

Israel

Distinctive Features: Strong pro-family policies including tax benefits and universal family allowances, education and health services. Also social assistance for poor children and families and increasing reliance on privatization. Multi-ethnic culture and immigration adds complexity to this relatively small nation.

Maternity / Parental Leave Benefit	12 week paid and job protected maternity leave. Additional lump sum maternity grant for layette costs.
Eligibility Criteria	Mother contributed to insurance fund for minimum of 6 months. Mother may take 9 month unpaid leave supplementing paid leave period. Father may take weeks 7-12 of paid leave in lieu of mother.
Duration of Leave	12 weeks, 6 of which may be taken prior to birth.
Compensation Rate	100% of wages equal to last 3 months of paid employment.
Early Childhood Education and Care	70% of children age 2 and over 95% of children aged 3-5 years are in preschool or child care programs. Lower rates for Arab children. Most programs for younger children are run by voluntary, religious and women's organizations with growing role of for-profits in this area. Funding is private and public.
Family and Child Allowances	Universal cash benefit for families with one or more children under age 18. Allowances are tax free and increase with number of children. Benefit level varies from 2.6% to 21% of average wage. Additional funds available for single parent and large families to defray education related costs.
Child Support	The National Insurance Institute administers a national means-tested, cash benefit, at a level set by the court that is equal to or less than social assistance benefits. Average support payment is one-fifth of average wage.
Tax Benefits	Tax benefits are available for single-parent families, women, working mothers with children under age 18 years, and for earners with dependent partners.
Child Health	Universal maternal and child health care system provides mother and well-baby clinics (0-4 years). School health services available for school-age children. National universal health insurance program available to all is financed by mainly taxes and personal payment.
Housing Benefits	Government subsidized low rate mortgage program available to large families and a rental assistance program available to low income families. Assistance increases with family size.
School-Age Children Policies	Compulsory education through age 5 though 16. Strong involvement in youth movements, community centers and after school programs.
Youth Policies	Over 90% of youth ages 14-17 years are enrolled in school; lower enrollment rates for Arab youth (67%). About 45% of Israeli youth involved in youth movements, clubs and community centers.