

A close-up photograph of a man with a beard and mustache, wearing a dark jacket, gently kissing a baby on the forehead. The baby is wearing a blue and white striped beanie and a dark jacket. The background is bright and out of focus, suggesting an outdoor setting. The image is framed by a large blue circle on the left and a blue banner at the bottom.

# 100% MAN



FUNDACJA —  
SHARE THE CARE

## HOW TO FATHER LIKE A PRO AND GET YOUR 9 WEEKS OF PARENTAL LEAVE



STRATEGIC PARTNER



PARTNERS



MEDIA PARTNERS



SOCIAL PARTNERS



# DEAR FATHERS (AND FATHERS-TO-BE)

2023 is a special year for us, as after much effort we finally succeeded in bringing about the implementation of the EU work-life balance directive in Poland. Thanks to the directive, fathers have gained 9 weeks of parental leave just for them! This is another step towards parental equality in Poland. This publication has been created especially for you – men. Because of the additional nine weeks of parental leave for fathers coming into force, this year's edition of the 100% Man campaign is sponsored by the number 9 – you will find it throughout the publication!

You will find plenty of inspiration from experts, our foundation's ambassadors and fathers who know that it is not worth delaying parental leave, so take advantage of it now!

We promote relationships based on equality and the sharing of parental leave between parents, because we know that this benefits women, men, and above all, children. You will find plenty of supporting evidence in this publication.

For us, partnership in relationships is a response to a changing world, where equality and belief in human potential are among the highest values, and the quality of a relationship directly translates into the quality of our lives. Once again, the publication's strategic partner is Gillette, a brand within the Procter & Gamble portfolio, which recognises the global changes in the perception of masculinity and supports men in being themselves. In its

campaigns, it encourages consumers to become role models for the next generation brought up in the pursuit of a world of equal opportunities. Together with our strategic partner, we invite you to read this issue where we convince you that there are some things that are not worth putting off – 9 weeks of parental leave is one of them. The moments spent together are priceless! Enjoy your reading!

## KAROLINA ANDRIAN

President, Share the Care Foundation

*PS. Please remember that the 9 weeks of non-transferable parental leave is not the entire amount of leave a father can take. The leave can also be divided e.g. half-and-half – this topic is discussed at length in this publication. You will also find interesting scenarios for using parental leave together as a couple. There are plenty to choose from.*





[FACEBOOK](#)

[WWW.SHARETHECARE.PL](http://WWW.SHARETHECARE.PL)

[INSTAGRAM](#)



# SHARE THE CARE FOUNDATION

## GROW – A GROUP FOR FATHERS

[sharethecare.pl](http://sharethecare.pl)

A series of meetings for fathers in a permanent, intimate group. It is an opportunity to learn and exchange experiences with other men. The group is led by psychologist Kamil Janowicz. GROW – a fatherly support development group.

## WE SUPPORT PARENTS IN ACHIEVING EQUALITY AT HOME AND AT WORK!

We promote a partnership family model, which allows parents to fulfil themselves in all spheres of life and gives children the chance to develop close ties with their mother and father.

## PODCASTY

[#TEAMRODZINA](#)

Inspiring conversations with experts from various areas and parents about parental leave in Poland and abroad, especially about how parental leave can be divided between a woman and a man. We discuss all issues associated with partnership in relationships, bringing up children, legal aspects, social conditions and many other important issues.

## WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS-TO-BE AND NEW PARENTS

Free legal and psychological workshops for parents, which are to prepare them for their new role. The 'Parenting in accordance with the law' workshop discusses all formal and legal issues connected with the birth of a child, including the rules for various allowances and types of leave for parents. The 'Parenting in partnership' workshop, run by psychologists, is aimed at helping the family function better as a whole, where every family member is equally important.

## PORTAL TEAM RODZINA

[www.teamrodzina.pl](http://www.teamrodzina.pl)  
[Instagram](#)

A parenting portal focusing on parents rather than children. We write about relationships between partners and between parents and children, the need for fulfilment in other spheres of life, as well as professional, financial, legal and social issues.



# WE SUPPORT MEN IN WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THEM

Gillette, a brand belonging to the Procter&Gamble portfolio, has for the second time become a strategic partner of the 100% Man campaign. Why? Because we have always supported men to look, feel, and be their best every day.

Progressive society increasingly recognises men as role models for the next generation. Men don't just want to be the ones making money and providing for the family. They increasingly see the value in building relationships with their children and their partners.

The parental role is becoming an important part of men's identity, that's why we support men with the right tools and information on fatherhood so they can become as important to the child as mum.

Being able to engage and get to know one's children from the earliest months is an important experience and one that will not be repeated. Children grow and even when they need us, it's at a different stage, in a different area. That's why it's worth taking parental leave and being present from the beginning, at different stages of our kids' lives, because time can't be turned back.

We started the transformation process with ourselves. Procter&Gamble launched an industry-leading global employee programme several years ago that provides 8 weeks of fully-paid parental leave for fathers.

Fathers who work for us already know that there are things that you shouldn't postpone. What about YOU?

## GORAN SUTINOVSKI

Brand Director of the Gillette brand in Central Europe





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Good practices by employers



# #1 IT IS WORTH TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE, BECAUSE... YOU'RE AS READY AS YOU'LL EVER BE

Are men ready to use parental leave? No, they aren't. This is the bad news. But the good news is that no one is actually ready for this. If anyone thinks otherwise, it is safe to tell them they know nothing.



**JOANNA WŁODARCZYK**

Expert, co-presenter of the #TeamRodzina podcast. Sociologist, researcher, graduate of the Institute of Applied Social Sciences at Warsaw University

Parenthood, especially the long hours of singlehandedly taking care of a child every day, is unpredictable. It is relatively easy to learn how to change or feed the baby, but what is most difficult about being on parental leave is dealing with the exhaustion and uncertainty.

## Confronting the ideal

This uncertainty is associated with a much more important question than the one asking whether men feel ready to take parental leave. In a study conducted by the Share the Care Foundation, a number of interviewees stated that the father is in no way able to match the mother as far as childcare is concerned, especially at the infant stage.

*[The child] will always be better off with the mother. There will always be a greater bond between the child and the mother than the father. (a father)*





*The role of the father starts after the first/second year of life. This is when this role makes sense. This is when the child will benefit more from the father's presence than in infancy. (a father)*

Does anything change when we talk about additional parental leave for the father, which takes nothing away from the one-year leave usually taken by the mother? The men who consider such an arrangement still have little faith in their abilities.

*I'm not sure if I would cope. I don't know if I would manage with all of it. It's demanding to stay at home like that. (a father)*

**IT IS DIFFICULT TO EXPECT A PREGNANT WOMAN TO WAIT FOR A BETTER TIME TO TAKE LEAVE. IN THE CASE OF A MAN, THIS DOES HAPPEN.**

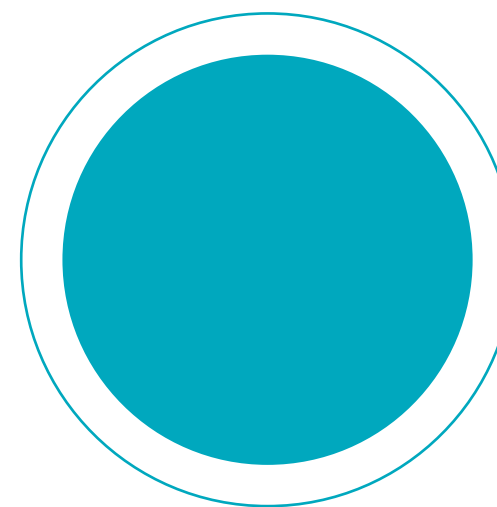
### Employer's reaction

One of the biggest concerns men have is the reaction of the employer. There is a strong sense of the leave being optional that is not present for women. It is difficult to expect a pregnant woman to wait for a better time to take leave. In the case of a man, this does happen. However, it is worth remembering that the time spent with the child at this early stage of the child's development will not come back, and fortunately more and more men are becoming aware of this.

*It's just two months. Let's not fool ourselves, gentlemen, two months is like taking annual leave plus some sickness leave. I think it's down to our mentality that we take work so seriously, thinking that without us something bad would happen or it would be difficult to return to work and we do not allow ourselves to take time off to take care of the family and the baby. (a father)*

*I believe that the father should be there to witness the child's development, so I would take such a leave. Actually, nothing would stop me, not even some financial issues. Because that 30% is what I actually spend on my commute. (a father)*

Quotes: Włodarczyk, J. (2022). "For me a child is always better off with the mother". A report from the study on parental leave for fathers. The Share the Care Foundation





1

RECOGNISE THE FATHER OF THE CHILD AS AN EQUAL CARER. BUT FOR REAL!

2

TRY NOT TO LECTURE YOUR PARTNER ON HOW HE SHOULD CARE FOR THE BABY. JUST SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE.

3

DAD LOOKS AFTER THE CHILD DIFFERENTLY THAN YOU. DIFFERENTLY MEANS DIFFERENTLY – NEITHER WORSE OR BETTER.

4

IF YOUR LITTLE ONE IS CRYING WHEN HELD BY HIS DAD, WAIT, DON'T TAKE THE BABY AWAY. GIVE THEM TIME TO WORK IT OUT.

9

## 9 WAYS WOMEN CAN SUPPORT THEIR PARTNERS IN BUILDING THEIR ROLE AS EQUAL CARERS

5

YOU DIDN'T RECOGNISE YOUR BABY'S NEEDS STRAIGHT AWAY EITHER, YOU HAD TO LEARN TO DO SO. TELL YOUR PARTNER THIS – YOU'LL HELP HIM UNDERSTAND THAT LEARNING WHAT THE BABY WANTS IS A PROCESS.

6

TALK BEFORE THE BABY IS BORN (AND PREFERABLY BEFORE YOU DECIDE TO HAVE A BABY) ABOUT HOW YOU ENVISAGE SHARING CARE, INCLUDING THE USE OF LEAVE.

7

LEAVE THE BABY ALONE WITH DAD, DON'T KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR PARTNER, TRUST HIM. THE LITTLE ONE NEEDS CONTACT WITH HIS FATHER. SOMETIMES IT'S BETTER TO JUST GO FOR A WALK.

8

YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS, YOURS AND YOUR PARTNER'S ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT – TALK ABOUT THEM FREQUENTLY.

9

ENCOURAGE YOUR PARTNER TO TAKE PARENTAL LEAVE ALONE WITH THE CHILD, WITHOUT YOUR PRESENCE.



# #2

## IT IS WORTH TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE, BECAUSE... THE LAW GIVES YOU SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY

Labour code regulations amended in 2023 provide for numerous entitlements for fathers. Fathers can use them just after their partner gives birth or delay taking them until later. These entitlements make it possible for fathers to become more involved in their family life and take a more active role in bringing up their children.



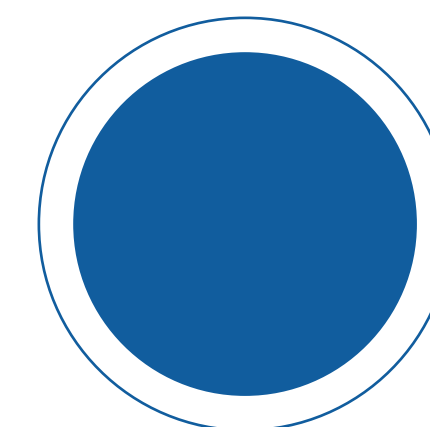
**MARZENA  
PILARZ-HERZYK**

Employment law expert.  
For over 6 years she  
has been spreading  
knowledge online through  
her social media channels  
and one of the most  
popular legal blogs  
[www.MamaPrawniczka.pl](http://www.MamaPrawniczka.pl)

### Maternity leave taken over by dad

Maternity leave, which starts on the day of childbirth, is compulsory and cannot be waived. However, the legislation allows it to be discontinued early – after the first 14 weeks of leave at the earliest, provided that the father of the child takes the remaining six weeks. If he has not complied with the formalities for taking over the leave, the woman's maternity leave continues unchanged, as, in principle, the part taken by the man must start immediately after the mother's leave. These six weeks are sometimes called 'dad's leave', although it is actually a continuation of maternity leave.

The procedure for interrupting maternity leave and transferring it to the child's father requires the submission of several documents and, most





importantly, compliance with the following deadlines. The mother must complete the formalities seven days before she plans to return to work. The father must take care of the formalities at least 14 days before taking over the leave, and he must give up any gainful activity for this period. Fathers who are entrepreneurs are also entitled to the benefit, provided they pay sickness contributions.

## Parental leave

Parental leave is, by definition, granted to both parents. From April 2023, the number of weeks has been changed in the following way:

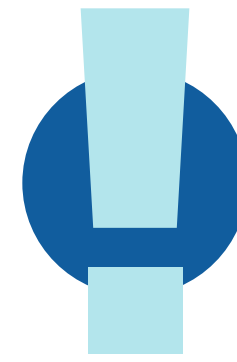
- 9 additional weeks, not transferable to the other parent, have been added to the existing limit of 32 weeks. In practice, the additional weeks must be taken by the father. If he chooses not to, the said part of the leave will be forfeited;
- the legislator has also introduced an additional 24 weeks for parents of children with a certificate from the Act of 4 November 2016 on support for pregnant women and families "Pro life" (i.e. Journal of Laws, 2020, item 1329, as amended). Parents are entitled to take this amount of parental leave regardless of the number of children born during one delivery.

Parental leave must be used before the end of the calendar year in which the child turns six. The nine weeks of leave can be taken by the father while the mother is on leave (maternity or parental leave), but also after the end of his partner's leave. Moreover, the leave does not have to fall immediately after the mother's leave.

The amendment to the legislation has brought a major change concerning the right to leave for the father of the child. He now retains the right to parental leave regardless of whether the child's mother is in employment. This means that even if the woman is uninsured, the father of the child has the right to take parental leave.

He can do so when the child's mother:

- is on maternity leave,
- is on parental leave (both parents can be on leave at the same time),
- has returned to work or is on unpaid childcare leave or annual leave



## 'DAD'S LEAVE

**6 weeks of maternity leave continuation** if the mother of the child discontinues it early and transfers it onto the father

## PARENTAL LEAVE:

**additional 9 weeks**  
(41 weeks in total – previously 32 weeks) in the case of one child born in one delivery

## PATERNITY LEAVE

**14 days irrespective of the number** of children born in one delivery.

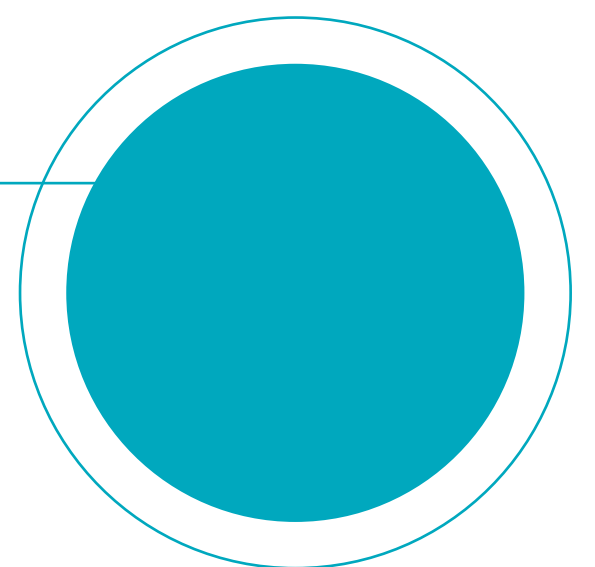
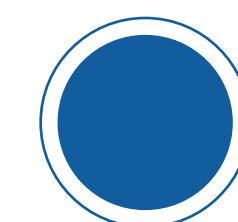
Each parent retains nine weeks of leave exclusively for himself or herself, which cannot be transferred to the other parent under any circumstances. The allowance for this entitlement can also be used by a father who is self-employed and pays sickness contributions.

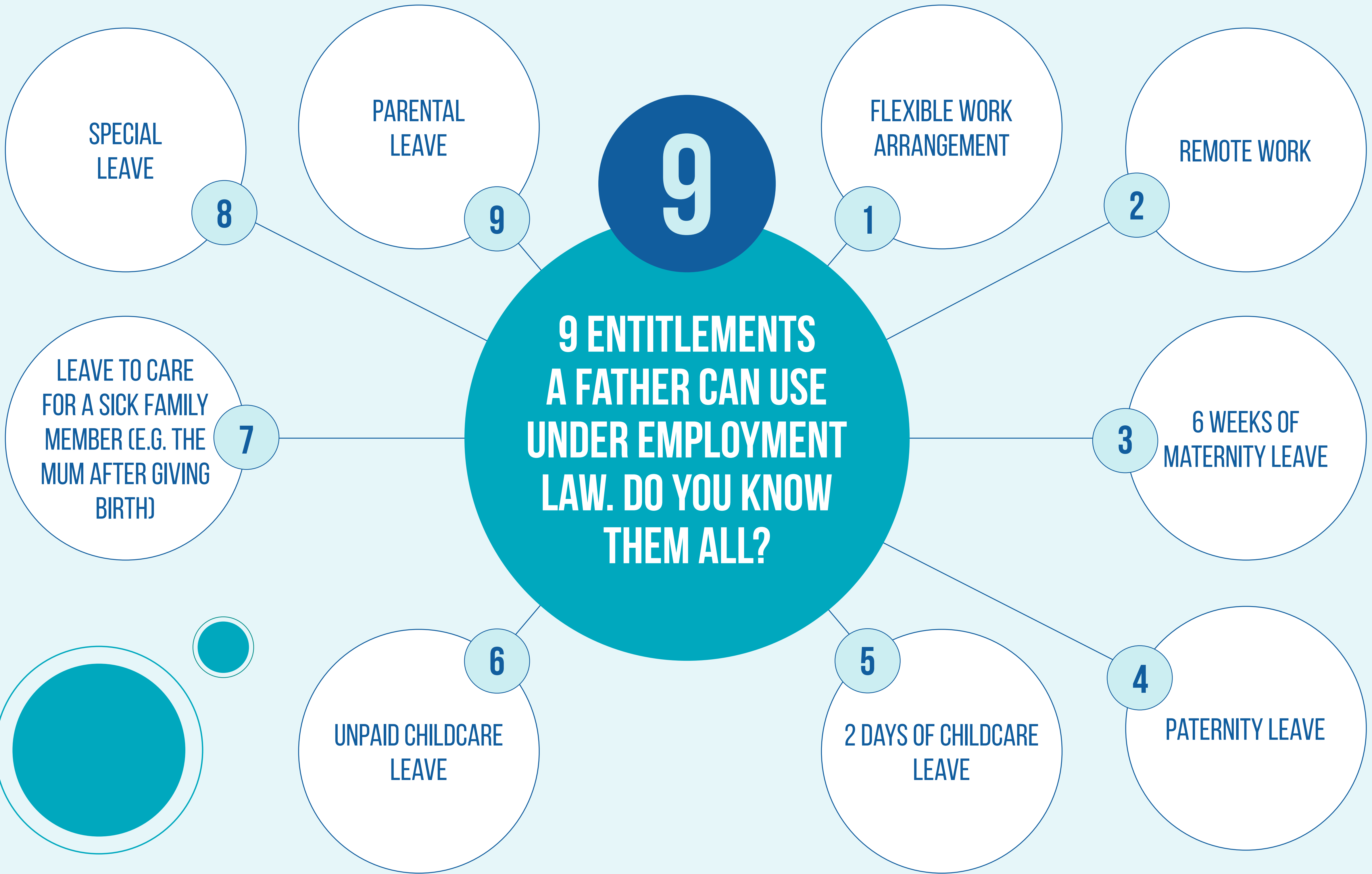
## Paternity leave

We should also remember about paternity leave, which an employee is entitled to regardless of the insurance status of the mother of the child. It lasts 14 days regardless of the number of children born during one birth. It can be taken in one go or divided into two seven-day parts. Paternity leave can be used before the child is 12 months old. If it is not taken, the entitlement is lost. No holiday allowance is paid for unused leave. For the period of paternity leave, the employee is entitled to an allowance of 100% of the allowance base. The allowance is also paid for days off. It is also due to a father who is self-employed and pays sickness contributions. For the duration of this benefit, the father will also have his social contributions reduced.



Want to know more? Download our guide „Dad's Rights” (available in Polish only) [„Prawa Taty”](#).







# #3

IT'S WORTH TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE, BECAUSE...

## YOUR PRESENCE MEANS PRICELESS BENEFITS FOR YOUR CHILD

In recent years, after a long period of focusing on motherhood, the topic of the importance of fathers and fatherhood in children's lives has become more and more pronounced. What is the fathers' role? Why should men be involved in caring for a child from its first days, weeks, months? What can mothers gain from this, and what can fathers gain? And finally, what does the latest research say about this?



### MACIEJ CHODOREK

Psychoanalytic psychotherapist with over fifteen years of experience. He works with adolescents and adults. He specialises in working with parents, especially fathers. He trains professionals. He cooperates with the Empowering Children Foundation.

Scientific research indicates many positive aspects of a father's engagement early on in children's lives. First and foremost, this gives men a chance to build a secure bond with their sons or daughters, which, on the one hand, supports the formation of the child's mental health and, on the other, allows fathers to develop nurturing and parenting skills. Such contact also provides the chance to get to know the child, its character, habits, likes and dislikes, making the man a more attentive parent and able to provide the child with greater emotional security in the later stages of life. Research shows that the more time a father spends with his child early on, the higher skills he acquires and the more often he is involved in caring for and playing with his son or daughter later on.

### Accompanying in development

Greater involvement of men in childcare creates an opportunity for better





communication, because both sides get to know each other better. The presence of the father can have a positive impact on the child's emotional development, his or her self-esteem and, consequently, development of social competencies. A baby who knows someone other than the mother thus gets to know two people making up a social group. This way he or she learns that it is possible to differ from each other. Additionally, harmony in the parents' relationship and their low stress levels contribute to the development of attachment patterns which give the child a sense of security and are the basis for valuable relationships in the years to come. This can be important during adolescence. Children whose relationship with their fathers in infancy and early childhood was close and based on trust have fewer social problems, better contacts with their peers and are able to cope with conflicts, disagreements and differences of opinion. Teenagers whose fathers showed more involvement and interest in their early childhood are less likely to get into conflicts with the law and use stimulants. Research confirms that these children develop better cognitively and perform better academically.

### Support for the partner

The presence and involvement of a man can relieve the mother of some of her responsibilities and provide her with emotional support, which is an important protective factor against the development of postnatal depression in women. A calmer, more attentive, and less tired mother is more able to provide loving care for her child and a more secure relationship with her partner. By caring for his partner, the man extends care not only to her, but also indirectly to his son or daughter.

The involvement of fathers in childcare and sharing domestic responsibilities by both partners can prevent conflicts within the family, provide a more harmonious atmosphere for the development of the little one and can also be a protective factor against family breakdown. However, if the relationship between the mother and father of the child were to break down, the bond established can facilitate the offspring's relationship with both parents.

### Breaking stereotypes

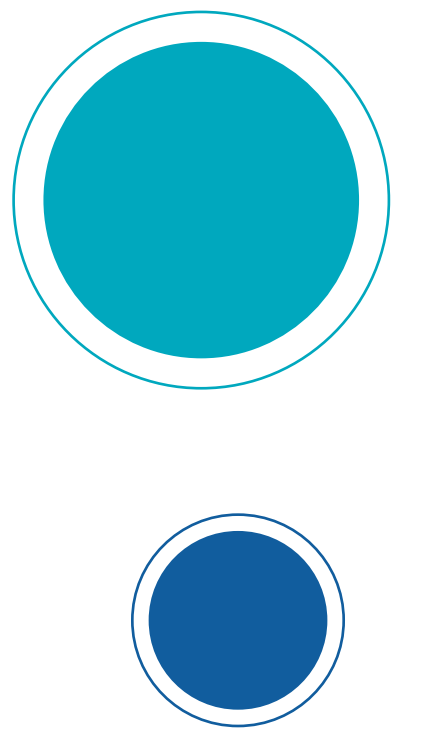
Greater involvement of fathers in care during the first months of a child's life has a positive impact on changes in social awareness and a shift away from gender stereotypes in family roles, i.e. 'the Polish mother' and 'absent father'. The child learns to a large extent by observing the parents. It can therefore be assumed that the model of relationship the child sees in their parents will significantly influence the model they will choose for themselves. In the long

**HARMONY IN THE PARENTS' RELATIONSHIP AND THEIR LOW STRESS LEVELS CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ATTACHMENT PATTERNS WHICH GIVE THE CHILD A SENSE OF SECURITY AND ARE THE BASIS FOR VALUABLE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE YEARS TO COME.**

term, a good relationship with the father is an additional protective factor against the development of mental disorders and the undertaking of self-destructive behaviour, such as suicide attempts.

### Everything starts at home

The British psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott wrote in his book "Home is the Starting Point" that infants do not remember what went right, but they do remember what went wrong. If everything went well, they will never say 'thank you' because they are not aware that everything went right. So you could say that there is a certain area of unacknowledged debt, which, however, should not be considered a debt. Nothing is owed to anyone, but one who has reached a stable adulthood could not have achieved it if someone else had not guided them through the initial stages. And while Winnicott wrote about the mother as the primary caregiver, why, in the light of the research cited above, not think of the father as someone who also creates the environment of the child's life?





1

DON'T EVER TAKE LIFE TOO SERIOUSLY

9



9

IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW HOW TO PUT A CHAIN ON YOUR BIKE AND HOW TO BRAID HAIR.

2

A SENSE OF HUMOUR CAN MAKE A DIFFICULT MOMENT BEARABLE.

8

WHEN KAYAKING, LET'S PADDLE TOGETHER – THEN IT IS QUICKER TO GET TO OUR DESTINATION, E.G. PIZZA AND ICE CREAM.

6

YOU SHOULD ALWAYS REMEMBER TO BRUSH YOUR TEETH, BECAUSE THE MONEY SAVED BY NOT GOING TO THE DENTIST CAN BE SPENT ON HAVING PIZZA TOGETHER.

5

HAVING PIZZA A FEW TIMES IN A ROW HAS NOT KILLED ANYONE YET.

4

A POLKA DOT TOP GOES WITH STRIPED SHORTS AND NO ONE SHOULD TELL YOU OTHERWISE.

7

MEN ALSO CRY AND ARE EMOTIONAL.

3

EVERY TRIP IS EDUCATIONAL, PARTICULARLY A CAMPING TRIP WITH DAD.

## 9 LESSONS WHICH A DAD CAN PASS ON TO HIS CHILD



# #4 IT'S A BENEFIT TO THE FATHER AS WELL

IT'S WORTH TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE, BECAUSE...



**KAMIL JANOWICZ, PHD**  
(SWPS UNIVERSITY)

Psychologist, post-doctoral researcher, academic lecturer at SWPS University. He cooperates with numerous foundations (Share the Care, Empowering Children Foundation, Odzyskani, to mention a few), running workshops and delivering lectures on psychoeducation for parents and youth and leading development groups for fathers. He popularises scientific knowledge on parenting and bringing up children on his blog [Father\\_ing](#).

Among the benefits often mentioned for a man taking parental leave are the positive impact on the child's development, giving the mother some relief from parental responsibilities and enabling her early return to work. This perspective is of course important, but it is also worth remembering that taking this leave can also benefit the fathers themselves.

## The benefits can relate to a few areas:

- relationship with the child and coping with parental challenges,
- relationship with the partner,
- mental health.

## More time together

Let's look at how taking parental leave can support fatherhood. Firstly, it gives men the chance to spend more time with their child on a daily basis and assist him or her in ordinary activities. This is very important in the context of building a bond with his son or daughter and getting to know





them. When the father is at work, he has limited capabilities to accompany the child's development and observe how the child functions. As a result, he knows less about his child and it is more difficult for him to cope when he is left alone with his child.

Parental leave is a great opportunity to get to know your child better, to learn about him or her, to develop patterns of behaviour which will make daily life as a parent easier in the future. This will make activities such as feeding, dressing, putting to sleep, and organising playtime easier and less stressful for the father. This is supported by research showing that men who have taken paternity (and/or parental) leave are more satisfied with their relationship with their offspring and are more likely to experience fatherhood as something positive. Taking parental leave is also an investment for the future in developing abilities as a father. Many men who only become involved in childcare when the child is two or three years old experience difficulties in building a bond with their toddler, who clearly prefers mum, listens less to dad and finds it harder to calm down with him in emotional situations.

By developing a bond with a child early in life, we build a stable foundation for future relationships together. The son or daughter can get to know the father better, gain trust in him and feel safe with him. With this experience, the man will find it easier to positively influence the child's future development, know how to set and respect behavioural boundaries, share his passions and values. He will also be a support to his son or daughter in their challenges.

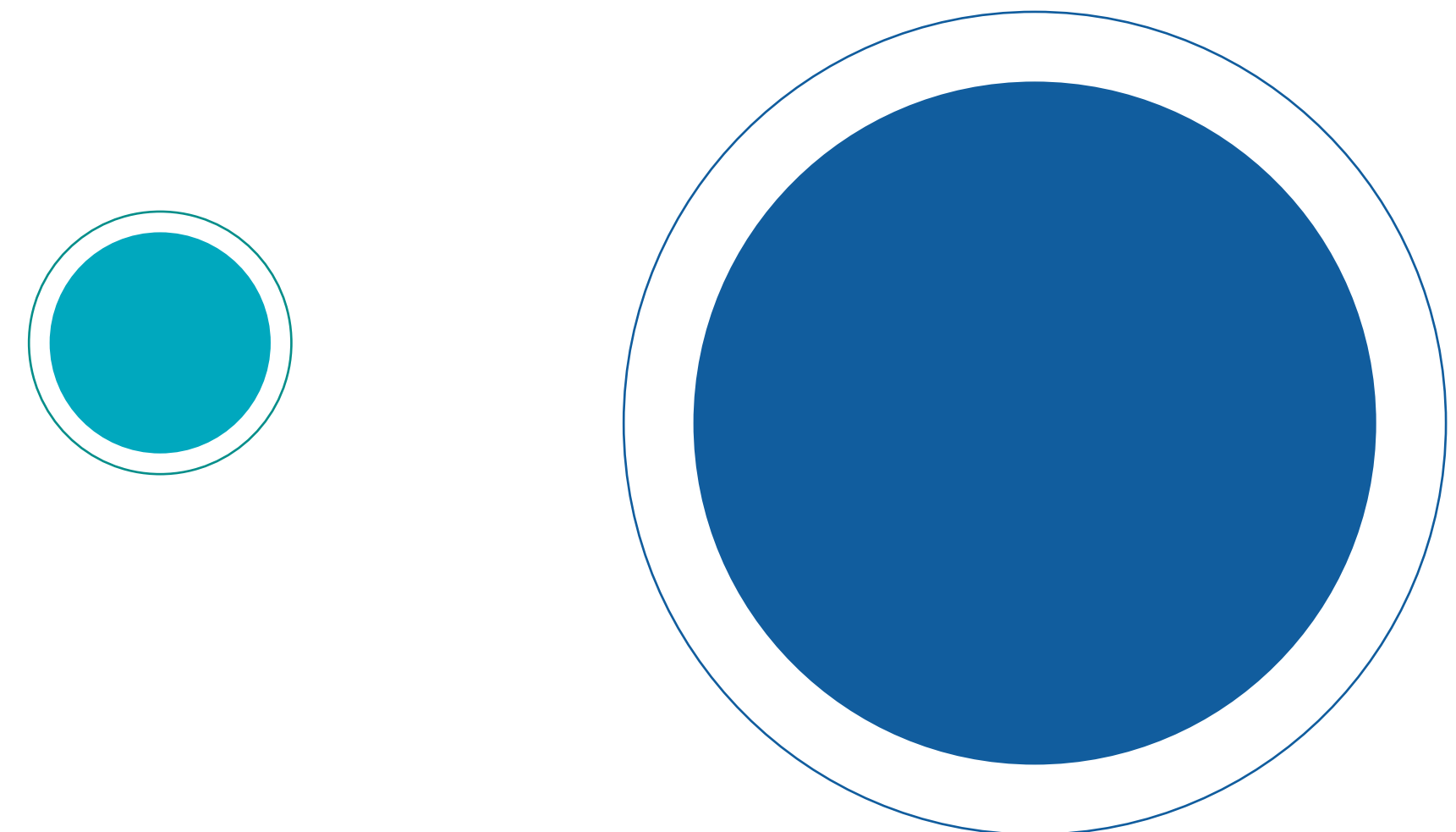
Equally important is the joy of watching the child develop. Fathers taking parental leave share in positive experiences when spending time with their offspring. They emphasise that it is something special for them when they can see their child's first steps, hear their first words and watch them learn new skills every day. Seeing it in pictures or hearing about it from your partner is completely different to being there yourself. Taking parental and/or paternity leave will allow you to witness more of these beautiful moments.

## A better relationship with the partner

One of the significant difficulties which fathers may experience after the birth of a child is the deterioration of their relationship with their partner. Therefore, a father taking parental leave is also an investment in relationship building. Research shows that those who decide to go on leave gain a better relationship with their partner, are more satisfied with the quality of the relationship and experience better cooperation over parental responsibilities. By taking parental leave, one can relieve the burden on the partner, but also better understand her experience of being the main carer of the child. Learning about the other's perspective is an opportunity for more open communication, more gratitude and mutual appreciation and understanding in the relationship.

One of the key benefits of leave for fathers is that it promotes an earlier return of women to the labour market. And what other positive effects

**RESEARCH CARRIED OUT IN DENMARK, AMONG OTHER COUNTRIES, SHOWS THAT, OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL YEARS, IN FAMILIES WHERE THE MAN HAS TAKEN PATERNITY AND/OR PARENTAL LEAVE, THE FINANCIAL SITUATION IMPROVES AND THE PARTNERS' TOTAL INCOME IS HIGHER THAN IN FAMILIES WHERE THE FATHER HAS NOT OPTED FOR IT.**



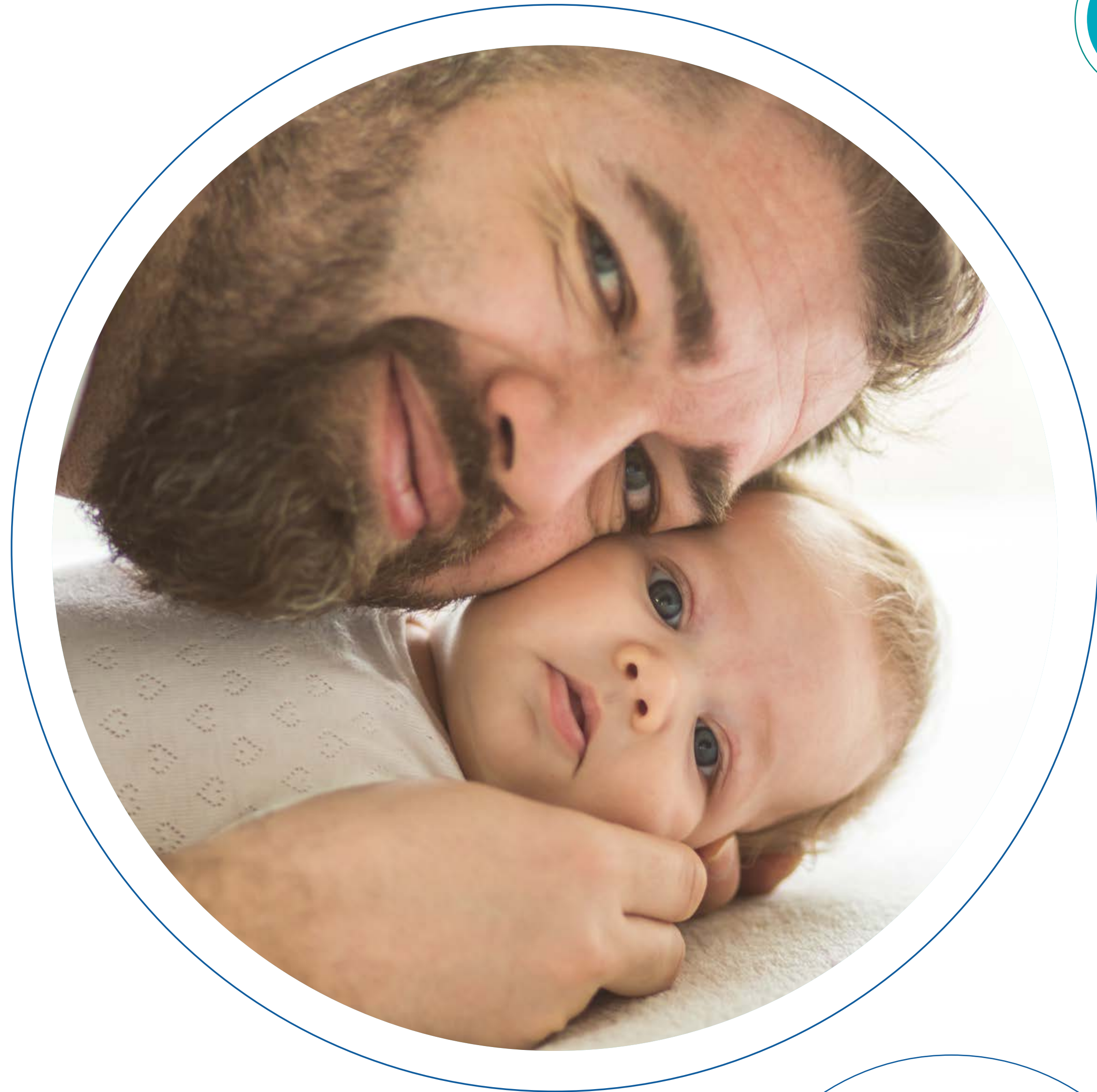


might it have for fathers? Professional development, and therefore better pay, for the female partner is an opportunity for her to contribute more to the household budget and therefore may reduce pressure on the man, who may otherwise have to take care of all or the vast majority of the family's financial security. Research carried out in Denmark, among other countries, shows that, over a period of several years, in families where the man has taken paternity and/or parental leave, the financial situation improves and the partners' total income is higher than in families where the father has not opted for it. A better state of the household budget is an opportunity for the man to enjoy peace of mind, development, smaller and larger pleasures... Although in the short term the financial argument often discourages men from taking their leave, it is worth looking at the long term.

### Stress reduction

The final aspect of the benefits of the taking of leave by fathers relates to mental health and wellbeing. The sad truth is that men experience serious problems in this sphere as often as women. In the light of scientific research, it can be concluded that taking paternity and/or parental leave is a factor in reducing the risk of depression and severe and prolonged stress, which can result in physical health problems.

As can be seen, parental and/or paternity leave can have many benefits for men. And not only immediate ones, but also long-term ones. It is a chance to build a better relationship with the child, develop parenting skills, maintain a good relationship with the partner and reduce the stress of a professional career. It is worth thinking about taking advantage of this opportunity and preparing well for it.





1

YOU WILL LEARN HOW TO RECOGNISE  
YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS BETTER.

2

YOU WILL HEAR THE FIRST 'DADDY'  
UTTERED BY YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER.

3

YOU WILL GAIN TIME TO REFLECT ON THE  
PRIORITIES IN YOUR LIFE.

4

YOU WILL UNDERSTAND YOUR  
PARTNER BETTER (BECAUSE EIGHT  
HOURS AT WORK AND EIGHT HOURS  
AT HOME ARE TWO VERY DIFFERENT  
PERSPECTIVES).

5

YOUR PARTNER WILL BETTER UNDERSTAND  
YOU AND THE STRESS AND EXHAUSTION  
CONNECTED WITH PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY.

9

YOU WILL DEVELOP PARENTING  
COMPETENCIES.

8

YOU WILL GAIN TIME TO TAKE  
A BREAK FROM WORK (WOMEN CITE  
THIS AS A REASON FOR NOT SHARING  
LEAVE WITH THEIR PARTNER).

7

YOU WILL GET TO KNOW THE  
SO-CALLED 'IN-BETWEEN' TIME WITH  
YOUR CHILD – MAGICAL THINGS HAPPEN  
IN THAT SPACE.

6

YOU WILL BUILD A STRONGER AND  
CLOSER BOND WITH YOUR SON OR  
DAUGHTER.



## 9 BENEFITS DADS TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE CAN PROFIT FROM





# #5

IT'S WORTH TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE, BECAUSE...

## THE COURAGE TO BE FIRST PAYS OFF IN THE FUTURE



JACEK

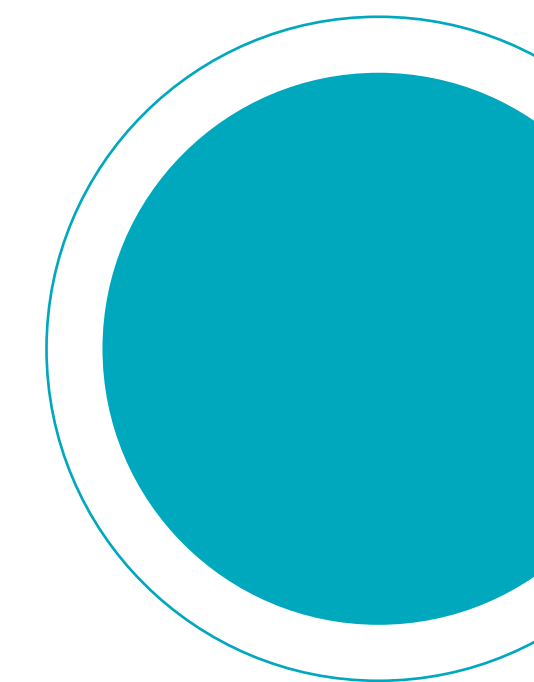
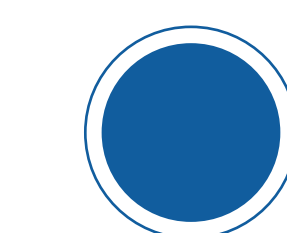
WASILEWSKI, PHD

He specialises in the inclusivity of language in organisational processes and persuasion in communication. Author of research on inclusivity, as well as many academic and popular science books. Lecturer at the Department of Journalism of Warsaw University, where he analyses communication and cultural codes as part of Narrative Impact.

How are modern fathers different from their fathers? Among other things, in their expectations of their daughters. Today, men hope that their daughters' life goal is not just to get married, but rather to follow their dreams. According to my research (Narrative Impact 2020), the role of the father is **currently undergoing a cultural shift: from protecting his daughter from the world to teaching her how to cope in it. However, this will not happen without the involvement of both parties and a common bond. The first step in building this bond is parental leave.**

9

WEEKS OF PARENTAL LEAVE





Fathers who are involved in their child's care from birth have a greater influence on how the child will be brought up in the future. Small but important decisions, e.g. what to have for dinner, where to go shopping, what to play, what kind of soup to cook, how to spend the afternoon, all accumulate on a larger scale into big issues concerning lifestyle, life choices, consumer tastes, and interests. Through everyday small decisions, a man decides what kind of person his child will be. These decisions often bypass those who work all day away from the home.

According to a study by Petts, Knoester and Waldfogel (2020), fathers who took at least two weeks of paternity leave after the birth of their child could expect long-term effects benefitting their families. Even nine years after such leave, their children declared higher levels of closeness to their dad than those whose fathers did not take leave. In the future, this may fuel generational conflict and negation of the fathers' lifestyle. And again – according to data from my “Calling You” campaign (2020), the majority of broken contact with an adult child involves men. Those who do not have a say in everyday life and the small decisions miss the chance to shape the attitudes of their offspring.

### Fathers' concerns

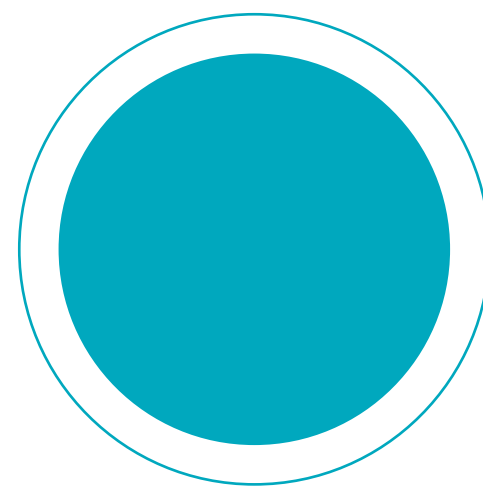
Men are scared, but not, in my opinion, of what they should really be scared of. This is a result of not knowing what the future holds for them. According to the 2018 Global Parental Leave Report, the main reasons fathers gave for not taking parental leave were their concerns that:

- they will be excluded from the male group which does not take such leave;
- they will miss something at work and that by staying at home with their child they will not contribute to the success of the team;
- they will be sidelined and judged as less committed to the organisation's goals;
- they will fall out of their role as the breadwinner, who, at the time of the child's birth, should be earning first and foremost.

We shall now look at countries where parental leave has a long tradition.

## THE POPULARISATION OF PARENTAL LEAVE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CHANGE MEN'S EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION FROM THE CARING SPHERE, INCREASING THEIR SENSE OF BELONGING AND LIFE SATISFACTION.

According to the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan), ten years ago parental leave was less frequently taken by young men (“I don't know what this is all about”) with southern cultural background (“this is not a man's thing”), with low income or low position on the labour market (“my role is to provide for my family, I'd rather take overtime”), as well as those living with poorly-educated partners (the woman decides that she will take care





of the child alone or use her mother's help).

Men's main concerns about taking parental leave relate to the professional sphere and losing their current position/role in the company. Thoughts arise: what will my colleagues say, what will I think of myself when I should be working even more and earning money? Well, that's exactly the wrong thing to think. The moment the child arrives, the father starts playing for a different team and, as a coach, he is needed on a different pitch than the company one.

### A set of benefits

When we think of courage, what often comes to mind are those moments when someone comes face to face with some kind of danger – a hunter encounters a bear in his path, a firefighter does not hesitate to enter a burning building, a policeman risks his life in pursuit of a dangerous criminal. The courage resulting from risking one's life or health is widely appreciated. That's why many people do risky activities for fear of being accused of being a coward or ridiculed.

Meanwhile, today, real courage is to face one's weaknesses and fears which do not allow one to achieve long-term goals. Today, not only the one who sets off with a dog sled to conquer the South Pole is courageous, but also the one who plucks up the courage to change the environment and themselves for a child who trusts that someone will protect and care for him, or her. So it is courageous to be the first to do something, before anyone else. It is courageous to be a pioneer, when not everyone is able to understand the decision you have made. Others will probably understand it later, when you are reaping the rewards of establishing an early relationship with your child.

Fathers who share childcare duties with their partners often experience a sense of inadequacy. This is connected with reluctance to participate in activities socially attributed to women. Why? Because we cannot see fathers performing these roles (or we see too few of them). When there are few

“  
THROUGH  
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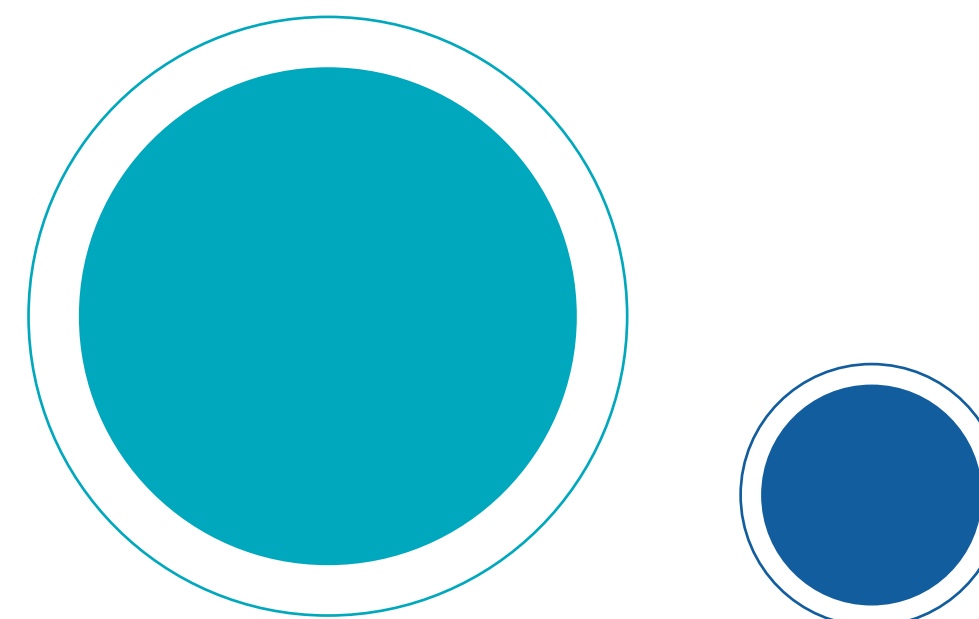
father-carers, they may feel alienated. The popularisation of parental leave has the potential to change men's experience of social exclusion from the caring sphere, increasing their sense of belonging and life satisfaction.

I admire a colleague of mine – a lawyer and activist from the days of the ACTA protests – who is on unpaid childcare leave today, and, as he says, it is the best time of his life. It is also the best time for pursuing his medieval Viking passions together with his third child. For me, this is a perfect example of how a man who used to change society is now shaping it by looking after his children.

### Lower risk of divorce

In a series of scientific articles from three years ago, sociologists Richard Petts and Chris Knoester showed data from a long-term study of thousands of American families. The data indicates that leave taken by fathers is associated with lasting benefits for both parents. The researchers found that in families where the man opted for even short periods of parental leave, there was a lower risk of divorce over the following six years than in couples where the partner did not take such leave. This pattern was observed even when the children reached school age.

Therefore, if you want your daughter to be courageous and assertive, be courageous yourself. If you want to win the approval of your partner, be courageous. If you want to do something first, without looking at others, be courageous. Courage requires overcoming your own emotional limitations. The first step starts with a parental leave request. After that, you are on your own. I am sure you can do it.





9

## 9 FEARS A FATHER MUST OVERCOME BEFORE TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE

1

WHAT WILL MY  
COLLEAGUES SAY?  
AFTER ALL, MEN DON'T  
TAKE PARENTAL  
LEAVE...

2

WILL I MISS  
SOMETHING IMPORTANT  
AT WORK DURING MY  
LEAVE?

3

WILL MY BOSS THINK  
I'M TRYING TO AVOID  
WORK?

4

WILL I BE PERCEIVED  
AS A MAN WHO MIMICS  
HIS PARTNER?

5

HOW WILL I FEEL  
IN THIS ROLE WHICH  
IS PERCEIVED AS  
UNMANLY?

6

WILL I NOT MAKE  
A FOOL OF MYSELF  
LOOKING AFTER MY CHILD?  
AFTER ALL, MY PARTNER  
IS SO MUCH BETTER AT  
THIS.

7

WILL I EARN LESS  
MONEY DURING MY  
LEAVE?

8

IF I EARN LESS,  
WON'T MY ROLE IN THE  
RELATIONSHIP BECOME  
LESS IMPORTANT  
BECAUSE OF IT?

9

WHAT IF I GET TO ENJOY  
LOOKING AFTER MY  
CHILD?



# #6 THIS LEAVE STRENGTHENS BONDS

IT'S WORTH TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE, BECAUSE...



**SEBASTIAN  
ANTONOWICZ**

Preventionist, psychological educator, soft skills training specialist, coach. He works with people at risk of exclusion. He provides psychological support at the men's helpline of the Institute for Prevention of Exclusions Foundation.

Whether we like it or not, a revolution is taking place in front of our eyes. Until not so long ago, for many children, the father was the gentleman who would lie down on the sofa and relax after coming home late. Today, fathers, dads and daddies can become so much more to their sons or daughters than just a bogeyman: “you’ll see, I’ll tell your father”. The world is changing, we are becoming a more aware society, and increasingly notice the need for equality and shared parental responsibilities.





Changes in attitudes towards the father's role in child-rearing are important, because active participation of both parents in childcare is of great importance for child development. For the father, it is an opportunity to be really close to his child. Being involved in his child's development can have an invaluable impact not only on the child, but also on the man's mental health.

## Fatherly bond

Parental leave is an opportunity for the father to establish a deeper bond with his child. Through everyday close contact, the father has the chance to better understand the needs and emotions of his son or daughter. This provides a beautiful basis for building trust and creating strong family bonds. And it is these bonds that allow the father to feel that what he is doing has a deeper meaning, that he is needed and has a direct impact on the life of another person.

## A different kind of stress

Parental leave exposes a man to stressors other than work. Working life generates tension, which is quite high and persistent. Caring for a child offers a chance to take a break from the daily problems at the office, project team meetings, accounting for goals achieved (or not), although it also involves stress, but in a completely different area of our lives. Our mind tends to appreciate variety because it develops us. It allows us to test ourselves in something that matters and to focus on values that are more important to many of us.

## A father's self-esteem

Do you know the kind of men who, after a decade in the workplace, find it difficult to identify what they have achieved at work, what they have changed for the better, what they have significantly developed? Taking care of a child on a daily basis and seeing the positive results of that care builds a sense of fulfilment, something that many of us do not experience in our working lives. Caring for a child can enhance a man's self-esteem

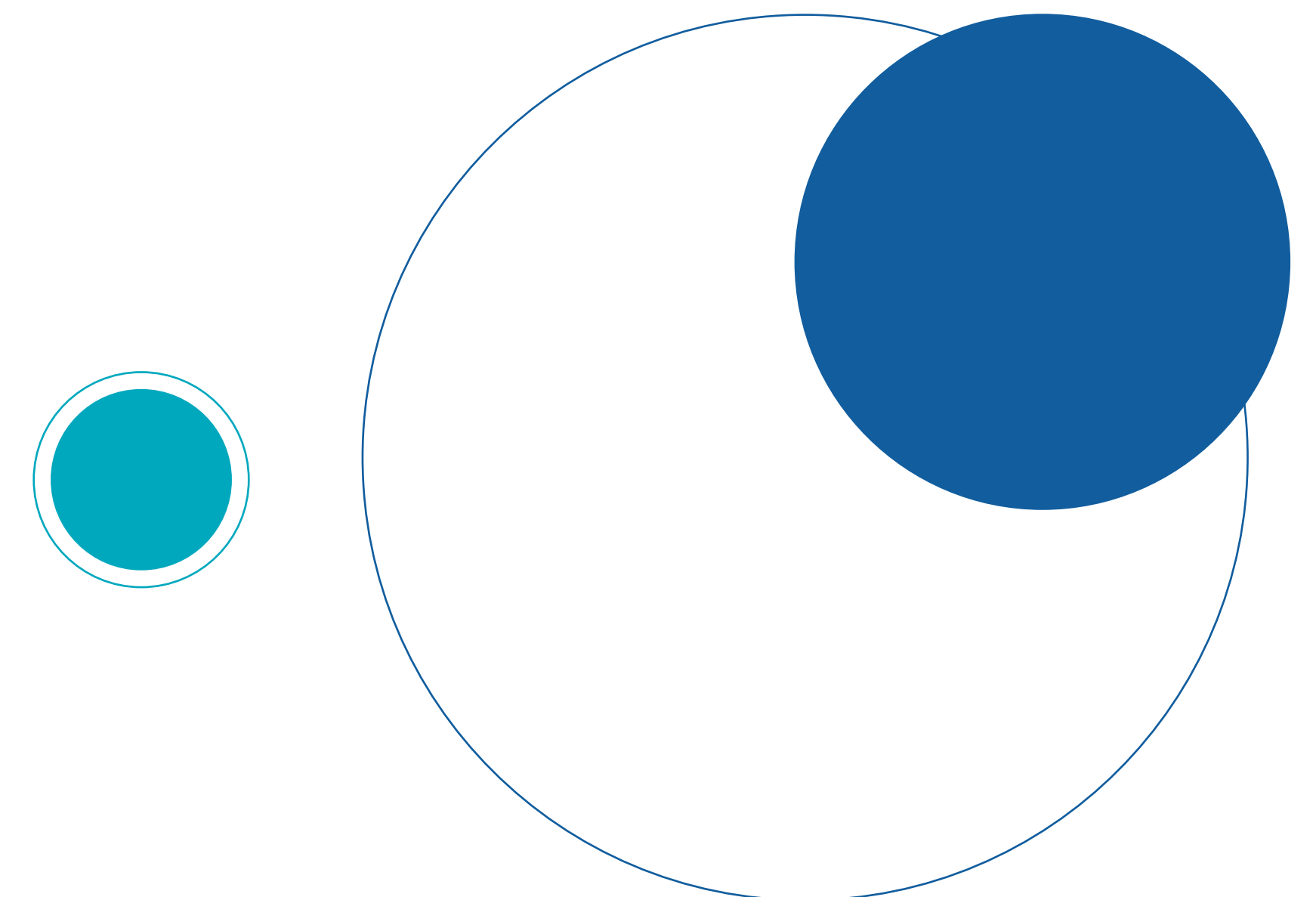
## BEING AN ACTIVE FATHER GIVES THE IMPETUS TO CONNECT WITH OTHER MEN WITH CHILDREN, EXCHANGE EXPERIENCES, AND FORM NEW, VALUABLE RELATIONSHIPS.

as a father. Watching a son or daughter develop before our eyes can be extremely rewarding.

## A community of fathers

Parental leave gives men the opportunity to actively participate in family life and spend time together. Being an active father also gives the impetus to connect with other men with children, exchange experiences, and form new, valuable relationships. Many men are missing this, and being a dad is a great basis for initiating a conversation. It makes it easier to overcome social isolation, a sense of loneliness or alienation. This makes it easier to build a kind of social support network for fathers.

Parental leave for men is an investment in a child's future, but not only that. By fulfilling himself as a father, a man builds strong family bonds, strengthens his self-esteem, his resilience to stress and becomes part of a community of other men. Let's support this idea, because parental leave is a man's way to mental health and building a better world for future generations.





1

## THE MASCULINUM FOUNDATION

[masculinum.org](http://masculinum.org)

The foundation organises numerous events supporting parents – webinars, workshops, live meetings.

2

## THE STO POCIECH FOUNDATION

a helpline for parents of young children

[stopociech.pl/s/index.php](http://stopociech.pl/s/index.php)

tel. +48 507 599 033

Remember this number – it is worth knowing if you are a parent in crisis or if you meet one!

3

## INSTITUTE FOR PREVENTION OF EXCLUSIONS

tel. +48 608 271 402

Helpline for men operated by a team of psychologists.

4

## THE EMPOWERING CHILDREN FOUNDATION

psychological support

[rodzice.fdds.pl/pomoc/jak-mozemy-pomoc/](http://rodzice.fdds.pl/pomoc/jak-mozemy-pomoc/)

Psychological support in the form of individual and group meetings for parents in difficult life situations.

5

## THE EMPOWERING CHILDREN FOUNDATION – SUPPORT GROUPS FOR FATHERS

[rodzice.fdds.pl/o-nas/](http://rodzice.fdds.pl/o-nas/)

In-person meetings of fathers under the guidance of a specialist therapist organised several times a year. The main idea of these groups for men is to give participants the opportunity to talk about themselves and their fatherhood and to listen to others with similar problems.

9

# PLACES WHERE A MAN CAN GET SUPPORT

6

## THE SHARE THE CARE FOUNDATION

[sharethecare.pl](http://sharethecare.pl)

The Foundation periodically organises free psychological webinars for parents and a fatherly support development group – GROW for fathers. It is worth following our social media profiles Facebook, Instagram.

7

## THE STO POCIECH FOUNDATION

– groups for fathers

[stopociech.pl/s/index.php/63-warszaty-psychgoedukacyjne/724-grupa-ojcow](http://stopociech.pl/s/index.php/63-warszaty-psychgoedukacyjne/724-grupa-ojcow)

A series of ten in-person meetings. It is an original support programme for fathers, developed over 12 years. It combines the formula of a support group and a workshop, inspiring reflection and supporting men in their daily lives. It provides opportunities for empowerment and teaches how to draw strength and power from meeting other people.

8

## CIRCLES – GRUPA PERFORMATYWNA CHŁOPAKI

performative group

[facebook.com/grupa-performatywnachlopaki](https://facebook.com/grupa-performatywnachlopaki)

A group of men who were uncomfortable in the rigid

corset of socio-cultural roles and stereotypes associated with masculinity. They talk about emotions and explore the idea of 'tender masculinity' together. They organise men's online circles, performances and live meetings.

9

## FACEBOOK GROUP “LEPSZY TATA – OJCOWSKIE INSPIRACJE”

(“Better Dad - fathers' inspirations”)

[facebook.com/groups/LepszyTata/](https://facebook.com/groups/LepszyTata/)

The biggest Facebook group just for men! The men in the group look for ways of being even better fathers and inspire others to do the same. They want to be better at bonding with their children and building relationships within the family. They encourage everyone to spend time with their kids and recommend books, toys and gadgets.



# #7 IT'S WORTH TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE, BECAUSE... 9 WEEKS OF BEING TOGETHER CHANGE A LOT



**RAFAŁ  
ZADYKOWICZ**

Gynaecologist-  
obstetrician with  
international experience.  
Winner of the "Doctor  
with Empathy"  
competition. Chair of  
the Polish section of the  
European Network of  
Trainees in Obstetrics  
and Gynaecology  
(ENTOG).

The summer holidays are approaching. Do you remember yours? Time flowed differently back then. For most of us, it was nine weeks of carefree fun, trips and getting up whatever time you wanted. A time for breaking barriers! A time of building unforgettable memories which have accompanied us through the passing years. What if you were given a similar opportunity once again to experience nine weeks in a unique, one-of-a-kind way?

## But let's come down to earth for a moment....

Nine – not weeks this time, but months (40 weeks to be precise) is how long pregnancy lasts. For nine months, the woman's body must provide the right conditions for the child's development, so that it is able to function properly in the outside world in the future. Nine long months during which a woman's body changes, as well as her psyche. Nine months of anticipation and extreme emotions – joy combined with uncertainty.





## A change in attitude

As a gynaecologist, for many years I have been observing the changing awareness of parents-to-be in terms of their responsibility for their developing human organism. I witness the process by which a small being is formed – from a few millimetres long embryo to a newborn baby of several kilograms. This whole process takes place inside the woman's body. It is the nourishment provided by the mother that makes this miracle possible. This is why so much attention is now paid by parents to diet, supplements which can positively influence the development of the foetus, and the safety of the medicines used. Until recently, no one realised that we already have an impact on future generations at the epigenetic level.

Scientific and social progress is forcing us to change. For example, during the coronavirus pandemic, female patients bravely fought for the

**WE WILL NOT  
RETURN TO THE  
FAMILY MODEL  
FROM THE LAST  
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SCIENCE AND  
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FATHERS – MUST  
ALSO TRY OUR BEST  
TO ADAPT TO THE  
NEW CONDITIONS,  
THE EXPECTED ROLE  
OF THE FATHER  
IN BRINGING UP  
CHILDREN.**

fundamental right to have their partners accompany them during labour. It is worth mentioning that 30 years ago, this right was completely outside the canon, and newborns were viewed through the glass windows in the neighbouring ward. Similar changes are taking place on the family front and concern the role of the father in raising a child. Just as we cannot imagine going back to viewing newborns exclusively through a glass pane or using drugs harmful to the foetus, nor will we return to the family model from the last century. Humans, science and society are evolving, so we too must try our best to adapt to the new conditions.

## Investment in the future

Can we fathers – without sacrificing much - invest nine weeks of our own time to build the foundations for our child's development? Time that would be priceless for us and for our child. It certainly won't be a holiday (just as maternity leave is not like annual leave), but these nine weeks – just like the holidays of our childhood – will leave us with lifelong memories, shape our personality and that of our child's and perhaps allow us to re-evaluate our priorities.

## First times

This period of nine weeks is not just about responsibilities. During this time, you can witness your baby take their first independent steps, call out "Daddy!", rejoice at the sight of you, begin to show real affection. First times that will never be repeated... And you have the chance to witness them. The human brain is designed in such a way that it can store positive memories – especially of something that happened for the first time – for decades. Wouldn't it be nice to accumulate positive reinforcements in your memory that you can refer to at different times in your life? Memories that will individually build you and your child and your bond together for years to come. Have the courage to take your chance!





# 9

## SPECIAL DAD-CHILD MOMENTS – DON'T GIVE UP ON THEM

WHAT WILL YOUR  
TOP 9 SPECIAL MOMENTS  
WITH YOUR LITTLE  
ONE BE LIKE?

1

DAD READS A BOOK  
TO A BABY WHO IS  
STILL INSIDE MUM'S  
TUMMY



6

DAD READS A BOOK  
TO PUT THE CHILD TO  
SLEEP AND... FALLS  
ASLEEP HIMSELF



8

PLAYING  
FOOTBALL TOGETHER  
- THE LITTLE ONE  
SCORES A GOAL AFTER  
DAD'S ASSIST

4

DAD WITNESSES THE  
CHILD'S FIRST STEPS

2

THE CHILD SAYS  
'DADDY' FOR THE FIRST  
TIME

7

DAD ARRANGING HIS  
DAUGHTER'S HAIR INTO  
PONYTAILS

5

DAD AND CHILD GO FOR  
ICE CREAM TOGETHER

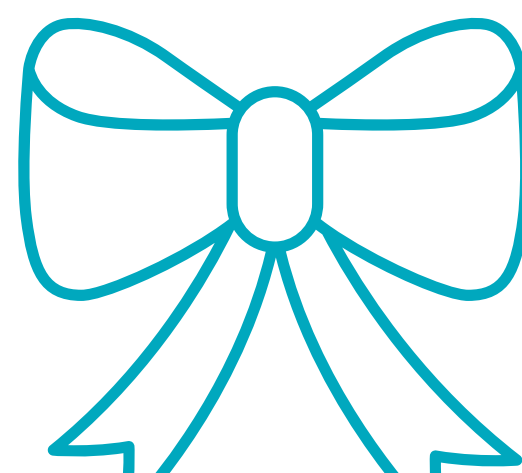
3

THE CHILD GIVES  
DADDY A CUDDLE OR  
A KISS



9

DAD AND CHILD LOOK  
IN THE MIRROR AND  
CAN SEE HOW SIMILAR  
THEY ARE





# #8 IT'S WORTH TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE, BECAUSE... NON-TRANSFERABLE LEAVE OFFERS A LOT MORE POSSIBILITIES

**9 weeks of non-transferable leave is not everything that a father can benefit from. He can take advantage of much more.**



**KAROLINA  
ANDRIAN**

President of the Share the Care Foundation, who for over two years carried out advocacy activities for the implementation of the EU work-life balance directive in Poland. She is an activist for equal opportunities for women.

Parental leave in the case of a single pregnancy is currently 41 weeks. According to the amended labour law, mum and dad each receive 9 weeks of leave. They cannot transfer them to the other parent. If they do not use this leave, it is lost, which would be a great pity, as each week spent with a parent helps the child develop new skills and strengthens the common bond.

## **New possibilities**

Mothers usually use longer periods of parental leave, 9 weeks in their case will therefore not make too much difference. With fathers, however, it is different. Until now, only 1% of men have taken parental leave. We hope that the 9 weeks that fathers have just been legally granted will motivate them to use this opportunity more actively.

Fathers do not have to limit themselves to only using these 9 weeks. Included in the 41 weeks of parental leave are 9 weeks for mum, 9 weeks for dad and 23 weeks which the parents may divide as they please. Because of this a discussion about how to use this entitlement should take





place before the child is born, and preferably even before the decision to have a child is made.

### Important arrangements

It is very important to have a conversation about how you envisage caring for your child and using your leave, and we recommend that you discuss this topic in a calm atmosphere. Each of us usually has some parenting models observed at home, most often incompatible with the current reality, which is why such a discussion allows us to verify ideas about future care, establish what suits us as parents and give up on what will not work for us.

### A chance for more

Although it may seem tempting for the father to take his non-transferable share of parental leave while his partner is on maternity or parental leave (the legislator has allowed for this possibility), it is worth considering a scenario that is more beneficial for the whole family. If the father takes his part of the leave after the mother has already returned to work, this will bring many benefits to the couple:

- for two extra months, your child will be in the care of the dad, rather than a nursery, nanny or a grandmother/grandfather,
- for two months the family saves on childcare expenses,
- mum's return to work is much easier and calmer for her – she can be sure that the child is in the best possible hands – the father,
- going on parental leave by a man without the presence of his partner builds his position as an independent, self-reliant carer, rather than a mother's helper,
- the father-child bond is stronger and is the basis for building it further. By being alone with the child, the father learns to read the child's needs more accurately, which will give him confidence as a good carer.

The graphic on the next page presents the different options for the use of fathers' leave after the birth of their child. Read, analyse and take advantage of them!



**INCLUDED IN THE 41 WEEKS OF PARENTAL LEAVE ARE 9 WEEKS FOR MUM, 9 WEEKS FOR DAD AND 23 WEEKS WHICH THE PARENTS MAY DIVIDE AS THEY PLEASE.**



1

### DAD TAKES MOST OF THE LEAVE, MUM LOSES HER 9 WEEKS

- mum uses: 14 weeks of obligatory maternity leave
- dad uses: the remaining 6 weeks of maternity leave + 2 weeks of paternity leave + 32 weeks of parental leave

2

### DAD TAKES MOST OF THE LEAVE, MUM DOES NOT LOSE HER 9 WEEKS

- mum uses: 14 weeks of obligatory maternity leave
- dad uses: the remaining 6 weeks of maternity leave + 2 weeks of paternity leave + 32 weeks of parental leave
- mum uses: 9 weeks of non-transferable parental leave

3

### DAD USES ONLY 9 WEEKS OF NON-TRANSFERABLE LEAVE AND 2 WEEKS OF PATERNITY LEAVE

- mum uses: 20 weeks of maternity leave (during which dad takes 2 weeks of paternity leave) + 32 weeks of parental leave;
- dad uses: 9 weeks of non-transferable parental leave

## WAYS TO USE LEAVE AFTER THE BIRTH OF A CHILD

PLEASE NOTE! THESE EXAMPLES ARE FOR ONE CHILD BEING BORN AND OTHER LEAVE COMBINATIONS ARE POSSIBLE.

4

### MUM USES THE WHOLE LEAVE, DAD DOES NOT TAKE ANY

- mum uses: 20 weeks of maternity leave + 32 weeks of parental leave

5

### MUM USES MOST OF THE LEAVE, DAD TAKES ONLY PATERNITY LEAVE

- mum uses: 20 weeks of maternity leave (during which dad takes 2 weeks of paternity leave) + 32 weeks of parental leave

6

### MUM USES ONLY THE COMPULSORY PART OF MATERNITY LEAVE AND DAD TAKES PATERNITY LEAVE

- mum uses: 14 weeks of obligatory maternity
- dad uses: the remaining 6 weeks of maternity leave + 2 weeks of paternity leave

7

### DAD WANTS TO RECEIVE ALLOWANCE AT 100%

- mum uses: 14 weeks of obligatory maternity leave
- dad uses: the remaining 6 weeks of maternity leave + 2 weeks of paternity leave
- mum uses: 32 weeks of parental leave

8

### MUM AND DAD SHARE PARENTAL LEAVE EQUALLY (MUM 20 WEEKS, DAD 21 WEEKS)

- mum uses: 20 weeks of maternity leave + 20 weeks of parental leave
- dad uses: 2 weeks of paternity leave + 21 weeks of parental leave.

9

### MUM AND DAD SHARE THE WHOLE LEAVE ALLOWANCE EQUALLY (MUM 32 WEEKS, DAD 31 WEEKS)

- mum uses: 20 weeks of maternity leave + 12 weeks of parental leave
- dad uses: 2 weeks of paternity leave + 29 weeks of parental leave



# #9 SHARED MOMENTS ARE PRICELESS

IT'S WORTH TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE, BECAUSE...



**GORAN SUTINOVSKI**

Brand Director of the  
Gillette brand in Central  
Europe

There is a quote attributed to Mark Twain : “Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.” Don’t put off important things for later, because for some things it may be too late. And time cannot be turned back.





For more than 115 years, the Gillette brand, part of The Procter & Gamble Company, has helped men look, feel and be the best version of themselves. Today, we are supporting them on their parental journey, as it has become important for them to be better fathers.

Sociologists and the media have long described the phenomenon of the 'new dad' – caring, involved, loving. They stress that he is the complete opposite of the 'old' model, characterized by an authoritarian approach to children or emotional dryness.

For men, taking care of the family used to mean ensuring its financial security. Today, it increasingly means building bonds or providing emotional security. This is a major generational change. We see more and more young fathers pushing strollers and carrying bags of diapers. They are present at playgrounds, taking their children to preschools. They accompany their children in everyday moments and activities. In this way, they build a secure bond and gain the trust of the child, who sees that the father understands and can meet the child's needs.

The new relationship model is based on closeness and empathy. Fathers, who used to be reluctant to show emotion, are now more comfortable admitting their attachment to their child. In everyday practice, the 'new father' actively participates in the care of the child and performs seemingly trivial daily tasks.

Importantly, fathers are proud of this. They do not hide their satisfaction, especially those whose children come to them when they need something and do not run to mum with every problem. This is especially true for fathers who have taken parental leave and have been able to focus 100% on their children's needs for a few weeks.

We expect that there will be more and more of these men. From April 2023, it will definitely be easier for Polish fathers to take parental leave, because of the changes in the Labour Code. Thanks to the EU work-life balance directive, men will have an individual right to parental leave. Importantly, 9 weeks is reserved for them only – if they don't use it, it's forfeited (they can't pass it on to mum).

Gillette is proud to partner with the Share the Care Foundation and raise awareness on the 'new' parental leave for fathers. We encourage men to take advantage of this new opportunity, because research shows that it has a number of benefits for them and for their children. It also improves the quality of their relationship with their partner.

We know this from our own experience. Several years ago, Procter&Gamble launched an industry-leading global employee program that offers fathers eight weeks of fully-paid parental leave. It is a widely used benefit. Fathers say it was a unique time that positively impacted their confidence in their role as caregivers and strengthened their parenting skills. After such an experience, they no longer felt like 'the other' parent. They developed their own ways of

**FOR MEN, TAKING CARE OF THE FAMILY USED TO MEAN ENSURING ITS FINANCIAL SECURITY. TODAY, IT INCREASINGLY MEANS BUILDING BONDS OR PROVIDING EMOTIONAL SECURITY. THIS IS A MAJOR GENERATIONAL CHANGE.**

caring for their children, which earned them the trust not only of their children, but also of their partners.

The opportunity to get to know their children from the earliest weeks is an important and unique experience. It is thought-provoking and allows them to change their perspective. Men admit that they would lose a lot if they didn't get involved.

And in a world that has relied on the traditional family model for hundreds of years, there are many excuses for not getting involved – stereotypes, pressure from older family members, financial concerns, fear of the unknown.

Fortunately, there are even more reasons to take parental leave and experience fatherhood 100%. Because shared moments are priceless.

We believe parental leave can give you an opportunity unavailable to most fathers before us, for you and your child to start your new lives together in an original and mutually sustaining bond. We wholeheartedly support the efforts made in compiling this guide to help fathers at the start of this adventure.



1

RECOGNISE FATHERS AS EQUAL GUARDIANS OF THE CHILD, WITH THE SAME PRIVILEGES AS WOMEN.

2

INFORM MEN OF ALL THEIR RIGHTS AFTER THE BIRTH OF THEIR CHILD, NOT JUST PATERNITY LEAVE AND TWO SPECIAL DAYS TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF THEIR CHILD.

3

TOP UP THE MATERNITY ALLOWANCE THAT THE FATHER RECEIVES FOR 9 WEEKS OF NON-TRANSFERABLE PARENTAL LEAVE TO 100%.

9

## WAYS AN EMPLOYER CAN SUPPORT FATHERS' INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDCARE AND THEREBY BUILD PARENTAL EQUALITY IN THE ORGANISATION

4

SPECIFICALLY INFORM FATHERS ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS IN SEPARATE MESSAGES FROM THOSE ABOUT MOTHER'S RIGHTS.

5

OFFER ADDITIONAL FULLY-PAID LEAVE FOR FATHERS.

6

ORGANISE EVENTS, WORKSHOPS AND WEBINARS ADDRESSING TOPICS IMPORTANT TO FATHERS.

7

CREATE GROUPS/NETWORKS OF FATHERS IN YOUR ORGANISATION.

8

IF YOU ARE A MANAGER, BECOME A ROLE MODEL YOURSELF – BE AN INVOLVED FATHER AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PARENTAL LEAVE.

9

REFUTE HARMFUL STEREOTYPES CONCERNING GENDER ROLES IN THE FAMILY.



BECOME INSPIRED AND DECIDE

# (UN)EASY RETURNS TO PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

The birth and the first year of a child's life is a revolution in the lives of new parents. Although in Poland, mainly for the mothers. It is not only about the appearance of a little person who understands nothing and has to learn even the simplest activities, such as falling asleep and eating, but also about the fact that it is a period of social benefits enabling both parents to take parental leave.

Taking up these benefits means taking a break from paid work and fully focusing on domestic and parental responsibilities. Depending on how this time is divided between parents, the break can last from a few months to as long as 12 months. Unfortunately, in Poland, the world of newborn and infant care almost always has a woman's face. Although it has been possible to transfer benefits to fathers for almost a decade, parental leave is used by only 1 percent of men.

## Planning the return

Since I am myself a father from the narrow circle of men on parental leave, I have a strong belief that most of the experiences and emotions of parenthood are the same for both sexes. After almost eight months

of looking after my younger son, I am currently planning to return to professional activity. There is no denying that this comes with a lot of uncertainty and sometimes anxiety about what this return will look like. And although my employer does not give me reasons for concern, as the Polish Economic Institute is a parent-friendly institution, my fears relate to the detachment from current topics and the fact that I have become unaccustomed with acting under the pressure of time and circumstances. In conversations with fathers who returned to work after parental leave, similar concerns were repeated. They said that the first weeks of their work were associated with strong emotions and trying to find themselves in their previous conditions, but in a new reality.



**ANDRZEJ KUBISIAK**

Deputy director at the Polish Economic Institute, currently on parental leave.



## Parental career barriers

It is worth considering an obvious fact here. Bringing up children and caring for them does not end with the expiry of benefits. After a career break of a few months or so, it is time to return to your working environment, but with a child on board. And that is quite a revolution! Various scenarios then arise in families: putting the child into daycare, using the support of the family, a carer or (more often) a nanny. Sometimes one of the parents

**AFTER A CAREER BREAK OF A FEW MONTHS OR SO, IT IS TIME TO RETURN TO YOUR WORKING ENVIRONMENT, BUT WITH A CHILD ON BOARD. AND THAT IS QUITE A REVOLUTION!**

becomes economically inactive – this affects almost a third of women, who do not return to the labour market after giving birth and receiving childcare benefits.

The scenario of both parents returning to work and being economically active is a steeplechase with a tight schedule. Such a strategy requires adjusting your work schedule to accommodate the working hours of childcare facilities or those taking on the care of a one-year-old child. However, even the best-arranged schedules can be thrown into disarray by illness, painful teething in children and their high susceptibility to infection due to the lack of natural immunity that is acquired with age. Hence, taking leave to look after sick children is quite common and taken twice as often by women in Poland than by men.

Any such leave is an emergency which disrupts business operations, which can negatively affect the perception of the parent at work. The 2019 Eurostat data shows that only 7% of Polish employees feel they can take time off to care for a sick child. Only Cyprus is worse in this respect. This data is shocking, and it is worth sharing it especially with those who argue

that the crèche is a sufficient solution to ensure that both parents return to work. Without empathy and an understanding on the part of superiors that caring for the youngest is an obligation of employee-parents that will pay off in the future, it will be difficult to have a higher fertility rate in Poland.

## New regulations to the rescue?

For many people, the implementation of the work-life balance directive can support a return to professional activity – in the Polish context – especially for mothers. The entitlement of nine additional weeks of non-transferable parental leave for the other parent is an opportunity for a less abrupt transition from leave to work. After I have fully used up my parental leave, my wife will be able to take the 9 weeks due to her, which will give us an additional transition period. This will provide me with a smoother entry into professional work and give us both the certainty that our child is in the best care. During this time, it will also be possible for my son to adapt to external care, so that both my wife and I can return to professional activity (although while still aware that many obstacles cannot be bypassed).

The recent major amendment to the Labour Code also provides additional solutions for parents of young children. These include, for example, flexible working hours for parents of children under eight and remote working for parents of children under four, which cannot be refused by the employer if the company's work organisation allows it. There is also provision for an additional two days (or 16 hours) off (with the right to half pay) due to force majeure (until now this counted as annual leave) and five days of care leave to provide personal care for a relative (son, daughter, mother, father or spouse) requiring care or support for serious medical reasons.

These solutions, together with the right attitudes from managers in companies, will certainly make it easier for parents to return to work and hopefully reduce a lot of anxiety.





BECOME INSPIRED AND DECIDE

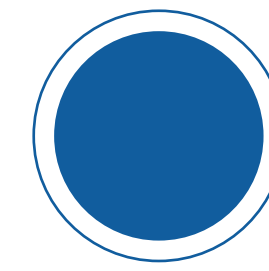
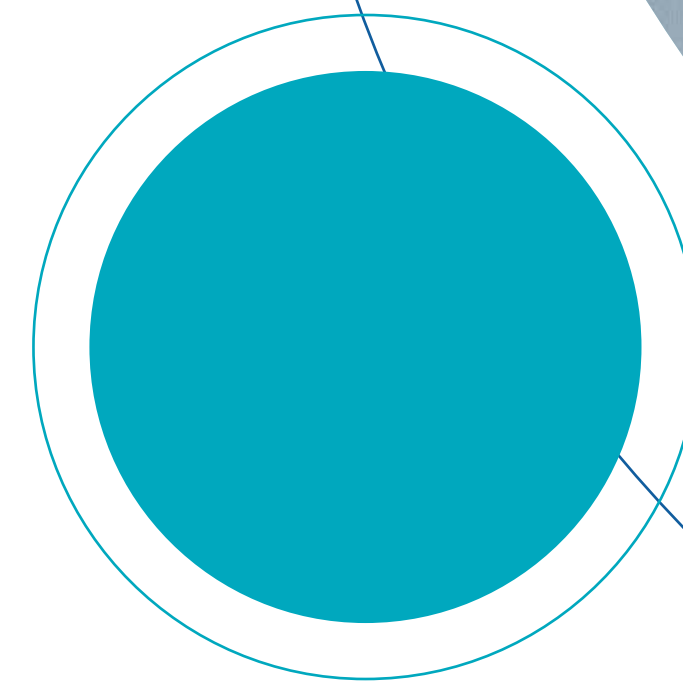
# I HAVE MADE THOUSANDS OF MISTAKES, AND I'M BOUND TO MAKE SOME MORE

**What does it mean to be a good father? For Jakub Rybiński, this means caring for his children but also for his wife and himself. He wants to show his sons that there is more to life than being a parent.**

Jakub Rybiński is 37 and has two sons with his wife Urszula: a seven-year-old Leon and a five-year-old Adam. Their children were born in Sweden. Jakub lived there for 12 years – between 2010 and 2022; today he lives in Warsaw. We talk about children, parenthood, fatherhood and the differences between Sweden and Poland. And we talk really honestly.

## **What surprised you in the Swedish attitude to parenthood?**

The fact that parents are so calm and well-mannered. No one interferes with how you bring up your children, no one makes comments (at least publicly). Nearly all parents interact with other children, e.g. on the playground, in the street, in a shop – smiling, talking, encouraging them to





play. There is no artificial barrier and addressing adults “sir” or “madam”, children say ‘you’ to complete strangers and that’s OK. Adults talk to the children politely, respect them, but don’t spoil them too much and, let me stress once again, don’t interfere with the way their parents raise them. This doesn’t mean that they don’t take interest in other children. They are attentive, and if they see a child in need, they check to see if there is a carer nearby, and if there isn’t, they help them, for example, get off the climbing frame or help them swing for a while. Importantly, they don’t allow themselves to make remarks towards the child’s parents, there are no comments like “how can the child be left unattended” etc.

#### **What elements relating to childcare would you transfer from Sweden to Poland?**

First and foremost, kindergartens. Even those which are considered by the Swedes to be of lower quality are still much better than average kindergartens in Poland, in my opinion. And the high-level kindergartens are just out of this world. My sons attended a kindergarten where children played outside a lot, irrespective of the weather. The boys learnt how to plant and look after plants and once a week went on all-day trips to the forest. They played among the trees, carried out lots of manual work and were allowed to freely interact with nature and do what they wanted. Everyone came home tired but happy. From an early age, children are taught basic things, so that they quickly gain independence. The best example: the use of a fork and knife – toddlers as young as two or three are taught to use them, but after returning to Poland, my sons forgot how to use a knife, because it is not used for meals in the kindergarten.

#### **And is there something which the Swedes could learn from us?**

Perhaps the approach to school education. As much as kindergartens in Sweden are well-organised and give children an excellent start in later life, the level of education in later years leaves much to be desired. This is the general opinion. I remember that in my times primary schools were

of a high standard. I know that this is also changing in Poland today, and for the worse. I will soon find out, because my elder son will start school in September. I can’t think of anything else the Swedes could learn from us.

**I AM NOT A FAN OF THE ABANDONED NEST SYNDROME AND PARENTS WHO FAILED TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES IN THE PROCESS OF RAISING THEIR CHILDREN. BECAUSE OF THIS ATTITUDE, THEY CREATED A SAD FUTURE FOR THEIR CHILDREN AND FOR THEMSELVES, A FUTURE WHERE BOTH PARTIES ARE UNABLE TO FIND THEIR WAY.**





**You have several years of experience raising your sons. What does it mean to you to be a good father?**

To be good to my children, but also to my wife and myself. I want my sons to understand in the future that the world doesn't end with parenthood and that it doesn't have to be their main, let alone only, goal in life. Lots of interesting things can happen to them outside of parenthood, and if they don't become parents, I want them to be able to find their meaning too. And when they become independent, I will not force my way into their lives. I don't want to be misunderstood – I love my sons and will always be a father to them, but when they grow up, my world will not stop, my wife and I will move on. I am not a fan of the abandoned nest syndrome and parents who failed to take care of themselves in the process of raising their children. Because of this attitude, they created a sad future for their children and for themselves, a future where both parties are unable to find their way.

**Well put. Fully agreed!**

I'm still looking for this balance! When Leon was born, I was fully involved in his upbringing and I felt fulfilled. Adam was born at a time when a lot was going on in my professional life, plus there came the fatigue caused by daily responsibilities away from my home country and the lack of family support. We returned to Poland, I started a new job and I experienced a heightened sense of bitterness that I was not the kind of dad that I always wanted to be. This is exacerbated by the Polish reality. I know I still have a lot to learn.

**What are your first memories associated with your dad?**

I think singing songs together and playing the guitar. When I was little, we used to spend the summer in the Mazury area and my father used to play the guitar by the fire and I liked to sing with him.

**Do you think that as fathers we repeat the mistakes of our fathers?**

For sure. If I knew how to avoid this, I wouldn't be doing it. And I certainly do

do it. Sometimes I notice it myself, sometimes probably others see it, e.g. my mother. Luckily, she refrains from making comments.

**If you could give some advice to your younger self from 10 years ago, what would it be?**

Honestly, I don't know. I'm happy with what my wife and I have built together, I'm happy with my life, very aware of myself and my needs. The last decade has been good for me and my family, so there is nothing I should have done differently. There are probably thousands of mistakes I have made and thousands more I will make before my sons become independent. But these are not the kind of mistakes which can be fixed with advice like "take care of yourself" or "spend more time with the kids". These are much more complex problems which I am still trying to work on.

**Did you go on parental or paternity leave? If so, what did you get from it?**

I did. It gave me independence in child-related matters and the opportunity to have a real partnership with my wife in the area of caring for my sons. And it also helped me build a good relationship with the children. In total, I spent about three months with each of my sons, except that with Leon it was at the very beginning of his life, and with Adam just a small part was at the beginning, and most of it when he was three. It wasn't as much time as I would have liked, but the family's financial situation back then required me to be the one working after all (different rates on leave than when working – ed.).

**Why do fathers take parental leave so infrequently?**

I'm sure there are many reasons, but I would list a few: the income gap/ family financial dependency, the culture of patriarchy and the sad fact that fatherhood understood as caring for a young child is considered unmanly. The lack of statutory support has certainly had a role to play there.

The interview was conducted by  
Tomasz Rusek, a journalist of Gazeta Lubuska



BECOME INSPIRED AND DECIDE

# I HAD TO GROW UP TO BE A FATHER

What kind of parents are Icelanders? According to Artur Kepen, dad of little Gaja, in Iceland you don't feel the strict parenting which he remembers from Poland. In Poland, instead of helping children find their way off the climbing frame, the carers warn them against using the frame, as they may fall off.

Artur is 32. He lives with wife Ula and 14-month old daughter Gaja in the Warsaw district of Ursus, although he had earlier got to know a few other districts (Żoliborz, Mokotów, Śródmieście, Wola), and he had also lived in Iceland for a few years.

## A chance to meet people (and parents) from other countries

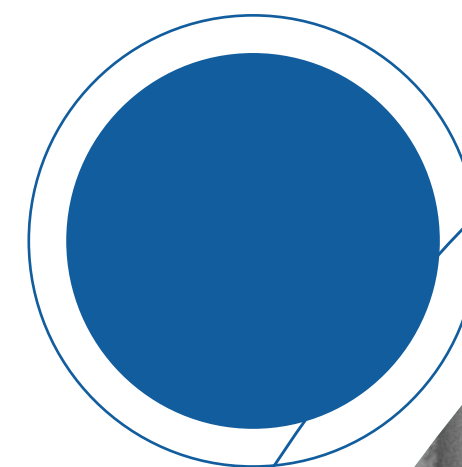
Emigration has strongly influenced Artur's life. He lived in Iceland from 2016 to 2019, which was during one of the highest waves of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the period of peak tourism.

– Back in those years, there were unprecedented numbers of tourists per year, which we experienced directly, because my wife and I had been involved in the hotel and leisure industry from the beginning. We won a casting



### TOMASZ RUSEK

a journalist of Gazeta Lubuska Ambassador of the Share the Care Foundation. Dad having taken maternity and parental leave.





*call to run a hostel on our own, where we did everything. We also had the opportunity to meet people from dozens of countries, learn about their rather unique perspectives, motivations and approaches to parenting, – says Artur.*

They also got to know about the Icelandic school of parenting and family life. What makes it different? The biggest shock for our interlocutor was the attitude of Icelanders to the number of children and their upbringing. Icelanders form rather large families, it is normal to have three or four children. And their upbringing is very different from what we know in Poland.

*– At first, my wife and I were rather puzzled, because it seemed to us that the children were left to their own devices, let loose without adult supervision, even, so to speak, 'spoilt'. With time, we began to understand how good this attitude was. It allowed children to get out there and release their energy, go to bed according to their own biological clock and live without taboos, – says Artur.*

### **Young Icelanders quickly learn to be independent**

Artur and his wife were impressed by the Icelandic attitude to children – there was a sense of partnership and care and a desire to nurture family rituals, such as going to swimming pools together, which serve as a kind of leisure time hub.

Young Icelanders quickly learn to be independent. Children as young as 13 can perform light, age-appropriate work. This is usually community work commissioned by the municipality or the district where the family lives. The young worker is, of course, remunerated for his or her work.

*– I was shocked when I first encountered a 15-year-old scanning products at the grocery shop checkout, – Artur recalls.*

He goes as far as to say that these experiences have reformulated his approach to children and parenting in general.

*– Iceland and what I experienced there have changed me, but I also had to grow up to be a father. I became more patient. My wife only sometimes*

*goes back to the time years ago, when my 'short fuse' got in the way of our relationship, – admits the 32-year-old.*

A good father? One that is present and listens. So little, but so much.

After Gaja was born, Artur spent three weeks on leave – he used two weeks of paternity leave and one week of annual leave.

*– The entire maternity leave was taken by my wife. The reasons were pragmatic and financial, but also systemic. My wife, who ran her own*







*business, could only count on a minimal allowance. However, paternity leave gave me three much-needed weeks to adjust to a new situation. The arrival of a child had taken its toll on my mental state – I was overstimulated and found it difficult to find my balance. These three weeks were necessary for both of us. It gave my wife at least a bit of space for herself to recover from the birth, and we were also able to deal with all the necessary official matters. I believe that a leave after the birth of a child should last about two months. It's a shame I didn't take more leave, especially that my company offered me the opportunity to stay at home with the baby, – adds our interviewee.*

Asked what being a good father means to him, Artur replies: – *The definition is fluid. But if I had to sum it up in a few words, I would say that being a good father means being present in your child's life and listening to their needs. Just that but it means so much.*

### **We don't give ourselves a chance**

Finally, an important observation. According to Artur, many modern parents repeat deeply ingrained mistakes.

– *Steeped from a young age in stereotypes about raising girls and boys in a particular way, we create situations that can harm children. But that's not everything. We repeat sexism, classism, double standards, alcoholism, verbal and physical violence, upbringing in the Catholic faith and many other situations accepted as something normal, socially acceptable and good. And the biggest mistake is that we do not give ourselves the chance to break this vicious circle that has been going on for generations. We do not verify the sources of our educational methods, stubbornly returning to those that have been debunked as harmful by scientists – sums up Artur.*



BECOME INSPIRED AND DECIDE

# FROM READING TO SUPERPOWER

A dad who reads with his baby from six months old develops his child's brain, stimulating the multiplication of synapses. This daily brief moment – it should literally be a few minutes at first, no more – builds closeness not only physically, but also mentally, based on shared emotions.

Reading together is one of the most wonderful ways to build a father-child relationship, as it helps the little one to acquire the social competences which are so important later in life.

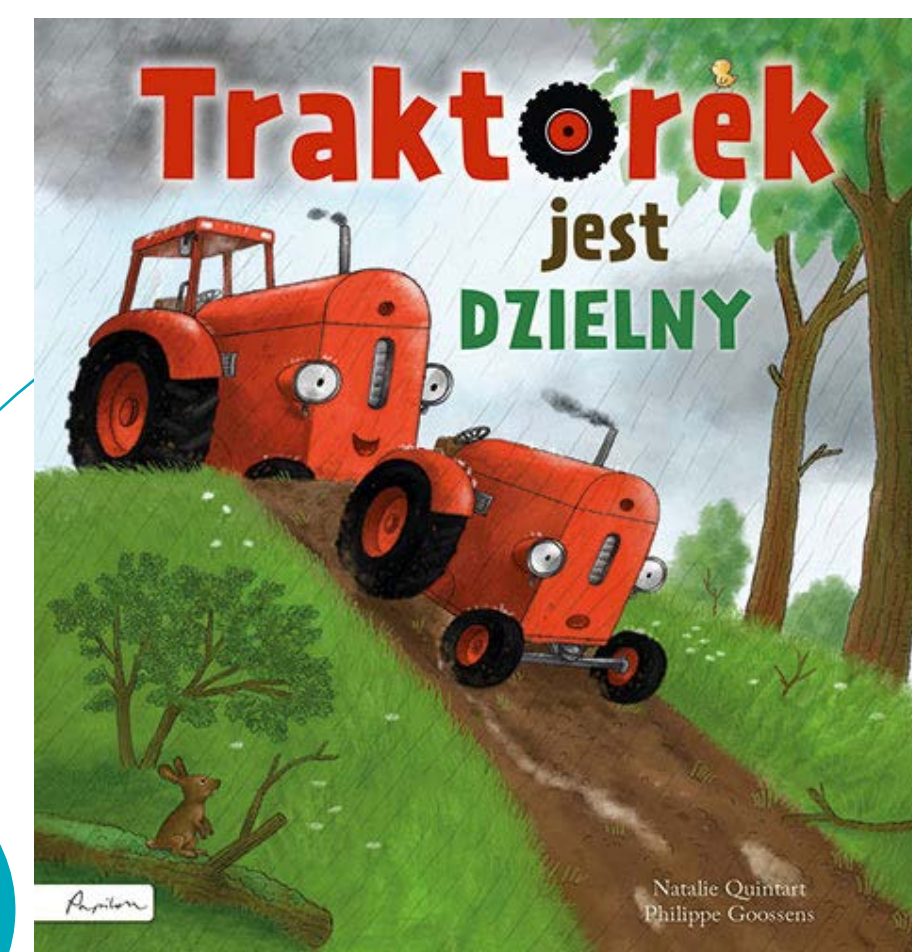
## Reading is empowering

First pictures and then stories activate our superpowers: reading is about developing empathy – by observing the characters, the child learns about emotions, experiences them and begins to understand other people better. Children whose parents read to them regularly from the first months of life understand twice as many words by the age of three. As evidenced by research, fathers are more likely than mothers to treat the texts they read as a challenge: they ask questions, question the endings – it's a great model of critical thinking for children. In this way, reading together, like nothing else, becomes the foundation for the child's future school success.

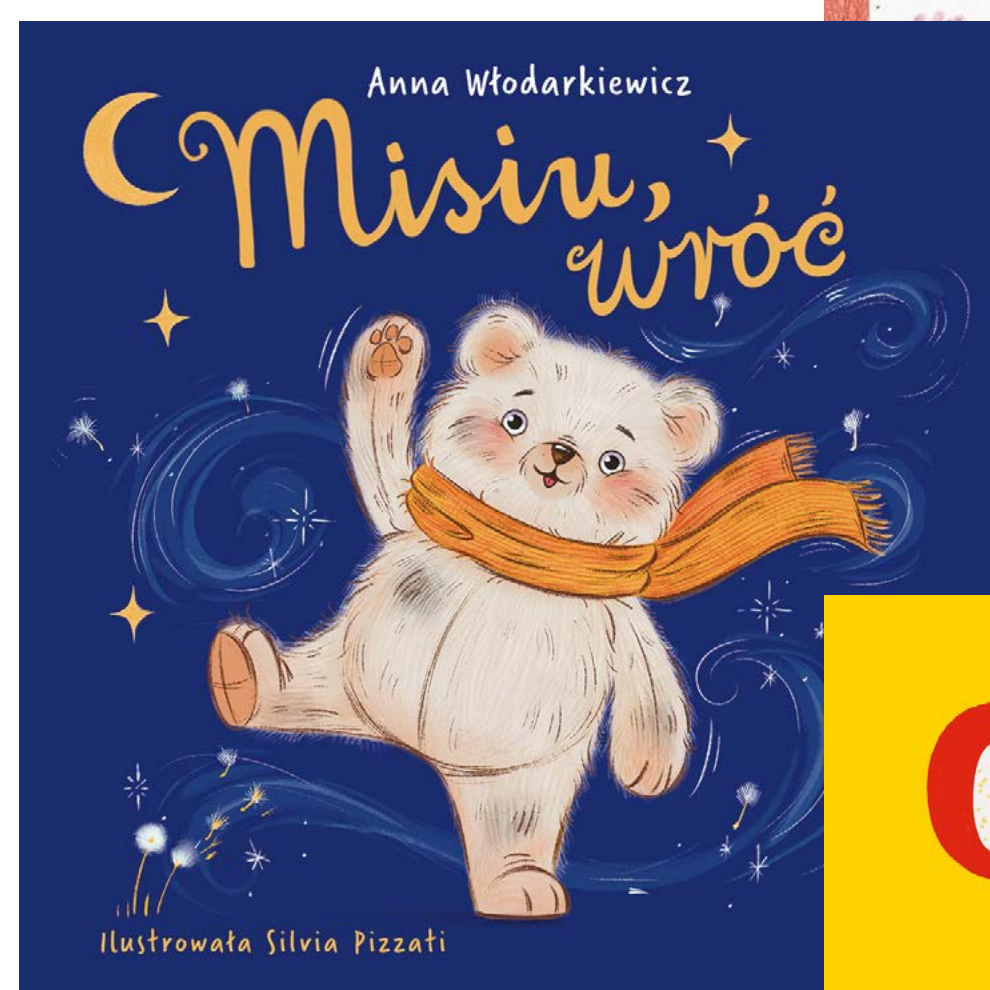
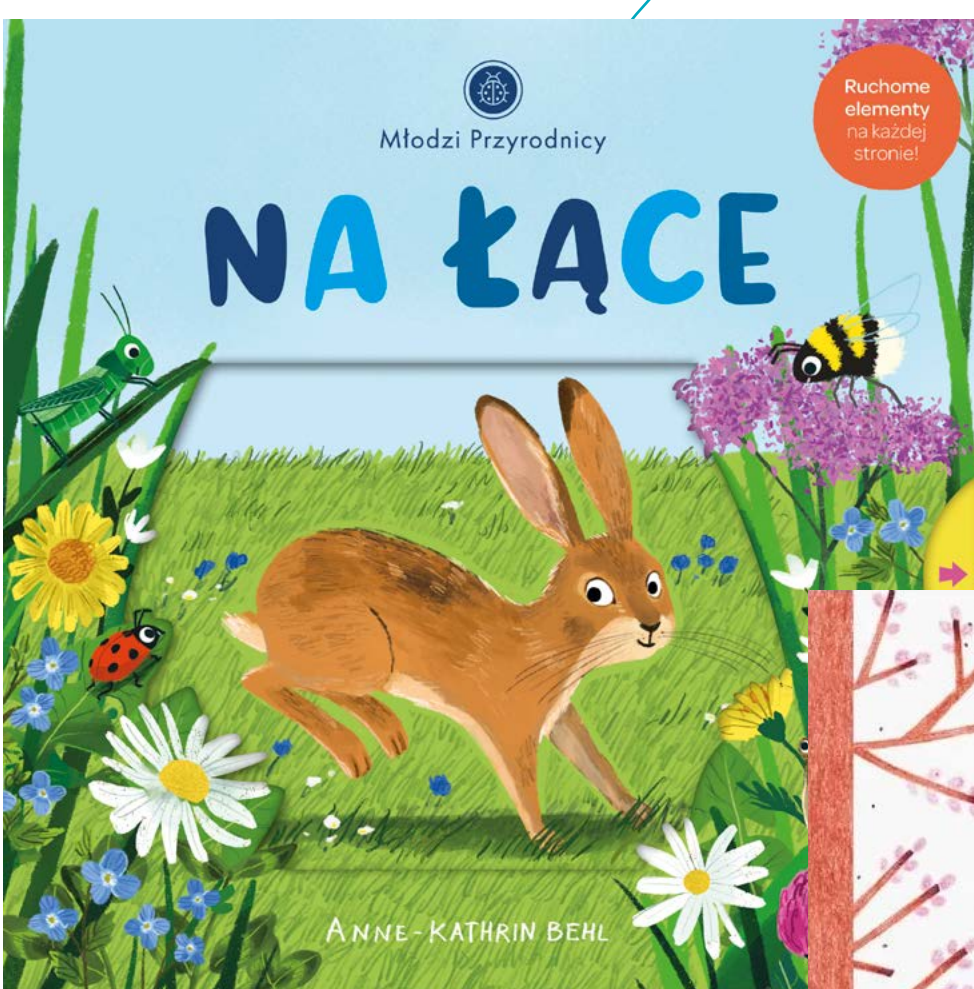
The bonds built through early and regular reading together are invaluable for the future. They build the mental resilience that will enable the child to cope better with life, and be more likely to dare to ask for help in times of difficulty.



**MARIA  
DESKUR**  
President  
of the Universal  
Reading  
Foundation







## Reading develops innovation

Children with early and regular reading experience perform better in mathematics and have better technical competence (as evidenced by research). Their brains have more synaptic connections and, thanks to the books they have read, they have the knowledge base necessary to process data – as a result, they are more competent to innovate. So, paradoxically, it is the regular reading of books on paper from a young age that gives you the competences necessary for healthy functioning in the highly digitised world! I encourage you wholeheartedly!

## FIND OUT MORE

ON THE 'READING DAD' WEBSITE [FPC.ORG.PL/READING-DAD/](https://fpc.org.pl/reading-dad/) YOU CAN DOWNLOAD A FREE BROCHURE "THE SUPERPOWER OF BOOKS #READINGDAD". IT WILL TELL YOU HOW TO GET DOWN TO READING WITH YOUR CHILD, WHAT TO DO AND AT WHAT AGE, WHAT TO AVOID, WHAT BOOKS TO REACH FOR. THE DOWNLOADABLE MATERIALS CAN BE THE START OF PLAYING TOGETHER, TAKING PHOTOS OF READING TOGETHER OR OF THE BOOKS YOU READ.



BECOME INSPIRED AND DECIDE

# #TATAWDOMU (#DADATHOME) – AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARDS PARTNERSHIP AND BALANCE IN LIFE

Ringier Axel Springer has been active in the field of equal opportunities for women for several years. Gender equality is one of the three key pillars of our sustainability strategy. We started with the #ImNotWaiting107Years campaign, whose next iteration was the #FemaleExpertsBase, a project which is extremely important to us – the media. This year we decided to focus on parental equality.



**KAROLINA  
NOWAK-LUŚTYK**  
Sustainability  
Marketing Manager  
at Ringier Axel  
Springer Polska



In Poland, the stereotypical image of the father as the head of the family responsible for household finances and discipline, who has significantly less time for children than the mother, is still firmly rooted.

## The winds of change

For the past few years, this image has clearly been changing in favour of a dad who is present, involved and attentive. The importance of a father's involvement in a child's life from early on is evidenced by research. Psychologists all around the world agree on that matter and

**UNFORTUNATELY, MANY MEN ARE STILL AFRAID OF THE REACTION OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT, EMPLOYER, COLLEAGUES AND FAMILY. HENCE THE IDEA FOR A CAMPAIGN IN WHICH WELL-KNOWN FATHERS SHOW HOW IMPORTANT FATHERHOOD IS AND WHAT THE WORD 'DAD' MEANS TO THEM.**

can list numerous benefits for the offspring resulting from the father's presence. These include better emotional development, self-esteem, social competence, cognitive development, and even better academic performance in the future. The children are more open, which helps them to acquire new competences more quickly, and therefore also more resourceful in life. A child needs both parents from the very beginning. A sense of closeness and systematic bond building. Therefore, a father who is actively present from the first days of a child's life is no longer just a fad, but a common phenomenon in the countries of the European Union.

The benefits of sharing parental responsibilities equally are multidimensional. The gain is not only for the children (although their perspective is paramount here), but also for mum, dad and the employer.

## Campaign launch

That is why we are taking the opportunity to support the idea of equal childcare. We have launched a campaign under the slogan #DadAtHome, which responds to the work-life balance directive implemented in April 2023, granting fathers an individual right to 9 weeks of non-transferable parental leave, among other things. As part of the campaign, we are informing men of their entitlement and encouraging them to take advantage of such leave.

New parental leave arrangements can not only ensure a better relationship between fathers and their children, but also allow men to take over some of the household responsibilities, which will translate into better opportunities for women's self-fulfilment and increased self-esteem.

## Famous examples

Unfortunately, many men are still afraid of the reaction of their environment, employer, colleagues and family. Hence the idea for a campaign in which well-known fathers show how important fatherhood is. The campaign has been joined by Wiktor Zborowski, Damian Michałowski, Krzysztof 'Jankes' Jankowski, Przemysław Saleta, Krzysztof Zalewski and Radosław Pazura, who talk about what the word 'dad' means to them.

With the support of the UN Global Compact and the Share The Care foundation, we want to show that a stay-at-home dad is a game-changer not only for the child, but for the whole family. It's a huge opportunity to change the labour market and to improve the skills of the workforce. It's a social change that will not only refresh relationships in the home over the years, but will also change business, politics and economics. It is not driven by obligation, but by the real needs of citizens who consciously plan their families, thoughtfully and empathetically, with true equality in mind. That is why it is worthwhile for dads to stay at home.



BECOME INSPIRED AND DECIDE

# SETTING OFF IN A FAMILY CAMPERVAN

Parental leave has little in common with annual leave understood as relaxation. On the contrary, it is hard work and makes being behind a desk seem like putting your feet up. Fortunately, there is something you can do to make your parental leave seem positive and even like a holiday. All you need to do is... go on a trip. And a campervan is the perfect solution to achieve this.

## An idea for parental leave

Parental leave can be used in many ways. The most popular is the traditional one, which is simply staying at home. We decided to spend this time a little differently. And so we divided our parental leave to care for our daughter between us. We used the mum's part (about eight months) to adapt to the new reality. We postponed the dad's part and, combining it with an outstanding annual leave and a few weeks of unpaid parental leave, used it to go on an almost six-month campervan trip to Turkey.

## Planning the idea

The idea of a longer campervan trip had been growing in our minds for some time. We knew that sooner or later we would do it. The only thing that needed deciding was the timing. Together, we decided that the period of parental leave would be the ideal time, especially in our professional arrangement (mum is self-employed, dad has a full-time job). So all that remained was to inform the employer of our decision. This is not the easiest thing to do: men who decide to take a career break to look after a child are still looked upon with scepticism.



**PAULINA  
WALCZAK-MATLA  
AND MACIEJ MATLA**

Parents of three, travel enthusiasts, authors of books about Japan and Turkey. They run a blog and social media profiles about family travel "Rodzina w świat". Paulina runs her own business in the travel industry, Maciek works in consulting.







## Where did we go off to?

After making all the necessary arrangements one cloudy December day, we packed up the essentials to our home-on-wheels and set off on an adventure with our two children: our then four-and-a-half-year-old son and our less than one-year-old daughter. We drove ten thousand kilometres in the 1989 campervan we had bought a few months earlier. Parking the van off the beaten track, we visited unique parts of Turkey. We lazed on

**WE FOUND OUT FOR OURSELVES THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO LIVE A LESS STANDARD LIFE AND STILL BE PROFESSIONALLY AND PARENTALLY FULFILLED.**

beaches where the sound of the sea lulled us to sleep. We visited major cities. We admired the balloons in Cappadocia, taking off right next to our campervan. We tried several types of kebab. We ate several kilos of pistachios. We met several travelling families from other countries and heard a whole host of inspiring stories. We found out for ourselves that it is possible to live a less standard life and still be professionally and parentally fulfilled.

## Why is a campervan ideal for travelling with children?

A campervan successfully replaces a house. And, despite appearances, you can actually put a lot into it. Packing for a trip with the whole family can defeat even the best-organised parent. The list of things you should take on a trip of several months seems never-ending. Unlike the space in the suitcase. In a campervan, this problem is virtually non-existent. It is true that you cannot pack the whole house, but you can take the most important things with you. And there is room for the unnecessary items too.

Meals are also no problem in a campervan. Virtually anything can be prepared, which is of great importance for parents of fussy eaters or

Many fathers do not take advantage of the two weeks of paternity leave, so the vision of a voluntary break of several months is completely abstract for many. Although Maciek had already had one break in his career in the form of unpaid childcare leave used for a two-year stay in Japan because of my contract, he still felt uncertain about his decision. Unnecessarily so. Neither leave negatively affected his career progression and his employer responded positively to his request each time. Instead, on his return to work, it turned out that the previously accompanying fear of losing something important during his absence was illusory. Time with the child – special and unrecoverable. It sounds obvious, but it's true.



children with allergies. After all, a visit to a restaurant with small children has little in common with a quiet meal. In a campervan, this is not a problem. Children can make noise and eat without necessarily following the etiquette. Even extending the diet is not a problem, although I admit that wiping bits of tomato from the sofa and eggs from the gaskets of the campervan windows is not the easiest thing to do.

## The drawbacks of travelling by campervan

Before deciding on a campervan trip, it is worth bearing in mind the negative side of it: as soon as you return, you are planning your next trip. Even if, during the trip, we regularly said: never again. Because there was sand in every crevice, because it was messy, because we ran out of water a few times, because the showers were too short, because the space was too cramped for four people...

We felt the same way. After returning from Turkey, however, all we could think about was how to go on a longer trip again. Especially as we had carried out a small refurbishment of the campervan and our appetite grew even more. We took advantage of a change of job and set off once again. This time for two months and in the opposite direction: to Spain and Portugal. Once again, we found out that travelling in a camper van is the perfect way for a family to spend time together.

Now we are once again considering where to set off on our next trip, this time as a family of five. The fact that we will is more than certain.

## Read about it in our book

We described our journey in our book "Turkey off the beaten track, an all exclusive journey through the land of çay and baklava". This book is about making dreams come true despite adversity. About living for six months in a campervan with two young children. About discovering Turkey: its culture, cuisine and customs, and getting to know its people. About vanlife (i.e. living full-time or part-time in a vehicle), the people, the beauty and the hardships of travel.

The book published by Pascal will be released on 12 July. You can pre-order it today (with a dedication and a surprise) on <https://rodzinawswiat.pl/sklep/turcja/>





BECOME INSPIRED AND DECIDE

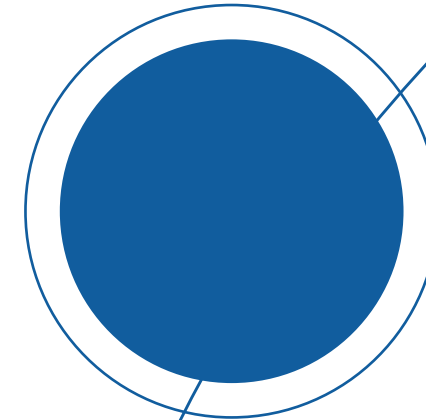
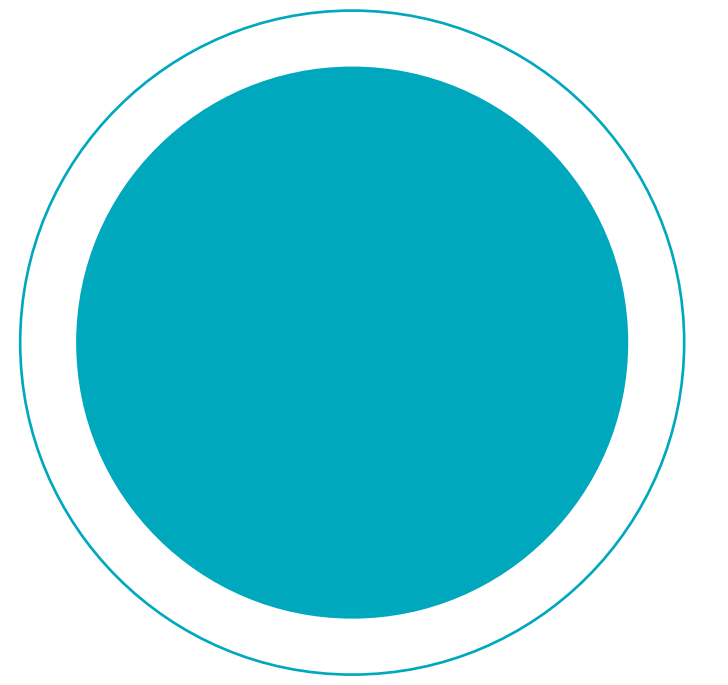
# WHAT WILL CONVINCE EMPLOYERS TO SUBSIDISE MATERNITY PAY FOR FATHERS?

One of the main reasons why men do not take parental leave is financial. The most common argument is: "I earn more than my partner, so financially it is not viable for us."



**KAROLINA  
ANDRIAN**

President of the Share the Care Foundation, who for over two years carried out advocacy activities for the implementation of the EU work-life balance directive in Poland. She is an activist for equal opportunities for women.





It's quite simple: the household budget will suffer more from a father's parental leave, because the one who earns more loses more. Interestingly, this is pointed out not only by men, but also by their female partners. Another barrier indicated by men is the form of employment. Men are much more likely than women to opt for B2B contracts, optimising tax and social security contributions. As much as the form of employment of men requires more discussion and changes, the financial barriers pointed out by those on employment contracts can be removed quite simply. Employers can opt for 100% salary subsidies, which means topping up a man's salary by 30% for two months.

**SUBSIDISED PARENTAL LEAVE PAY FOR FATHERS IS ALSO A VERY ATTRACTIVE EMPLOYEE BENEFIT. IT CAN PROVIDE AN ADVANTAGE TO THE EMPLOYER IN THE LABOUR MARKET.**

### How to persuade your employer to do this?

In Poland, there are more benefits available for mothers than for fathers. Women receive 20 weeks of maternity leave paid at 100%, men receive two weeks of paternity leave paid at the same level. As you can see, the difference is significant. Parental leave is paid at 70% for both mum and dad. However, women can average their maternity and parental leave allowance and receive 81.5%. Men cannot do so as their period of leave paid at 100% is too short.

The fairness argument may work, but it is not the only one available to the father. It is worth pointing out that during parental leave a man can learn many skills that he can later use at work. And most importantly, fathers on parental leave make it easier for women to return to work, which is important for an economy suffering from a labour shortage. Subsidised

parental leave pay for fathers is also a very attractive employee benefit. It can provide an advantage to the employer in the labour market.

### How can the employer finance that?

When an employee-father decides to take nine weeks of parental leave, the financing of his salary is taken over by the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS). The employer thus retains the salary of this employee in their budget. Employers will rarely choose to hire a temporary employee to cover the position for nine weeks. This is basically unfeasible given the recruitment or onboarding time.

What then can be done with the nine weeks of salary saved by a dad going on parental leave? 30% can be used to subsidise the salary of the father on parental leave, so that his salary during this time is 100%. The remainder of the salary can be used to provide extra allowances for employees who will undertake the employee's duties during his absence.

### What can the employer gain?

Quite a lot, actually. Firstly, the employer eliminates the financial barrier for new fathers described above. Secondly, the company gains a benefit that is very attractive for employees, which enables men to exercise their rights and fulfil their needs also in the area of being a parent and a partner. Thirdly, while on parental leave the employee-father acquires a number of new skills. Last but not least, through such actions, the employer builds parental equality in the organisation, promoting partnership between men and women, raising men's awareness of their role in levelling the playing field for women in the labour market, dispelling gender stereotypes operating in the area of family and work, and building a more diverse and inclusive workplace. No one needs to be convinced of the benefits of diversity anymore.

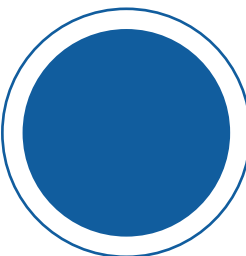
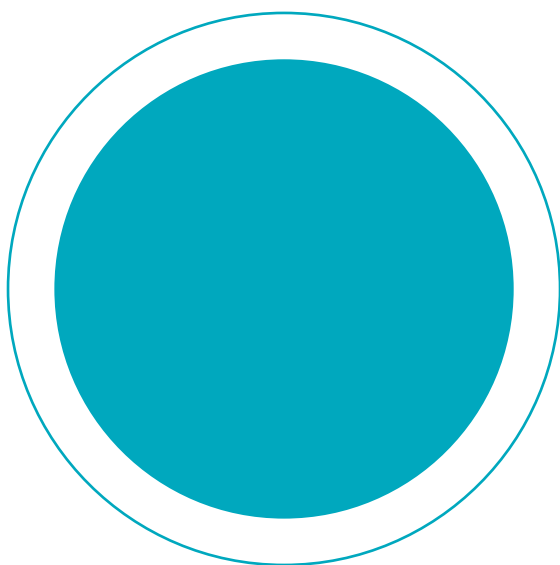




BECOME INSPIRED AND DECIDE

# BROWSE, LISTEN, READ

Books, portals for fathers and blogs written by fathers for fathers are a proven and widely accessible source of information needed when caring for and raising children. There are more and more of them! Here are a few worth recommending.



## 9 PORTALS FOR FATHERS

- 1

**THE MASCULINUM FOUNDATION**  
[masculinum.org](https://masculinum.org)  
Specialist articles for men.
- 2

**DAD HERO**  
[dadhero.pl](https://dadhero.pl)  
A lifestyle portal for fathers.
- 3

**FATHER\_ING DAILY**  
[fatheringdaily.com](https://fatheringdaily.com)  
Blog and Facebook profile run by a psychologist-dad, where each post is supported by scientific evidence. Fatherhood from a scientific and practical point of view.

- 4

**OJCOWSKA STRONA MOCY**  
[www.ojcowskastronamocy.pl](https://www.ojcowskastronamocy.pl)  
Blog and podcast about fatherhood.
- 5

**TATO NET-CZYTELNIA**  
[tato.net/czytelnia](https://tato.net/czytelnia)  
Specialist articles for men.
- 6

**TATA W PRACY**  
[www.tatawpracy.pl](https://www.tatawpracy.pl)  
Blog of a working dad.

- 7

**BLOG OJCIEC**  
[www.blogojciec.pl](https://www.blogojciec.pl)  
Blog and podcast. One of the most popular parenting blogs. Advice, ideas, inspiration and a lot of empathy for parents.
- 8

**TEAM RODZINA**  
[teamrodzina.pl](https://teamrodzina.pl)  
A parenting portal focusing on parents rather than children. It contains texts about the relationships between children, as well as parents and children, and the need for fulfilment in other spheres of life, and texts on professional, financial, legal and social subjects. A large knowledge base on fathers rights.

- 9

**URLOP OJCOWSKI INFO (PATERNITY LEAVE INFO)**  
[www.urlopojcowski.info/urlop-ojcowski.html](https://www.urlopojcowski.info/urlop-ojcowski.html)  
This is a portal that was created to promote paternity leave. It inspires and persuades men to be more involved in parenting. It contains practical legal advice, as well as interesting interviews with fathers.



**MAŁGORZATA ADAMOWICZ**

At the Share the Care Foundation, she is in charge of social media and follows everything that comes up about fatherhood online and offline.



## 9 PODCASTS FOR FATHERS

Fathers want to talk and listen about parenting too, sometimes seriously, sometimes a bit in jest. We're presenting a compilation of various podcasts produced by fathers. There is plenty to choose from.

1

### SUPERTATA TV

Broadcast on various aspects of parenting on Polish Radio Dzieciom – Parent's Zone. A podcast coming soon.

2

### OJCOWSKA STRONA MOCY

Jarek Kania's podcast. In it, he shares his experiences and knowledge and seeks answers on how to become a better parent.

3

### TATA NA MACIERZYŃSKIM

t(Dad on maternity leave)  
Stories from the life of Tomasz Rusek, a dad of two daughters, when he was on maternity and parental leave.

4

### FATHER\_ING

Podcast presented by psychologist Dr Kamil Janowicz. Parenting from a scientific and practical point of view.

5

### TATA & DZIECIAKI

(Dad & Kids)  
Dad talks about his

everyday life together with his children Marcelina and Franek.

6

### DADDY KRACZE – WRONCAST DLA OJCÓW

A podcast created by two fathers: sportsman and journalist Andrzej Wrona and HR professional and influencer Łukasz Dominiak, known in social media as Who's Your Daddy. Conversations with interesting guests on more and less serious topics.

7

### TATA ODPOWIADA

(Dad replies)  
Maciej Siwiński talks about the joys and dilemmas of being a dad.

8

### OJCOSTWO PO MOJEMU

Podcast for fathers and fathers-to-be, a subjective diary based on knowledge and experience.

9

### PODCAST OJCA

Run by one of the first father-bloggers – Kamil Nowak known from Blog Ojciec. It's about children, parents and other things.

## 9 BOOKS FROM FATHERS TO FATHERS

### “POZWÓL DZIECKU BYĆ” (“LET THE CHILD BE”) TOMASZ SMACZNY

[pozwoledgekubyc.pl](http://pozwoledgekubyc.pl)

The first Polish self-help manual in the spirit of RIE parenting. This parenting method developed over 75 years is based on deep respect for the child and trust in his or her abilities. The book familiarises Polish readers with this inspiring parenting path, which the author has been exploring for some



time with joy and curiosity. It is dedicated first and foremost to the parents and carers of children under seven. The assumptions of RIE discussed in the book will help you support your child in developing competencies of the future.



### „TATA NIE MA SIŁY” (“DADDY IS EXHAUSTED”) BŁAŻEJ STARYSZAK AND KRZYSZTOF WIŚNIEWSKI

[natuli.pl/pl/p/Tata-nie-ma-sily/21775](http://natuli.pl/pl/p/Tata-nie-ma-sily/21775)

A hilarious book written by two fathers and improv actors – Błażej Staryszak and Krzysztof Wiśniewski. You can laugh your head off, but also find a piece of your parenting reality in these funny situations. You won't find advice on how to have more strength to live as parents of toddlers, but you will see your reality with humour and distance.





## “EKSTREMALNE OJCOSTWO” (“EXTREME FATHERHOOD”) WOJTEK OLSZEWSKI

[wojtekolaszewski.pl](http://wojtekolaszewski.pl)

Wojtek is a dad of six who put all his vast fathering knowledge on paper. The book will tell you how to raise a child with self-esteem, how to be consistent and how to look after your authority. And, most of all, how to find time for all of this. As a dad with 20 years of experience, Wojtek must know that!



## “MY DOLL” ANNE LISE HEURTIER AND MAUREEN POIGNONEC

[natuli.pl/pl/p/Bawie-sie-w-tate.-Otwarcie-na-swiat/23713](http://natuli.pl/pl/p/Bawie-sie-w-tate.-Otwarcie-na-swiat/23713)

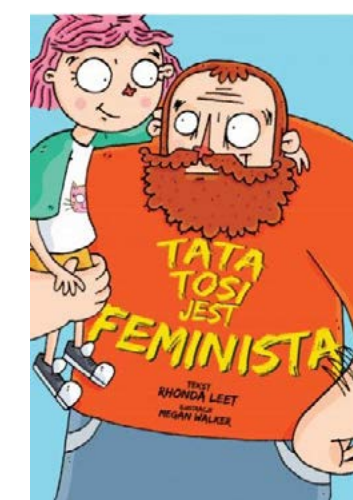
A book ostensibly for children, but really for dads. It teaches us that tenderness, gentleness, support, care, kindness and great fun can be the qualities of every father.



## “FATHER FIGURE: HOW TO BE A FEMINIST DAD” JORDAN SHAPIRO

[tantis.pl/nowe-ojcostwo-jak-byc-feministycznym](http://tantis.pl/nowe-ojcostwo-jak-byc-feministycznym)

A book especially for fathers of girls (but not only!). It is not a light and witty handbook. Shapiro gives us food for thought and can be heavy going at times. The reading urges you to give your children the freedom to express themselves and their thoughts. It also redefines the role of the father. It turns out that we don't have to be “bosses” of our children 24/7. And that we are not always right. And that there is more to being a dad than fooling around with your children.



## “FRANNY’S FATHER IS A FEMINIST” RHONDA LEET, MEGAN WALKER

[lubimyczytac.pl/ksiazka/4974029/tata-tosi-jest-feminista](http://lubimyczytac.pl/ksiazka/4974029/tata-tosi-jest-feminista)

This is a simple story showing the relationship between a daughter and a dad who is not afraid to break social and gender rules so that his daughter grows up to be a smart, confident and independent person. Franny’s dad is a prime example that men are feminists too, and proves that male feminism plays a key role in raising girls and supporting young women.



## “MY SMARTY” JAREK KANIA

[mojesmarty.pl](http://mojesmarty.pl)

Something more than a book about being safe online. Smarty is a digital education tool, which – contrary to most parenting guides – adults can (or even should) use together with their children. A practical guide to the digital world for the whole family.



## “THE SEXUAL LIFE OF PARENTS” ZOSIA AND DAWID RZEPECCY

[natuli.pl/pl/p/Zycie-seksualne-rodzicow/22734](http://natuli.pl/pl/p/Zycie-seksualne-rodzicow/22734)

A book for all couples experiencing difficulties and those who think it will never happen to them. For those stuck in the middle of a parenting revolution and for those planning to start a family. Married couple Zofia and Dawid Rzepeccy are therapists specialising in relationships and their intimate development. In the book, they describe how to build lasting and happy relationships while having children.

AND WHICH BOOK HAS INFLUENCED YOUR FATHERHOOD? WRITE TO US AND LET US KNOW AT [WITAJ@SHARETHECARE.PL](mailto:witaj@sharethecare.pl). WE WILL INCLUDE IT IN OUR NEXT LIST!



# TO BE PRO IN GENERAL TERMS MEANS TO HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOMEONE OR SOMETHING. WHAT MIGHT IT MEAN IN A CORPORATE CONTEXT?

The Share the Care Foundation has coined the term PRO EMPLOYER for the organisations which support parental equality in the workplace. It is important that companies' activities which go beyond the standard perception of childcare involvement are promoted in the labour market. We are pleased that more and more companies are recognising that the employee-dad has responsibilities which go beyond the traditional role of breadwinner. Today, fathers want to be actively involved in raising their children and companies are giving them the opportunity to do so through a variety of measures, such as benefits and additional paid leave.

Research shows that these activities need to be well communicated to encourage employees who are fathers to take advantage of them. Only then will they have a positive effect for dads, the family, society and the employer. Employee loyalty is a profit in itself. Learn about the good practices of PRO EMPLOYERS and become inspired.





# DAD, WHO DO YOU TALK TO ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN? ABOUT A FATHERS' GROUP FOR BANK EMPLOYEES

When a child is born, our heads are filled with questions – how to take proper care of the baby, do we do this or that well, is our daughter or son's reaction to a given situation normal? But there are also questions which we often ask ourselves – am I the only one who's so tired, am I the only one who does not always know what's good for my child, am I ever going to regain a bit of the independence I had before the birth, am I the only one who argues with my wife/husband/partner about parenting issues every now and then? Women have many opportunities to talk about this. For men, this space is lacking, although the need is definitely there.

This need gave rise to a wonderful initiative at Bank BNP Paribas, which we called 'Dad, you can bank on it'.

## Dad can bank on it

Konrad Siedlecki, a dad of two, spontaneously started talking to his male work colleagues about parenting. It soon became apparent that there was a great need among fathers to share the experiences connected with childcare and to talk about fatherhood in a male only group. A fathers'

group was formed to plan and carry out our organisation's activities for fathers but also for parents in general.

As part of these activities, fathers are actively engaged in sharing their knowledge. They organise webinars and workshops, which address the parental needs associated with both younger and older children.

Taking the male perspective into account when discussing parenthood is important and inspirational for both fathers and mothers. Without it, it is difficult to build a partnership, which seems to be an important and desirable value in today's world. The research conducted by CBOS in December 2020 shows that already 58 percent of Polish men and women want to implement a partnership-based family model in their lives.

Bank BNP Paribas is the bank of a changing world, which is why we join in activities promoting gender equality, openness and diversity. And the best lesson in diversity we can teach our children is to have both parents actively involved in raising them and supporting them in their everyday lives. Because mums and dads do many things differently. That does not mean 'better' or 'worse'. Just different.



**MAŁGORZATA PETRU**  
Diversity & Inclusion  
Manager, Diversity  
Officer at Bank BNP  
Paribas.



# PARTNERSHIP AND THE POWER OF DIVERSITY

What does the bringing up of children equally by both parents have to do with organisational culture and diversity in a company? At ING Hubs Poland, we know that it's like a system of communicating vessels. Trust, the feeling that we are understood, and are supported in matters that are important to us, are now fundamental values in both our private and professional lives. These, until recently seemingly separate, areas of our lives are coming together.

Some time ago, as part of the Diversity Group for Women operating at ING Hubs Poland, we asked ourselves a number of questions, such as: what action can we take to support women in their everyday lives, and what can we do to make them comfortable working in our organisation. One of these areas turned out to be partnership and the need to build awareness of how partnership translates into quality of both private and work lives for both parents.

## Partnership, meaning...

The family model based on partnership means that we are moving away from a stereotypical perception of gender roles, recognising that mothers and fathers have equal rights as parents and as employees. Our strategy, which is the result of internal consultation and research into the needs of working parents in our organisation, is in line with what was the overarching

intention of the European Commission when implementing the work-life balance directive, namely the need to improve the situation of women in the labour market by increasing men's involvement in the care and upbringing of children. Luckily, it turns out that partnership is just as important for men.

To mark Father's Day and the recent implementation of the directive in Poland, we spoke to some of our employees about what partnership and fatherhood mean to them and how they see themselves in the role of a father.

## Partnership and involved fatherhood

*– For me, being a dad is one of the most important roles in life. I'm constantly working on being an involved family member. Sometimes my daughter's issues seem trivial, especially after a long day at work, but then I quickly remind myself that for her nothing is more important. This is how I approach*



**ANETA  
SARNIK-SAWICKA**

Diversity Group for  
Women Leader ING  
Hubs Poland



**MARTA BASA**

Employer Branding  
and Diversity &  
Inclusion Expert ING  
Hubs Poland



*almost every issue she comes to me with* – says Karol Wojtczak, Head of Transaction Monitoring Operations at ING Hubs Poland, dad of 12-year-old Blanka.

He recalls that he was with his daughter from the moment she was born, which was four weeks before her due date. It was then that he realised what an enormous effort it takes to care for a child from the first days of life, when you are terribly tired yourself.

*– Back then we fully appreciated the power of partnership and mutual support, which helped us at the very beginning. 12 years after that event, partnership is still key to everything we do. It allows us to fulfil ourselves in our private and professional lives and Blanka is able to succeed at school and follow her passions* – Karol points out. He adds that partnership allows him to keep the right perspective and has taught him that ‘one size does not fit all’.

## Partnership and mutual trust

For Usman Iftikhar, Transaction Monitoring Optimisation Area Lead at ING Hubs Poland, a dad of two little boys, partnership is about mutual trust, respect and a sense of shared responsibility for the child and family’s development. However, he emphasises that developing a strong partnership based on trust takes time and patience.

According to him, involved fatherhood means that you appreciate your children more, are more aware of their feelings and at the same time you are more involved in their daily activities and conversations. Usman Iftikhar stresses that what he gives his children today will stay with them for the rest of their lives, as it is not easy to change the patterns we experienced at home.

*– Our behaviour as parents directly affects who our children will be when they grow up. This is a huge responsibility* – he adds.

## A lesson in diversity

Parents cooperating together and being jointly involved in raising their offspring also benefits the children. This is a real lesson in diversity.

*– My wife and I have slightly different approaches to various things, we prefer different games and different ways of spending our free time. Therefore, we*

**INVOLVED FATHERHOOD MEANS THAT YOU APPRECIATE YOUR CHILDREN MORE, ARE MORE AWARE OF THEIR FEELINGS AND AT THE SAME TIME YOU ARE MORE INVOLVED IN THEIR DAILY ACTIVITIES AND CONVERSATIONS. WHAT YOU GIVE THEM TODAY WILL STAY WITH THEM FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES.**

*can complement each other. It gives my daughter the opportunity to have a broader view of the world, to learn about herself and her surroundings without labelling it as girly or tomboyish* – says Karol Krupnik, Expert Lead Transformation at ING Hubs Poland, dad of 7-year old Matylda.

Krzysztof Andrzejewski, Expert Lead Transformation at ING Hubs Poland, dad of two, also pays attention to the quality of his relationship with his partner. *– Knowing that my wife is aware that she can always count on me is very motivating. I believe this gives her peace of mind and a lot of space to develop her own dreams and attain her goals* – says Krzysiek.

He firmly believes in parental equality and therefore tries to be present in all aspects of his children’s upbringing. In this way, he learns to recognise their needs, understands them better and can be friends with them, rather than just being their father.





# GOOD PRACTICES BY EMPLOYERS

## NATWEST POLAND



Since January this year, we have offered our employees an additional 100% paid partner's leave of nine calendar weeks, which can be taken in whole or in several parts until the child reaches the age of eight. The leave is granted to the other parent or guardian, which can also be the female partner of the child's mother in the case of same-sex couples.

Flexible working hours are also an important aspect of our measures to support parents. Employees can start work between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. and finish between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

### Why is it worth doing?

Parental equality is embedded in our organisation's values, such as inclusivity. We support our employees in every aspect of their lives, creating opportunities and giving them the tools to pursue their professional and personal goals. We currently employ 655 employees who have children, hence supporting parental equality is crucial for us. We want both parents to be able to spend the same amount of time with their child. We offer them 100% pay during their absence. This solution not only levels the playing field between men and women in their roles as parents, but is also financially neutral. Following the implementation of the work-life balance directive, the company subsidises 30% of the 9-week leave for the other parent, thus giving fathers/carers the opportunity to actually use it.

This is how we show that supporting parents is just as important to us as supporting social minorities such as LGBT+.

### I recommend this

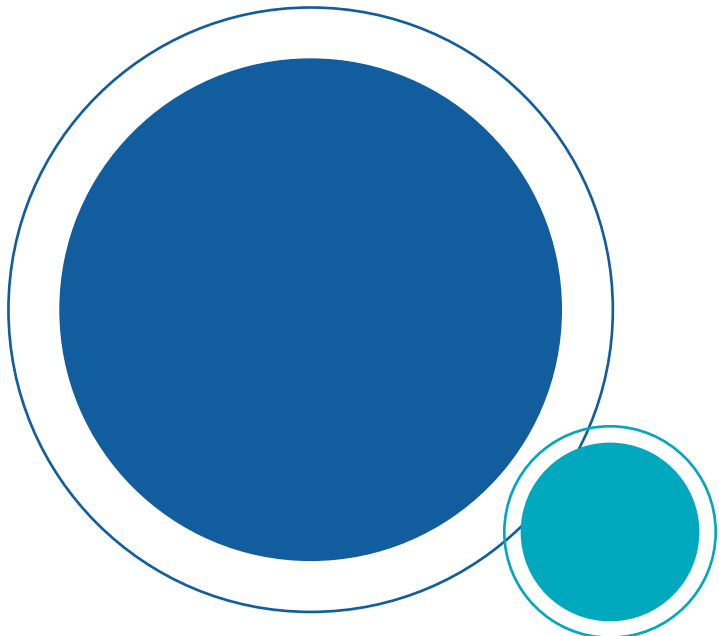
*I would extend my parental leave even though I enjoy my job. It was a time full of peace, love, laughter and fun. There were difficult moments too – after all, dirty nappies and sleepless nights returned yet again. However, whatever happened, I always had my wife's support, and any difficulties disappeared when a smile came over my children's faces. I will strongly encourage fathers to take parental leave. It is a bond that stays for life. For me, it was a time that I needed, but I didn't know it.*



**TOMEK BECZEK**  
Customer Service &  
Operations Unit Leader  
Anti-money Laundering



# GOOD PRACTICES BY EMPLOYERS



## PROCTER & GAMBLE



P&G's intention is to create a culture of sharing that enables both parents to be involved in caring for their children. A culture that shifts the perception of caregiving as a gender-related responsibility (primary caregiving is commonly associated with the role of the mother) to one that is independent of whether one is female or male. A culture that recognises that both parents have the same opportunities to care for their children while carrying out professional duties.

The #Sharethecare policy meets these objectives. Our programme supporting fathers was launched in March 2019 and has been extremely successful. It has already benefited more than 340 fathers from all P&G sites in Poland.

Due to a change in regulations in April 2023, the policy for Poland has been adapted to the new legislation. Fathers are entitled to two weeks of statutory paternity leave to be taken until the child turns 12 months old, and nine weeks of parental leave to be taken until the end of the calendar year in which the child turns six.

### I recommend this

*I have always dreamt of being a fully-fledged and involved parent. The extended paternity leave during my son's first year of life helped me and*



**ADRIAN KŁYSIK**

Initiatives Start-Up  
and Technical Support  
Group Leader in  
Aleksandrów Plant

*my family a lot in making this vision happen. It allowed me to share time with Maks from his first smiles, through his tentative steps to his adaptation in nursery, which built his sense of security and our unique relationship. I am proud to say that this leave has allowed me to step out of the role of a 'helping' parent, it has enabled me to fully share in the care and upbringing of my child, and made my wife's return to work smooth, without undue stress.*

### I recommend this

*I am a new dad and I took advantage of the six weeks of paternity leave provided by P&G. This allowed me to help my wife and spend a lot more time with our little daughter Liliana, which has had a very positive impact on our family relationship. It also allowed me to better understand what the role of a father is all about. This was particularly important for me as Liliana is our first child. Each of the extra days offered by P&G deepened our bond. It made me realise how important it is to balance being a father and a husband, in a flurry of new responsibilities which, as it turned out, were sometimes beyond us.*



**RAFAŁ DEMBOWSKI**

Finance Director for  
Central Europe, P&G





# GOOD PRACTICES BY EMPLOYERS

## PHILIP MORRIS IN POLAND



PHILIP MORRIS  
INTERNATIONAL

Philip Morris in Poland has been actively supporting working parents for several years now, e.g. through solutions under the Happy Parents programme. For the first month after returning from parental leave, parents can work part-time while retaining the right to full pay. The company also offered new fathers who decided to take parental leave the opportunity to receive a 100% salary top-up for the full eight weeks. Since 26 April this year, i.e. since the entry into force of the work-life balance directive and the amendment to the Labour Code, the period of subsidy has been extended (in line with the new regulations) to nine weeks.

The programme is addressed to all parents working at Philip Morris in Poland. The solutions are available to both women and men. The tools available are designed to help them decide how to share childcare responsibilities and support them in returning to the office and combining work duties with their new roles.

### Why is it worth doing?

The Happy Parents programme was developed in response to real needs. Before introducing specific solutions, we asked employees of both genders about their expectations and concerns regarding childcare and subsequent balancing of parenting and work duties. In response to men's concerns about financial issues, we decided that parental leave taken by the father would be

paid at 100% for eight weeks. Following the recent amendment to the Labour Code and the extension of the leave to nine weeks, we decided to continue with this solution and therefore, from 26 April this year, we have been topping up the other parent's salary to 100% for nine weeks.

The parents employed at PMI also voiced their concerns about returning to work after an extended absence. Therefore, we start the planning process associated with returning to the organisation six months before the return date. In addition, those on parental leave receive an annual performance-related pay rise. We have also ensured that those returning to work from parental leave are given a soft landing in the first month. During this time, they can work part-time but receive full pay. All these solutions stem from our firm belief that without equality at home, there will be no equality in business. That is why, as a company, we prioritise parenting equality and support our employees in their childcare decisions.



**EWA SOBIECH**

Manager People  
Engagement and  
Inclusion & Diversity  
in Philip Morris  
Poland

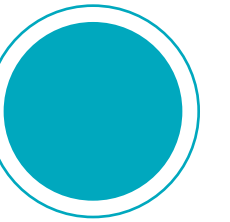
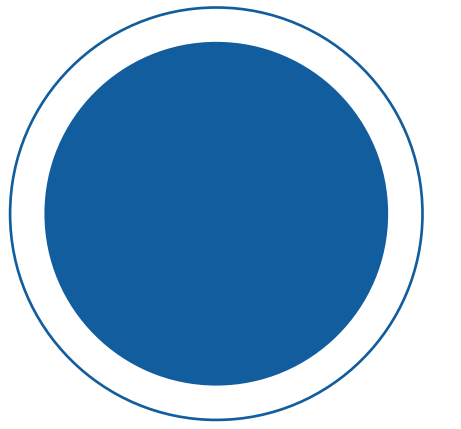


*Thanks to projects tailored to the needs of employees such as Happy Parents, we can support parents in their parenting decisions on the one hand, and simply support parenting on the other.*





# GOOD PRACTICES BY EMPLOYERS



## MASTERCARD

Since January 2021, Mastercard has been offering an additional – over and above the legal entitlement – fully-paid 16-week leave for parents (including fathers). It can be used flexibly within 12 months from the birth or adoption of a child. It can be taken both by parents who had a baby and guardians who adopted a child. The benefit is available for all families – irrespective of whether the parents are in a formal relationship.

## IKEA

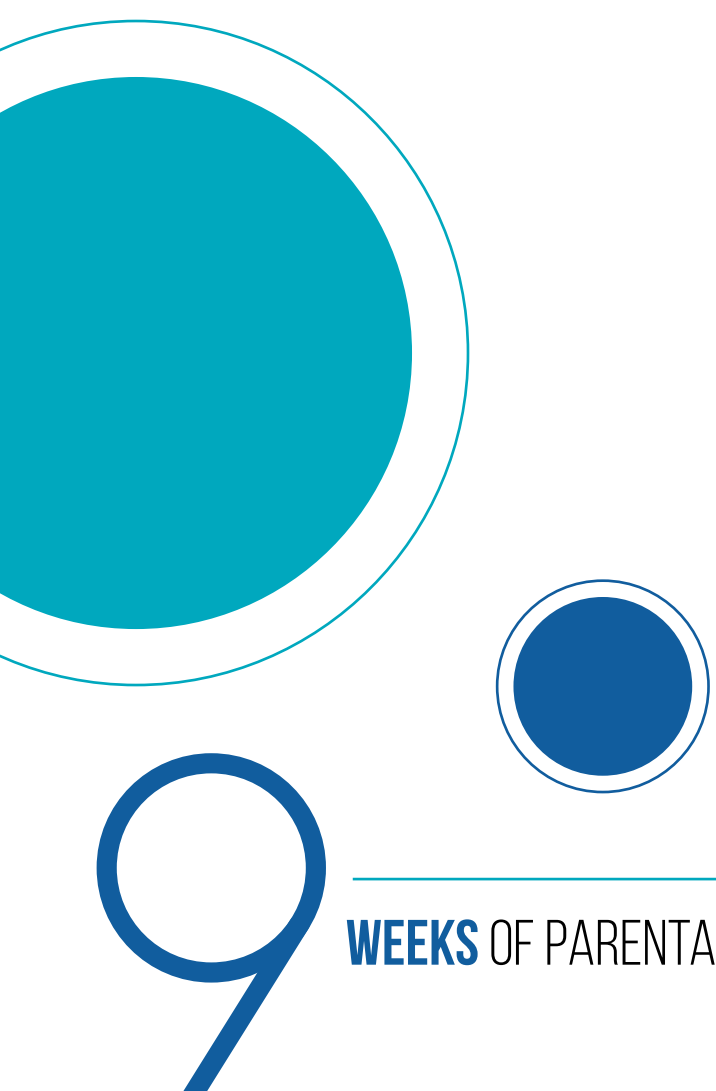
IKEA Retail in Poland is one of the first organisations to introduce an additional month of paid paternity leave, thus supporting gender balance in caring responsibilities. The organisation monitors the gender pay gap on an ongoing basis and conducts an evaluation survey once a year. In the case of pay inequalities between male and female employees with the same or similar roles, an individual plan is prepared to close the gap. This usually concerns longer absences, such as parental leave.

## NOVARTIS

From 1 January 2020, Novartis has been offering 18-week fully-paid parental leave. The benefit can be used by fathers after the birth or adoption of a child or obtaining the status of a foster family. The introduction of this solution not only allows parents to enjoy the time with their new family member, but also makes it easier for them to reconcile work with parenting, upbringing and caring. The leave is available for all Novartis Group employees hired under an employment contract, including those employed part-time.

## SNOWFLAKE

The company ensures that employees can take parental leave. This policy reflects company values and responds to the needs of new parents. The organisation offers a 12-week leave which can be used by the parents who do not give birth. Moreover, employees have access to a range of free services supporting parents, such as Care-Express. This is a network of babysitters where the company guarantees 80 hours of childcare services per year. Employees can also expect to receive a layette from Snowflake! The 12-week leave can be used at any time during the first year following the birth, adoption or admission into foster care.





# GOOD PRACTICES BY EMPLOYERS

## NESTLÉ POLSKA

Nestlé is committed to a parent-friendly working environment. The company offers four weeks of fully-paid additional leave for fathers, available within a year from the day of birth or adoption of a child. Nestlé employees have the right to flexible working hours, shorter Fridays and preferential medical care packages for the whole family. All company parents are also entitled to an additional day for childcare. The additional leave for fathers can be used by any person who cares for a newborn or adopted child after it arrives in the family. This may include – but is not limited to – the biological or adoptive parent, the life partner and the child's legal guardian.

## CISCO

The company offers the “Supporting Care Giver” programme, which is an additional fully-paid leave of two weeks for those who are entitled to paternity leave, or four weeks for those who are not. This benefit can be used until the child turns one. In addition, the company facilitates the return to work for parents who have been on longer leave, such as unpaid childcare leave. The “Back to Business Inclusive Community” initiative helps to make the return as smooth and seamless as possible.

The “Supporting Care Giver” programme is addressed to all employees who have become parents, regardless of gender, and the “Back to Business Inclusive Community” is aimed at all employees returning to work after an extended break.

## NOKIA SOLUTIONS AND NETWORKS

The company is committed to ensuring that employees can freely combine work with other roles in their lives. The wellbeing of female and male employees is important to the organisation, which is why it offers the following solutions to parents and child carers:

- three months of paid father's leave,
- parenting skills development training,
- kindergarten and crèche on company premises, subsidised by the employer,
- subsidised nanny/crèche/kindergarten,
- flexible working hours,
- webinars and workshops,
- possibility to participate in the Employee Resources Group,
- Personal Support Service,
- remote work option,
- subsidised camps for children.

These arrangements are available to

all parents with a permanent contract of employment. The ‘New Child Leave’ is available to fathers and carers of adopted children with at least one year's service.



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