

Eight weeks of earmarked parental leave for fathers

In future, both parents will have eight weeks of earmarked parental leave. This has been adopted by the EU's ministers for social affairs and employment. The agreement also includes five days of carers' leave a year for all employees.

What does the agreement mean?

In Denmark, parents are together entitled to a total of 52 weeks of leave with maternity pay.

Each parent is entitled to 32 weeks of parental leave, i.e. together a total of 64 weeks of parental leave. However, they are only entitled to receive maternity pay for a total of 32 weeks of parental leave, as part of the 52 weeks is already earmarked for pregnancy leave, maternity leave and paternity leave.

With the new agreement, eight of the 32 weeks must be earmarked for the father. The earmarking does not imply that the father is forced to take the eight-week leave. But the eight-week leave is non-transferable to the mother if the father does not take it. Instead, the five-week leave will lapse. Likewise, the mother has an earmarked eight-week leave which is non-transferable to the father.

In addition, the EU will introduce five days of carers' leave a year for all employees. The days can be used if the employee has to provide care for relatives with serious medical conditions.

Provisional agreement

The agreement has not yet been formally incorporated into Danish law, but a directive is expected to be adopted in July. Subsequently, the rules will come into force within three years.