

*Reconciliation of family life and work
Labour Force Survey ad hoc module 2010*

Interviewer instructions

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Background and objectives of the survey

The ad hoc module related to reconciliation between work and family life is carried out in all EU Member States in connection with the Labour Force Survey in 2010. Its primary objective is to answer to information needs supporting the political decision-making of the European Union. The aim of the survey is to find out:

1. Whether people participate in the working life to the degree they would like to, and if not, whether the reasons are related to insufficient provision of care services
2. To what degree flexibility is offered at workplaces to make reconciliation of work and family life easier, and
3. How common leaves due to child care are.

An ad hoc module concerning the same topic was also carried out in 2005, but a number of changes have been made both to the content and the questionnaire from the previous time.

The target group of the ad hoc module covers all aged 15 to 64, because reconciliation of work and family life concerns persons in many life situations, not only families with children. Here family is understood widely to comprise also those close ones living outside one's own household whose care responsibilities may just any age persons have. Reconciliation of work and family life also concerns those not working, because for some of them care responsibilities may have an effect on their getting employed. For this reason, the target group of the survey is not limited only to employed or those with families, for instance.

Invoicing

The interviewing time is invoiced to project TY81H. The time spent on familiarisation with the interviewer instructions and trial interviews is invoiced to project TY29H.

Contact persons at Statistics Finland

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It is advisable to call us immediately in case of acute problems and possible error situations, but please give us more general feedback on the ad hoc module as well (primarily by email):

General interviewer instructions and moving to the questionnaire

All ad hoc module questions concern facts, and if necessary, the interview can be assisted by using the interview instructions and the screen instructions.

The ad hoc questions are asked from the **target persons** in connection with the fifth time of responding. The questions are placed **in the household section right after establishing the members of the household**, because information is needed behind the routing of questions on what age children the target person has, for example. Questions about the activity of 15 to 74-year-old household members are asked only after the ad hoc questions.

At the end of the fifth interview round the interviewer thus after the LFS core module moves as normal to the household questionnaire and information about the members of the household is inquired. After this... (explain here how to move to the questions!)

Instructions by question

Part 1: Organising childcare for the youngest child (TP1-TP3)

Questions are asked about childcare arrangements if at least one under ten-year-old child of the target person or his/her spouse belongs to the household. The questions concern the childcare arrangements of the youngest child.

The questions aim to find out about the use of childcare services. Because the questions are directed to the care arrangements of the youngest child, the results can be examined by the child's age.

TP1–TP2. Use of childcare services in the care of the youngest child

Organised care here refers to all such care arrangements where the child is looked after regularly by other than his/her own family member or relative. Usually these care arrangements are subject to charge, except for pre-school, which is also taken into account. Whether the care is organised by a local authority or a private body is not relevant here.

All regular care arrangements are taken into account even if they are used only a few hours per week. The child may go to a club organised by the parish or municipality once or twice a week for a few hours at a time, even if one of the parents was at home taking care of the child. Some municipalities provide a play park supervisor service, which some families may use quite regularly to support childcare.

Examples of organised childcare:

- Daycare centre (municipal or private)
- Family day care (municipal or private)
- Group family day care
- Pre-school
- Afternoon activities of school-age pupils at school or other premises
- Regular club activity for under school-age children
- Play park supervisor activity
- Paid nanny at home (excl. occasional childminders)

Using a paid nanny is asked separately to make sure that this type of childcare is included in the follow-up question TP3. Some of those using a paid nanny may answer 'Yes' already to question TP1, which does not matter. Here using a paid nanny also refers to a regular arrangement where the care place is the child's own home. Occasional use of childminders is thus not taken into account.

Hobbies, such as sports practice or music lessons, are not considered organised childcare. Sports or music-oriented afternoon clubs are taken into account, however.

TP3. How many hours per week are childcare services used

Here the idea is to give an estimate of how many hours per week the youngest child is usually in care. The alternatives may be read out loud, if needed.

The question refers to a normal week, that is, one without any holidays, sicknesses or other exceptional circumstances.

If the care times vary from week to week, the average number of hours is asked.

Part 2: Use of family leaves (TP4-TP9)

These questions inquire about the use of **parental leave and care leave** (the common designation family leave is used for these in the following) and shortening of working time. The questions are asked from those respondents whose youngest child is aged under eight, and they relate to the situation **after the birth of the youngest child**.

The aim is to find out

- How common it is for parents of small children to have a full-time parental or care leave and how long the leaves are,
- For how many the family leave has been also a break from working life, and
- How many have shortened their working hours for the purpose of childcare.

The EU legislation guarantees all parents - mothers and fathers alike - the right to take time off from work for taking care of a small child. These statutory leaves are not used all around the EU to the extent that would be desired. In many countries the conditions for family leave as concerns return to work or the compensations paid for the leave are disadvantageous for the parent, and on the other hand, attitudes particularly towards men's leaves may be negative. Family leaves are then not used or they are replaced by other arrangements, such as holidays and flexible working time.

In Finland having family leaves is not as such a problem but their division by gender is, because only a small number of fathers use family leaves in addition to the short paternity leave.

TP4. Whether has cared for the youngest child at home

First it is found out whether the respondent has at all been at home looking after his/her youngest child at some point after the maternity allowance period. Here it is of no concern whether the respondent then had an existing employment relationship or not. **Caring at home** refers to full-day caring, information about part-time leaves or shortening of working hours is asked in question TP9.

Here we are specifically interested in leaves after the maternity allowance period because they can be used by both parents (the **maternity allowance period** refers to the mother's statutory leave used in connection with childbirth, which ends when the child is a little over three months old). The question is asked from both fathers and mothers. It is not asked if the respondent self is at the moment on maternity, paternity, parental or care leave. The respondent's spouse may be on family leave (and the maternity allowance period has not yet necessarily ended), but that is not yet known at this stage of the interview. Then the response entered is 'No'.

All family leave arrangements usable by **both parents** are taken into account regardless of the type of family leave. Most often it is probably a question of parental leave, a "daddy" month closely connected to parental leave or care leave, the definitions of which are described briefly below (for more exact definitions, see Labour Force Survey Handbook, Chapter 13.1.7).

Parental leave: Usually taken in continuation of maternity leave, so the child is normally aged three to nine months during it. Adoptive parents also have a right for parental leave even if the child is older than this. The parent caring for the child receives (earnings-based) parental allowance from the Social Insurance Institution.

Daddy month: If the father has at least a two-week parental leave at the end of the six-month long parental leave period, he gets two extra weeks off, or the so-called daddy month.

Full-time childcare leave: After the parental leave, when the child is around nine months old, caring for the child at home can be continued on a full-time childcare leave until the child is three years old. During this period, the Social Insurance Institution pays a home care allowance and a supplement to the home care allowance, and municipalities may also pay a municipal supplement. In special cases, such as for parents of adopted children, the right to full-time childcare leave continues even after the child is three years old.

TP5. Was the employment relationship existing during the family leave

This question aims to find out from those having cared for their youngest child at home, whether they had an existing employment relationship when starting the care leave.

If the fixed-term employment relationship has ended during the leave, enter here nevertheless 'Yes' because the interviewee had an existing employment relationship when the care leave started.

TP6. How long cared for the youngest child at home

This refers to the total length of the period regardless of what arrangements have been used; the respondent may, for instance, have had parental leave, care leave and annual leave, in which case the total duration of all these is entered.

If the respondent has been on parental leave over several periods, the length of the longest continuous break is primarily given.

NB! The family leave period for the **caring of the youngest child** only is taken into account, even if the respondent had been on family leave continuously with several children.

An example: The mother of a five and two-year-old started maternity leave before the birth of her first-born and stayed first at home with the first-born on parental leave and then on care leave for around 2.5 years. After this the youngest child was born, and the leave continued without interruption as a new maternity and parental leave. After having been away from work continuously for nearly 3.5 years, she went back to work after the second parental leave period when the youngest child was around ten months old, in which case the children's father stayed at home on childcare leave. Alternative 4 is entered in question TP6 (over six months, but not more than one year), because this period she was on family leave to look after specifically her youngest child.

TP7–TP8. How long stayed away from work

TP7 is asked from employed persons with several jobs who have been on family leave. The intention is to find out the cases where the person worked in a secondary job while on family leave from the main job, and did not thus stay totally away from work.

If working has been quite random and short-term (e.g. a journalist has written a few short articles during parental leave or a musician has had a couple of gigs), this need not be taken into account. The respondent's view of how long has stayed away from the working life is decisive here.

TP9. Shortening of working hours due to care of the youngest child

The question takes into account all kinds of official and unofficial arrangements as long as they intend to shorten working hours specifically in order to take care of the youngest child. Working part-time is not as such sufficient if working hours are not shortened from before due to child care. Similarly if the respondent has shortened his/her working hours primarily for some other reason, such as studies, this is not taken into consideration.

The Finnish family leave system makes it possible for parents of young children to shorten their working hours by means of **part-time childcare leave**. Working hours can be shortened until the end of the child's second school year. The Social Insurance Institution pays for those shortening their working time as compensation a partial care allowance if the number of hours worked per week is not shortened more than to 30 hours and the child is aged under three or attending the 1st or 2nd grade at school (exceptions are ill and disabled children whose parents have larger rights).

Working hours can be shortened by working either shorter working days or by having extra days off. Both parents can shorten their working hours over the same period, provided that the leaves are at different times (e.g. one parent can be on leave on Mondays and the other on Fridays or one on mornings and the other on afternoons).

Only employees may be on part-time childcare leave. However, shortening of working hours is possible for the self-employed as well, as they are self ultimately responsible for their working time arrangements and such arrangements should also be taken into account.

Part 3. Care responsibilities

This section aims to find out how many 15 to 64-year-olds take regularly part in caring or helping of some close person and what effects these care responsibilities may have on their labour market participation. Care responsibilities may be related to children aged under 15 or over 15-year-old close ones needing regular help or care.

The questions are connected to the respondent's personal life situation and close ones, so professional care work and voluntary work are excluded.

Regular means that it is a fairly regular and often repeated arrangement, that is, care is daily or weekly, for example. Occasional childminding is not taken into account.

TP10. Care responsibilities connected to children

This question refers to regular care of children aged under 15 (excl. own or spouse's children living in the same household; information on this is gained in the household section). Children may live in the same or different household, and they can be, for instance,

- Own or spouse's children living at their other parent's
- Grandchildren
- Foster children or adopted children
- Children of friends or relatives.

Caring for small children primarily means attending to their basic needs, but for bigger ones it can be all kinds of being together, playing, outdoor activities, helping with homework, etc. Essential is that the respondent is responsible for the child's well-being.

TP11. Care responsibilities connected to relatives, friends or other close persons

The question refers to regular caring of an elderly person or an over 15-year-old incapacitated person or one otherwise in need of help. The assisting person can live in the same or different household, and he/she can be such as:

- An elderly mother or father
- An over 15-year-old disabled or sick child (care responsibilities of under 15-year-old children are examined separately)
- An elderly or incapacitated relative, friend or neighbour.

Caring can be helping in daily activities, such as dressing or washing, cooking, walking, housekeeping or financial matters. It can also include simply keeping company. It is not always easy to draw the line between caring and keeping company, but the respondent's view of the matter is decisive here. The intention is that not all keeping company can be defined as caring or looking after, but the caring person has some kind of **responsibility for the well-being of the cared person**.

Professional care work or voluntary work is not taken into account, but because acting as a family carer is no longer classified as gainful work, **family carers** should, as a rule, answer here 'Yes'.

TP12–TP15. The effects of the availability of care services on being employed

Questions TP12 and TP14 intend to find out whether the problems related to care services are an obstacle to (full-time) gainful employment. They are asked from everybody who has care responsibilities related to either children or other close ones. In Finland such problems are assumed to be rare. In many European countries without an affordable public child day care system it is very common for mothers to stay away from working life because no care places are available for children or day care would be too expensive. The question is not restricted only to childcare but deficiencies related to care services of elderly and over 15-year-old incapacitated persons are also taken into account.

The questions work with the same logic as the core section questions TA4–TA5 and EE5–EE6 and complement the information gained from them, because they extend the target group of the question to such respondents whose care responsibilities are not the primary reason for working part-time or for not looking for work at the moment.

TP12 is asked from all those who have their own children aged under 15 living in the same household or take regularly care of other children, TP14 from those who have care responsibilities related to other relatives or close ones. The formulation of the questions varies depending on whether the respondent is working part-time or non-employed not looking for work.

Questions TP13 and TP15 ask more precisely what problems are involved in the care services for children or relatives. They are also asked from such respondents who have told about problems connected with care services in questions TA4–TA5 or EE5–EE6 of the core questionnaire. The most serious shortcoming is naturally that no suitable care services are available at all (this may be a very theoretical situation in Finland at least for child care services), but the care services may be too expensive or their quality is not sufficient in the respondent's opinion.

Part 4. Adjustment of working hours for family reasons

The final part examines the adjustment of working hour arrangements among employees, which is of essential importance from the viewpoint of reconciliation between work and family. It is first asked how flexible the arrangements of the respondent's

working hours are in general and then examined are adjustments in special situations related to family reasons. The aim is to form an overall picture of the adjustment of working hours among employees by means of the combination of these questions.

The questions are also asked from those who during the survey week were absent from work on family leave, for instance. The questions then refer to the situation before the leave started.

TP16. Whether can influence daily working hours

Questions TP16 and TP17 measure the general flexibility of daily working hour arrangements. The questions concern a normal situation at work. They refer to the respondent's view of how flexible the working hours really are, not the enterprise's official arrangement of working hours.

1. Defined starting and finishing times

Daily working hours are determined by the employer and the respondent cannot influence them personally except at most in exceptional circumstances. **Shift work** should usually be entered here because the work shifts are arranged by the employer, even if at times the person could wish to work a certain shift or change shifts with a co-worker.

2. Can influence starting and finishing times

As a rule, the arrangement of working hours is flexible, and the employee can self decide the starting and leaving times at least within certain limits. Flexible working hours are included here, as is a situation where daily working hours are not defined at all.

TP17. Type of flexible arrangement of working hours

1. Flexible working hours, working hours bank or other flexible arrangement where longer or shorter days can be worked:

This group includes such working hours arrangements where the working hours can be fairly freely stored up and similarly the hours accumulated can be used for shortening the working day or in more flexible systems for taking full days off. The arrangement can be flexible working hours or a working hours bank, which use a working hour monitoring system, i.e. a time card, or it can be a more unofficial system where the employee can have freedom in arranging working hours him/herself.

2. The length of the working day stays more or less the same, but can have some effect on the times of starting and leaving work:

Daily working hours in the arrangements belonging to this group are less flexible than in Alternative 1, and it is not possible to accumulate working hours. The daily working hours of employees are at least more or less agreed, but timing of working hours is somewhat flexible. One example is a situation where the daily working hours are seven hours, but the employee can choose whether to work from 8 am to 3 pm or from 9 am to 4 pm. Also, an arrangement of working hours where the employee must be at work during certain hours, e.g. during shop opening hours or office hours, but there may be some flexibility outside these hours, belong to this group.

3. Completely free working hours:

The employer has not set any limits to daily working hours, but work can be made in practice at any time of the day. Controlling of work is thus based on the end result, not on working hours worked. Work performance may still have a certain deadline by which it has to be done. Such can be a decorator working at piece rate, a journalist writing an article or a researcher.

4. Some other arrangement of working hours:

This alternative is used when neither of the above is suitable, such as combinations of different arrangements. For example, teachers whose teaching hours are specified quite precisely, but the time used on teaching preparation can be arranged fully by oneself, belong to this group.

TP18–TP19. Whether can start work later or leave work earlier for family reasons

The questions intend to measure the adjustment possibilities of daily working hours related to family reasons. The questions are asked from those whose arrangement of working hours is not as a rule one of the most flexible ones, that is, they are not asked if TP17 = 1 or 3. The questions refer to an adjustment of working hours by at least one hour.

A family reason is here understood fairly largely, and it can be the child's day care centre or school party or other event, doctor's appointment with a child or relative, weddings or funerals of a family member or relative.

Time off can be paid or unpaid. Absence can be compensated either before or after by working the hours lost, but this is not a necessary criterion.

Almost always when necessary: Adjustments of working hours are possible in principle whenever needed by the employee (excl. exceptional situations, such as a particularly busy time).

Only in exceptional circumstances: Adjustments are possible but only seldom or in particularly exceptional situations.

TP20–TP21. Whether can take a full day off work for a family reason

This refers to a situation where an employee can in advance arrange his or her working hours to be able to take a full day off work for some family reason. The arrangement can be made by changing shifts or utilising flexible working hours or hours accumulated in the working hours bank. If the only possibility is to use days from one's annual leave allowance, enter "No".

Almost always when necessary: Taking a day off from work is possible in principle whenever needed by the employee (excl. exceptional situations, such as a particularly busy time).

Only in exceptional circumstances: Days off are possible but only seldom or in particularly exceptional situations.