

## Call for Interest: 2025 Workshop

### Mothers' Return to Work After Childbirth: Mental Health and Family Well-Being

#### *Organizers:*

**Dr. Tímea Laura Molnár**, Assistant Professor, Central European University

**Dr. Gaëlle Simard-Duplain**, Assistant Professor, Carleton University

With financial and organizational support from the **Vanier Institute of the Family**

#### *Context:*

Research shows that mothers' earnings stagnate and often decrease following childbirth, leading to a large and growing gender pay gap. This is often referred to as the "motherhood penalty". In response to this, considerable work has focused on policies which may facilitate the return of mothers to the workplace. However, knowledge remains scarce regarding the implications of the timing of this return on maternal mental health and on children's development.

In a research project funded by the Vanier Institute of the Family, we seek to address this gap. In this context, we are organizing a workshop to bring together experts from academic and other sectors, around topics at the intersection of maternal labour supply, policies that support mothers' return to work (e.g., parental leave, child care), mental health, child development, and family well-being and dynamics. We hope to have as broad a range of perspectives as possible (e.g., work looking at various family structures, Indigenous parents, racialized parents, etc.).

At this stage, we are looking for individuals and organizations interested in participating in the workshop. These may include academic and non-academic researchers, policy makers, practitioners, etc. Individuals who may wish to attend but not necessarily present may also contact us to receive updates.

#### *Workshop Objectives:*

1. **Knowledge mobilization.** Mothers' return to work and maternal mental health are often considered separately in research and policy spaces. Our first objective is to address this; namely, to:
  - a. Bring together experts from various domains, including fields that may have done more to bridge the gap between these two issues; and
  - b. Help further the conversation around the intersection of these topics.
2. **Stakeholder engagement.** With the expansion of affordable child care, the current policy context is a great opportunity for researchers to engage with policy makers and practitioners around:

- a. What works best for families; and
  - b. How the expansion's success could or should be evaluated going forward.
3. **Conversation around data challenges and opportunities.** Despite advances, important data gaps continue to restrict our ability to answer policy-relevant questions in this space. Our third objective is to engage with others to:
- a. Identify the various data limitations individuals and organizations are facing; and
  - b. Discuss how existing data may be leveraged to circumvent some of these limitations.

*Tentative Date and Location:*

The workshop will be held in **Ottawa** in the **spring of 2025**.

To express interest in participating in or attending the workshop, or for additional information, please email Dr. Simard-Duplain at [\*\*gaille.simardduplain@carleton.ca\*\*](mailto:gaille.simardduplain@carleton.ca).