



Evaluation of the Employment Insurance Parents of Critically Ill Children Benefit



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Employment Insurance program's Parents of Critically Ill Children benefit provided temporary financial support to working parents who must interrupt their employment to provide care to a child under the age of 18 with a life-threatening illness or injury. It was available between June 2013 and December 2017, after which it was replaced by the Family Caregiver Benefit for Children¹.



KEY FINDINGS

1. Low levels of awareness and incomplete understanding of the benefit were key barriers to accessing the benefit, particularly in the early years of implementation.
2. The benefit was effective in easing financial pressures on parents in order to allow them more time to provide care to their critically ill or injured child.
3. The benefit also had noticeable non-financial impacts and positive effects on the personal lives of recipients.
4. The benefit helped keep claimants attached to the labour force, but the gradual alignment of provincial and territorial employment standards may have reduced their time on leave or created a barrier to access the benefit.
5. Slower-than-usual speed of pay for the benefit was likely related to difficulties with submitting and/or processing appropriate Parents of Critically Ill Children-specific medical certificates.
6. The Manual Pay System, through which the benefit was administered, limited tracking and reporting functions for claimants and for the Department.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Seek to increase the level of awareness and understanding of the Employment Insurance Family Caregiver Benefit for Children following its December 2017 launch.
2. Explore the feasibility of migrating the administration of the Employment Insurance Family Caregiver Benefit for Children from the Manual Pay System for applicants in order to allow self-serve functionality for applicants.

¹The Family Caregiver Benefit for Children builds on the policy objectives and program design of the previous benefit with greater flexibility, accessibility, and inclusion.

The full Evaluation of the Employment Insurance Parents of Critically Ill Children Benefit is available at:

www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/evaluations/parents-critically-ill-children-benefit.html

