



A program led by



هيئة أبوظبي
للطفولة المبكرة
Abu Dhabi Early
Childhood Authority

Applicant Handbook

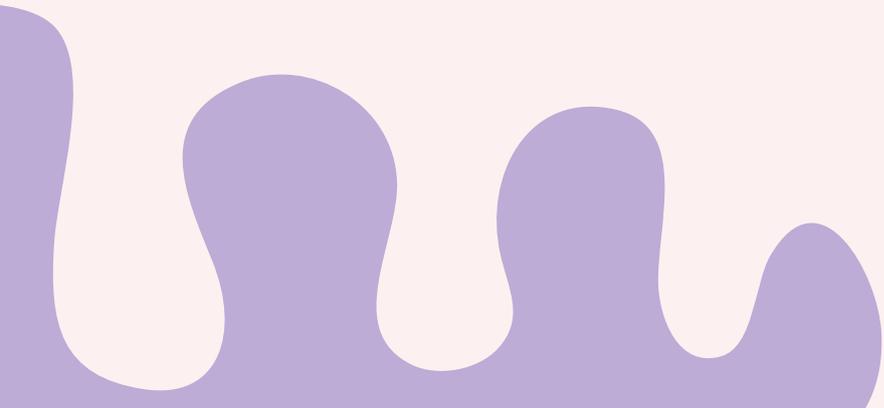
Parent-friendly Label Cycle 4 - 2026

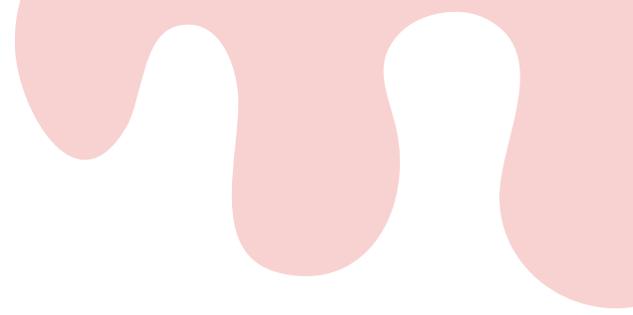
Government Sector



Contents

About the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority	1
About the Parent-friendly Label (PFL)	2
Benefits of parent-friendly policies to society and business	3
Benefits of Applying to Parent-friendly Label	4
Eligibility	5
How Will My Organization be Assessed: 1) Criteria 2) The Parent-friendly Experience Survey	6
The Applicant Journey	7
Quality Assurance	8
Notification to ECA of Changes	9
Confidentiality	10
Contact Details	11





About the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA)

Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA) is an Abu Dhabi-based government entity that supports holistic early childhood development. We oversee the Early Childhood Development sector with a commitment to the highest standards and young children are at our core action. For further information about ECA, please visit www.eca.gov.ae

We help young children flourish by playing vital roles:

Enabler

We broaden the capabilities of our partners to support holistic child development.

Policy Influencer

We support and influence the development and implementation of ECD policies.

Knowledge Hub

We inform early childhood decision-making through research, data and evidence.

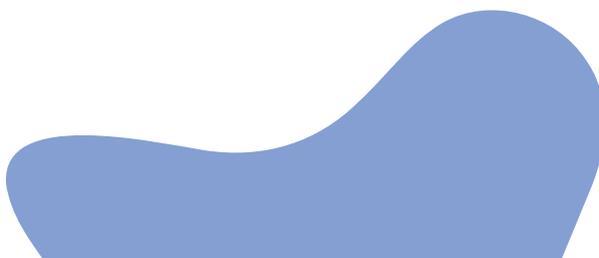
Impact Navigator

We assess and monitor progress of the ECD ecosystem and impact for the community.

Incubator

We nurture the growth and sustainability of innovative ECD programs and services.

A key action to take as a society is to invest in our children's early phases. This is why our primary focus is on children aged 0-8 years old. By year 3, a child's brain is already more than 80% of adult size. By year 5, it's grown to about 90% of adult size.



About the Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL)

The Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL) is a UAE-wide voluntary workplace award program that provides a range of criteria your organization can adopt in order to be recognized and awarded for your parent-friendly policies and practices. Among a wide range of benefits, organizations that earn the PFL will be entitled to display it as a symbol of their commitment in this area.

Parent-friendly workplaces demonstrate a deep understanding of family needs by offering a work culture and environment that is compassionate towards working parents. This is primarily manifested through offering flexibility for working parents, actively welcoming back new mothers and fathers and providing sufficient parental leave, among other measures.

Taking the decision to apply for the Parent-friendly Label is an organization's first step in committing to the journey to put people and their children first and stand out with your parent-friendly policies. Regardless of the outcome of your application, there are no winners or losers. Consider your application a milestone step in a journey of progress. Earning the PFL marks the beginning of the journey; there will always be room for growth, learning, and sharing your experience.

Applying to earn the Parent-friendly Label is FREE and at no direct cost to the organization. All benefits listed in this Handbook are value-add services which are also free of charge. This is because our goal is to provide workplaces across the UAE with consistent support to continuously enhance their policies and culture.

UNICEF Praises the Parent-friendly Label Program

In support of the Parent-friendly Label program, Eltayib Adam, UNICEF Representative to the Gulf Area, said

“

UNICEF is pleased to note the progress being made by Abu Dhabi's Early Childhood Authority (ECA) when it comes to family-friendly policies, in particular with the Parent-friendly Label. The aspiration to match the policies with internationally recognized standards and progressively work towards UNICEF's recommended best practices is praiseworthy.

”

Parent-friendly Label (PFL) consists of two levels



Level 1: Parent-friendly Label™

Workplaces in the UAE that exceed local requirements and standards.



Level 2: Parent-friendly Label+™

Workplaces in the UAE that meet or exceed global leading policies and practices.

Specific organizational targets have been defined for each level, and those for 'Parent-friendly+' are more comprehensive and ambitious.

The validity period of PFL and the follow-up meeting with the assessment team.

Your Label will remain valid for two years; however, you will be invited 12 months of after earning PFL Label to a check-in with the Assessors to better understand whether there have been any policy modifications or new additions since your organization earned the Label. This is intended to serve as a support for your organization as it endeavors to maintain and progress in its commitments to the Label.

Benefits of Parent-Friendly Policies to Society and Business

Many organizations have found that the adoption of parent-friendly policies and practices:

Helps retain employees

A recent global study showed that 40% of employees leave their job or look for a new one in search of better flexibility and 20% do so for better work life balance.¹

Another study showed that 71% of employees want more flexible work options to stay at their current employer.²

Enhances employer reputation, brand and attractiveness

Research shows that organizational support for work life balance is more than a 'nice to have'; 87% of employees expect their employer to support them balance work and personal commitments.³

Having parent-friendly policies in the workplace boosts employer appeal. 89% of employees working at organizations that support well-being initiatives are more likely to recommend their company as a good place to work than those that do not.⁴

Results in increased profitability

Research shows that high employee engagement leads to increased profitability up to **21%**

And in the UAE, it is no different...

A study in 2022 found that 56% of employees in the UAE want more emphasis on employee well-being and work-life balance, and 90% of employees in the UAE prefer flexible work options.⁶

1. World Economic Forum, "Employee loyalty is declining. Here's how to build it back", 2021
2. Microsoft, "More than two-thirds of staff want flexible working to stay, Microsoft research reveals", 2021
3. Glassdoor, "Three Reasons Employee Wellness Can Improve Employee Engagement", 2021
4. American Psychological Association, "Workplace Well-being Linked to Senior Leadership Support", 2016
5. Gallup, "Company Culture: Private Equity & Intangible Value Creation Lever", 2020
6. Cisco, "Cisco Global Hybrid Work Study", 2022

Research suggests that parent-friendly policies and practices in the workplace can:

Reduce parental stress

Research has shown that a parent-friendly workplace committed to supporting families with young children can reduce parenting stress and promote wellbeing.¹ Paid leave also relieves some of the financial burden that comes with childbirth or adoption and contributes to help reduce relationship dissatisfaction among couples.²

Improve mother and infant health

Research has shown that when mothers are supported in the workplace to nurse their babies, their infants have lower rates of acute infant, chronic illnesses and the likelihood to have a variety of infections decreases.³

Moreover, mothers who breastfeed for 12 months experience a reduced incidence of Type 2 diabetes and lifetime risk of breast cancer.⁴

Good for fathers

A study in Sweden found that fathers who took paternity leave in early parenthood were at lower risk for mortality during the next two decades, possibly due to the adoption of caring roles during infancy and the tandem development of health promotion attitudes.⁵

Extended paternity leave enables fathers to be more involved in the early years, supporting children to have better developmental outcomes, potentially leading to less behavioral problems and improved cognitive and mental health.⁶

Enable women to reach their full potential professionally

In the United States, the implementation of paid-leave policies resulted in a 20% reduction in the number of women leaving their jobs in the first year after childbirth.⁷

Improve mother-child interactions

Maternity leave is beneficial for infants in the first few months of life, where leave time is linked to better quality of mother-child interactions as well as increased attachment security for the infant.⁸

1. UNICEF, "Family-Friendly Policies - Handbook for Business", 2020

2. D'Inverno et al., "INSERT NAME OF STUDY HERE", 2018

3. CNN, "The benefits of paid leave for children are real, majority of research says", 2015

4. Collaborative Group on Hormonal Factors in Breast Cancer, 2002; Ursin et al., 2004; Victora et al., 2016.

5. Månsdotter et al "INSERT NAME OF STUDY HERE"., 2006

6. United States Department of Labor, "Why Parental Leave For Fathers Is So Important For Working Families", 2016

7. Jones & Wilcher, "Reducing maternal labor market detachment: A role for paid family leave", 2019

8. Plotcka & Busch-Rossnagel, "The role of length of maternity leave in supporting mother-child interactions and attachment security among American mothers and their infants", 2018.

**The future of work is
Parent-friendly!**

Benefits of Applying for the Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL)

The Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL) offers a number of benefits to its recipients. Some primary benefits include:

Positive Impact on the Organization

Positive Impact on employees' wellbeing

When employees feel supported by their employer to balance their work and family commitments, they can better deal with stress, which results in improved wellbeing. Employees' wellbeing is a key factor in determining an organization's long-term success.

Increased employee loyalty

Employees that work in parent-friendly workplaces value the care and support provided by their employers, creating greater loyalty to the organization.

Higher productivity

Parent-friendly policies such as extended parental leave, employee wellbeing programs, and flexible working have been shown to have no negative impact on productivity, and in most cases, have a positive effect.

Increased employer competitiveness

Employers that are known for prioritizing families and parents enjoy reputational benefits and are often regarded as employers of choice, especially for more experienced employees that, due to their age group, are most likely to have children.

Additional Benefits for Label Earners

PFL promotes knowledge sharing

Once you earn the Label, you will be invited to regular virtual or in-person curated knowledge sharing sessions with other Label earners. It will be an opportunity to learn from industry experts about trends and best practices, as well as challenges and success stories from each other.

Opportunities and Recommendations Report

All applicants, regardless of the outcome, receive a customized Feedback Report that includes the outcome of your application, key highlights from your application which have stood out to the assessors, areas of opportunity and assessor recommendations around those areas.

This is a valuable resource to be able to plan for where your organization aspires to go. Every organization is encouraged to use the assessors' recommendations to develop their action plan to improve and progress along their journey, regardless if they have earned the Label or not.

Welcome Pack

Upon earning the Parent-friendly Label, you will receive a Welcome Pack, including a plaque for display in your offices and a congratulatory letter from Leadership acknowledging your organization's achievement. The Pack will also include brand guidelines and collaterals which Label earners may produce to be able to share pride in earning the Label with their employees. It will also include social media guidelines and recommendations of posts (assets) to support you in your engagement across social media channels.

Recognition and Promotion

Targeted outreach designed to provide Label earners with public recognition of their efforts both in the media and through ECA-owned social media channels.

Eligibility Criteria

To determine if your organization is eligible to apply for Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL), it is important to consider the following questions:

Which sector does your organization operate in?

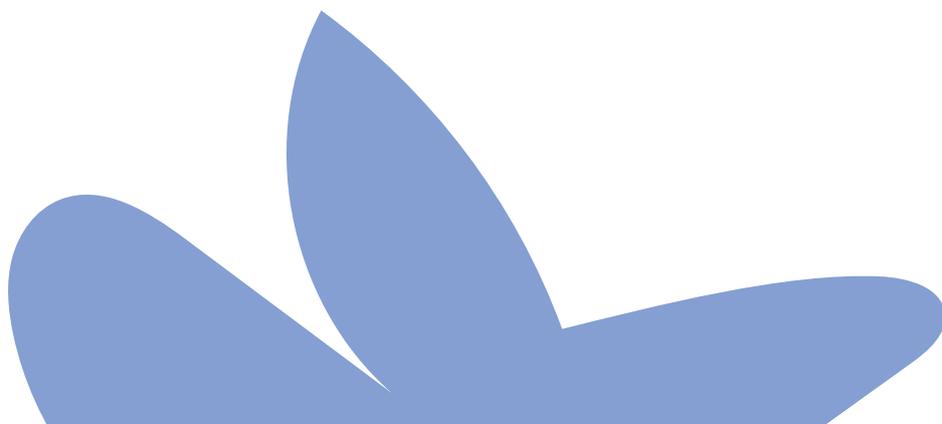
Does your organization employ more than 20 parents?

Can your organization demonstrate a commitment to parent-friendliness?

Has your organization been established in the UAE for at least two years?

If you answered “YES” to all these questions, then you are eligible to apply.

Participation in Cycle 4 of the Program has been opened to the government sector organizations in the United Arab Emirates on a trial basis, allowing them to benefit from the supportive government frameworks and policies and integrate them with the Program’s standards, as part of the approved expansion plan for the Program. In this context, we encourage local and federal government entities to draw inspiration from the Program’s standards and adopt its best practices to enhance their organizational policies and practices, wherever possible.



06

How Will My Organization Be Assessed?

The application process consists of two parts - the online Application Form with relevant evidence and the Parent-friendly Experience and the Parent-friendly Experience Survey - both are mandatory.

The online Application Form provides the landscape through which applicants will be assessed. The form measures 19 criteria across 5 categories. Ten out of 19 criteria are mandatory, and the remaining nine criteria are optional. Applicants will need to achieve ALL 10 of the mandatory requirements and at least 3 of any of the 9 optional criteria to meet the requirements of Level 1 of the Label and at least 5 optional criteria to meet the requirements of Level 2 of the Label.

Following that assessment, a judging panel made up of members from leading government institutions across the UAE will review the applications and make the final recommendations.

1. In order to assess your application, you will be asked to fill and submit an Application Form, to better understand your existing policies and practices, as well as what are the unique elements of your organization that you would like to share as the assessors review your application.
2. A key component of the Application Form will also require you to include supporting evidence of your policies and practices, in the form of existing policy documents, photos, communications, where appropriate. This will support the assessors to understand where your organization is against the criteria, and is also an opportunity for you to bring your application to life.

How Will My Organization Be Assessed?

The criteria and targets were thoroughly developed and validated through a number of key activities:

1

Gathering research and data from leading global institutions such as the OECD, International Labor Organization, among others

2

Understanding global leading practices from 16 countries, such as Scandinavian nations, as well as global leading organizations

3

Reviewing 9 existing single and multi-award programs in family-friendliness globally

4

Collaborating with public and private sectors and working closely with experts in the field to cross-check against the UAE context to ensure market needs and conditions were accounted for.

5

A thorough review of the criteria and targets by UNICEF Gulf



The 19 criteria fall within 5 categories:

a

Parental Leave

Dedicated leave days and arrangements are provided to parents to support them before, during and on return from the birth OR adoption of their child

b

Flexible Work Arrangements

Flexible work practices are accommodated to allow for caring responsibilities and changing family arrangements

c

Family Care

Employees are supported and empowered to make choices to reconcile work and caring responsibilities

d

Family Wellbeing

Support for the emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing of employees and their families is offered

e

Culture

Parent-friendly policies and practices are embedded into organizational culture through training, professional development, monitoring and feedback mechanisms

Innovation

The Applicants are encouraged to share details of the innovative approach adopted in their organizations in the delivery of parent-friendly processes for their employees, and supply supporting evidence. Offering more information on these processes help the assessor to assess the innovation level in the organization in a better way.

When sharing these innovative solutions, please keep in mind how your organization has gone above and beyond to support parents and their children's needs: whether this was done through a policy, new programs or projects, on-site office changes, or other actions taken to enhance their experience Employee.

Our expectation with the Parent-friendly Label is that applicants will make concrete policy changes within their organizations to meet or exceed the criteria.

Examples of innovative parent-friendly policies that may inspire you:

1

Shared parental leave: The same amount of parental leave is offered to all parents, regardless whether they are mothers or fathers.

2

Emergency family fund for vulnerable workers with families abroad: The funds come from a voluntary nominal contribution from office worker salaries (1 AED/month)

3

Special educational allowances: They are offered to parents of A child of determination.

4

Remote work: Employees may work remotely from any location during the summer period (July and August).

5

Wellbeing support: Free ergonomic assessment offered for pregnant women to enhance their workspace, making sure it is adapted to their needs.



1. Assessment Criteria

‘Yes’ indicates that this component of the relevant criteria will be assessed, while ‘NA’ indicates that this component is not applicable to the assessment of these criteria. There are also areas where a percentage ratio has been added to be evaluated against when required.

The assessment of some components will be based on the employees’ responses provided to a Parent-friendly Experience Survey which you must share with your employees. This is a mandatory component of your application. These areas have been indicated and highlighted when they are included.

a Parental Leave

A1. Maternity leave

Mandatory

Parental leave granted to women before and after the birth **OR** adoption of a child, to allow mothers to heal, nurture, care for and bond with their child.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Number of paid maternity leave calendar days offered	90 days or more	90 days or more
Flexibility in how maternity leave is taken (i.e. deferring leave days to later or spreading part-time over a longer period)	Yes	Yes
Option to take unpaid leave or use annual leave sequentially with the paid maternity leave days, for at least one month before the birth or after the maternity leave	Yes	Yes
% of employees who agree that mothers are supported to take their full maternity leave benefit	60%	80%
% of new mothers who agree that the maternity leave policy and procedures were clear and easy to understand, with all guidance and information are well defined	60%	80%
% of new mothers who feel supported with regard to extending their maternity leave using other types of leaves, e.g. annual leave, or unpaid leave whether BEFORE or AFTER maternity leave	60%	80%

A2. Paternity leave

Mandatory

Parental leave granted to men before and after the birth **OR** adoption of a child, to allow fathers to nurture, care for and bond with their family.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Number of working days	5 working days or suitable alternative	5 working days or suitable alternative
Flexibility in paternity leave days (deferring leave days to later or spreading part - time over a longer period)	Yes	Yes
Option to take unpaid leave or use annual leave sequentially with paid paternity days before or after the birth	Yes	Yes
% of employees who agree that fathers are supported by their manager to take their full paternity leave benefit	60%	80%
% of new fathers who feel supported by my managers to utilize their paternity leave benefit flexibly	60%	80%
% of new fathers who feel supported to extend their paternity leave by using other types of leave, such as annual or unpaid leave	60%	80%

A3. Special parental leave

Optional

Special leave provisions for prenatal **OR** adoption appointments, illness during pregnancy, miscarriage, stillbirth or loss.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Days of leave for pregnant employees in cases of miscarriage before 24 weeks	At least 2 weeks of unpaid leave	At least 2 weeks of unpaid leave
Days of leave for male employees in case of their spouse's miscarriage before 24 weeks	At least 3 days of paid leave	At least 3 days of paid leave
Offers fully paid maternity leave in cases of stillbirth (pregnancy loss after 6 months)	Entire maternity leave benefit (90 days)	Entire maternity leave benefit (90 days)
Offer fully paid paternity leave in cases of spouse stillbirth (pregnancy loss after 6 months)	Full paternity leave (5 working days)	Full paternity leave (at least 5 working days)
Additional maternity leave in cases of multiple births in a single pregnancy	Yes, paid or unpaid leave	Yes, paid OR unpaid leave
Additional paternity leave in cases of multiple births in a single pregnancy	Yes, paid OR unpaid leave	Yes, paid OR unpaid leave



A4. Leave transition support

Optional

Employees are provided with support as they depart on, remain on and return from, extended parental leave through regular manager communication, transitional flexible work arrangements and re-integration programs.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Communications sent prior and upon return from parental leave detailing support options to support transition back to work	At least 2 forms of communications provided	At least 2 forms of communications provided
Option for employees to be invited to work events during parental leave	Yes	Yes
Additional support provided to employees to support their transition upon return from extended parental leave including formalized training/coaching/mentoring program, regular touch points with manager during leave period or transitional working arrangements	At least 1 form of additional support provided to employees to support their transition back to work	At least 1 form of additional support provided to employees to support their transition back to work

A5. Employee benefits while on unpaid parental leave

Optional

Employee receives benefits while on unpaid parental leave such as continuity of their health insurance, ability to apply for roles to progress career, access to organizational communications, surveys and trainings, and inclusion in remuneration reviews, team events and activities.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Employee benefits are protected throughout the duration of unpaid parental leave	Access to at least 70% of employee benefits offered by the organization (choose 5 out of 7 benefits)	Access to at least 70% of employee benefits offered by the organization (choose 5 out of 7 benefits)

b Flexible work

B1. Flexible work policy

Optional

A policy that documents the organization's approved flexible work arrangements, including flexibility available options (work hours, work location, part-time work, job sharing, etc.) This policy focuses on output and outcomes rather than set hours of work. Employees with access to this policy should include those that are pregnant, returning from parental leave, or caring for a Child of Determination.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Documented flexible working policy which can be availed post alignment with line-manager	Yes	Yes
Flexible working policy provides flexible working hours and remote working, including additional flexible working options such as: job share, part time, annualized hours	Flexible working policy offers options for both flexible working hours (e.g., job share, part time) and work location (e.g., remote, hybrid)	Flexible working policy offers options for both flexible working hours (e.g., job share, part time) and work location (e.g., remote, hybrid)
Employees can attend antenatal or adoption appointments without taking leave	Employees can take a minimum of 2 days of leave (separate from unpaid or annual leave) for antenatal or adoption appointments per year.	Employees can take a minimum of 2 days of leave (separate from unpaid or annual leave) for antenatal or adoption appointments per year.
% of employees who agree that they feel comfortable when requesting flexible work arrangements from their managers	60%	80%
% of employees who agree that flexible working is promoted, supported and role modeled at all levels	60%	80%
% of employees who are satisfied with the flexible work arrangements available to them	60%	80%

B2. Short term flexible work

Mandatory

Entitlement for employees to work remotely for short periods to accommodate caring responsibilities or care emergencies e.g. in case childcare worker is not available or is ill.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Short term flexible working policy for cases of childcare emergencies or illness	Yes	Yes
Emergency medical leave days for childcare emergencies or hospitalization	Yes	Yes
Specific provisions for parents to work flexibly to attend nursery or school events or initiatives to support parents in school terms	Yes	Yes
Mothers and fathers are provided with flexible work arrangements in exceptional circumstances, such as the birth of a child weighing under 2,500 grams or other comparably serious situations and are allowed to negotiate these arrangements with their employer	Additional flexible work arrangements OR additional leave (not sick or annual leave) are offered	Additional flexible work arrangements OR additional leave (not sick or annual leave) are offered
% of parents who feel supported to work flexibly or take leave at short notice when they face last minute child-related emergencies, without having to consume annual/sick leave	60%	80%
% of parents who feel supported to work flexibly to attend school or nursery events, or attend to other caregiving responsibilities based on mutual understanding with their manager rather than going through a formal process	60%	80%

B3. Flexible working job evaluation and progression

Optional

Employees working flexibly are able to progress in their careers, and organizational processes provide fair review of performance for those working flexibly.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Job evaluation guidelines customized for flexible working arrangements	Yes	Yes
% of employees who agree that while using flexible working they can still advance their careers	60%	80%

C Family Care

C1. Nursing

Mandatory

Employees are able to take paid breaks from work to pump or nurse their baby. A private, exclusive, and hygienic maternity room with storage facilities, power, suitable seating and baby change facilities is available. Extras: Lactation specialist, hospital-grade breast pumps, sanitation equipment, fresh towels, lockers, parenting books, wireless speaker, window access, adjustable lighting, Wi-Fi, charging station, sink with running water, and foot rest

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Number of nursing break hours per day and the period for availing them, with access unaffected during reduced working hours (e.g., Ramadan)	Option 1: 2 hours for 6 months + 1 hour for 12 months OR any suitable alternatives to be provided Option 2: 2 hours for 12 months	Option 1: 2 hours for 6 months + 1 hour for 12 months OR any suitable alternatives to be provided Option 2: 2 hours for 12 months
A private and hygienic maternity room for female employees, where they can feel comfortable and store milk. or Provide justification why no maternity room and suitable alternative (e.g. remote working options during nursing breaks)	A private and hygienic maternity room for the female employees, with suitable seats and a fridge Or offering a suitable alternative, such as remote work options until the child is six months after the maternity leave to support and promote exclusive breastfeeding Note: The Praying room does not meet these requirements	A private and hygienic maternity room for the female employees, with suitable seats and a fridge Or offering a suitable alternative, such as remote work options until the child is six months after the maternity leave to support and promote exclusive breastfeeding Note: The Praying room does not meet these requirements
% of new mothers who feel supported to take their nursing breaks	60%	80%
% of new mothers who agree their organization clearly communicates the nursing support and facilities available to them (nursing hours, location, amenities, signage, etc.)	60%	80%
% of new mothers who are able to use their nursing breaks flexibly	60%	80%
% of new mothers who are satisfied with the nursing support/facilities offered	60%	80%

C2. Childcare

Mandatory

Employees are supported by their employers to access childcare support, including when childcare is not available, such as during school holidays. Such support includes: Direct financial support, vouchers, discounts, domestic helper training, domestic helper search, and dedicated facilities (such as a kids' corner or on-site childcare that is compliant with all regulations approved by the concerned authorities, such as Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), The Education, Human Development and Community Development Council (EHCD), and etc.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Forms of childcare assistance e.g. schooling allowance, child allowance, insurance, direct financial support, vouchers, discounts, domestic helper training, domestic helper search, facilities (such as kid's corner or if onsite childcare, then it should be compliant with ADEK regulations), etc.	At least 2 form of childcare assistance	At least 2 form of childcare assistance
% of employees who feel that the support that is offered in terms of childcare is clearly defined. (e.g.schooling allowance, child allowance, insurance, childcare discounts, etc.)	60%	80%
% of Parents who feel that the childcare support offered fits their childcare needs as a parent (e.g.schooling allowance, child allowance, insurance, childcare discounts, etc.)	60%	80%
% of parents who feel that their organization's family care benefit policies apply to all their children, regardless of how many they have (e.g., schooling allowance, child allowance, insurance, childcare discounts)	60%	80%

C3. Caregiver education

Optional

Information and resources are made available for employees on relevant topics including babies, toddlers, children, and Children of Determination specifically.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Parenting education resources are offered (i.e. Seminars on parent topics, educational materials, access to ECA's Parents' Platform)	At least 1 form of caregiver education is provided	At least 1 form of caregiver education is provided



C4. Child of Determination caregiver support

Mandatory

Employees caring for a child of determination can access additional support and/or benefits through their employer.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Policy in place support to parents caring for Child of Determination, including additional 30 or more days of paid maternity leave and 30 days of unpaid maternity leave	30 days or more of paid maternity leave, and 30 days of unpaid maternity leave, in addition to one additional benefit.	30 days or more of paid maternity leave, and 30 days of unpaid maternity leave, in addition to one additional benefit.
% of employees who are carers of children of determination who agree that the support offered for them is clearly defined	60%	80%
% of employees who are carers of children of determination who agree that the support offered for them is sufficient	60%	80%
% of parents who feel that the organization's benefits provided to child(ren) of determination fits their caregiving needs	60%	80%

d Family Wellbeing

D1. Employee wellbeing support

Mandatory

Programs and services available to promote the mental and physical wellbeing of employees and their families

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Formalized wellbeing support for mental and physical wellbeing including stress management support, mental health and counseling services	Formalized support for mental and physical wellbeing, in addition to family activities.	Formalized support for mental and physical wellbeing, in addition to family activities.
PRO/admin support is offered	Yes	Yes
Formalized manager training and education in awareness and application of wellbeing support, such as first aid courses, CPR training, guide, or management training programs	At least 1 option of manager wellbeing training	At least 1 option of manager wellbeing training
% of employees who agree that their organization clearly communicates programs and services that promote the mental and physical wellbeing of employees and their families	60%	80%
% of employees who are satisfied with the employee physical wellbeing support options offered	60%	80%
% of employees who are satisfied with the employee mental wellbeing support options offered	60%	80%



D2. Worker protection on parental leave

Mandatory

Employee rights are protected and cannot be undermined due to eligible parental leave or the utilization of nursing hours.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Protection during pregnancy and parental leave.	Protection during pregnancy and parental leave.	Protection during pregnancy and parental leave.
% of employees who feel protected while on parental leave, believing that their absence will not impact their role/position, their career at their organization or equivalent	60%	80%

D3. Women's leadership and career programs

Optional

Dedicated support is offered to women to advance in their careers given the specific challenges they often face in balancing family and work responsibilities.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Support programs for women's leadership advancement or career progression	Yes	Yes
% of employees who feel their organization understands the unique challenges women face in balancing work-family life and offers meaningful support to navigate them	60%	80%

e Culture

E1. Manager enablement and support

Mandatory

Managers are knowledgeable of parent-friendly policies and implement them consistently in line with the intention for which they were created. Employees feel comfortable and supported utilizing the parent-friendly policies that are available to them.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Organization supports and enables managers to understand and implement parent-friendly policies by building awareness and providing ongoing support to ensure they foster a parent-friendly team environment	Provides parent-friendly training and awareness sessions to managers periodically, as well as one other form of activity that supports awareness and education among managers (at least 2 options selected)	Provides parent-friendly training and awareness sessions to managers periodically, as well as one other form of activity that supports awareness and education among managers (at least 2 options selected)
% of employees who agree that their manager is knowledgeable on parent-friendly policies (e.g. Flexible work, parental leaves, etc.)	60%	80%
% of employees who agree that their manager is supportive of their caregiving responsibilities (childcare, elder care, dependent care)	60%	80%
% of employees who agree that their managers apply parent-friendly support consistently across the organization	60%	80%



E2. Internal promotion of parent-friendly policies

Mandatory

Parent-friendly policies are documented and promoted within the organization to all employees.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Promotion of parent-friendly policies throughout organization, which are easily accessed by employees	Yes	Yes
% of employees who agree that they understand the parent-friendly support options available to them	60%	80%
% of employees who agree that they know how and where to access information on parentfriendly policies	60%	80%
% of employee who feel that the organization actively encourages the use of parent-friendly support options	60%	80%

E3. Policy monitoring and impact

Optional

Organizations review the utilization of parent-friendly policies, including identifying potential areas for improvement, and use that intelligence to inform policy changes.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Measures are in place and reviewed regularly to ensure that practices and promotions in place are delivering parent-friendly outcomes, with actions taken to update policies and initiatives in line with the outcomes, where feasible	At least two parent-friendly related measures are tracked.	At least two parent-friendly related measures are tracked.
% of employees who are satisfied with the parent-friendly support provided by their organization and believe it reflects an understanding of employee needs and priorities	60%	80%



E4. Employee listening and impact

Optional

Organizations can illustrate that they have collected feedback from employees on parent-friendly policies, have introduced creative solutions to meet employee needs, and can demonstrate with data the impact of these initiatives.

Components of measurement	Parent-friendly	Parent-friendly+
Organizations can demonstrate that they have mechanisms in place to collect employee feedback and ideas on parent-friendly policies, while ensuring the feedback is reviewed, piloted and implemented	Yes	Yes
% of employees who agree they can provide feedback on parent-friendly support at their workplace	60%	80%
% of employees who are confident that their feedback is seriously considered	60%	80%
% of employees who feel that they are able to provide feedback on how their manager applies parent-friendly policies	60%	80%
% of employees who feel that they are able to provide feedback on how their manager applies parent-friendly policies	60%	80%

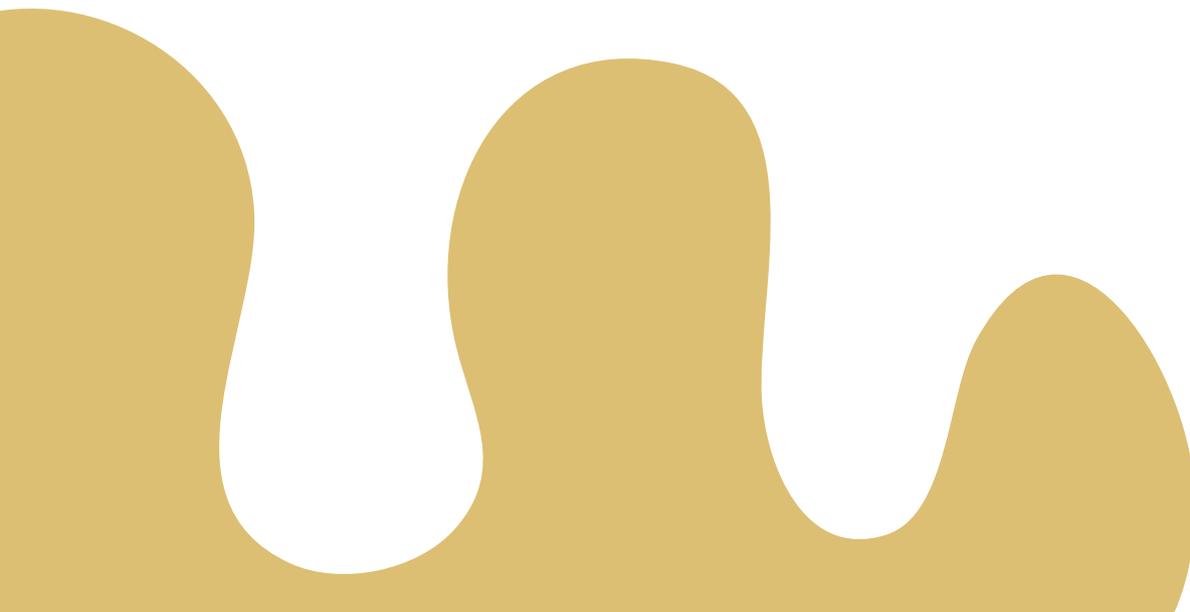


2. The Parent-friendly Experience Survey

As a mandatory part of your application, you will be required to share a brief Parent-friendly experience Survey with your employees. Please send the survey link to a diverse group of parents, non-parents, and employees who perform various roles and functions within the organization. These questions were designed to specifically assess how employees view current parent-friendly practices within their own organization.

Employee responses to the survey will be anonymous and will be collected and analyzed by an independent third party to prevent bias and maintain privacy.

The Parent-friendly Experience Survey response rate is based on the size of your organization, ensuring the right coverage of employee participation based on statistical best practices. Throughout your application journey, we aim to support you.



Applicant Journey Checklist

All Applicants:

Anytime

- Visit the PFL Website to learn more about the Parent-friendly Label
- Download and read the Applicant Handbook. Attend an Awareness Webinar and/or reach out to the PFL Team at pfl@eca.gov.ae with all your questions or request a one-on-one support session.
- Conduct an internal assessment of your parent-friendly policies & action any improvements where needed.

During the application window

- Fill in your organization's Application Form online. Your progress is autosaved, so take your time and be thorough in your responses.
- Receive an automated email with your organization's sample size requirement for the Parent-friendly Experience Survey and circulate the survey to your employees. Please remember to allow at least one month to reach your required sample size
- Ensure your evidence is all up-to-date and reflects everything you want to share about your organization's policies and innovation. Finalize and submit the online Application Form before the deadline

After application window closes

- Attend the Clarification Session, if needed. An email will be sent to you with details, including what to prepare; if you do not attend this session, the assessors will proceed with assessing your application as-is
- Receive the decision regarding your organization's application
- Attend the Recommendation Session with the assessors and receive your Recommendation and Opportunities Report
- Establish your Action Plan using recommendations from the Report and secure endorsement from your management to make the necessary changes.

If you have earned the Parent-friendly Label then:

- Attend the Recognition Ceremony
- Receive your Parent-friendly Label™ Welcome Pack (which includes a plaque for display in your offices and a congratulatory letter from
- Leadership acknowledging your organization's achievement, PFL brand guidelines and collaterals which Label earners may produce to be able to share pride in earning the Label with their employees, as well as social media guidelines and recommendations of posts (assets) to support you in your engagement across social media channels)
- Share the good news with your employees and help foster a sense of workplace pride in the achievement by distributing PFL-branded collaterals
- Collaborate with ECA on how to share your story and promote your organization's achievement (through communication features, etc.)
- Engage with PFL on social media as per suggestions provided in your Welcome Pack and actively participate in the PFL Connect sessions curated for you Attend the 1-year Check-In Meeting to share your organization's achievements since earning the Label

If you have not earned the Parent-friendly Label then:

- Focus on achieving milestones from your Action Plan
- Keep all policy updates and improvements well-documented
- Engage with the Parent-friendly Label on social media to stay updated on the latest news and events
- Apply to earn the Parent-friendly Label once the new application window opens

***If your organization should encounter any issues in completing any step of this process for any reason, please make sure to inform the PFL Team immediately by emailing us at pfl@eca.gov.ae**

Quality Assurance

To ensure the credibility and integrity of the Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL), a series of checks and balances for quality assurance and control have been put in place throughout the assessment process.

Selection

Application assessment will be conducted by a professional vendor with a trusted reputation and extensive experience to ensure complete fairness and integrity throughout the assessment process. ECA and its personnel will not be directly involved at any stage of the assessment process.

Benefits

Applicants who have not yet achieved the Parent-friendly Label™ will also have the opportunity to receive feedback in order to better understand the results of their application and how they can improve for the next cycle if they wish to re-apply.

The purpose of the Parent-friendly Label™ is to encourage and reward the adoption of parent-friendly policies and practices across workplaces in the private, semi-government and third sectors in the UAE. ECA recognizes, however, that a conflict of interest could potentially arise when entering a professional relationship in the course of business activities with organizations who may choose to apply to the Label.

In order to ensure the neutrality and independence of the selection of Parent-friendly Label™ applicants and avoidance of undue influence, ECA has implemented the following to retain the integrity of the Label:

1. Contracted a third-party evaluation firm with a strong reputation of ensuring independence to conduct the assessment and analysis of all submitted applications
2. Included as part of the Parent-friendly Label™ recipient selection process, a Judging Panel made up of independent senior stakeholders from leading public institutions across the UAE, who will be reviewing and recommending the list of successful applicants

Notification to ECA of Changes

Organizations are responsible for notifying ECA of all significant changes that impact their implementation of the PFL criteria within 90 days of their occurrence. Significant changes include, but are not limited to, those listed below.

Focal Points

If the change relates to the organization's focal points, please inform ECA immediately of the new leader's name, title and contact details.

Leadership

If the change relates to the organization's leadership, please inform ECA immediately of the new leader's name, title and contact details.

Organization Mergers

The entity must submit an official letter, signed by the authorized official, outlining any organizational changes that have occurred, including cases of mergers or separation between government entities. The letter must clarify whether the entity's implementation of the current Parent-friendly Label™ program criteria will be affected by these organizational changes, and provide the reasons accordingly. In the event of any potential impact, the entity must also outline the plans and measures it will undertake to ensure the continuity of compliance and implementation.



Confidentiality

All data and information submitted by applicants will be used exclusively for the purposes of assessing the application for the Parent-friendly Label™ (PFL), and individual responses will not be shared with third parties outside of the evaluation parameters. This extends to ECA's selected evaluation vendors, ensuring a fair application assessment.

The individual policies and practices or other organization-specific data shared as part of the application process will not be shared without written consent and authorization from the organization.

Data may be anonymized and aggregated for the purposes of understanding overall trends, and general aggregated data about applicants and the assessment process may also be used in communications by ECA. Organizations may also self-disclose their own individual data in any of their communications should they wish to do so.

Our applicants' privacy is of paramount importance for us. If you would feel more comfortable sharing data with an NDA in place, this can be provided upon request.



Contact Details

Do you have any additional questions?
You can always reach out to our team and we will get back to you!

E-mail: pfl@eca.gov.ae

Phone: **Abu Dhabi Government Contact Center (800-555) or
PFL Team (+971 56 533 7474) (+971 56 686 6658)**

[Parentfriendlylabel.ae](https://parentfriendlylabel.ae)

You can also check out our [Parentfriendlylabel.ae](https://parentfriendlylabel.ae)
for more information.



PFL_UAE