

Access to parental benefits Canada and Québec

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Session Who Benefits from Parental Benefits and Who Doesn't
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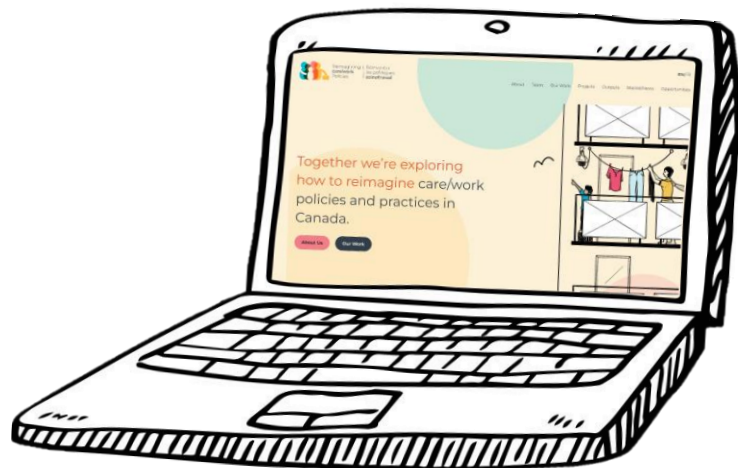


Reimagining
care/work
Policies

Réinventer
les politiques
soins/travail

**National and international experts
working within and across three clusters:**
(1) childcare; (2) parental leave; and (3)
employment policies.

50+ Co-Investigators and Collaborators



SSHRC  CRSH



36 Partners organizations ... Including...

Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU)

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

Campaign 2000

Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)

Oxfam Canada

Réseau pour un Québec famille

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Parental Benefits in Québec and the Rest of Canada

Key **similarities** in 2022:

- Both are wage replacement programs. Accessibility is contingent upon labour market participation;
- Both programs offer some flexibility; parents have the option between a longer leave paid at a lower replacement rate and a shorter leave at a higher replacement rate;
- For both programs, the replacement rate depends on the plan chosen: benefits are higher when the leave is shorter;
- In both programs, maternity benefits are reserved for the biological mother and these benefits must be used around the birth;
- Prior to the pandemic, no minimum benefits had ever been offered.



Key Differences in Parental Benefit Programs in Canada and in Québec: Accessibility

For both programs, accessibility is contingent upon labour market participation...

But it is much easier to qualify in Québec than in Canada

	Canada	Québec
Eligibility	420 hours of insurable employment	\$2,000 [€1,464] in earnings
Waiting period	1 week	None
Self-employed workers	If opted-in, 12-months prior to claiming	Automatically covered

Key Differences in Parental Benefit Programs in Canada and in Québec: Flexibility and Gender Equality Focus

Both programs offer some flexibility; parents have the option between a longer leave paid at a lower replacement rate and a shorter leave at a higher replacement rate

BUT

Longer leaves can in Canada are detrimental for women's career; Canadian fathers are not entitled to individual take-it-or-lose-it paternity benefits

	Canada		Québec	
	Standard (shorter + higher benefits)	Extended (longer + lower benefits)	Basic (longer + lower benefits)	Special (shorter + higher benefits)
Maternity	15 weeks		18 weeks	15 weeks
Paternity (non-transferable individual entitlement- « use it or lose it »)	None		5 weeks	3 weeks
Parental benefits	35 weeks	61 weeks	32 weeks	25 weeks
Parental sharing benefits (contingent on both parents receiving benefits)	5 weeks	8 weeks	4 weeks when each parent has taken 8 weeks of benefits	3 weeks when each parent has taken 6 weeks of benefits

Key Differences in Parental Benefit Programs in Canada and in Québec: Generosity

For both programs, the replacement rate depends on the plan chosen: benefits are higher when the leave is shorter;

BUT

Replacement rates and maximum insurable income are higher in Québec

	Canada		Québec	
	Standard (shorter + higher benefits)	Extended (longer + lower benefits)	Basic (longer + lower benefits)	Special (shorter + higher benefits)
Maternity	15 weeks @ 55%		18 weeks @ 70%	15 weeks @ 75%
Paternity	None		5 weeks @ 70%	3 weeks @ 75%
Parental benefits	35 weeks @ 55%	61 weeks @ 33%	32 weeks : 7 weeks @ 70% + 25 weeks @ 55%	25 weeks @ 75%
Parental sharing benefits	5 weeks @ 55%	8 weeks @ 33%	4 weeks when each parent has taken 8 weeks of benefits @ 55%	3 weeks when each parent has taken 6 weeks of benefits @ 75%
Maximum insurable earning (2022)	\$60,300 [€44,145]/year		\$88,000 [€64,423]/year	
Maximum weekly benefit	\$638 [€467]/week	\$280 [€467]/week	\$1185 [€868]/week	\$1269 [€929]/week

Summary:

- Both parental benefit programs in Canada and in Québec are labour market policies (not care policies), because access to benefits is contingent upon economic activity. They are income replacement programs that do not cover parents who are not active in the labour market (students, stay-at-home parents and those who are outside formal employment before giving birth);
- No program offer minimum benefits;
- Both programs reflect and reproduce class inequalities: middle and high income-families receive generous benefits; low-income families are the least well supported (McKay, Mathieu & Doucet, 2016; Mathieu, Doucet & McKay, 2020);
- Both programs offer some flexibility, between a shorter leave (with higher benefits) and a longer leave (with lower benefits).

BUT

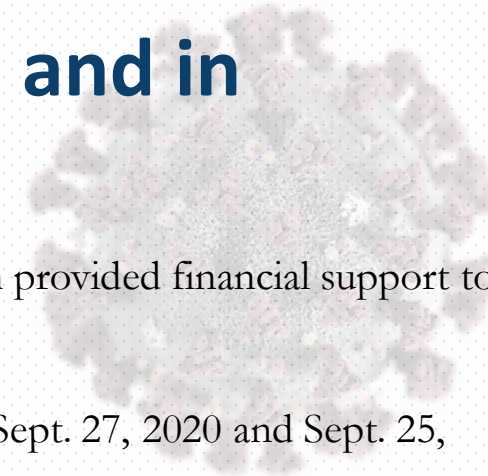
- Eligibility criteria to access benefits are easier to meet in Québec;
- Benefits and maximum insurable income are much higher in Québec;
- Québec fathers are entitled to individual non-transferable paternity benefits.



As a result, it is easier to be a mother in Québec than in the other Canadian provinces

- The take up of benefits is much higher in Québec for both parents;
- The differences are particularly acute for fathers;
- Québec families can also rely on a network of low-cost childcare.

Lessons from the Pandemic: Parental benefits in Canada and in Québec in 2020



- In 2020, the federal government introduced Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). This temporary program provided financial support to employed and self-employed Canadians who were directly affected by COVID-19.
- Both programs temporarily introduced minimum weekly benefit for claimants whose benefit period began between Sept. 27, 2020 and Sept. 25, 2021. This shed led to the number of parents who received low benefits.

	Canada		Québec	
MINIMUM BENEFITS	Standard	Extended	Basic	Special
Maternity	\$500 [€367]/week		\$500 [€367]/week	
Paternity	----			
Parental benefits	\$500 [€367]/week	\$300 [€220]/week		
Parental sharing benefits	\$500 [€367]/week	\$300 [€220]/week		

In Québec, 30% of parents who received benefits previously received less than \$500 [€ 367] per week. Even in Québec, many parents are “parental-leave poor” (O’Brien, 2009).

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*Thank
you!*



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