



YOUR GUIDE TO PARENTAL LEAVE

in the non-government education sector



CONGRATULATIONS



As you take time out of the workforce during this exciting stage of your life, our union is here to support you along your journey.

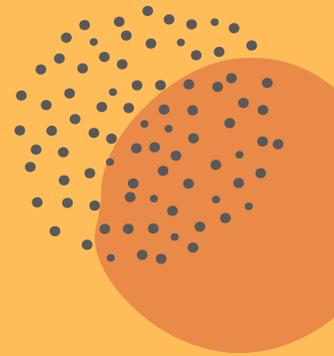
Our Industrial Team is available to help as you access leave entitlements, consider returning to work, request flexible work arrangements, take additional time out of the workforce or navigate any other workplace issues.

Unfortunately, it is common for members to face industrial issues during this time. We strongly encourage you to maintain your union membership so we can support you every step of the way.

Over the years, union members have won many working conditions to support new parents (which we'll share with you in this booklet) but there's still a long way to go to help close caring and financial gaps - particularly for women.

Our union is committed to fighting for better outcomes for working parents and your ongoing membership helps us in that fight.

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CONNECT WITH OUR UNION



CALL US

1800 177 938 (QLD) 1800 351 996 (NT)



EMAIL US

SUPPORT QUERY: INDUSTRIAL@IEUQNT.ORG.AU
GENERAL QUERY: ENQUIRIES@IEUQNT.ORG.AU



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

WWW.IEUQNT.ORG.AU



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YOUR MEMBER BENEFITS CONTINUE



While parental leave means your work is on hold, that's not the case for your IEU member benefits!

We'll continue:

- bargaining for better wages and conditions
- providing our expert legal and industrial advice
- sharing latest union news
- offering quality professional development, and
- connecting you with member benefit organisations like Teachers' Union Health, NGS Super and UnionShopper.



Is it time to update your email address?

Let us know the best way to stay in touch with you or update your details via our website.

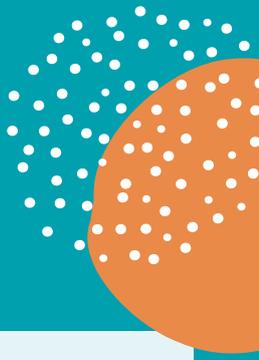
Make sure to let us know your leave dates so we can adjust your membership fees!



MEMBERSHIP FEES:

While all your member benefits remain, your fees will reduce as your salary reduces. Fees while you're on unpaid leave are less than \$5 a fortnight!

HOW OUR INDUSTRIAL TEAM CAN HELP



Our Industrial Team has decades of collective experience in providing trusted advice and support to members.

There are many issues you might need our advice on, but the most common ones are:

- *Job share and flexible work arrangements*
- *Rights and obligations when returning to work*
- *Becoming pregnant while on parental leave*
- *Accessing paid parental leave*
(both employer-funded and government-funded)
- *Teacher registration and professional development requirements*
- *Redundancy*
- *Notice periods for resignation*
- *Support for breastfeeding and expressing at work*
- *Hours of duty or timetable problems upon return to work*

Our Industrial Team can also provide advice and support if you experience any complications during pregnancy and want to discuss how these impact your work arrangements and industrial entitlements.



1800 177 938 (QLD)
1800 351 996 (NT)



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@IEUQNT.ORG.AU

STAY IN TOUCH WITH THE PROFESSION

Our union offers a calendar of Professional Development (PD) and training opportunities, as well as other member events.

Members have told us that attending PD or training sessions helps them to feel better connected with their profession. Our PD and training can also help you to meet your registration requirements.

The opportunity to catch up with colleagues at member events can also support you to maintain a professional network during your time away from the workplace.

Our union offers scheduled events, as well as online sessions that can be completed from the comfort of your home.

Additional PD opportunities are available through our Beginning Educators Network (BEnet) if you are a teacher member in your first five years.



VIEW OUR UNION'S CALENDAR OF UPCOMING PD AND OTHER EVENTS VIA OUR WEBSITE.

WHAT TYPE OF LEAVE IS AVAILABLE TO ME?

The parental leave available to you will depend on your workplace, but the good news is IEUA-QNT members have won enhanced leave entitlements in most sectors.

For most members, this means you will be able to access parental leave from your employer as well as government-funded parental leave.

This leave is available to you as the 'primary caregiver' of your child. There is also 'spousal' leave available to your partner in most employment sectors.



What happens to other entitlements while you're on parental leave?

Any period of paid parental leave is considered as 'service'. This means your super, long service and other leave will continue to accrue. Your classification level stays the same.

In most workplaces, super is not paid on unpaid parental leave, although we recently won this in NT Catholic schools and we're fighting for it in our other sectors.

LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS BY EMPLOYER SECTOR



	Primary caregiver leave	Spousal leave
QLD Catholic schools	14 weeks	10 days
QLD Lutheran schools	14 weeks	5 days
QLD Anglican schools	12 weeks	5 days
QLD PMSA schools	15 weeks	5 days
QLD Christian Community Ministry (CCM) schools	6 weeks	3 days
NT Catholic schools	14 weeks	5 days
NT Lutheran schools	14 weeks	5 days



This table is a general guide. Please contact our union to discuss your personal circumstances.

GOVERNMENT-FUNDED LEAVE FOR PRIMARY CAREGIVERS

In addition to the leave available through your employer, you may be able to access government-funded parental leave.

- *18 weeks of parental leave is available through the federal government, paid at the minimum wage rate.*
- *To be eligible, you must meet certain conditions including a 'work test'. Generally, this means you must have worked for at least 10 of the 13 months prior to the birth or adoption of your child.*
- *The 18 weeks can be accessed continuously or over two periods within two years, including a set 12 week period and a 'flexible' six week period (agreed with the employer).*
- *For example, the 'flexible' portion could be used on certain working days (adding up to 30 days in total) rather than in a continuous block.*
- *Payments are made by your employer (in most cases) and will usually be noted on a normal payslip.*
- *Claims can be lodged up to three months before the expected birth or adoption of your child and must be claimed within one year of the birth or adoption.*

GOVERNMENT-FUNDED LEAVE FOR PARTNERS

The government also provides paid parental leave for partners, referred to as the 'Dad and Partner Pay' scheme.

Under this scheme, partners can access two weeks of leave paid at the minimum wage.

The same 'work test' outlined on the previous page applies to this leave.

The payment is directly by the government in a single installment, which must be claimed within 50 weeks of the birth or adoption of your child.



Where can I get more advice about eligibility for government parental payments?

Eligibility for the federal government primary caregiver and partner payments vary. We recommend seeking advice from Services Australia about your personal circumstances.

Contact Services Australia via www.servicesaustralia.gov.au or 136 150.

APPLYING FOR LEAVE

Organising your leave arrangements doesn't have to be stressful.

Follow these steps to planning your leave - and contact our union for support if you have any issues accessing your rights.

NOTIFYING YOUR EMPLOYER

Choosing when to notify your employer about your planned parental leave is largely up to you — as long as you provide written notice at least ten weeks before the intended start date of your leave.

You should also confirm the intended start date of the leave again in writing, four weeks before it is due to begin.

Depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible to apply for up to two years' (predominantly unpaid) parental leave.

Paid parental leave may also be accessed at half pay for double the period of time.



HOW DO I APPLY FOR PARENTAL LEAVE?

STEP ONE

(At least) 10 weeks before your parental leave is intended to begin, write to your employer stating that you want to access primary caregiver/parental leave.

STEP TWO

Four weeks before your parental leave, write to your employer stating the date leave is to start and finish.

STEP THREE

Before starting leave, you should provide your employer with documentation confirming the expected birth or adoption date of your child (e.g. medical certificate) and a statutory declaration outlining who will be the primary caregiver as well as any period of parental leave being taken by your partner.

STEP FOUR

Keep a copy of all correspondence and certificates sent to your employer and reach out to our union if you're unsure or need advice about the process.



WHAT ABOUT SUPER?

While you're accessing paid parental leave, annual leave or long service leave, your super will continue to be paid by your employer.

However, unless you work in an NT Catholic school, super will **not be paid** during unpaid parental leave (something our union is fighting to change in other employment sectors).

Most super funds require notice from your employer that you will be taking paid parental leave.

We recommend reaching out to your super fund to make sure arrangements are in place for your super while you're on parental leave.

WOMEN FACE SUPER GAP

Women currently retire with 47% less super than men, on average.

Sadly, 40% of single retired women experience economic insecurity.

BRIDGING THE SUPER GAP

Much of the super gap can be attributed to women taking time out of the workforce due to caring responsibilities, being more likely to work part-time and earning less than their male counterparts. So what can you do to minimise the gap?

CO-CONTRIBUTE WHEN YOU CAN

IEU-QNT members have won the option to co-contribute to super in most employment sectors.

That means your employer pays additional super if you also contribute a small percentage of your salary to super.

If you co-contribute 5% to super over 10 years, this could make a \$47,497 difference to your retirement balance*.

To find out more about super co-contribution, contact our union or visit the members' section of our website.

TIP: YOU MIGHT CONSIDER SEEKING INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ADVICE TO DISCUSS HOW TO MAXIMISE YOUR SUPER DURING AND AFTER PARENTAL LEAVE.

IEUA-QNT IS NOT A FINANCIAL ADVISOR. DISCOUNTED OR FREE ADVICE MAY BE AVAILABLE THROUGH YOUR SUPER FUND.

*This co-contribution comparison is based on a number of assumptions including: Balance at start is \$0; Retirement is at age 65; Rate of return is 5.52% pa; Balances are in 'future value' terms; Base salary is \$60,000 indexed at 1% pa; Superannuation earnings are taxed at 15% pa; Contributions are based on a percentage of base salary; Concessional contributions are subject to a 15% contributions tax; No changes to the Superannuation Guarantee (SG) have been included.

Source: QIEC Super (Division of NGS Super)

PLANNING YOUR RETURN TO WORK

The most important thing to remember about returning to work is that you're entitled to return to the same position (and classification) you held before your leave - if you choose to.

If your position no longer exists, you have the right to return to a comparable position.

If you are a part-time employee, you are entitled to return to a position that includes the same number of hours (but may not include the same working times or classes).

We recommend reaching out to your employer around four weeks prior to your planned return to confirm your arrangements.

CHANGING YOUR PLANS

Your return to work plans could change for any number of reasons. You may like to take more time off, return to work sooner or access flexible work arrangements.

There are some limitations on how much parental leave you can access and how much notice you need to provide your employer about delaying or bringing forward your return date.

Contact our union as soon as you know your plans will change, for advice about your personal circumstances.



HOW DO I ACCESS FLEXIBLE WORK?

When returning to work, many employees find flexible work arrangements like part-time or job sharing help them to balance their personal and professional lives.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO 'REQUEST'

Under current workplace law, employees (with at least 12 months' service) have the right to request flexible work arrangements in certain circumstances - including caring for young children.

Flexible work can allow a number of changes to the type of work such as: reduced hours, altered pattern of work or change to the location of work.

Requests for flexible work must be made in writing. The employer is required to respond within 21 days and can only refuse the request on reasonable grounds.

Your request should be genuinely considered with alternative options provided if your initial request cannot be accommodated.

It is crucial to contact our union for support if you would like to discuss your options or if you experience any issues accessing flexible work arrangements.

RETURNING PART-TIME

Returning to part-time work is a common option for new parents as it allows them to participate in the workforce while still enjoying their child's early years.

If you wish to return to work part-time, you need to make a request to your employer in writing at least 7 weeks before the end of your parental leave.

Your employer must respond in writing within 21 days.

In considering an application, the employer must take into account:

- The employee's circumstances, particularly those relating to the role of a primary caregiver.
- The impact of refusal on an employee and their dependents.
- The effect that agreeing to the application would have on the workplace.

An employer must not unreasonably refuse an application to work part-time.

If your employer has advised that your request to work part-time has been accepted, these arrangements need to be agreed in writing:

- The hours, days and starting and finishing times.
- The classification of the employee.
- The period of part-time employment.

RETURNING TO JOB SHARE

Job share is a voluntary arrangement where the duties, responsibilities, pay and other employment entitlements of one full-time position are shared between two people.

After the job share ends, both employees return to their prior positions and employment status.

Employees have the right to request a job share arrangement.

WRITING A JOB SHARE PROPOSAL

If a suitable job share partner has been identified (often it will be a colleague who is also balancing parenting responsibilities or transitioning to retirement), a proposal should be sent to your employer.

The proposal needs to be signed by both job share partners and should include:

- Details for each partner (including current classification and hours)
- The proposed split of work between each partner (days and times)
- Preferred teaching level/subjects for each partner
- Commencement and end date (if applicable) for the job share
- Proposed work responsibilities (how you will divide/manage duties)

CONTACT OUR UNION FOR ADVICE OR TO ACCESS TEMPLATE JOB SHARE APPLICATION DOCUMENTS.

BREASTFEEDING AT WORK

For employees who would like to continue breastfeeding or expressing at work, there are family-friendly entitlements and policies available in many employment sectors.

This usually includes access to appropriate breaks, a private and secure area, as well as an appropriate storage facility that is separate from other communal staff facilities.

If you'd like to continue breastfeeding or expressing at work, this should be raised as part of the return to work discussion with your employer.

To discuss your personal circumstances or to check if your workplace has particular entitlements or policies, contact our union for support.



ANY QUESTIONS?

Our union is here to provide confidential advice and support about any of your parental leave questions.



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