

Nordic Conference 2022

Parental leave reforms

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Thank you very much for this important event about parental leave for fathers and thank you to the Nordic Council of Ministers for supporting the important event.

We see more activities, research, legislation and events about shared parenting and positive father involvement today like ever before. Not only in the Nordic countries, but also on a European and International level.

This is based on the Council of Europe Resolution 2079 about Equality and Shared Parenting responsibility: the role of fathers¹. The background for the European Commission decision on at least 4-month parental leave for parents in all member countries by August 2nd 2022.

- Directive 2019/1158² establishes a minimum of 4 months of parental leave.
- At least 2 out of the 4 months are non-transferable from a parent to another.
- At least the 2 non-transferable months must be adequately compensated at a level to be decided in each EU country (as of 2 August 2024 for the last 2 weeks).
- Parents have the right to request taking the leave in a flexible way (part-time and in a piecemeal way).

This parental leave decision is probably one of the best investments we can make for the society. It creates love and care for the children throughout their lives by both parents.

It facilitates better parenting, shared parenting, positive father involvement and equal opportunities for all citizens and a truly free choice for men and women, boys and girls in both work and family life. Parental leave for both parents is therefore in line and an important step towards the UN Global Goals in year 2030³.

If we want to create equal opportunities for women in work life. We simply also need to create equal opportunities and new legislation for fathers and children in family life. If we don't the children will be losers in modern society. That is not in the best interest of the children.

The Nordic region is in daily life the most gender equal region in the world. However, on family reforms several US states and Belgium has implemented equal parenting time as the basic assumption by law moving beyond the Nordic countries.

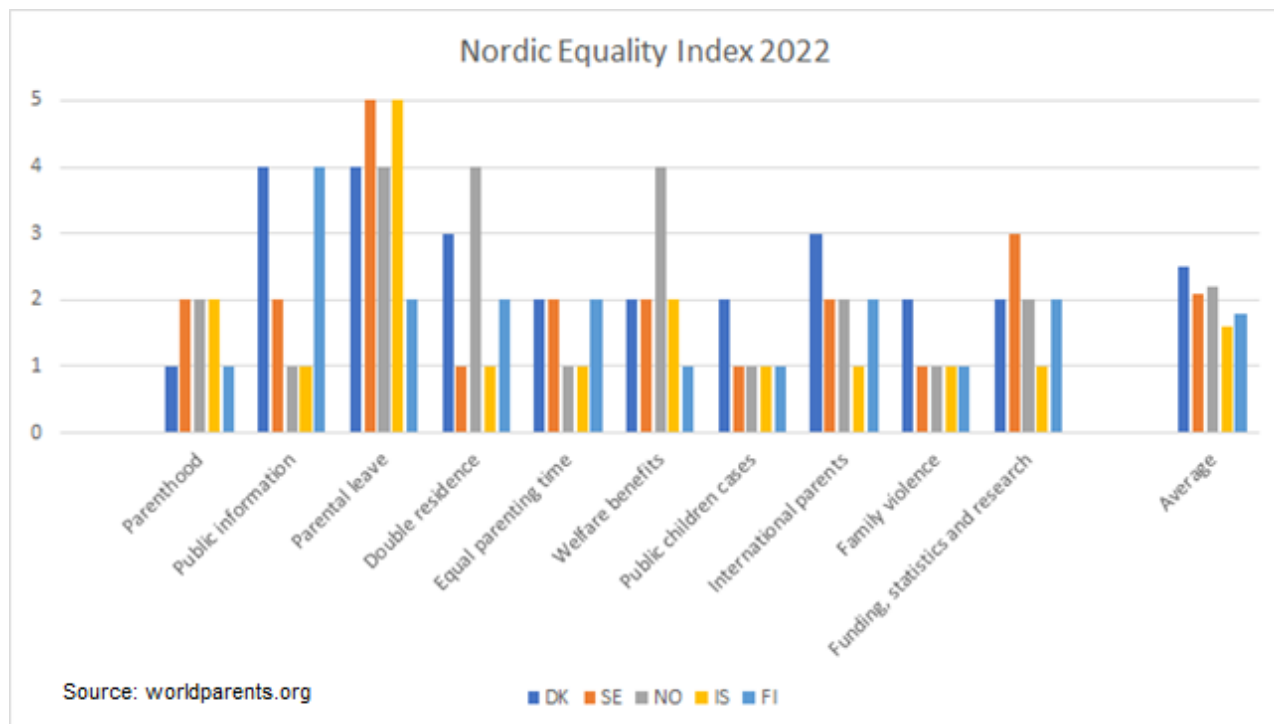
That said parental leave for both parents are 1 of 10 important strategic themes in which we need to change our understanding, behavior, and legislation as illustrated in the Nordic Equality Index 2022⁴. This to be in line with the modern society related to open information, transparency, freedom of choice as well as the UN Global goals towards 2030.

¹ [PACE - Resolution 2079 \(2015\) - Equality and shared parental responsibility: the role of fathers \(coe.int\)](#)

² [EUR-Lex - 32019L1158 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

³ [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development \(un.org\)](#)

⁴ [Nordic Equality Index 2022 \(worldparents.org\)](#)



Nordic fathers that have had 3, 6 or 9 months of parental leave know that it is one of the greatest, most awarding and funniest experiences in life. They experience that later in life they have the same love and caring bond to their children as we traditionally have seen and talk about between mothers and children.

Parental leave for both parents is indeed positive for society, the families, and the children speaking to parents that have experience it and seen the positive effects.

Finland and Denmark have been behind Iceland, Sweden, and Norway on parental leave for father, but both countries have made new law reforms starting August 2nd, 2022.

The Danish Parliament have decided new parental leave legislation giving both parents 50% /50% equal rights to 24 months of parental leave with 11 weeks being non-transferable and 13 weeks transferable by the parent to the other parent.

The reforms look great, but as with most Nordic reforms it must work in all family forms both when parents are living together and not, which applies for 33-50% of the Nordic children today. The Nordic reforms therefore could be behind even when they are decided. It is an important human rights challenge currently to secure children and parents in all family forms by the ministries in the family law.

Nordic Surveys

The Danish Fathers Association have asked 2000 fathers⁵ about their experiences and challenges on paternity leave. A new Nordic survey with approx. 4500 Nordic fathers⁶ will soon be published with almost identical results on parental leave for fathers.

⁵ Christine Simon, Harvard and Jesper Lohse, MBA <https://youtu.be/-JQ0tqvavNA>

⁶ Coming soon on worldparents.org

The key findings are:

- Freedom of choice, legal rights and family economy are the priority cause of the paternity leave period.
- The best thing about paternity leave is the love and relation between the father and child.
- More than 70% of the fathers stated they would like a longer period.
- An earmarked paternity leave model is the preferred model.
- More than 70% state that both parents do not receive the same public information about the child.
- Nearly 50% state that there is a lack of family and father groups in society.
- 20% of the father's state that the full leave period was not registered or paid, because they paid themselves or used holidays or other type of leave.

So, looking ahead we are in for a Nordic baby boost with fathers walking around everywhere with children. That will be fun.

The benefit is a closer, more loving, and caring positive relationship between fathers and children that will benefit not only the children, families, but also the mothers and our society.

Parental leave for both parents is in the best interest of the children documented already by real life experiences and research on children health and public welfare today.

Parental leave for fathers is an important step on the way to reach the United Nations Global Goals in year 2030. The Nordic countries can and should lead the way on this positive development for society, families, and the children.

Just as the Nordic countries did when the United Nations was created after the 2nd world war to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations and achieve international cooperation. This not at least in today's global society.

Danish Father Association / Foreningen Far

The Danish Father Association was founded in 1977 and is one of the largest children and father organizations in the world. The organization has nationwide free counselling centers, phone, and online counselling several days a week about all issues related to children and fathers.

The organizations have more than 100.000 online visitors per month and approx. 25.000 parents of both gender in shared parenting discussion groups with 24x7 self-assistances. Foreningen Far is providing national and international politicians, ministries, institutions, courts and media with patterns and recommendations about children and fathers on a weekly basis incl. recommendation to new law reforms.

