

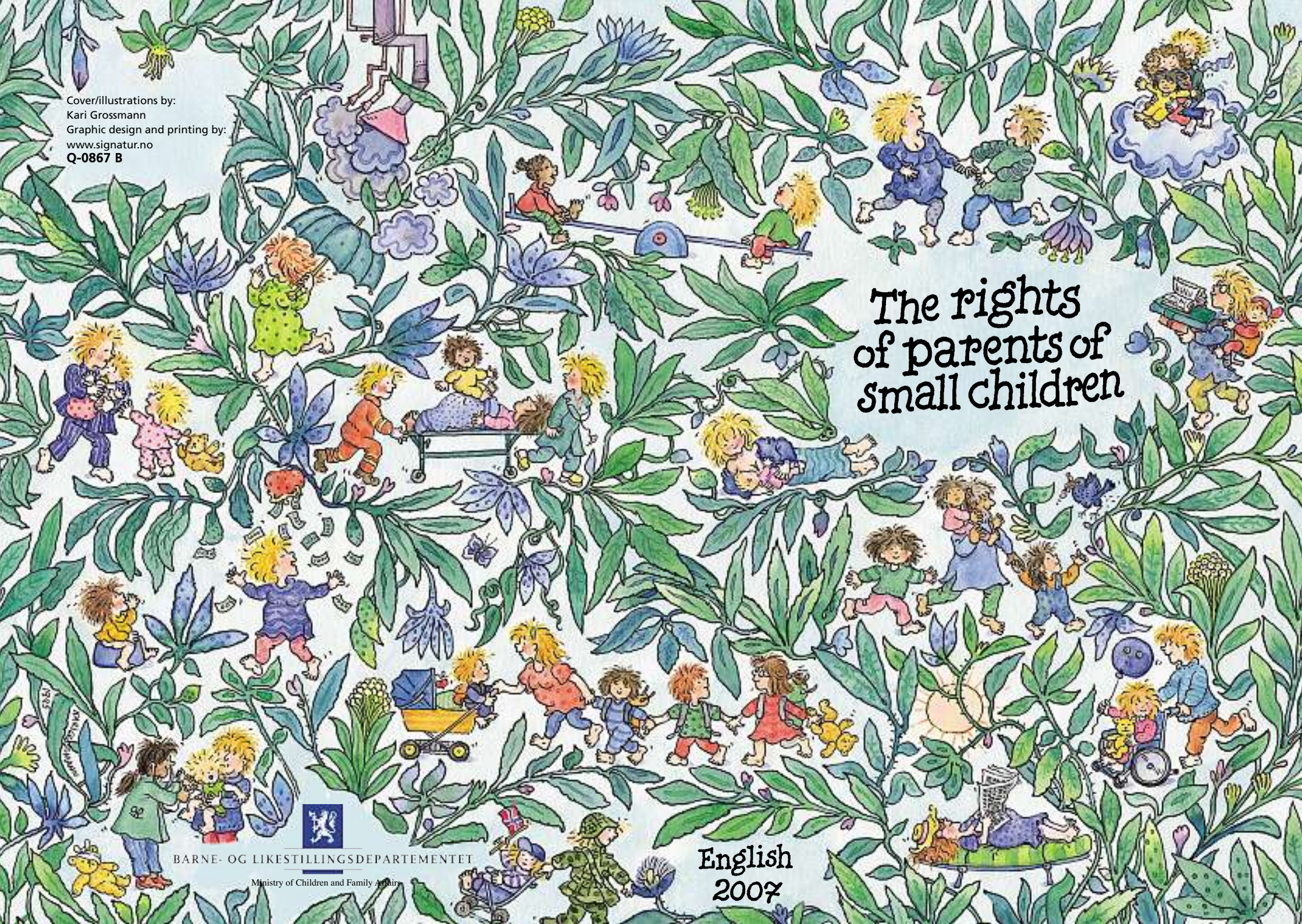
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www.signatur.no  
Q-0867 B

# The rights of parents of small children

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Ministry of Children and Family Affairs

English  
2007



# Preface

This booklet explains the statutory rights of parents in relation to pregnancy, birth and adoption and when the children are small. It describes the financial support schemes available to persons who work at home, who are employed or unemployed, to pupils and students with loans from the State Educational Loan Fund and to persons doing national service. It also provides information on special rights for people who care for sick and disabled children.

Brief information on health and social services for children and parents and educational services for small children is also provided here. These services may however vary from one municipality to another.

Reference is made to the relevant legislation. The relevant laws are listed at the back of this booklet.

This booklet was updated in January 2007.

The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation (NAV) has published booklets dealing with several of the topics in this booklet. They are available from local NAV offices.



Additional information and details of any changes in rates etc. may be obtained from local NAV offices or labour inspection offices or on the Internet:

- The Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority: [www.arbeidstilsynet.no](http://www.arbeidstilsynet.no)
- The Directorate of Taxes: [www.skatteetaten.no](http://www.skatteetaten.no)
- The Ministry of Children and Equality: [www.bld.dep.no](http://www.bld.dep.no)
- The Ministry of Defence: [www.fd.dep.no](http://www.fd.dep.no)
- The Ministry of Health and Care Services: [www.hod.dep.no](http://www.hod.dep.no)
- The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation (NAV): [www.nav.no](http://www.nav.no)
- The State Educational Loan Fund: [www.lanekassen.no](http://www.lanekassen.no)

Government offices can order this booklet from:  
Departementenes servicekontor  
Kopi- og distribusjonsservice  
[www.publikasjoner.dep.no](http://www.publikasjoner.dep.no)  
E-mail: [publikasjonsbestilling.dep.no](mailto:publikasjonsbestilling.dep.no)  
Fax no.: +47 22242786  
State publication code: Q-0867E



# Contents

<b>RIGHTS AND BENEFITS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN</b> .....	3
<b>PROTECTION AGAINST DISMISSAL</b> .....	5
<b>PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION OF PREGNANT EMPLOYEES AND LEAVE-TAKERS</b> .....	6
<b>THE RIGHT TO LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN CONNECTION WITH BIRTH AND ADOPTION</b> .....	8
– Notifying employers .....	9
<b>PARPARENTAL AND ADOPTION BENEFITS</b> .....	10
– Who is entitled to parental and adoption benefits .....	10
– How are parental and adoption benefits calculated .....	11
– The parental benefit period .....	11
– Sharing the benefit period between the parents .....	12
– The paternity quota .....	13
– Postponing the parental benefit period .....	14
– Flexible use of parental benefits .....	15
– The right to parental benefits if the child is stillborn and if the child dies during the benefit period .....	16
– Lump sum maternity and adoption grants .....	16
– Home confinement grant .....	17
– Grants for families adopting children from abroadt .....	17
<b>THE RIGHT TO SHORTER AND FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS</b> .....	18
– Who is entitled to shorter working hours .....	18
– Exemption from overtime and extra work .....	18
<b>FINANCIAL SUPPORT SCHEMES</b> .....	20
– Child benefit .....	20
– Cash benefit scheme .....	22
– Tax rules for families with children .....	24
– Pension points for persons who have the care of small children .....	24
<b>BENEFITS FOR SINGLE MOTHERS OR FATHERS</b> .....	25
– Child support .....	26
– Advance payments of child support .....	27
<b>RIGHTS OF PARENTS IF A CHILD OR THE CHILDMINDER IS ILL</b> .....	28
– The right to leave of absence .....	28
– Benefits for children with a permanent illness .....	30
– Children in hospital .....	31
<b>THE STATE EDUCATIONAL LOAN FUND'S SCHEMES FOR PARENTS OF SMALL CHILDREN</b> .....	32
<b>COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE AND CARE OF CHILDREN</b> .....	34
<b>EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDMINDERS AND TRAINEES</b> .....	35
– Daycare facilities .....	35
– Open daycare facilities .....	35
– Special educational assistance .....	36
– Childminders and trainees .....	36
<b>HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES</b> .....	38
– Health clinics .....	38
– Respite and personal contact schemes .....	38
– Care pay .....	39
– Domiciliary services .....	39
– Family counselling .....	39
– Parent guidance .....	39
<b>RELEVANT LEGISLATION</b> .....	40

# Rights and benefits for pregnant employees

## *Pre-natal check-ups*

A pregnant employee is entitled to time off from work with pay for prenatal care when check-ups cannot reasonably take place outside working hours.

## *Illness during pregnancy*

If an expectant mother has to stay off work because she is ill, this is treated as normal sick leave and is not part of the parental benefit period. For the last three weeks before delivery, sick pay is replaced by parental benefits.

## *Covering expenses*

The national insurance scheme covers the mother's share of the costs of necessary medical examinations during pregnancy and of one check-up after delivery. This also applies to the cost of physiotherapy for women suffering from sacro-iliac strain combined with difficulty in walking during pregnancy and for up to six weeks after delivery. If the mother has to live away from home prior to confinement, the national insurance scheme will normally cover the cost of board and lodgings for up to 10 days from her arrival at the place of waiting until she is admitted to the maternity clinic or hospital.

## *Parental benefits in the case of a miscarriage*

If the woman has a miscarriage within the first six months of pregnancy, she loses the right to parental benefits. A miscarriage after the sixth month is regarded as a delivery and the mother is entitled to 6 weeks' parental benefits after delivery.

## *Strenuous work and hazardous substances*

Some women are employed in jobs that may be too strenuous for them in the final stages of pregnancy, for instance women who work as cleaners, nurses/carers or shop assistants. Night work may also be strenuous for expectant mothers.

The employer has a duty to adapt the work load as far as practically possible, so that it is not too strenuous for the expectant mother. The work should be reorganised or the expectant mother should be given other work tasks.

In some occupations, employees are exposed to special factors which are known or believed to harm the unborn child:

- Physical factors such as work under pressure or ionising radiation.

- Biological factors such as toxoplasma or rubella virus (German measles).
- Chemical factors such as solvents, carcinogenics, metals such as lead, mercury or nickel, cytostatics, chromium, certain plastic raw materials, certain weed-killers and insecticides, and carbon monoxide, anaesthetics or other gases which are absorbed into the blood.

The employer has a particular duty to remember that pregnant women should avoid all hazardous substances at the workplace. For some types of work where there are special risks, there are separate rules. Further information can be obtained from the labour inspection offices.

Men and women who have difficulty in conceiving should be aware that the cause may be found in the working environment. The employer has a duty to work to ensure that the working environment does not lead to reproductive damage for female or male employees.

### *Pregnancy allowance*

Pregnant women who have to stop working due to a hazardous working environment may be entitled to a pregnancy allowance.

A pregnant employee will be eligible for this allowance if she is required to give up her job in accordance with provisions in laws or regulations and her employer is unable to reorganise her work or reassign her. A pregnant self-employed person or freelancer is entitled to a pregnancy allowance if she is exposed to the same risk factors which give a pregnant employee the right to a pregnancy allowance, provided that she can substantiate the risk factors and she is not able to reorganise her work activities.

The pregnancy allowance is payable from the date on which the employee is obliged to stop working until three weeks prior to delivery when she will start receiving parental benefits. Pregnancy allowances are calculated in the same way as sick pay.

# Protection against dismissal

*Provision is made for protection against dismissal in Section 15-9 of the Working Environment Act.*

*Protection against dismissal during pregnancy and leave of absence*

No employer may dismiss a woman because she is pregnant. This also applies during the probationary period. A pregnant employee is protected against dismissal even if she is unable to carry out her normal work due to pregnancy. Any employer who dismisses a pregnant woman on grounds other than pregnancy must be able to prove that there are reasonable grounds for dismissal.

An employee who takes leave in connection with a birth or adoption cannot be dismissed during this leave when the employer is aware of the reason for the absence. If an employee is rightfully dismissed during leave of absence, the leave period is not included in the period of notice. If half of the period of notice has expired when the leave period commences, the other

half of the period of notice must be served at the end of the leave period. This absolute protection against dismissal during parental leave applies for up to one year.

An employee who takes part-time leave or unpaid leave over and above the initial year cannot be dismissed on these grounds.

In other words, the employee is protected against dismissal on the grounds of leave of absence. Any employer wishing to dismiss an employee who takes more than one year's leave must be able to prove that there are reasonable grounds for dismissal.

An employee may give notice, as specified in his/her contract of employment, at any time during the leave of absence.



*The right to return to the same job*  
Employees have the right to return to the jobs they had before taking leave of absence. This also applies when periods of part-time leave are over, and any leave in addition to statutory leave in connection with pregnancy, birth, adoption and taking over the care of foster children.

This right follows from agreements between employer and employee.

Occasionally, however, there may be reasonable grounds for re-assigning an employee who has had leave of absence. These may follow from the employee's contract of employment or the employer's

managerial rights. However, an employee cannot be re-assigned on the grounds of leave of absence.



If the mother suffers any injury or harm during delivery which makes it difficult for her to continue in her previous job, her job must in the first instance be adjusted to the new situation that has arisen. If the mother is to be re-assigned to a different job, both she and her union representatives must be consulted.

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## *Prohibition of discrimination of pregnant employees and leave-takers*

The Gender Equality Act provides protection against gender discrimination. In principle, any form of discrimination because of pregnancy, birth and the use of leave entitlement is a contravention of the Gender Equality Act.

However, the Act provides stricter protection during the periods of leave reserved for one or other of the parents. This means that women may not be discriminated against because of pregnancy, birth and leave-taking during the three

weeks prior to delivery and the six weeks after). The man cannot be discriminated against when using the paternity quota (6 weeks).

The parents may split the rest of the parental leave between them and discrimination during these weeks will not necessarily be a contravention of the Gender Equality Act. However, discrimination for leave-taking during this period will normally also be prohibited, unless there are reasonable grounds for such treatment (special cases).

If you believe that you are the victim of unfair treatment, you can contact the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman can decide if you have been treated unfairly and advise you on how to proceed. The Ombudsman can give a written opinion on the breach of the law. In most cases the parties will comply with this.

If one of the parties disagrees with the Ombudsman's opinion, they can bring the case before the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Board. The Ombudsman can also bring a case before the Board, if one of the parties does not comply with the Ombudsman's statement. The Board can make a ruling and the parties are then obliged to comply with this ruling.

***There are special laws and provisions for some types of work***

*Legislation:*

The Working Environment Act, Sections 4-5 and 4-2.

Regulations, guides and further information are available in Norwegian and can be ordered from Tiden Norsk Forlag AS

Phone: 23 32 76 61,

Fax: 23 32 76 98/99

Internet:

[www.tiden.no/arbeidsliv](http://www.tiden.no/arbeidsliv) or from the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority

The services of the Ombudsman and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Board are free.

# *The right to leave of absence in connection with birth and adoption*

In connection with birth and adoption, parents have the right to leave of absence from work as laid down in the Working Environment Act. The right to leave of absence runs parallel with and in addition to the provisions on parental benefits in Chap. 14 of the National Insurance Act, which governs the right to pay during leave of absence. Some employees may have better rights following from a collective agreement they are covered by.

## *Parental leave during the child's first year*

Together the parents are entitled to a maximum of twelve months' parental leave or as long as they receive parental benefits from the national insurance scheme. Prior to delivery the mother has the right to twelve weeks' leave (pregnancy leave). After delivery she must take maternity leave for the first six weeks. After that parental leave may be shared between the parents. Parents may take leave of absence at the same time, but this may affect their right to parental benefits.

- The father is entitled to two weeks' leave in connection with the birth of his child.
- The mother is entitled to 12 weeks' pregnancy leave prior to delivery.
- She must take six weeks' maternity leave immediately after giving birth.
- Parents are entitled to additional leave during the child's first year, or for as long as they are receiving parental benefits under the national insurance scheme.
- Each parent is also entitled to up to one year's unpaid leave for each child.
- Nursing mothers are entitled to time off from work to breastfeed.

### *Notifying employers*

The rules for notifying employers are laid down in Section 12-7 of the Working Environment Act. As a general rule, employers must be notified as soon as the employee knows that he or she is going to exercise rights in connection with the birth or adoption of a child. It is difficult to give a precise date for confinement and more particularly for the adoption of a child.

The employer must be notified at least one week in advance of leave lasting two weeks or more before the child is born or for the first six weeks after delivery. The employer must be notified at least 4 weeks in advance of leave lasting 12 weeks or more during the child's first year.

If an employee intends to exercise his/her right to unpaid leave in addition to leave during the child's first year, the employer must be notified at least 12 weeks in advance.

An employee who fails to observe these time limits will not have to postpone leave of absence if the leave of absence is necessary due to a situation of which the employee was not aware when the time limit expired. The employer must be notified as soon as possible.

# Parental benefits in connection with birth and adoption

*The right to parental benefits is laid down in chapter 14 of the National Insurance Act.*

Parental benefits are granted to the child's mother and father upon birth or upon adoption of children under 15 years of age.

The adoption of a stepchild does not generally give entitlement to parental benefits. The adoptive parent may however be entitled to parental benefits if the adoption of the stepchild takes place before the expiry of the parental benefit period following the birth.

Persons who take over the care of children under 15 years of age when granted parental responsibility pursuant to the Children's Act may, under certain conditions, be entitled to parental benefits on a par with adoption.

Applications for parental benefits should be made on the special form that is available from the local NAV office or can be downloaded from [www.nav.no](http://www.nav.no). This applies even if the employer paying the employee during parental leave.

## Earning the right to parental benefits

Entitlement to parental benefits is earned through paid employment. Both the mother and the father earn the right to parental benefits if they are employed and earn a pensionable income for at least 6 of the 10 months immediately prior to receipt of parental benefits.

Employment in another EEA/EU country may be added to a later employment period in Norway.

Periods during which a person receives sick pay, child sickness benefits, parental benefits, maternity allowance or daily cash unemployment benefit are regarded as periods of employment. This also applies to periods during which a person receives pay from an employer during leave to continue his/her education or training, severance pay, redundancy pay and continuing pay from an employer after termination of employment, and to periods of military or civilian national service or compulsory civil defence service.

The pensionable income earned during the qualifying period must be equal to at least half of the annual National Insurance basic amount (NOK 31,446 in 2006).

## How are parental benefits calculated?

Parental benefits are calculated on the basis of the income of the parent who takes leave of absence. Parental benefits for employees cover 100 per cent of income. However, parental benefits are not paid for income in excess of 6G per year (NOK 377,352 in 2006). An employee whose pay exceeds 6G (G=basic amount) may however be entitled to full pay on agreement with her/his employer.

Parental benefits are normally calculated in the same way as sick pay and for an employee are usually based on income during the last four weeks he/she worked. However, an exception can be made if this income deviates from ordinary annual income by more than 25 per cent.

When a woman transfers from a daily cash unemployment benefit to parental benefits, parental benefits are calculated on the basis of income earned during the best six months in the qualifying period if this provides a higher basis.

### *Self-employed persons*

Self-employed persons are entitled to parental benefits corresponding to 65 per cent of their income, but may receive 100 per cent if they take out voluntary additional insurance (sickness benefit insurance). This insurance agreement must have been entered into at least 10 months prior to the birth or adoption of the child.

The income basis is calculated on the basis of tax-assessed pension-earning income for the past three years. Parental benefits are not granted for income in excess of six times the basis amount under the national insurance scheme.

## The parental benefit period

The parental benefit period in connection with a birth is either 44 weeks at the full rate or 54 weeks at the reduced rate. In the case of adoption, the benefit period is 41 weeks or 51 weeks. If only the father qualifies for parental benefits, the benefit period is 39 weeks or 29 weeks.

The full rate is understood to be 100 per cent of the calculation basis (maximum 6G). For self-employed persons with no additional insurance, the full rate is 65 per cent of the income basis.

The reduced rate is 80 per cent of the calculation basis, limited upwards to 6G. For self-employed persons with no additional insurance, the reduced rate is 80 per cent of 65 per cent of the income basis.

Parents must choose one of these alternative rates at the start of the benefit period. The chosen alternative then applies for the whole period and for both parents.

#### *Multiple births and adoptions*

In the case of multiple births and adoptions of more than one child is adopted at the same time, the benefit period is increased by five weeks for each additional child if the parents choose the 100 per cent alternative, or by seven weeks for each additional child if they choose the 80 per cent alternative.

Parents are free to choose how they share the extra weeks and may take them at the same time or use them to extend the benefit period

#### *Early stepchild adoption*

In the case of an early stepchild adoption, the adoptive parent has the same rights as fathers from the time of adoption and for the remainder of the benefit period.

There is no requirement to make use of the paternity quota in these cases.

## Sharing the benefit period between the parents

Parents may choose to share the period of paid leave between them. However, certain weeks must be taken in accordance with specific rules. Three weeks prior to the birth and six weeks after the birth are reserved for the mother. Six weeks are reserved for the father (paternity quota, see page 13).

The parents may split the remainder of the benefit period between them in accordance with certain conditions, provided that they both qualify for paid leave. In the case of birth this is up to 29 or 39 weeks. In the case of adoption, this 35/45 weeks, i.e. the entire benefit period less the paternity quota). If it is only the father who qualifies for parental leave, he can take the remainder of the benefit period subject to certain conditions.

The mother may choose to start her parental leave 12 weeks prior to the birth of her child. As a rule, the father may not receive parental benefits until at least six weeks after the birth.

#### *More about fathers' rights*

If the father wishes to use parental benefits in addition to the paternity quota, the mother cannot stay at home at the same time and take

care of the child. This applies whether the mother is entitled to parental benefits or not. The father can only receive parental benefits if the mother, after the birth or adoption:

- goes out to work.
- takes a publicly approved full-time education.
- combines work and an approved education to give a full-time total.

The father may also receive parental benefits if the mother is completely dependent on help to look after the child owing to sickness or injury, or is admitted to a health institution.

If the mother works part-time (less than 75 per cent), the father is entitled to parental benefits corresponding to the mother's part-time percentage. If, for example, the mother works 60 per cent, the father can receive 60 per cent of parental benefits.

If the mother takes up a full-time job (at least 75 per cent) before the benefit period is over, the father can take the remaining part of the parental benefit period.

#### *More about sharing between the parents*

Both parents may, for instance, agree with their employers to work part-time. They may both work 50

per cent. They can then receive 50 per cent each of the parental benefits for the rest of the parental leave period.

Moreover, one or both parents can postpone or extend their part of parental leave to correspond with full-time or part-time work. See page 13 for more information about postponement and page 14 about scaled parental benefits.

When parents share the parental leave period, it is presumed under the Working Environment Act that the mother will take her weeks consecutively and the father will then take his weeks consecutively. However, parents may share the period of leave in a different way if they have particular reasons for doing so and the arrangement is acceptable to the employer. A written agreement must be made with the employer regarding postponement or scaled parental benefits.

### **The paternity quota**

Six weeks of the parental leave period are reserved for the father (paternity quota) when both the mother and the father qualify for benefits and the mother has worked at least 50 per cent during the qualifying period.

If the father does not make use of the paternity quota, these weeks

will normally be forfeit. An exception will be made if the father is completely dependent on help to look after the child owing to sickness or injury, or is admitted to a health institution. The mother may then apply to have the paternity quota transferred to her.

The paternity quota cannot be taken until at least 6 weeks after the birth of the child. However, in the case of multiple births or adoption, the paternity quota may be taken at any time during the parental leave period.

If a written agreement has been made with the employer, the father may postpone paternity leave on the grounds of full-time work or scale it in combination with part-time work.

During paternity leave, the father's parental benefits are calculated on his income. Whether he receives 100 per cent or 80 per cent will depend on which alternative the parents chose for the entire parental benefit period (see page 11 on the parental benefit period).

The mother is not required to have paid work while the father utilises his paternity quota. If she wishes, the

mother may combine up to 50 per cent of parental benefits with part-time work during this period.

## Postponement of the parental benefit period

As a general rule, the parental benefit period runs without interruption, but it may be postponed in certain cases. Parental benefits must, however, be taken out within three years of the birth or adoption.

### *Holidays*

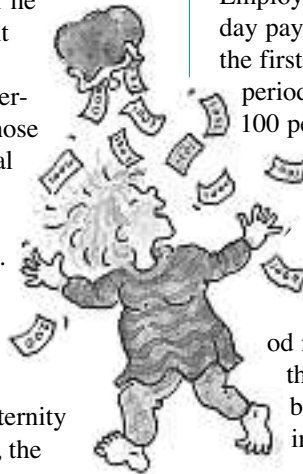
The parental benefit period may be postponed if the parent wishes to take his or her statutory holiday. When the holiday is over, the rest of the benefit period must be taken immediately.

Holidays may be postponed until after the parental benefit period.

Employees earn the right to holiday pay on parental benefits for the first 12 weeks of the benefit period if they have chosen the 100 per cent pay alternative, or for the first 15 weeks if they have chosen the reduced rate.

### *Full-time work*

The parental benefit period may be postponed when the recipient of parental benefits is working full-time in gainful employment. This



applies to the mother and the father. Before postponement can be granted, the recipient must have been receiving parental benefits for six weeks.

The father's right to parental benefits (not the paternity quota) depends on the mother's activities after the birth or adoption of the child. This means that the mother cannot be at home during the father's postponement. However, no requirement is made regarding the mother's activities when the paternity quota is postponed or in the case of postponement when more than a year has passed since the birth or adoption.

The period of full-time work must be documented in a written agreement with the employer.

Self-employed persons and freelancers must have an agreement with their local NAV office. The appropriate agreement forms can be downloaded from [www.nav.no](http://www.nav.no) or obtained from the local NAV office.

The parental benefit period may be postponed if the recipient of benefits is completely dependent on help to look after the child due to illness or injury or is admitted to a health institution. A medical certificate is required in this case.

The parental benefit period may also be postponed if the child is

admitted to a health institution. This may be the case if the baby is premature. The parents may then be entitled to invalid care pay (see page 28).

## Scaled parental benefits

It is possible to combine part-time work with partial (scaled) parental benefits and to start working before the ordinary benefit period is over without losing entitlement to parental benefits. This requires a written agreement with the employer on part-time work and parental benefits must be used within three years of the birth or adoption.

The whole parental leave period, apart from the last three weeks before delivery or the first six weeks after delivery, may be used for scaled parental benefits. In the case of adoption, the whole benefit period may be used.

Parents may receive scaled paternity benefits without extending the benefit period if, for example, each of the parents works 50 per cent and receives 50 per cent of the parental benefits for a given period.

Alternately, scaled parental benefits may be used to extend the benefit period. To do this, parents must have simultaneously received less than 100 per cent of parental

benefits. For example, each of the parents can work 60 per cent and take out 40 per cent of parental benefits. The remaining 20 per cent of parental benefits can then be taken out over a longer period. One or both of the parents may choose to receive his/her part of scaled parental benefits. They may choose to receive scaled parental benefits consecutively or simultaneously. The percentage of full-time that they choose to work while receiving scaled parental benefits will decide the amount of parental benefits they will receive and how long the parental benefits will last.

The mother's working hours have significance for the length of the father's parental benefit period. If the father wants to receive scaled parental benefits, the percentage he receives cannot exceed the mother's part-time percentage. However, the mother's activity after the birth or adoption has no significance when the father takes his paternity quota on a partial basis.

#### *Conditions for agreements*

**Employees** must enter into a written agreement with their employer which shows the percentage of a full post the employee is going to work and the duration of this work. The employee's wishes must be met provided that this does not seriously inconvenience the employer. If the parties disagree,

the dispute may be brought before a disputes settlement board administered by the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority.

**Self-employed persons and freelancers** must reach an agreement with their local NAV office on partial payment of parental benefits in proportion to the percentage worked.

Agreement forms can be downloaded from [www.nav.no](http://www.nav.no) or obtained from a local NAV office.

Agreements must be presented to the local NAV office before scaled benefits can be received.

### **The right to parental benefits if the child is stillborn or if the child dies during the benefit period**

If the child is stillborn, the mother is entitled to six weeks' parental benefits after delivery. If the child dies during the benefit period, parental benefits will be paid for up to six weeks of the remaining benefit period.

### **Lump sum maternity and adoption grants**

Women who do not qualify for parental benefits will receive a

lump sum grant. The lump sum grant is NOK 33,584 (2007).

The size of the lump sum grant is fixed by the Storting. The grant is not subject to tax. In the case of multiple births or adoptions, the grant is payable for each child.

Applications for lump sum grants must be submitted on the form supplied by the local NAV office within six months of the child's birth.

When the mother is granted a lump sum grant, the father may receive parental benefits for up to 39 weeks with 80 per cent pay or 29 weeks with full pay, provided that the mother goes out to work, takes an education or is ill after the birth or adoption of the child.

Employees who have earned less than the lump sum grant will receive the grant instead of parental benefits.

Women who are entitled to a maternity grant from the State Educational Loan Fund will receive this in addition to the lump sum grant.

## Home confinement grant

The right to a grant when the child is born at home is laid down in chapter 5 of the National Insurance Act. When delivery takes place at home, the parents are entitled to a cash payment of NOK 1,765 (2007).

## Grants for parents adopting children from abroad

Parents who adopt children from abroad receive a cash grant of NOK 38,320 (2007). The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs processes applications for grants and disburses the money.

Grants are disbursed after the child has arrived in Norway.

# The right to shorter and flexible working hours

*The right to shorter working hours is laid down in Section 10-2(4) of the Working Environment Act.*

## Who is entitled to work shorter hours

*Both parents are entitled to work shorter hours if this is necessary for strong welfare reasons, such as the desire and need of parents of small children to spend more time with their children.*

Permission to work shorter hours can only be granted if this does not seriously inconvenience the enterprise concerned. Disputes between employers and employees are settled by the Disputes Settlement Board. The case is first sent to the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority, which is the Board's secretariat. Practice of the rules indicates that the inconvenience to the enterprise must be considerable before an application for shorter working hours can be denied.

The Working Environment Act does not give employees working shorter hours the right to retain full pay.

Shorter working hours can be taken in the form of a shorter

working day, fewer working days per week or work-free periods. The need for work-free periods may arise, for example, in connection with long school holidays.

Employees wishing to work shorter hours must notify their employer in writing as soon as possible and at least four weeks in advance. It is possible to apply for shorter working hours for up to two years at a time. Employees have the right to return to their former working hours when the agreed period is over.

When an employee works shorter hours, work over and above the agreed hours (but within normal working hours) is not regarded as overtime but as extra work. Under the provisions in Section 49 of the Working Environment Act, employees are not entitled to overtime pay for extra work.

## Exemption from overtime and extra work are laid down in Section 10-6 (10) of the Working Environment Act

Working parents of small children often have to leave work at a fixed

time to look after their children. For example, they may have to fetch them from the daycare centre. An employee may be excused from overtime or extra work that affects the care of a child. If it is necessary to be excused for a prolonged period, the employer may demand documentation, for example from the head of the daycare centre. Disputes on the right to exemption are settled by the Disputes Settlement Board.

Under Section 10-2 (3), employees have the right to flexible working hours if this can be arranged without undue inconvenience to the enterprise. This gives parents of small children the possibility of adapting their working hours to suit their needs. Flexible working hours may for example be arranged in such a way that employees work longer hours for some parts of the year in order to have more time off at other times or are permitted, within certain limits, to decide themselves what hours of the day they wish to work.



# Financial support schemes

*There are a number of other financial support schemes and special tax rules for families with children which apply in addition to parental benefits.*

## Child benefit

*The right to child benefit is laid down in the Act relating to Child Benefit.*

Child benefit is the most important social security benefit for families with children.

*Who is entitled to child benefit?*  
Anyone who has children under the age of 18 living with them permanently has the right to child benefit. This right applies from the month after the birth or adoption of the child up to and including the month before the child reaches 18. Parents lose the right to child benefit if the child enters into marriage or partnership.

To qualify for child benefit, the child must be resident in Norway. If the child is resident abroad for more than 6 months, the right to child benefit

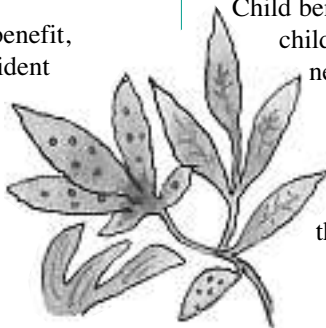
may be granted if the child and the person(s) the child lives with permanently are compulsory or voluntary members of the national insurance scheme. Residence abroad for up to 6 months will not normally result in the loss of the right to child benefit. In principle, children who are going to stay in Norway for less than 12 months are not entitled to child benefit.

Ordinary child benefit is granted automatically for newborn children. This means that in most cases the parents do not have to apply for child benefit after the birth of a child. There are cases where the parents do have to apply, for example if the child is older than six months or if the parent is entitled to child benefit for one more child than he or she actually supports (additional child benefit).

### Rates

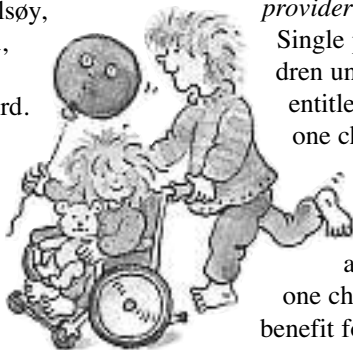
Child benefit is payable for each child. The rates are determined by the Storting.

A special supplement is payable for children living on Svalbard, in the county of Finnmark



and in the following municipalities in North Troms: Karlsøy, Kvænangen, Kåfjord, Lyngen, Nordreisa, Skjervøy and Storfjord.

A single provider with a child or children between nil and three years of age is entitled to a young child supplement if he/she qualifies for additional child benefit under the Children's Act) and to the full transitional benefit under the National Insurance Act. One young child supplement is payable per single provider. This supplement is payable from the month following the birth of the child until the month in which the child reaches three years of age.



### *Additional child benefit for single providers*

Single providers with children under the age of 18 are entitled to child benefit for one child more that they

actually have (additional child benefit).

This means that

a single provider with

one child will receive child benefit for two children, and

so on. A single provider loses the right to additional child benefit if he or she marries, has a child with a cohabitant or has lived in a marriage-like relationship in a joint household for at least 12 of the last 18 months.

### ***Ordinary child benefit and supplementary rates 2007***

	<i>Amount per month</i>	<i>Amount per year</i>
Ordinary child benefit	970	11 640

#### *Supplements:*

Finmark, Svalbard and North Troms supplement for children aged 0-18 years	320	3 840
Young child supplement for single providers with children aged 0-3 years	660	7 920

### *The EEA Agreement*

The general rule is that the child must be resident in Norway to receive child benefit in Norway. An EEA national, who is subject to Norwegian laws under the provisions in EC Regulation 1408/71, will in principle meet the requirement regarding place of residence no matter which EEA country the person in question or his/her family are actually living in and will be entitled to receive child benefit in his/her country of residence, provided that the other conditions have been fulfilled. It follows from Article 73 in the above regulation that child benefit, by virtue of being a family benefit, is payable for children residing abroad if the provider (one of the parents) is working in Norway, on a Norwegian ship, on the Norwegian Continental shelf or is subject to Norwegian laws while working abroad.



### **Cash benefit scheme for families with small children**

The right to the cash benefit applies to children between the age of nil and three and to adopted children who have not started school. The cash

benefit may be granted for up to 23 months.

Parents may receive the cash benefit provided that the child does not make use of a full-time place in a daycare centre that receives a state grant. If the child has a part-time place in such a daycare centre and the agreed time is less than 33 hours a week, a reduced cash benefit may be granted.

The cash benefit is payable per child without means or needs testing and it is tax-free. The cash benefit is not payable until the period of full parental benefits following a birth or adoption has expired.

The cash benefit is not payable for children in foster care or for children who live in institutions. As a

### ***Kontantstøttesatser 2007***

<i>Agreed hours in the daycare centre each week</i>	<i>Cash benefit as a percentage of the full rate</i>	<i>NOK per year</i>
No daycare place	100 per cent	39 636
8 hours or less	80 per cent	31 704
9–16 hours	60 per cent	23 784
17–24 hours	40 per cent	15 852
25–32 hours	20 per cent	7 932
33 hours or more	No cash benefit	0

general rule, the child and the parent who receives the benefit must reside in Norway to qualify for the cash benefit. The right to the cash benefit ceases if the child lives abroad for a period of more than 3 months.

An EEA national, who is subject to Norwegian laws under the provisions in EC Regulation 1408/71, will in principle meet the requirement regarding place of residence no matter which EEA country the person in question or his/her family are actually living in and will be entitled to receive child benefit in his/her country of residence, provided that the other conditions have been fulfilled. It follows from Article 73 in the above regulation that child benefit, by virtue of being a family benefit, is payable for children residing abroad if the provider (one of the parents) is working in Norway, on a Norwegian ship, on the Norwegian

Continental shelf or is subject to Norwegian laws while working abroad.

The cash benefit is generally paid to the person with whom the child lives permanently. The full benefit may be shared between the parents if they are not living together and they have reached a formal agreement to give the child two homes as stipulated in Section 36 of the Children's Act. The parents must agree to share the cash benefit. If not, the cash benefit will be paid in full to the parent whom the child is registered as living with permanently.

Applications for the cash benefit must be submitted in writing to the local NAV office where the applicant resides. Application forms can be obtained from NAV offices or at [www.nav.no](http://www.nav.no).

The rates are fixed by the Storting.

## Tax rules for families with children

*Tax relief for persons with dependants is laid down in the Taxation Act.*

### *Tax allowance for child-minding expenses*

Parents of children under the age of 12 are entitled to a so-called parents' allowance. This is a deduction in ordinary taxable income for substantiated child-minding expenses. The maximum allowance is NOK 25,000 for one child and an additional NOK 5,000 for each child after the first-born. For married couples and for cohabitants who have joint children, this is a joint limit. The deduction is shared equally between the two spouses or cohabitants, unless otherwise agreed upon by the parents.

In the case of children who are in special need of extra care and attention due, for example, to a handicap, the allowance may also be granted for substantiated child-minding expenses after the age of 12. Child-minding does not include administering to the child's special needs for care and attention.

### *Personal allowance on ordinary income*

When both spouses have an income, they are normally taxed

separately for each income. A zpersonal allowance is then given in tax class 1. Spouses who are taxed jointly for one income are given a personal allowance in tax class 2. Spouses are always assessed jointly for assets. Cohabitants are normally taxed separately for income and assets and given a personal allowance in tax class 1. Single providers are assessed in tax class 2. The personal allowance is determined annually by the Storting. For 2007, the personal allowance on ordinary income is set at NOK 37,000 for tax class 1 and NOK 74,000 for tax class 2.

Further information about tax rules may be obtained from your local tax office or at [www.skatteetaten.no](http://www.skatteetaten.no).

## Pension points for persons who have the care of small children

Persons who have the care of small children earn pension points, so-called 'care points'. They can earn 3.00 pension points per year for unpaid care of children under the age of seven.

Care points are credited automatically to the person receiving child benefit for the child(ren). If the caregiver has a pensionable income which qualifies her/him for more than 3.00 pension points,

approximately NOK 215,000 per year, care points will normally have no significance. One parent may ask to have the care points transferred to the other parent. If the caregiver does not receive child benefit, then he/she must apply to the NAV office for care points.



Persons who have the care of disabled children over the age of seven can apply for care points. If the child is receiving attendance benefits at rate 3 or 4, care points are credited automatically.

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## *Benefits for single mothers or fathers*

*Benefits for single providers are laid down in chapter 15 of the National Insurance Act.*

Under the national insurance scheme, financial aid is available to mothers or fathers who have the sole care of their child(ren). Single mothers or fathers are ensured an income and temporary assistance to enable them to support themselves partly or fully by working.

Under the National Insurance Act, single mothers or fathers are entitled to the following benefits:

### *Transitional benefit*

The transitional benefit can be granted up to two months prior to the birth of the child and until the youngest child reaches eight years of age, but for a total of no more than three years. The benefit period may be extended for two years for necessary education. To receive a transitional benefit after the youngest child has reached the age of three, the parent must be working or studying on at least a 50% basis or be registered as an active jobseeker. The transitional benefit is a means-tested benefit and may be

granted for incomes up to 1.85G (G=basic amount). Effective from 1 May 2006 this amounts to NOK 116,350 per year. No deduction is made in the transitional benefit for maintenance payments.

During the transitional period after separation, divorce or breakdown of a relationship, a single mother or father may be granted a transition benefit for up to two years before the youngest child reaches the age of 10. This is conditional on work-oriented activity.

#### *Educational benefits*

Educational benefits may be granted to single parents taking necessary education during period in which they are entitled to transitional benefits. Educational benefits are not normally granted for more than three years or after the single parent has achieved occupational competency.

#### *Child care benefit*

Child care benefit is available to single parents when they have to give the necessary care of the child(ren) to someone else because they are studying or working outside the home, or have registered as an active job-seeker or started their own business.

This benefit is payable at 64 per cent of documented expenses up to certain maximum rates. The maximum rates for 2007 are

NOK 35,496 for one child, NOK 46,308 for two children and NOK 52,488 for three or more children. The benefit is not available to parents whose income exceeds six times the National Insurance basic amount (NOK 377,352 from 1 May 2006). This benefit can be granted for one year if the provider is temporarily ill.

Child care benefit is payable until the child has finished fourth grade, but may be extended under certain conditions.

#### *Removal grant*

If the single provider has to move in order to find work, he or she may be entitled to a grant to cover removal expenses.

Recipients of benefits are under obligation to notify the NAV office if they are no longer entitled to benefits due to a change in marital status etc.

## **Child support**

*The rules for child support are given chapter 8 of the Children's Act. More detailed rules regarding assessment and amendment of child support are given in the Regulations issued on 15 January 2003.*

Both parents have an obligation to provide for their children, each according to his or her ability.

The parent who does not live permanently with the child is obliged to pay child support. This applies regardless of whether the parents have been married to each other or not, and even if the non-custodial parent does not have parental responsibility for the child. It is the child who is entitled to child support. The person who receives support on behalf of the child must use it to provide for the child.

Parents may agree between themselves on the amount of support to be paid. Parents can receive guidance at the NAV office. If the parents do not agree, they are entitled on payment of a fee to an assessment of the amount by the NAV office. Child support is calculated on the basis of what it costs to provide for a child. These costs are determined according to fixed rates and they vary, among other things, with the age of the child. The costs are shared between the parents in proportion to their incomes, rounded off to the nearest sixth. The amount of child support payable is calculated in the light of the ability of the non-custodial parent to pay child support. Contact with the child is also taken into account and the

cost of this contact is deducted from the calculated amount.

## Advance payments of child support

The parent who receives child support may be entitled to advance payments. As a rule, the amount payable in advance is means-tested with reference to the recipient's income, marital status and number of own children in his/her own household which he/she supports. After means testing, advance payments are granted at 100%, 75% or 50% of the full advance amount. As of 1 June 2006, the full advance amount is NOK 1,250 per month per child. If the recipient has an annual income of more than 320 times the monthly amount for full advance payments, he/she loses the right to advance payments. Advance child support is a minimum amount, which is also paid by the NAV office in situations where the father is unknown or does not pay child support for some other reason.

Further information is obtainable from the NAV office or at [www.nav.no](http://www.nav.no)



# Rights of parents if the child or childminder is ill

*Employees are entitled to leave of absence if a child or childminder is ill in accordance with Section 12-9 of the Working Environment Act. During leave of absence, employees are entitled to care pay as laid down in Chapter 9 of the National Insurance Act.*

## The right to leave of absence

Children's illness, including long-term illness and disability  
Employees who have the care of children under the age of 12 are entitled to leave with pay (care pay) to look after sick children. Employees are also entitled to time off from work to accompany a child to a medical examination or other follow-up in connection with illness.

- Each parent is entitled to leave of absence for up to 10 days per year.
- Parents with more than two children are entitled to up to 15 days each.
- Single providers are entitled to up to 20 days' leave, or 30 days if they have more than two children to look after.

Even if one parent has sole care of the children, the parents may share the right to leave in proportion to the agreed contact arrangements. The NAV office will then require written declarations from both parents, confirming the contact arrangements.

The right to leave of absence when a child or childminder is ill applies irrespective of part-time or full-time employment and of how the parent's working days are distributed throughout the week. If the parent has a shorter working day than normal, one day's absence is still calculated as a whole day.

Care of a child with a chronic or long-term illness or of a disabled child where this entails a noticeably higher risk of absence from work gives entitlement to an extra 10 days of paid leave for each parent. This means, for example, that each of the parents of a





disabled child has the right to 20 days of paid leave.



Parents with two non-disabled and one disabled child have 25 days each and parents with two disabled children have 30 days each. The number of days of paid leave is doubled if the parent has sole care of a seriously ill or disabled child.

Care pay is granted for annual incomes of up to 6G (NOK 377,352 from 1 May 2006). Income above this amount is not covered by the national insurance scheme. This is in line with the general rules for sick pay and parental benefits.\* Care pay is calculated in the same way as sickness pay when the employee is ill. The right to care pay applies until the calendar year in which the child reaches 12 years of age. If the child is chronically ill or disabled, this entitlement applies until the year in which the child reaches the age of 18.

\*Care pay is paid by the employer during the child's illness, and payments for more than 10 days are refunded by the NAV office.

### *Sick childminders*

An employee is also entitled to leave with care pay in accordance with the above rules, if the person responsible for the daily supervision of the child (e.g. the other parent, a childminder or day-care teacher) is ill or is prevented from looking after the child because he/she has to take another child to a health institution for evaluation or admission. These days are taken from the same quota as the days to which the employee is entitled if a child is ill.

### *Children in hospitals or other health institutions*

A person who has child admitted to a hospital or similar and who stays at the hospital is entitled to leave of absence. This right applies regardless of the number of days involved. The right to leave of absence also applies after the child has been discharged if the employee has to stay at home because the child needs continuous care and attention. This right applies until the child reaches 12 years of age, or 18 years of age if the child has a chronic or long-term illness or is disabled.

Invalid care pay is granted under the national insurance scheme when the need for care extends over more than seven days. This is covered by the same provisions as sick pay under the national insurance scheme.

### *Children with a life-threatening illness*

A working parent who has the care of a child below the age of 18 with a life-threatening or other very serious illness or injury is entitled to leave of absence. This right applies regardless of the number of days involved and it applies until the year in which the child reaches 18 years of age. If the child is mentally handicapped, there is no age limit.

Parents may have the right to invalid care pay in situations corresponding to those which give entitlement to leave of absence. Persons other than the child's parents are also entitled to invalid care pay if this is necessary out of consideration for the child. Both parents may receive invalid care pay at the same time if necessary. Invalid care pay is calculated in the same way as sickness pay under the national insurance scheme, but may be granted to self-employed persons from the first day of absence.

### *Courses – training*

An educational allowance is available if a person

who has the care of a child with a disability or long-term illness completes training at an approved health institution or attends a parents' course at a state-run special education resource centre.

## **Benefits for children with a long-term illness**

If the child has a long-term illness or disability, the parents may be entitled to a basic benefit or attendance benefit or both. A long-term illness is an illness that lasts for at least 2-3 years. Applications for these benefits must be made in writing, stating reasons. The NAV office can help with this.

### *Basic benefit*

This benefit is intended to cover certain additional expenses resulting from the child's illness, e.g. wear and tear on clothes and bed linen, unusually expensive food etc. The illness and the additional expenses must be long-term, i.e. of 2-3 years' duration. The basic benefit rates vary according to the size of the necessary additional expenses. The lowest rate is NOK 6,864 per year (2007).



### *Attendance benefit*

Parents may be entitled to an attendance benefit if the illness or injury is so serious that the child needs extra care or attention. The attendance benefit for care and attention is limited to private care, i.e. care and attention by members of the family or paid private help. In allocating and apportioning care pay for private care, the local authority may require the parents to apply for an attendance benefit as a basic benefit. The ordinary attendance benefit is NOK 12,312 (2007). If the child needs more care or attention than is covered by the ordinary attendance benefit, the attendance benefit may be increased if it improves the child's chances of living at home. This is determined by the amount of care or attention required.

### *Assistive aids*

Aids to help children overcome disabilities may be borrowed from the county Assistive Technology Centre run by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation (NAV).



## Children in hospital

### *The right to be accompanied by parents*

Children are entitled to have at least one parent with them throughout their stay in hospital. Parents must be offered food and overnight accommodation at the hospital. Children must be allowed visitors outside normal visiting hours.

### *Travel expenses*

When the hospital calls in parents on medical grounds, travel expenses for the person who accompanies the child to and from the hospital for admission and discharge are refunded under the national insurance scheme.

### *Play and tuition*

The hospital must provide facilities for play and activity. Children of school age are entitled to tuition during hospitalisation.

### *Information*

Children and parents are entitled to information they can understand about the illness and the treatment provided.

# *The State Education Loan Fund's schemes for parents of small children*

## *Parental grant*

Pupils and students who become parents while they are studying are entitled to a parental grant for up to 42 weeks. To qualify for this grant, the pupil/student must have been entitled to grants and loans from the State Education Loan Fund for six months immediately prior to delivery and be living with the child, and the spouse/cohabitant must not receive parental benefits under the national insurance scheme at the same time. An exception is made for use of scaled parental benefits (previously called 'time account').

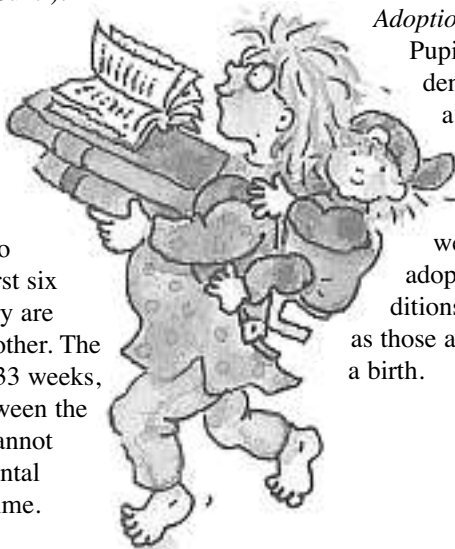
Both the mother and the father are entitled to a parental grant if they fulfil the conditions, but the three weeks prior to delivery and the first six weeks after delivery are reserved for the mother. The remaining period, 33 weeks, may be shared between the parents, but they cannot both receive a parental grant at the same time.

If part of this period coincides with the summer holidays, the grant may also be given for this period.

The size of the grant is equal to the amount the student is otherwise entitled to receive in the form of an educational grant and loan for the weeks in question. The difference is that the whole amount given during the parental grant period is a grant. None of it has to be repaid. More information about parental grants is available at [www.lanekassen.no/fodsel](http://www.lanekassen.no/fodsel).

## *Adoption*

Pupils and students who adopt a child may receive a parental grant for 39 weeks after the adoption. The conditions are the same as those applying to a birth.



### *Provider's grant*

Pupils and students who have children are entitled to a means-tested provider's grant for their own and their spouse's children. The child must be under 16 years of age and the pupil/student must live with the child for at least 40 per cent of the time. The provider's grant is means-tested against any spouse or partner's income and the pupil/student's own income and assets.

### *Easier terms for repayment linked with birth and care of children*

Pupils/students may be allowed to postpone repayment of loans and be exempt from interest for up to twelve months from the date of the birth or adoption, provided that their income is low.

Pupils/students who have the care of children under the age of 10 may also be allowed to postpone repayments and be exempt from

interest after the first year after delivery/adoption, provided that the income of the person caring for the child is low and the total family income does not exceed certain limits.

Single providers whose income is under a certain limit may be allowed to postpone repayment and be exempt from interest as long as the child is under the age of 10.

More information is available about postponing payment at [www.lanekassen.no/utsettelse](http://www.lanekassen.no/utsettelse) and about exemption from interest at [www.lanekassen.no/rentefritak](http://www.lanekassen.no/rentefritak).

The regulations relating to the State Educational Loan Fund are issued by the Storting for one year at a time. It is therefore possible that the schemes described above may have been amended.



# Compulsory National Service and Care of Children

## *Compassionate leave*

National servicemen may take up to six weeks of their paid paternity quota during initial training, in addition to 14 days' leave in connection with the birth of their own child. This leave may be divided into two parts. Travel expenses will be covered for one journey home. Travelling time is included in the leave period.

## *Single providers*

National servicemen who have sole responsibility for the care of a child may postpone their initial military service for as long as they have sole care of the child and until the end of the year in which they reach the age of 33.

Refresher training may be postponed for persons with sole care of a child if the unit is unable to offer flexible leave arrangements so that the child can be cared for virtually in the same way as usual during the refresher training period.

This also applies if a national serviceman has temporary sole care of

a child because the other carer is unable to look after the child for reasons of work, studies or illness. (There must be very strong grounds for postponement.)

## *Shared parental care*

National servicemen who share the care of a child may primarily be stationed so close to home that they can live at home, or serve for the shortest possible period.

## *Postponement of national service*

If a national serviceman exercises his statutory right to parental leave accumulated during employment prior to national service, he can postpone all national service for the duration of the parental leave.

## *Military or civilian service earns the right to parental benefits*

Military or civilian service or compulsory civil defence service gives the right to earn parental benefits.

Applications for leave are processed by the unit concerned. Appeals should be addressed to the Director General of the National Service Administration.

Applications for parental leave should be submitted well in advance. The leave period can be determined when leave commences.



# *Educational services for pre-school children and employment of childminders/trainees*

## **Daycare centres**

Daycare centres are an educational service intended to provide children with a maturing, stimulating and safe pre-school period. Daycare centre facilities vary as regards ownership, educational content and opening hours. The children are admitted on application and in accordance with rules laid down by the daycare centre owner (municipal or private). The municipal authorities are responsible for the approval and supervision of all daycare centres in the municipality.

All daycare centres must have a satisfactory health standard and the premises must be approved by the local council (or health authorities, or approved through the Regulations relating to environmental healthcare in daycare centres and schools).

Under the Day Care Institution Act, children with disabilities shall be given priority for admission to a daycare centre. Children can be given special educational assistance in the daycare centre (see Special educational assistance below). There are also special

schemes to look after the needs of ethnic minority children, refugee children and Sami children.

Please contact your local daycare administration for further information and applications forms.

### *Family daycare centres*

Some local authorities and private individuals have established family day-care centres in private homes. Like other daycare facilities, family daycare centres are headed by a qualified pre-school teacher.

Legislation and regulations: The Day Care Institution Act, the Municipal Health Services Act, Regulations relating to environmental healthcare in daycare centres and schools, and Regulations relating to family daycare centres.

## **Open daycare centres**

Some municipalities or urban districts have open daycare centres. These are free short-day facilities for families with no ordinary daycare place. The child must be accompanied by an adult (parent, childminder, trainee, etc.). Open daycare centres are intended to be meeting places for children and caregivers/parents and a place where they can obtain educational assistance and follow-up.

Legislation: The Day Care Institution Act, Guideline Plan for Daycare Centres.

## Special educational assistance

Children under school age are entitled to special educational assistance when an expert assessment by the municipal Educational-Psychological Service (EPS) regards this as necessary. This assistance can be given in the home, day-care centre or elsewhere. These measures are arranged and coordinated by the EPS.



If special educational assistance is given in the daycare centre, a deduction will be made in the parents' fees for the number of hours allocated to the child for such assistance.

Legislation: The Education Act (Section 5-7).

## Childminders and trainees

There are special tax rules for parents who choose to employ a childminder or trainee to look after their children. By employing someone to look after their children, parents become employers and as employers they have to comply with specific tax and insurance regulations. Further information can be obtained from the local tax office, NAV office or tax collector.

Parents who employ a trainee or childminder do not have to pay employer's national insurance contributions on pay and other remuneration for looking after children. They may also be entitled to a tax allowance for substantiated child-minding expenses (see Tax allowance for child-minding expenses, page 22). Parents who pay for special care or nursing of children with a handicap or similar may be obliged to pay employer's contributions.

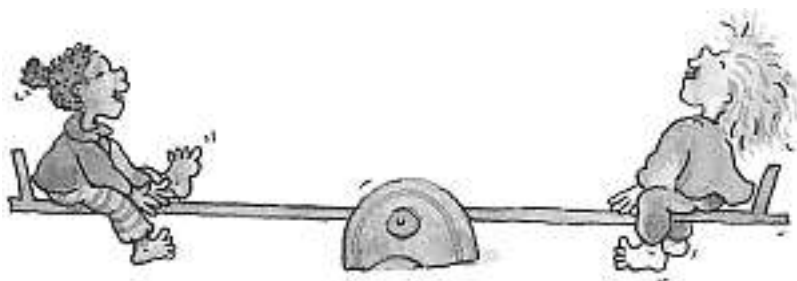
It is in the best interests of child-minders to have their own registered income. This will earn them the right to national insurance benefits, including sick pay, and will also earn them pension points.

Childminders who receive children in their homes or other premises must make sure that the premises have a satisfactory health standard.

Further details can be found in «Skatteregler ved barnepass for foreldre, dagmammaer og praktikanter» (Tax regulations relating to childminding for parents, childminders and trainees)

and «Familiebarnehager og skatt» (Family day-care centres and tax), which are available from the tax office. These brochures are also accessible on the Internet, see [www.skatteetaten.no](http://www.skatteetaten.no)

Legislation and regulations: The Municipal Health Services Act and Regulations relating to environmental healthcare.



# Health and social services

## Health clinics

Health clinics are part of the statutory municipal health services and are provided for children and young people aged 0–20 years.

Their activities, which are cross-disciplinary and based on the families' resources and possibilities of promoting children's health, comprise the following main tasks:

- medical check-ups, advice and follow-up/referral when required (including vision, hearing and language)
- preventive psychosocial care
- information and guidance individually or in groups on various issues relating to the child or to child-parent relations
- home visits
- cooperation on the rehabilitation of children with special needs, including chronically ill and physically disabled children
- information about and actual vaccination
- cooperation with the schools to promote good learning environments for pupils

The local authorities must also provide prenatal check-ups at the health clinics. In addition to medical examinations, advice, follow up and referral where required,

this includes information and guidance for families and parents.

For more information see Regulations of 3 April 2003 regarding the local authorities' health promotion and preventive care in the health clinics and school health service at [www.lovdato.no](http://www.lovdato.no) and Nasjonale faglige retningslinjer for undersøkelse av syn, hørsel og språk hos barn (National professional guidelines for checking children's vision, hearing and language) at [www.shdir.no](http://www.shdir.no).

## Respite schemes and personal contact schemes

Local authorities are obliged to provide respite schemes and personal contact schemes as part of their social services.

Respite is offered to families with particularly burdensome care responsibilities. Help is provided in and outside the home.

Personal contacts are provided, for example, for children with functional disabilities and for children in families with various social and health-related problems. The personal contact can help to give the child a more varied and meaningful leisure time.

The local authority assesses the need and scope.

Information: Application forms may be obtained from the social welfare office  
Legislation: The Social Services Act

## Care pay

The care pay scheme aims to give financial remuneration to persons who have a particularly heavy burden of care. Care pay is one of the services local authorities are required to provide under the Social Services Act and it is allocated on the basis of a discretionary assessment of the user's needs and any other available services. The caregiver has no legal right to care pay on a par with other social services.

Circular no. I-42/98 on care pay provides information about the scheme.

## Domiciliary services

Under the provisions of the Social Services and Municipal Health Services Acts, the local authorities are obliged to offer help in the home to persons with special needs. Such special needs may arise as a consequence of a parent's or child's handicap, illness or other circumstances.

The local authority assesses the need and scope.

Brochure: "Children and young people with disabilities – what are the family's rights?"  
[www.shdir.no](http://www.shdir.no)

## Family counselling

*The family counselling service is laid down in the Family Counselling Service Act.*

Family members who experience problems or difficulties within the family can contact the family counselling service for advice and guidance on behalf of the whole family, the parents or individual members. Each county has a family counselling office. This service is free.

The family counselling service also provides mediation in connection with separation and breakdown of relationships. Mediation is compulsory for all couples and partners who have joint children under 16 years of age. The purpose of mediation is to help parents to reach an acceptable agreement on where the children are to live, access, etc. after the relationship has broken down.

## Parent guidance

Parent guidance is available at municipal health clinics, daycare centres, schools, etc. Here parents can exchange experiences and discuss questions relating to bringing up their children and receive information and guidance about children's needs and development. Health clinics, daycare centres and schools can also be of help in finding other forms of assistance if the family so wishes.

Further information and an updated list of publications can be found at:  
[www.bufetat.no/foreldreveiledning](http://www.bufetat.no/foreldreveiledning)

# *RELEVANT LEGISLATION*

The Cash Benefit Act  
The Children's Act  
The Day Care Institution Act  
The Education Act  
The Child Benefit Allowance Act

The Family Counselling Service Act  
The National Insurance Act  
The Social Services Act  
The Taxation Act  
The Working Environment Act

