

# Activating Fathers

## The Icelandic way

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Sigríður Lilly Baldursdóttir





# Aim and scope

## of the Act on Maternity/Paternity Leave and Parental Leave

The Act applies to the rights of parents working in the domestic labour market to be granted maternity/paternity leave and parental leave.

Parents who are not active in the labour market or studying full-time, a maternity/paternity grant.

The aim is to ensure a child's access to both his/her parents and to enable both women and men to coordinate family life and work outside the home.



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  - Improve the economic situation of families with children
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- **Enable both women and men to co-ordinate family life and work**



# The right to a maternity/paternity leave

The leave was extended in steps from six months to nine.

Parents have each an independent right to leave up to three months.

Parents have a joint right to three additional months, which may either be taken entirely by one of the parents or be divided between them.

# The Maternity/Paternity Leave Fund

- A specific fund was set up to finance the payments for the leave.
- The fund was financed with a part of the employers' insurance levy.
  - Financed by insurance levy = % of wages – paid by the employers



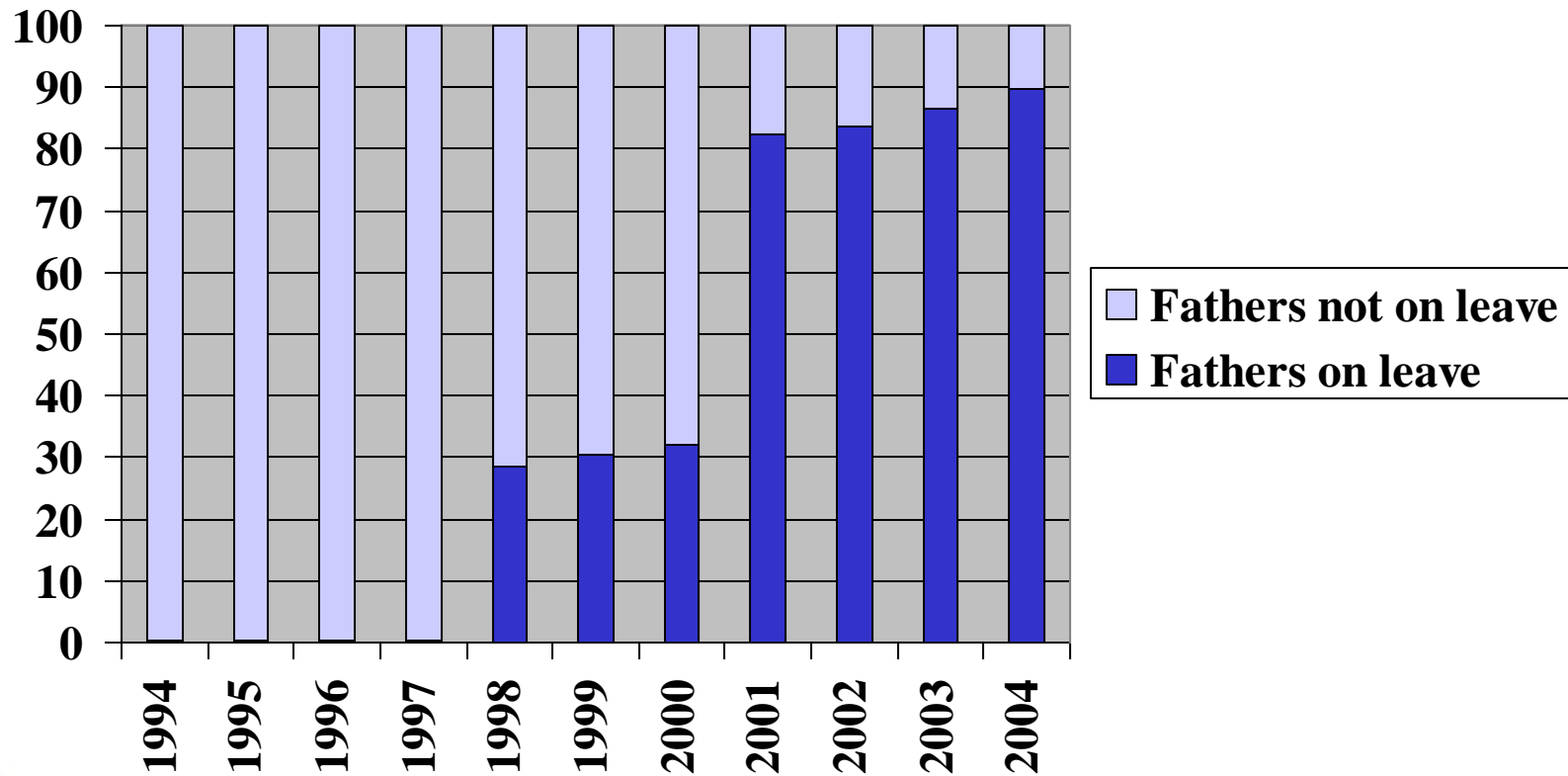
# Payments during the leave

- 80% of the parents average total salary, taken from 2 whole years before the birth of the child.
- The payment has a certain floor...
  - Minimum payments for those with low wages (in part-time work)
- ... and since 2004 – also a roof.
  - 480.000 Ikr./month (80% of 600.000)

# The structure of the leave - flexibility

- An employee has the right to take the leave in a one continuous period.
- When in agreement with the employer the parent can take the leave:
  - In fragments (at least one week at a time)
  - With part-time work (i.e. 50% work – 50% leave).
- The leave has to be taken before the child becomes 18 months old.

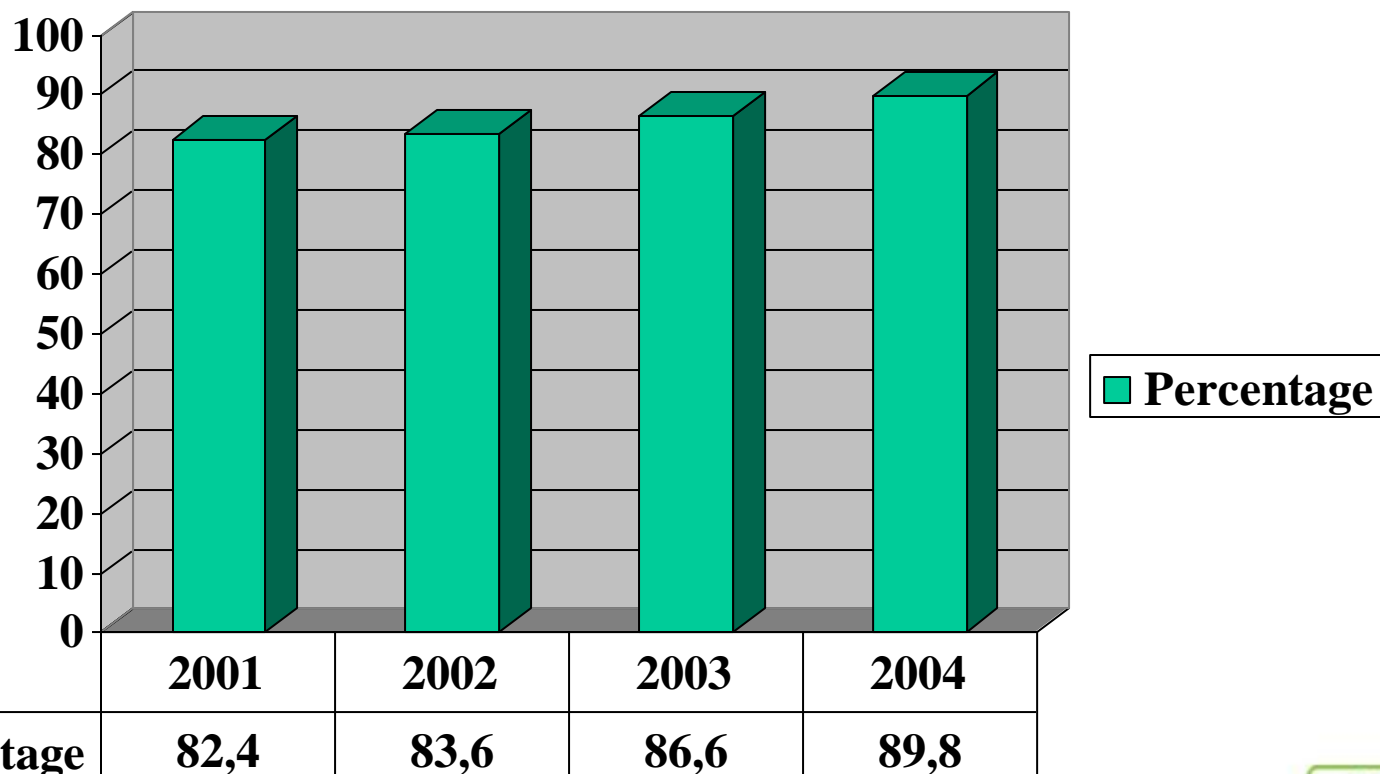
# Icelandic fathers on parental leave



# Common provisions

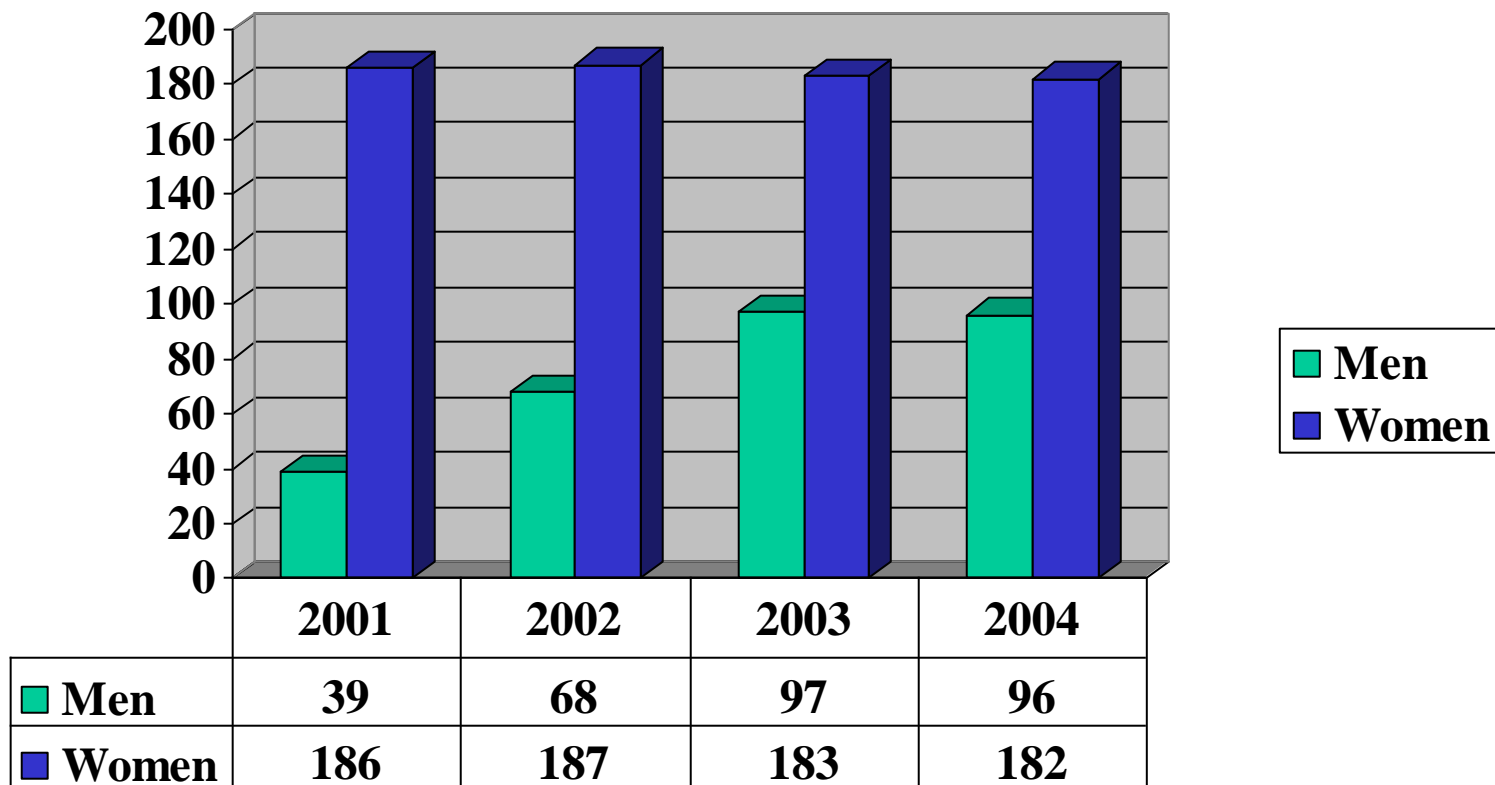
- Right to employment
  - A hiring contracts can not be terminated during the leave
- Accumulation of rights
  - The leave is considered a part of an employee's time with thw employer when evaluating work-related rights.

# Fathers' use of parental leave





# Average number of days



# Opinion polls

- 85% say that it is positive that men use their right to 3 – 6 months paternity leave
- 99% say that it is positive that women do it. Women are more positive than men towards the paternity leave, younger people are more positive than older
- 73.7% of employers are positive

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Yes



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- Increased fertility? - Yes



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- Improved the position of women on the labour market? - Yes
- Made men equally “unstable” labour force as women? - ?
- Improved the economic situation of families with young children? - Yes
- Increased fertility? - Yes
- Enabled both women and men to co-ordinate family life and work? – Yes and No

