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GRIST**SOUTH KOREA EXPANDS PATERNITY LEAVE AND FLEXIBLE WORK OPTIONS**

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Work-family balance initiatives — including paid paternity leave and reduced work hours — took effect 1 Oct 2019, South Korea's Ministry of Employment and Labor has [announced](#) (Korean). In response to low birthrates, changes to the Employment Insurance Act and the Act on Gender Employment Equality and Work-Family Compatibility Support include:

- Spouses can take 10 days of paid paternity leave within 90 days of a child's birth, subject to fulfilling certain eligibility criteria. The old law had provided five days of timeoff within 30 days of the birth, with pay for the first three days of leave. According to the government, several larger employers already have voluntarily extended 10 days' paid paternity leave after a child's birth.
- Employees with children younger than 9 years old or attending second or a lower grade of elementary school can work fewer hours for up to two years. The new flexible working options entitle employees to reduce their workday by one hour without loss of pay. Under the old law, employees could reduce their workday by two to five hours for one year.

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- [News Release](#) (Korean) (Ministry of Employment and Labor, 30 Sep 2019)

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