

## Card 5: Parental leave

### Introduction

Parental leave can be split up in many different ways between the parents, and what works for you depends on your unique situation as a family.

It might still be worth considering how parental leave affects the roles and attachment patterns in the family. It's always important to be able to discuss and reflect with your partner on how things are distributed.

**Attachment:** Research shows that children whose parents, or other safe grownups, are more present in their lives have a better possibility of safe attachment later on. That's why the relation you as a parent create through spending time with it affects the child long-term. If one parent is the one who mainly uses the parental leave quota it might be good to discuss how the other parent can gain an opportunity to establish attachment as well.

**Distribution of work and income:** If one parent uses the most of the parental leave it can affect his or her income long-term. It is one of the causes why women generally have lower salaries and pensions in Finland, which affects equality in many ways. This also increases the risk that one parent gains a sort of *care-head start*. The other parent then risks becoming a kind of *secondary parent* by being less present, and might feel left out.

### Aim of meetup

To reflect on parental leave, attachment and how your time is used.

### Re-connect to last meetup

What did you bring with you from last meetup?

Is there something you would like to discuss further?

### Warm up— End the sentence with the first thing that springs to mind

- When I take care of my child I feel...
- With my parental leave I would like to...
- In the best of worlds, I would like to (regarding parental leave)
- The best thing about parental leave is...  
To me, what's significant about being at home with the child is...
- A shared parental leave is...
- I can discuss parental leave with...
- I give my share of the parental leave to my partner because...
- Before having children I thought parental leave was...
- That which makes me use my parental leave is...

## Discuss in the group or with your partner

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### Discussion 1:

At what point did you discuss parental leave in your family?

#### Possible follow-up

- *What has influenced you to take or not take parental leave?*
- *Would it have been possible to do things differently?*
- *What worries you most regarding parental leave?*

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### Discussion 2:

How does the distribution of parental leave in your family affect you?

#### Possible follow up:

- *Does your position in the family change (for instance in being a primary or secondary parent?)*
  - *If you already had parental leave, were you satisfied or would you now do things differently?*
  - *How did your parents parental leave look like?*
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### To sum up

*Is there anything you would like to discuss further?*

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### Discussion 3:

How can you give the opportunity to the other parent to spend time and create attachment with the child if he or she takes less parental leave?

#### Possible follow up:

- *Is there for instance some household chore that could be done together with the child?*
- *Is there a specific time where he or she routinely can be with the child?*

### Homework:

Discuss and reflect with someone else that either has or has not had parental leave what they would do differently today.

- Reflect on what kind of tasks and responsibilities you think the person with parental leave should have at home?
- What are the tasks and responsibilities for the parent who is not on parental leave?