



Joining Forces for Gender Equality

WHAT IS HOLDING US BACK?

Country note: Canada



Joining Forces for Gender Equality comprehensively analyses developments and policies for gender equality, including issues such as gender mainstreaming and budgeting, reforms to increase fathers' involvement in parental leave and childcare, pay transparency initiatives to tackle gender pay gaps, and systems to address gender-based violence. Increasingly, governments are paying attention to gender inequalities to more policy areas, including energy, the environment, foreign direct investment, nuclear energy, trade, and transport. Advancing gender equality is not just a moral imperative; it will strengthen future gender-equal economic growth and social cohesion.

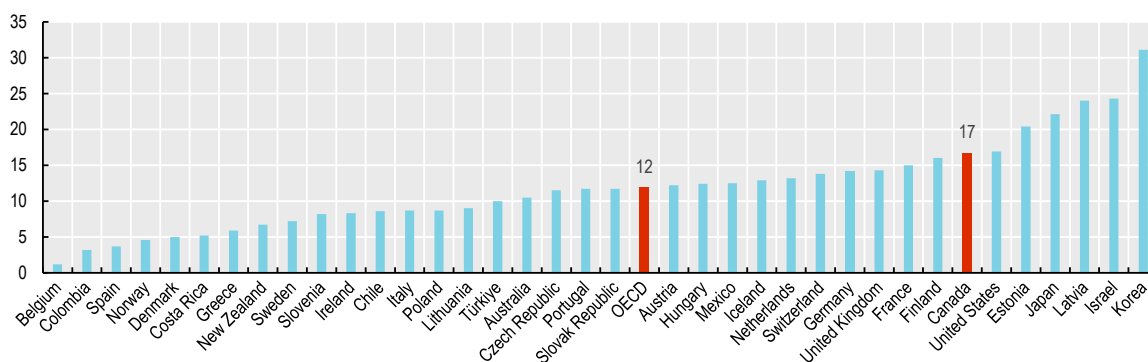
Gender equality in Canada

Canada's performance on gender equality is often close to or somewhat above the average across OECD countries (Table 1). Gender gaps in school performance and the share of women among masters' graduates are average. Canada performs better than the OECD average in most labour market indicators in Table 1. Canadian women make up a larger part of public sector senior management than women in most other OECD countries.

The gender pay gap remains stubbornly persistent, stemming from longstanding structural inequalities, such as an unequal division of paid and unpaid work, women having the same skills but different jobs and responsibilities than men within firms, and occupational and sectoral segregation with an undervaluation of traditionally female-dominated jobs (Chapter 16). At about 17%, the gender pay gap for full-time earners in Canada is well above the OECD average (Figure 1). This pay gap has decreased roughly at the same pace as in many other OECD countries. The introduction of gender pay gap reporting measures for federally regulated private-sector companies in 2021 could help narrow the difference in pay of men and women in the future (Chapter 27).

Figure 1. At 17%, the Canadian gender wage gap is well above the OECD average

Difference between median earnings of men and women relative to median earnings of men, full-time earners percentages, 2021 or latest data available



Note: Data refer to 2021, or except for Belgium, Chile, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, and Switzerland refer to 2020; for Ireland and Israel to 2019; and for Iceland, Slovenia and Türkiye to 2018.

Source: OECD Gender wage gap indicator, available at <https://data.oecd.org/earnwage/gender-wage-gap.htm>. – [Figure 16.1].

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Table 1. Summary indicators of gender equality

	Education			Employment & Entrepreneurship			Governance		
	Gender gap in mean PISA reading scores (boys–girls)	Gender gap in mean PISA mathematics scores (boys–girls)	Share of women among masters' graduates (%)	Gender gap in the labour force participation rate (men–women) (p.p.)	Share of women among managerial employment (%)	Share of women among self-employed with employees (%)	Share of women among parliamentary representatives (%)	Share of women among public sector employment (%)	Share of women among central government senior management (%)
CANADA	-29	5	56	7	36	27	31	63	45
OECD average	-29	6	58	11	34	25	34	58	37
Best female outcome	-52 (FIN)	-10 (ISL)	69 (ISL)	2 (LTU)	46 (LVA)	33 (NZL)	50 (MEX/NZL)	72 (SWE)	56 (LVA)
Worst female outcome	-10 (COL)	20 (COL)	35 (JPN)	40 (TUR)	13 (JPN)	12 (TUR)	10 (JPN)	25 (TUR)	4 (JPN)

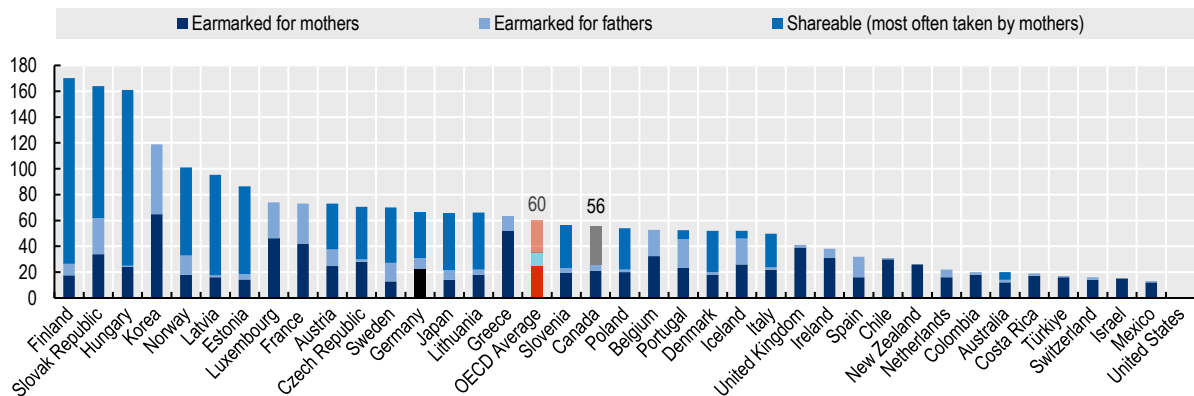
Note: Best and worst female outcomes are shown according to the size of women's share relative to the OECD average share or according to the size of the gap relative to the OECD average gap. Source: OECD Gender Data Portal, <https://www.oecd.org/gender/data/>.

Much of the gender difference in labour market outcomes emerge and widen once children arrive in households (Chapter 16). Mothers take longer leaves of absence from work than fathers and sometimes only return to work part-time. Canada is one of the OECD countries that provides strong incentives for fathers to use (at least some) parental leave: families receive five extra weeks of parental leave with income support if they share (Figure 2). The use of parental leave by new fathers in Canada (excluding Québec) has increased from 14% in 2010 to 24% in 2020. The province of Québec has a dedicated paternity leave and the share of fathers who (intended) to use this leave rose from 28% in 2005 to 86% in 2019 ([OECD Family Database](#)).

In Canada, relatively high child care costs for most families contribute to about 24% of women working less than 30 hours per week (Chapter 13). The ongoing implementation of a Canada-wide child care system that includes a target of “CAD \$10-a-day” regulated child care, on average, by March 2026 will help improve the capacity, quality and affordability of early childhood education and care (Chapter 24).

Figure 2. Canada incentivises fathers to take parental leave through bonus weeks

Duration of paid maternity-, paternity-, parental- and homecare leave entitlements, in weeks, April 2022



Note: Since April 2022, there have been reforms of parental leave systems in various countries, including Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Japan, the Netherlands and the Slovak Republic. In Japan, parents would have to take the “shareable” portion simultaneously (see [Figure 23.1](#)). Source: OECD Family Database, Indicator PF2.1, https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF2_1_Parental_leave_systems.pdf - [\[Figure 23.1\]](#)

Contact

Willem ADEMA (✉ willem.adema@oecd.org)

Jonas FLUCHTMANN (✉ jonas.fluchtmann@oecd.org)

Valentina PATRINI (✉ valentina.patrini@oecd.org)