**Parent Friendly**™

بيئة عمل داعمة للآباء

# Applicant Handbook

## Cycle 3

A program led by

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**Abu Dhabi Early
Childhood Authority**

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# About the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority

The Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA) is a government entity, based in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, that supports holistic early childhood development. We oversee the Early Childhood Development sector with a mind that is committed to the highest standards and young children are at the heart of all we do. For more information about the ECA, visit **www.eca.gov.ae**

We help young children flourish by playing vital roles:

**We are an Enabler**

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

**We are a Policymaker**

We develop coordinated and aligned policies and laws

**We are a Knowledge Hub**

We inform decision-making through research, data and evidence

**We are a Disruptor**

We transform how people think about and address the needs of young children

One of the most important things we can do as a society is to invest in our children early. This is why our primary focus is on children aged 0-8 years old. By 3 years of age, a child's brain is already more than 80 percent of adult size. By 5 years of age, it's grown to about 90 percent 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 first and stand out with your parent-friendly policies. Regardless of the outcome of your application, there are no winners and losers. Consider your application a milestone step in a journey of progress.  Earning the Label is not the end 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.

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.

The Parent-friendly Label (PFL) consists of two levels of recognition

**Level 1: Parent-friendly Label™**

Workplaces in the UAE that exceed local requirements and standards.

**OR**

بيئة عمل داعمة للوالدين+

**Level 2: Parent-friendly+**

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.

**Label Validity and Check-in Meeting with Assessors**

Your Label will remain valid for two years, however, after 12 months of earning it, you will be invited 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 businesses

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

### Helps to 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 don't.[4]

### Results in increased profitability

Research shows that a highly engaged workforce leads to

## 21%

**higher profitability[5]**

### 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]

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 Stated Department of Labor, "Why Parental Leave For Fathers Is So Important For Working Families", 2016

## 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]
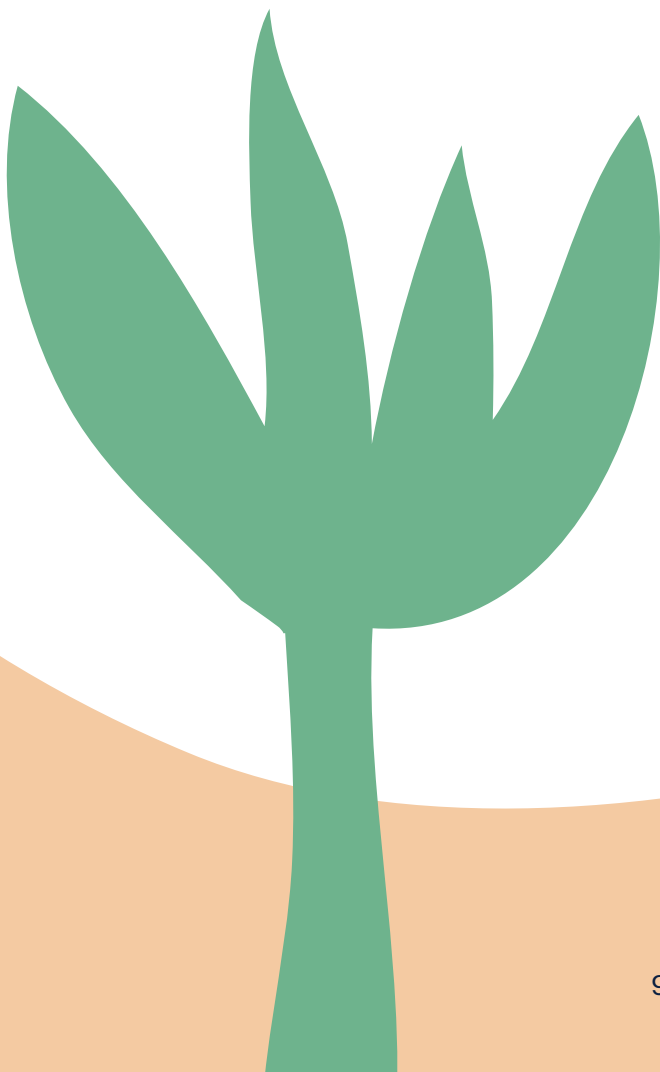
7 Jones & Wilcher, "Reducing maternal labor market detachment: A role for paid family leave", 2019
8 Plotcka & Busch-Rossnagel, "The role of length of maternity leave in supporting mother–child interactions and attachment security among American mothers and their infants", 2018.
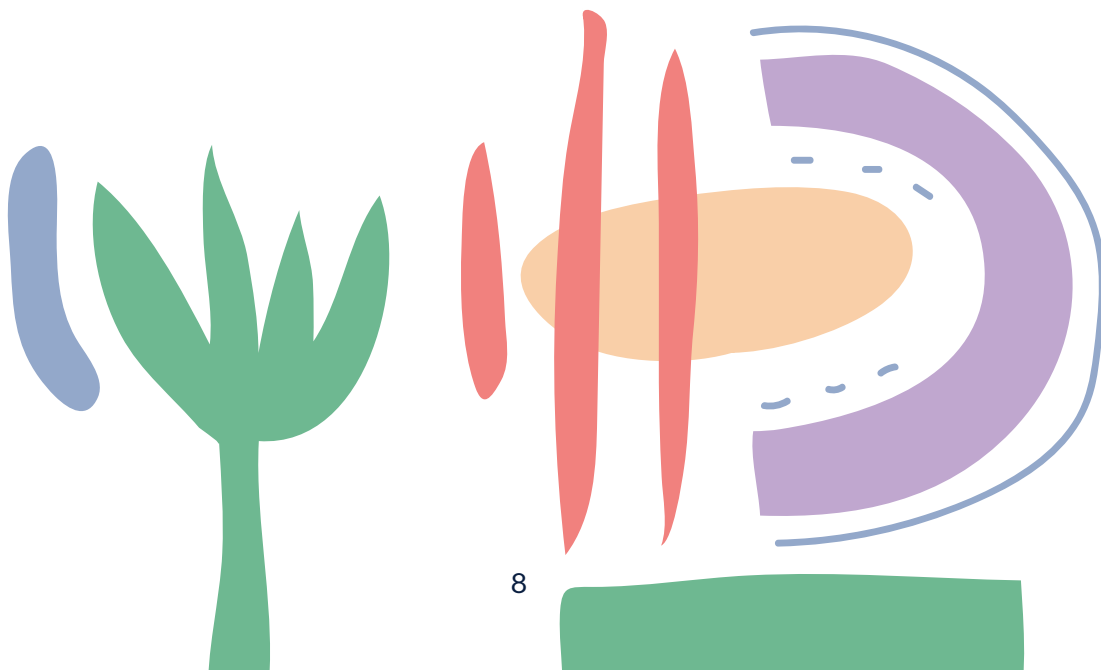
# The future of work is parent-friendly

# Benefits of Applying

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

## Workplace impact

### 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.

### 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 employee loyalty

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

### 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

## PFL Connect Community

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.

## Feedback 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.

## Public Recognition

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

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

Does your organization operate within the UAE's private, semi-government or third sector?

Does your organization have a valid trade license issued in the UAE?

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.

Government organizations in the UAE are not eligible to earn the Parent-friendly Label, however, we encourage local and federal government entities to be inspired by the criteria to enhance their organization's policies and practices, where applicable.

# 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. 8/19 criteria are mandatory, while 11/19 are optional. Applicants will need to achieve ALL 8 of the mandatory requirements and at least 6/11 of any of the optional criteria to meet the Label requirements.

Following that assessment, a judging panel made up of members from leading public 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.

## 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 Nordic nations, as well as global leading organizations

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

**4** Collaborating with private sector companies 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** foster care of their child

**B**

**Flexible Work**

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

Applicants are encouraged to share details about how they have been innovative in the delivery of parent-friendly processes and supply supporting evidence. The more information provided, the better the evaluator will be able to assess the level of creativity applied.

When sharing your 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, onsite office changes, or other actions taken to enhance their experience.

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 if it's the mother or father.

**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: offered for parents caring for children 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. If 'NA', this component is not applicable to the assessment of that criteria. There are also areas where a numerical value has been added to be evaluated against when required.

The assessment of some components will be based on responses provided to a Parent-friendly Experience Survey which you are responsible for sharing 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** foster care 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 | 136 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 along with 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 are satisfied with the number of maternity leave days offered | 60% | 80% |
| % of new mothers who feel supported by their manager to flexibly utilize their maternity leave benefit | 60% | 80% |

## A2. Paternity leave — Mandatory

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

| Components of measurement | Parent-friendly | Parent-friendly+ |
|---|---|---|
| Number of paid paternity leave working days offered | 6 days or more | 10 days or more |
| Flexibility in using paternity days (i.e. deferring leave days to later or spreading leave days over a longer period) | Yes | Yes |
| Option to take unpaid leave along with paternity leave | NA | Yes |
| % of employees who agree that fathers are supported by peers to take their full paternity leave benefit | 60% | 80% |
| % of employees who agree that fathers are supported by their manager to take their full paternity leave benefit | 60% | 80% |

## A3. Special parental leave — Optional

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

| Components of measurement | Parent-friendly | Parent-friendly+ |
|---|---|---|
| Additional leave in the case of miscarriage (before 24 weeks) for all parents | 2 weeks unpaid | 2 weeks paid |
| Days of leave for male employees in cases of spouses' miscarriage before 24 weeks | N/A | at least 3 days paid |
| Fully paid maternity leave in cases of stillbirth after 6 months | Entire maternity leave benefit (90 days) | Entire maternity leave benefit (136 days) |
| Offer fully paid paternity leave in cases of spouse stillbirth (pregnancy loss after 6 months) | Full paternity leave (6 working days) | Full paternity leave (at least 10 working days) |
| Number of days offered for antenatal or foster care appointments | 2 days paid | Policy does not limit |
| Additional maternity leave in cases of multiple births in a single pregnancy | Yes, unpaid | Yes, paid |
| Additional paternity leave in cases of multiple births in a single pregnancy | Yes, unpaid | Yes, paid |

## 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 to parental leave detail support options available to employees to help their transition back to work | Yes | Yes |
| Option for employees to be invited to work events during parental leave | Yes | Yes |
| Availability of a formalized training / coaching / mentoring program for employees to support them before they take leave or upon their return | NA | Yes |
| Option for employees to have regular touch points with managers while on leave | NA | Yes |
| Option for transitional working arrangements upon employee's return to work | NA | Yes |

## 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 parental leave | Access to at least 70% of employee benefits offered by the organization | Access to all employee benefits offered by the organization are provided |

# B- Flexible work:

**B1. Flexible work policy**  **Mandatory**

**If your organization is in the Education Sector (a university, educational operator, school or nursery) having a flexible work policy is OPTIONAL.**

Policy which documents the organization's flexible working arrangements, including the types of flexibility available (e.g. hours, location, part time, job sharing). This policy places focus on output and outcomes achieved rather than set hours of work. Employees with access to this policy should include at a minimum 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 includes flexible hours and remote working | Yes | Yes |
| Policy includes job share, part time, annualized hours and other options | job share, part time, annualized hours | L1 + at least 2 additional options |
| Specific provision for parents to work flexibly to attend school events | Yes | Yes |
| Flexible work arrangements are embedded in employee contracts | NA | Yes |
| % employee satisfaction with flexible work arrangements | 60% | 90% |
| % employees who agree that flexible working is promoted, supported and role modeled at all levels | NA | 80% |
| % employees who agree that they feel comfortable requesting their manager to work flexibly | 60% | 80% |

## B2. Short term flexible work — Optional

Entitlement for employees to work remotely for short periods to accommodate caring responsibilities or care emergencies e.g. loss of childcare or childcare illness.

| Components of measurement | Parent-friendly | Parent-friendly+ |
|---|---|---|
| Short term flexible working practice in place for cases of childcare emergencies or childcare illness | Yes | Yes |
| Access to emergency medical leave days for childcare emergencies or hospitalization | NA | Yes |
| Employees (BOTH mothers and fathers) are offered additional flexible work arrangements in cases of births with pre-natal challenges or birth weight under 2,500 grams | N/A | Additional flexible work arrangements OR additional leave (not sick or annual leave) are offered |
| % of employees with children who feel supported to work flexibly or take leave at short notice when they face last minute child-related emergencies | 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 consider flexible working | Yes | Yes |
| Employees can challenge reviews on the basis that working flexibly negatively impacted their performance evaluation | NA | Yes |
| % of employees who agree that using flexible working can still advance their careers | NA | 80% |

# C- Family Care:

**C1. Nursing**  **Mandatory**

Employees are able to take paid breaks from work to pump breastmilk or nurse their baby where applicable, and a private and hygienic maternity space with storage facilities, power, seating and baby change facilities is available. Extra support could include access to a lactation specialist, hospital-grade breast pumps, sanitation equipment, fresh towels, lockers, parenting books, wireless speaker, window access, WIFI and charging station.

| Components of measurement | Parent-friendly | Parent-friendly+ |
|---|---|---|
| Number of nursing break hours per day | 2 hours/day | Policy does not limit |
| Availability of a private and hygienic maternity room for female employees, where the mother is comfortable and can store her breast milk | A private and hygienic maternity room for female employees with appropriate seating and fridge (+ option for suitable alternative) | L1 + at least 3 "other amenities" (+ option for suitable alternative) |
| % of employees who agree that the work culture supports mothers to take their nursing break | 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 satisfied with the nursing support and facilities available to them | 60% | 80% |

* This criteria applies to organizations with a physical office space and who do not already offer flexibility of remote work to new mothers.

**C2. Childcare** **Optional**

**If your organization is in the Education Sector (a university, educational operator, school or nursery) offering childcare is MANDATORY.**

Employees are supported by their employers to access childcare support, including when childcare is not available, such as during school holidays.

| Components of measurement | Parent-friendly | Parent-friendly+ |
|---|---|---|
| Forms of childcare assistance e.g. direct financial support, vouchers, discounts, domestic helper training, domestic helper search, dedicated facilities (such as a kids' corner or onsite childcare that is compliant with all applicable regulations) | Availability of at least 1 form of childcare assistance | Availability of at least 3 forms of childcare assistance |
| % of employees who agree that they are satisfied with the support offered to access childcare support (e.g. childcare discounts, on-site daycare, etc.) | 60% | 80% |

**C3. Caregiver education** **Optional**

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

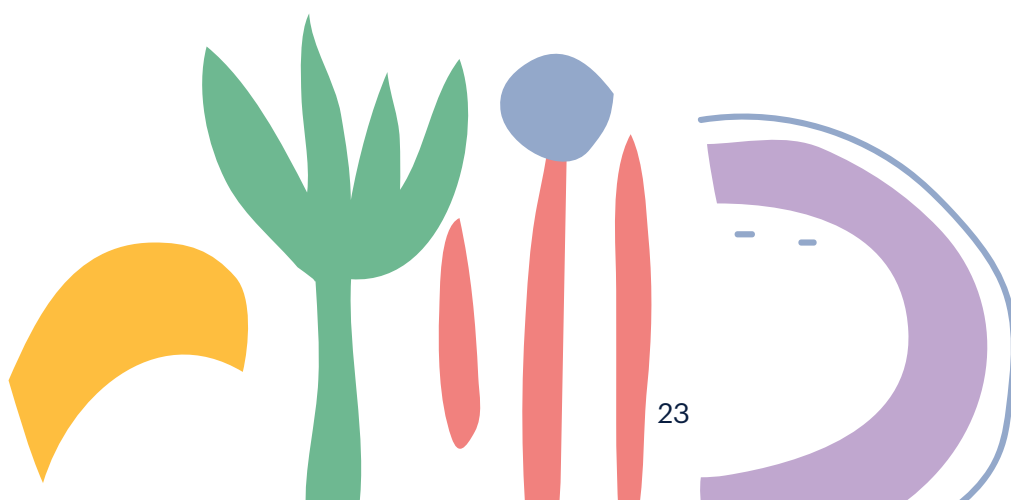| Components of measurement | Parent-friendly | Parent-friendly+ |
|---|---|---|
| Parenting education resources are offered (i.e. seminars on parent topics, educational materials, access to ECA's Parents' Platform) | At least 2 educational resource options | At least 3 educational resource options |
| Structured parenting training is offered (an example of this can be experts and facilitators providing on the ground training for expectant parents) | At least 1 parenting training option | At least 2 parenting training options |
| Targeted caregiver training that covers different caregiver and parenting styles for different needs is offered (example can be providing first-aid nanny training) | NA | Yes |

## C4. Child of Determination caregiver support — Optional

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 (or included within another policy) to support employees caring for a Child of Determination | Yes | Yes |
| Employers provide at least two forms of support to parents caring for a Child of Determination | 30 or more days paid, 30 unpaid of additional maternity leave | L1 + at least 2 additional benefits |
| % of employees who agree that the support for parents caring for Children of Determination is clearly defined | 60% | 80% |
| % of employees who agree that support for parents caring for Children of Determination is sufficient | 60% | 80% |

# D- Family Wellbeing:

**D1. Employee wellbeing support** · **Mandatory**

> Programs and services are available to promote the emotional, mental and physical wellbeing of employees and their families.

| Components of measurement | Parent-friendly | Parent-friendly+ |
|---|---|---|
| Formalized wellbeing support for mental wellbeing including stress management support, mental health and counseling services | Formalized wellbeing support for mental and physical wellbeing as well as family activities | Availability of physical health targeted programs and family wellbeing activities and at least one type of mental health support (examples include stress management, mental health, post-natal depression support) |
| PRO/admin support is offered to new parents | Yes | Yes |
| Peer-led family support groups are available | NA | Yes |
| Formalized manager training and education in awareness and application of wellbeing support, such as first aid courses, CPR training, guide, or management training | NA | Yes |
| % 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 from termination during pregnancy and parental leave | Protection during pregnancy and parental leave | Protection during pregnancy, parental leave AND may return to the same role or equivalent upon return |
| % 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 are available based on merit | Yes | Yes, and they address specific groups (i.e. mothers) |
| Structured support and mentorship networking opportunities | NA | Yes |
| % of employees who believe women's leadership and career programs offered at their organization are effective | 60% | 80% |
| % of employees who agree that their organization clearly communicates programs and services that promote the emotional, mental and physical wellbeing of employees and their families | 60% | 80% |

# E- culture:

**E1. Manager enablement and support**  **Mandatory**

Managers are knowledgeable of parent-friendly policies and implement them consistenly 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.

Enabling mangers could include different training methods, materials, sessions, being applied to managers to better understand the organization's existing parent-friendly policies, their importance, and how they can best support their teams to avail them and provide guidance as needed.

Internal promotion could be covered by the organization's internal platform where parent-friendly topics are discussed, e-mail communications, newsletters, SharePoint or equivalent with a specific area for parent-friendly policies, among others.

| Components of measurement | Parent-friendly | Parent-friendly+ |
|---|---|---|
| Training or awareness sessions are provided to managers periodically to enable them to implement parent-friendly policies and practices seamlessly | Parent-friendly training and awareness sessions are provided to managers periodically (at least 2 options selected) | L1+ more options selected |
| % of employees who agree their manager is supportive of their caregiving responsibilities | 60% | 80% |
| % of employees who agree that their manager is supportive of employees utlizing parent-friendly policies | 60% | 80% |
| % of employees who agree that their manager applies parent-friendly policies consistently across the team | 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, including ensuring they are easily accessed by employees | Yes | Yes |
| % of employees who feel they have a good understanding of the parent-friendly policies available to them | 60% | 80% |
| % of employees who agree that they know how and where to access information on parent-friendly policies | 60% | 80% |
| % of employees who agree they are comfortable utilizing the parent-friendly support provided by their organization | 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 policies and practices are delivering parent-friendly outcomes as intended | Yes | Yes |
| Organizations take action to update policies in line with the outcomes of the policy reviews | NA | Yes |
| % of employees who agree they are satisfied with parent-friendly policies | 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 a mechanism in place to collect employee feedback and ideas on parent-friendly policies | Yes | Yes |
| There is a structured and well-governed process in place by which employee feedback and suggestions are reviewed, piloted, tested and implemented where applicable | NA | Yes |
| The positive impact of improvements in policy can be demonstrated through credible data analysis | NA | Yes |
| % of employees who agree that they can provide feedback on parent-friendly policies | 60% | 80% |
| % of employees who feel that their feedback will be taken seriously | 60% | 80% |
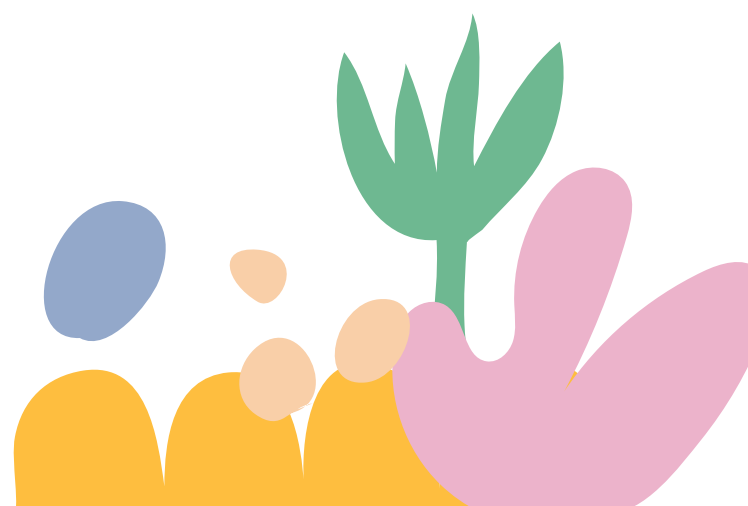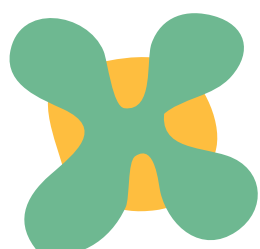
# 2. The Parent-friendly Experience Survey

As a **mandatory part of your application**, you will be required to share a brief Parent-friendly Experience Survey with your employees. Please issue the survey link to a good variety of parents, non-parents and employees covering different roles and functions across 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** (total number of employees in the UAE), 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 and become familiar with the criteria

- [ ] 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

- [ ] Start 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 with 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 Feedback Session with the assessors and receive your Feedback Report

- [ ] Establish your Action Plan using recommendations from the Feedback 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

3. If any applicant organization has an existing relationship or is collaborating with ECA, then this will be disclosed to the Judging Panel

# Notification to ECA of Changes

Organizations are responsible for notifying the 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 point, please inform the ECA immediately of the new focal point's name, title and contact details.

### Leadership

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

### Ownership Changes

**ORGANIZATIONS WORKING TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE LABEL** – The new owner must sign and submit a letter of intent signifying the organization's intent to continue to pursue the Parent-friendly Label™.

**ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE EARNED THE LABEL** – The new owner must send ECA a signed letter reporting the new ownership. The letter must state either the organization's current implementation of the Label criteria will not be impacted and why, or the organization's current implementation of the Label criteria will be impacted and what plans the organization has to ensure that all requirements will continue to be met.

### Organization Mergers

The organization must send a letter signed by the CEO describing the changes. The letter must state either the organization's current implementation of the Label criteria will not be impacted and why, or the organization's current implementation of the Label criteria will be impacted and what plans the organization has to ensure that all requirements will continue to be met.

In addition, if the merger results in more than one organization, only the organization that applied for the Label and underwent an assessment may claim Parent-friendly Label™ designation. In order for the new organization to claim Parent-friendly Label™ designation, it must apply for the Parent-friendly Label™ separately.

# 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 assessors, ensuring a fair application assessment.

PFL earners will be announced publicly, but 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)**

**https://eca.gov.ae/parent-friendly-home/**

📷 in
PFL_UAE

**A program led by**

هيئــة أبوظــي للطفـــولة المبكــرة
**Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority**