

RESEARCH BRIEF



Extended Parental Leave in Canada: Employer and Employee Impact and Reactions

SOURCE: Rachael N. Pettigrew, "Canadian Employers' Reaction and Policy Adaptation to the Extended, 61-Week Parental Leave," *Canadian Studies in Population* 47(1-2) (April 9, 2020). Link: <https://bit.ly/39u1uv3>.

INSIGHTS

- Employers reported that **parental leave usage remained highly gendered** in their organization since the extended option was introduced, with women far more likely to take leave – and to take *longer* leaves – than men.
- Extended leave **raised concerns** among employers about backfilling and "serial leaves," who felt the financial loss incurred by employees in taking extended leave contributed to low uptake.
- Employers **saw benefits** of extended parental leave, such as the greater incentive offered to external hires when backfilling (18 months vs. 12 months), and some felt employees benefitted from greater flexibility for families regarding child care.

INFORMATION

- 85%** Proportion of surveyed employers with experience managing employees taking parental leave who reported a much **lower uptake of leave among fathers** than mothers
- \$337** **Maximum amount** of weekly salary payments available to employees who take the full extended 61-week parental leave option (33% of their weekly salary)
- 33%** Proportion of surveyed employers who reported that they **offer their employees a "top-up" for their parental leave** – less than half the share who reported offering top-ups for *maternity leave* (67%)

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

Human resources policies; programs and management; family policy; work-family research; manager/supervisor training and leadership development; workplace organizational culture; early learning and child care policies; services and supports

INDICATORS

Employer responses to interview questions on how the extended parental leave might impact their organization; how top-ups were handled if an 18-month leave was selected; how employees and managers in the organization have received the parental leave extension

FUNDING

No acknowledgments necessary

PRIMARY DATA SOURCES

Structured telephone interviews with HR professionals within employer organizations from diverse sectors in Canada

STAKEHOLDERS

Employers; human resources professionals and practitioners; industry leaders; work-family researchers; labour leaders and union negotiators; family policy-makers; employment policy-makers; Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EAP/EFAP) service providers

AUTHORS AND AFFILIATIONS

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ALIGNMENT WITH UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

