



# Snapshots™

## PARENTHOOD: GOING ON LEAVE AND GOING BACK TO WORK

IF YOU ARE EMPLOYED FULL TIME WHEN YOU HAVE YOUR BABY, YOU ARE TYPICALLY ENTITLED TO TAKE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF UNPAID TIME OFF FROM YOUR JOB.

Your employer must hold your position while you are off work, or place you in a comparable position when you return to the workforce. You are also entitled to receive benefits from the government to help you replace income. You may also be entitled to replacement income from your employer (often called maternity top up – as it tops up the benefits you receive from the government to get you closer to your actual salary level).

The following information relates to Ontario. The rules will be fairly similar in your province/territory. I can help you learn the specifics, or visit the website below where the details for each province and territory are listed:

[Length of Maternity, Parental and Adoption Leave in Employment Standards Legislation](#)

### Going On Leave

There are two different types of leave. Combining them can allow new parents to spend up to one year at home with a newborn.

i. Pregnancy leave

In Ontario, pregnant mothers can take up to 17 weeks unpaid time off. During this time, you can claim employment insurance benefits from the federal Employment Insurance program.

ii. Parental leave

If you take pregnancy leave, you are also entitled to up to 35 weeks of parental leave. Those who do not take pregnancy leave and all other new parents are entitled to up to 37 weeks of job-protected parental leave. Leave is unpaid, but you may claim employment insurance benefits.

If you and your spouse took the maximum leave allowed at separate times, it would span 89 consecutive weeks (17 weeks of pregnancy leave and 35 weeks of parental leave for you, and 37 weeks of parental leave for your spouse). Or you and your spouse may also choose to go on leave at the same time.

Employees earn seniority and credit for length of service and employment while on pregnancy or parental leave. While you are on pregnancy or parental leave, your employer must continue to pay its share of the premiums to certain benefit plans that you had before you went on leave.

You must contact a Government of Canada Employment Insurance office to apply for pregnancy or parental benefits. Contact your Human Resources department for more information. Here is a link to help: [Service Canada](#).

## Going Back to Work

Once your leave ends, you must decide whether or not you want to go back to work or stay at home to raise your child. There are many factors that go into this decision, including:

- Type of job
- Career aspirations
- Financial rewards
- Daycare costs
- Personal preferences

Input your information into this calculator to help you determine if it will be financially worthwhile to go back to work: [Can You Afford To Stay At Home?](#)

Can you afford to leave your job behind? Add up the rest of your household expenses (e.g., groceries, mortgage, etc.) and decide whether your family can manage without your contribution. Can you reduce your household spending by the amount you bring in (for example, could you live without that car if you no longer needed it to drive to work)? For some budget-minded families, that money might be used for paying the mortgage. For others, it might furnish goodies such as a second car or an annual vacation. Once you figure out if you can reduce spending, decide if you're willing to. This calculator is just the first step.

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