

Explaining why some young mothers become NEET, and why some of them eventually take up employment or education again

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In recent decades, women's labour market participation in the Netherlands and other Western European countries has dramatically increased. Still, many women leave the labour force upon child birth. Especially for younger women, childbirth might lead to educational drop-out, less labour market experience, economic inactivity, and higher welfare dependence. In this paper we study how young mothers rely on social support networks to stay in education or the labour force. Specifically, we use geocoded population-wide register data and individual fixed-effects regression to study the effect of travel distance to grandparents as a proxy of support availability. We find that (1) the probability of being NEET is expectedly higher when young women become mothers and (2) that this can be compensated by grandmothers who live close-by, and (3) that this is likely explained by the fact that young mothers are not moving away from their parents once they have a child, and not by grandparents moving closer to them.