.1.B and charts PF2.1.A-PF2.1.C summarise paid leave entitlements. They show the duration of paid maternity leave, paid parental and home care leave available to mothers, paid paternity leave and paid father-specific parental and home care leave. In all cases entitlements reflect only those weeks of leave for which at least some payment is available. Because payment rates vary across countries and types of leave, entitlements are presented in both 'duration in weeks' form and in 'full-rate equivalent' (FRE) form, that is, as the length of the paid leave in weeks if it were paid at 100% of previous earnings. The calculation of the full-rate equivalent (FRE) can be summarized by:

$$\text{FRE} = \text{Duration of leave in weeks} * \text{payment rate}$$

For Australia, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand, the "payment rate" refers the proportion of previous earnings replaced by the benefit over the length of the paid leave entitlement for a person earning 100% of average national (2018) earnings, taking into account any payment ceilings and floors. If this covers more than one period of leave at two different payment rates then a weighted average is calculated based on the length of each period. For China, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, the "payment rate" refers simply to the main payment rate attached to the main leave benefit, and does not take into account any payment ceilings and floors.

### *Key findings*

Access to paid maternity leave is a common feature across the covered Asia/Pacific countries. All of the covered countries provide mothers with a statutory entitlement to at least some kind paid maternity leave, with most providing at least the 14 weeks recommended by the ILO (Table PF2.1.A and Chart PF2.1.A). Korea and Thailand provide mothers with a statutory entitlement to 90 days (12.9 weeks) paid maternity leave, Indonesia to 13 weeks, and Japan and China to 98 days (14 weeks). Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Viet Nam provide longer leaves – in the latter, mothers have a statutory entitlement to 26 weeks of paid maternity leave.

Maternity leaves are usually well-paid (Table PF2.1.A and Chart PF2.1.A). The lowest payment rates among the covered Asia/Pacific countries are in Australia and New Zealand, where maternity leave benefits replace around 40-50% of previous earnings for an average earner. In all of the other covered countries, maternity leave benefits replace at least two-thirds of previous earnings. In China, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam, maternity benefits fully replace previous earnings (at least up to a ceiling, in the cases of Singapore and Thailand).

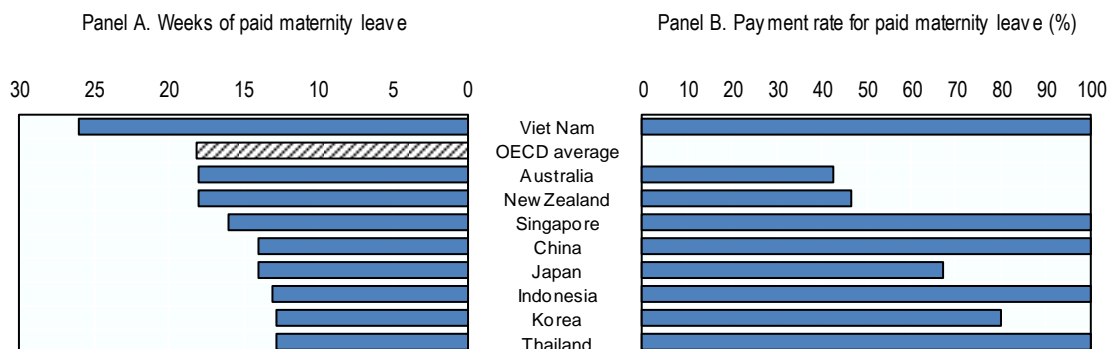
**Table PF2.1.A. Summary of paid leave entitlements available to mothers**  
 Paid maternity, parental and home care leave available to mothers, in weeks, 2018

	Paid maternity leave			Paid parental and home care leave available to mothers			Total paid leave available to mothers		
	Length, in weeks	Payment rate (%)	Full-rate equivalent, in weeks	Length, in weeks	Payment rate (%)	Full-rate equivalent, in weeks	Length, in weeks	Payment rate (%)	Full-rate equivalent, in weeks
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(1)+(4)	(8)	(9)
Australia	18.0	42.9	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.0	42.9	7.7
China	14.0	100.0	14.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.0	100.0	14.0
Indonesia	13.0	100.0	13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	100.0	13.0
Japan	14.0	67.0	9.4	44.0	59.9	26.4	58.0	61.6	35.8
Korea	12.9	80.2	10.3	52.0	28.5	14.8	64.9	38.8	25.1
New Zealand	18.0	46.8	8.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.0	46.8	8.4
Singapore	16.0	100.0	16.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.0	100.0	16.0
Thailand	12.9	100.0	12.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.9	100.0	12.9
Viet Nam	26.0	100.0	26.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.0	100.0	26.0
OECD average	18.1	-	-	35.8	-	-	53.9	-	-

Note: The table refers to paid leave entitlements in place as of (April) 2018. Data reflect entitlements at the national or federal level only, and do not reflect regional variations or additional/alternative entitlements provided by states/provinces or local governments in some countries. See Tables PF2.1.C, PF2.1.D, and PF2.1.E for details on benefit payment rules and conditions. For Australia, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand, the "payment rate" refers to the proportion of previous earnings replaced by the benefit over the length of the paid leave entitlement for a person earning 100% of average national (2018) earnings, taking into account any payment ceilings and floors. If this covers more than one period of leave at two different payment rates then a weighted average is calculated based on the length of each period. For China, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, the "payment rate" refers simply to the main payment rate attached to the main leave benefit, and does not take into account any payment ceilings and floors. In some countries maternity and parental benefits may be subject to taxation and may count towards the income base for social security contributions. As a result, the amounts actual amounts received by the individual on leave may differ from those shown in the table. "Paid parental and home care leave" refers to paid parental leave and subsequent periods of paid home care leave to care for young children (sometimes under a different name, for example, "childcare leave" or "child raising leave", or the *Complément de Libre Choix d'Activité* in France). The OECD average refers to the unweighted average across OECD member countries. See OECD Family Database Indicator PF2.1 (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) for more detail.

Sources: see tables PF2.1.C-PF2.1.E

**Chart PF2.1.A. Paid maternity leave, 2018**  
 Duration of paid maternity leave and the payment rate for paid maternity leave



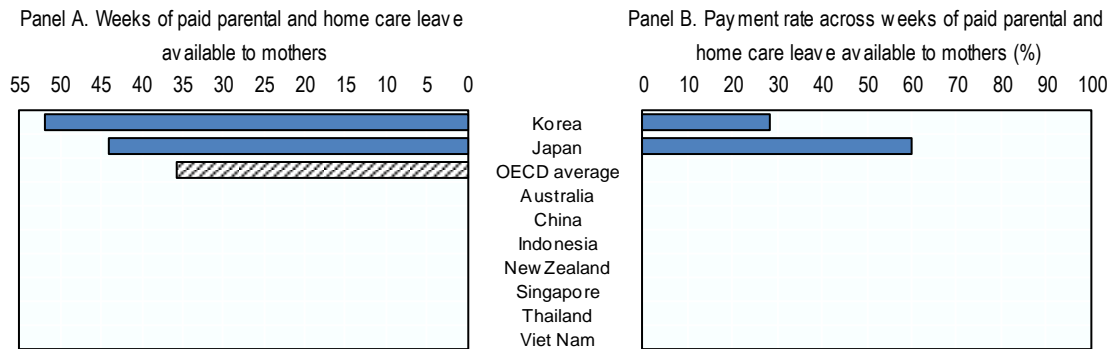
Notes: See notes to Table PF2.1.A

Sources: See tables PF2.1.C-PF2.1.E

Only a minority of the covered Asia/Pacific countries provide paid parental leave as a statutory right (Table PF2.1.A and Chart PF2.1.B). Japan and Korea both provide each

parent with an individual entitlement to up to one year of paid parental leave, paid at just less than 60% and 30% of earnings for an average earner, respectively. The remaining covered Asia/Pacific countries do not provide a statutory entitlement to paid parental leave, although Singapore does offer what they term a “child care leave” – an individual entitlement to 6 days paid leave per year for parents with a youngest child under age 7, and to 2 days paid leave each year for those with a youngest child aged 7-12. This “child care leave” is paid at 100% of earnings, up to a ceiling.

**Chart PF2.1.B. Paid parental and home care leave available to mothers, 2018**  
 Duration of paid parental and home care leave available to mothers, and the payment rate across weeks of paid parental and home care leave available to mothers



Notes: See notes to Table PF2.1.A  
 Sources: See tables PF2.1.C-PF2.1.E

Many of the covered Asia/Pacific countries provide fathers with their own reserved entitlement to paid leave in one form or another, although in most cases these father-specific paid leaves are only relatively short (Table PF2.1.B and Chart PF2.1.C). Japan and Korea offer by far the longest father-specific leaves among the covered countries, with each providing fathers with their own individual non-transferable entitlement to up to one year of paid parental leave. Otherwise, Australia provides fathers with two weeks of ‘Dad and Partner Pay’ – paid at the same relatively low rate as the parental leave – and Singapore provides two weeks of fully paid paternity leave. Viet Nam provides one week of paid paternity leave, and Indonesia two days. In China, there is no national statutory entitlement but all of the provinces provide fathers with access to at least one week of paid paternity leave. New Zealand and Thailand do not currently reserve any kind of paid leave just for fathers.

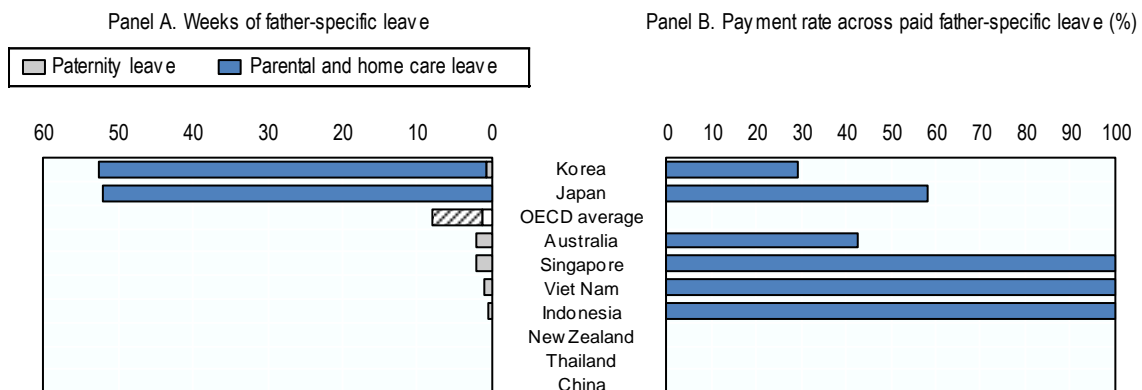
**Table PF2.1.B. Summary of paid leave entitlements for fathers**  
 Paid paternity leave and paid parental and home care leave reserved (or effectively reserved)  
 for fathers, in weeks, 2018

	Paid paternity leave			Paid parental and home care leave reserved for fathers			Total paid leave reserved for fathers		
	Length, in weeks	Payment rate (%)	Full-rate equivalent, in weeks	Length, in weeks	Payment rate (%)	Full-rate equivalent, in weeks	Length, in weeks	Payment rate (%)	Full-rate equivalent, in weeks
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)=(1)+(4)	(8)	(9)
Australia	2.0	42.9	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	42.9	0.9
China	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	-	-
Indonesia	0.4	100.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	100.0	0.4
Japan	0.0	0.0	0.0	52.0	58.4	30.4	52.0	58.4	30.4
Korea	0.6	100.0	0.6	52.0	28.5	14.8	52.6	29.3	15.4
New Zealand	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Singapore	2.0	100.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	100.0	2.0
Thailand	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Viet Nam	1.0	100.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	100.0	1.0
OECD average	1.4	-	-	6.7	-	-	8.1	-	-

Notes: Information refers to entitlements to paternity leave, 'father quotas' or periods of parental leave that can be used only by the father and cannot be transferred to the mother, and any weeks of sharable leave that must be taken by the father in order for the family to qualify for 'bonus' weeks of parental leave. The table refers to paid leave entitlements in place as of (April) 2018. Data reflect entitlements at the national or federal level only, and do not reflect regional variations or additional/alternative entitlements provided by states/provinces or local governments in some countries. See Tables PF2.1.C, PF2.1.D, and PF2.1.E for details on benefit payment rules and conditions. For Australia, Japan, Korea, and New Zealand, the "payment rate" refers the proportion of previous earnings replaced by the benefit over the length of the paid leave entitlement for a person earning 100% of average national (2018) earnings, taking into account any payment ceilings and floors. If this covers more than one period of leave at two different payment rates then a weighted average is calculated based on the length of each period. For China, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, the "payment rate" refers simply to the main payment rate attached to the main leave benefit, and does not take into account any payment ceilings and floors. In some countries maternity and parental benefits may be subject to taxation and may count towards the income base for social security contributions. As a result, the amounts actual amounts received by the individual on leave may differ from those shown in the table. The OECD average refers to the unweighted average across OECD member countries. See OECD Family Database Indicator PF2.1 (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) for more detail.  
 Sources: see tables PF2.1.C-PF2.1.E

**Chart PF2.1.C. Paid leave reserved for fathers, 2018**

Duration of paid paternity leave and paid father-specific parental and home care leave in weeks, and the payment rate across paid paternity and father-specific leave



Notes: See notes to Table PF2.1.B  
 Sources: See tables PF2.1.C-PF2.1.E

### *Comparability and data issues*

In addition to issues around the classification of leave entitlements, cross-national comparisons of leave systems are affected by several other issues:

- State and local governments can provide alternative entitlements and additional financial support for parents on leave. This is the case in China, for example, where many provinces provide mothers with additional maternity leave entitlements and fathers with an entitlement to paid paternity leave. Such local variations are not included here, and stated provisions reflect only those that are statutory entitlements at the national or federal level.
- Employers too can also provide alternative entitlements and additional financial support for those on leave. These additional entitlements are not included here. Practices differ across firms, sectors and countries, but in some countries these payments are substantial, so the indicators above may in some cases under-estimate the actual amount that parents receive.
- Leave benefits in some but not all countries may be subject to taxation and may count towards the income base for social security contributions. As a result, the actual amounts received by the individual on leave may differ from those shown in the tables and figures above, depending on the rules for and rates of taxation in the given country.
- Lastly, comparisons of statutory leave entitlements do not capture cross-national variations in take up of the various policies. In some countries, societal norms and culture may act as an effective barrier to take up for some parents. For example and as touched on above, Japan offers an extremely generous paid father-specific leave entitlement, but only around 3% of employed new fathers in Japan take advantage of the leave (Nakazato and Nishimura, 2017). As a result, while the information above reflects what is technically on offer to parents, statutory entitlements may say little about what is actually used.

*Country-specific notes for the calculation of paid leaves shown in Tables PF2.1.A and PF2.1.B and for Charts PF2.1.A-C (the data reflects the situation as at April 2016 and does not include more recent reforms):*

- Australia: it is assumed that the eighteen weeks of 'parental leave pay' are used by the mother straight after the birth, effectively as a paid maternity leave. Accordingly, all 18 weeks are recorded as 'paid maternity leave'.
- China: The data shown in Tables PF2.1.A and PF2.1.B and in Charts PF2.1.A-C reflect statutory entitlements at the national level only, and do not include the additional entitlements often provided by the provinces.
- Korea: it is assumed that the mother takes paid parental leave first and the father second. As a result, the increase in the payment rate available to the second parent to take leave is applied to the father's paid parental leave entitlement.

- New Zealand: it is assumed that the eighteen weeks of paid 'primary carer leave' are used by the mother as a maternity leave. The remaining weeks of parental leave are therefore unpaid.
- Singapore: The 'child care leave' is not considered as a parental leave or home care leave, and as such is not included in Tables PF2.1.A or PF2.1.B or in Charts PF2.1.A-C.

*Sources and further reading:* Blum, S., Koslowski, A., and Moss, P. (eds.) (2018), *International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2018*, <http://www.leavenetwork.org/>. Nakazato, H. and Nishimura, J. (2017) 'Japan country note', in: Blum, S., Koslowski, A., and Moss, P. (eds.) (2017), *International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2018*, <http://www.leavenetwork.org/>

Table PF2.1.C: **Statutory maternity leave arrangements, 2018**

Country	Maximum duration (weeks)	Paid	Eligibility criteria for payments	Payment
Australia	No statutory entitlement as such. However, most working parents are entitled to 12 months unpaid parental leave, and eligible mothers are can claim up to 18 weeks of 'Parental Leave Pay'.	Yes	Employees and self-employed who have: worked for at least 10 of the 13 months before the birth and for 330 hours in that 10 month period; received an adjusted taxable income of AUD 150,000 or less in the preceding financial year; and are currently on leave or not working. 'Parental Leave Pay' is given 'primary carer'. This usually means the mother, but it can be transferred to the father in some circumstances.	AUD 694.90 per week
China	14 weeks (98 calendar days)	Yes	All women employees.	100% of earnings, with no ceiling.
Indonesia	13 weeks (3 months)	Yes	All women employees.	100% of earnings, with no ceiling.
Japan	14 weeks	Yes	All women employees insured by the Employees' Health Insurance system (excluding self-employed, part-time or casual employees).	67% up to a high maximum.
Korea	12.9 weeks (90 calendar days)	Yes	For the full benefit, all women employees who have been insured with the Employment	100% with no ceiling for the first 60 days, paid by the employer. The remainder is paid at 100% of earnings up to a ceiling of KRW 1,600,000, paid by Employment Insurance.
New Zealand	18 weeks ('Primary Carer Leave')	Yes	Employees who have been employed for an average of at least 10 hours a week over the 26 or 52 weeks preceding the birth. Must be the child's 'primary carer'.	100% of earnings up to a maximum of NZD 538.55 per week before tax.
Singapore	16 weeks	Yes	Women employees with at least 3 months service before the day of confinement, and self-employed women who have been "carrying on her trade, business, profession or vocation" for a continuous period of at least 3 months before the day of confinement.	100% of earnings, up to a ceiling of SGD 10,000 per every 4 weeks.



Thailand	12.9 weeks (90 calendar days)	Yes	Insured female employees with at least 5 full months of contributions in the 15 months before childbirth.	Fully paid by the employer for the first 45 days. The remaining 45 days are paid by the social security fund based on the average daily wage in the highest paid 3 months of the 9 months preceding the leave, with a monthly earnings minimum of THB 1,650 and maximum of THB 15,000. Paid only for the first two children.
Viet Nam	26 weeks (6 months)	Yes	Insured female employees with at least 6 months of contributions in the 12 months before childbirth.	100% of average monthly earnings in the 6 months preceding the leave.

*Notes:* Legislation as applicable in (April) 2018. Private sector employees. In some countries civil servants have access to more generous entitlements. Self-employed often have less favourable statutory schemes. Information reflects entitlements at the national or federal level only, and do not generally capture regional variations or additional/alternative entitlements provided by states/provinces or local governments

*Sources:* [Blum, S., Koslowski, A., and Moss, P. \(eds.\) \(2018\), International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2018](#); [Social Security Programs throughout the World](#); [World Bank 'Women, Business and the Law'](#); [Singapore: National Population and Talent Division](#); [Vietnam: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Labour Law 2012](#)

Table PF2.1.D: **Statutory paternity leave arrangements, 2018**

Country	Entitlement	Duration in weeks or days	Paid	Payment
Australia	Yes	2 weeks 'Dad and Partner Pay', to be used while on unpaid leave	Yes	Same as "Parental Leave Pay" (see Table PF2.1.C).
China	No statutory entitlement at the national level. However, all provinces provide an entitlement to paternity leave.	Provincial entitlements range from 7 days in some provinces (Shandong and Tianjin) to 30 days in others (Yunnan, Gansu, Henan, Tibet). In most areas the entitlement lasts for 15 calendar days.	Yes	Where available, 100% of earnings.
Indonesia	Yes	2 days.	Yes	100% of earnings with no ceiling.
Japan	No statutory entitlement	-	-	-
Korea	Yes	1 week (5 working days)	Yes (3 days)	100% earnings for 3 working days, paid by the employer. The remaining 2 days are unpaid.
New Zealand	Yes	1 or 2 weeks, depending on the length of time for which the individual has worked for their current employer	No	Unpaid.
Singapore (a)	Yes	2 weeks	Yes	100% of earnings, up to a ceiling of SGD 2,500 per week.
Thailand	No statutory entitlement	-	-	-
Viet Nam	Yes	1 week (5 working days)	Yes	100% of average monthly earnings in the 6 months preceding the leave.

Family Database in the Asia-Pacific Region, <http://www.oecdkorea.org/user/nd84097.do?View&boardNo=00002627>  
OECD and OECD KOREA Policy Centre

*Notes:* Legislation as applicable in (April) 2018. Private sector employees. In some countries civil servants have access to more generous entitlements. Self-employed often have less favourable statutory schemes. Information reflects entitlements at the national or federal level only, and do not generally capture regional variations or additional/alternative entitlements provided by states/provinces or local governments.

a) In Singapore, eligibility for paid paternity leave benefits is limited to biological fathers who were lawfully married to the child's mother at the time the child was conceived or who became married to the child's mother between the conception and the child's first birthday.

*Sources:* [Blum, S., Koslowski, A., and Moss, P. \(eds.\) \(2018\), International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2018](#); [Social Security Programs throughout the World](#); [World Bank 'Women, Business and the Law'](#); [Singapore: National Population and Talent Division](#); [Vietnam: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Labour Law 2012](#)

Table PF2.1.E: **Statutory parental leave arrangements, 2018**

Country	Leave type	Duration	Age limit (years old)	Payment	Other
Australia	Parental leave	52 weeks. Individual entitlement.	2	Unpaid.	-
China	No statutory entitlement at the national level.	-	-	-	-
Indonesia	No statutory entitlement	-	-	-	-
Japan	Parental leave	Leave can be taken until a child is 12 months old. Individual entitlement. One parent can take their leave up until the child is 14 months old if both parents take some of the leave.	1	First 180 days: 67% of earnings, up to an earnings ceiling of JPY 447 000 with a minimum payment of JPY 49 647 per month and a maximum of JPY 299 691 per month.	Both parents can take leave at the same time.
Korea	Parental leave	12 months. Individual entitlement.	8	First 3 months: 80% of earnings, up to a maximum payment of KRW 1 500 000 per month. Remainder: 40% of earnings, up to a maximum of KRW 1 000 000 per month. For the second parent to take leave, the first 3 months are paid at 100% of earnings up to a maximum of KRW 1,500,000 per month, rising to KRW 2 000 000 from the second child on.	If both parents take leave at the same time, only one parent receives the allowance. Part-time work is possible. This is called Reduced Working Hours during Childcare Period. 25% of the parental leave payment is paid in a lump sum when the employee returns to the same employer and stays for more than 6 months.
New Zealand	Parental leave	Until the child is 12 months old. Family entitlement	1	Unpaid	-

Singapore	No statutory entitlement to parental leave as such, but most employees are entitled to a 'childcare leave'	6 days per parent per child per year, until the child turns 7 (42 days in total). The yearly allocation must be used by the end of the calendar year; days cannot be carried forward from one year to the next. Parents with a youngest child aged between 7 and 12 (inclusive) receive 2 days per parent per child per year.	12	100% of earnings, up to a ceiling of SGD 500 per day. For parents with a child under 7, the first 3 days are paid by the employer, and the last by the government. For those with a youngest child aged between 7 and 12, the 2 days are paid by the government.	-
Thailand	No statutory entitlement	-	-	-	-
Viet Nam	No statutory entitlement	-	-	-	-

*Notes:* Legislation as applicable in (April) 2018. Private sector employees. In some countries civil servants have access to more generous entitlements. Self-employed often have less favourable statutory schemes. Information reflects entitlements at the national or federal level only, and do not generally capture regional variations or additional/alternative entitlements provided by states/provinces or local governments .

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