

# Child disability and parental employment trajectories



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## 1 Motivation

Vast literature on labour child penalties for women, but limited evidence on how children's disability affects parental career trajectories. We have evidence on how children's disability have an impact on:

- parents' life-course decisions (e.g. fertility, union dissolution..) e.g. Stabile & Allin (2013)
- parents' physical, mental, and emotional health e.g. Yamaoka et al., (2016); Scherer et al., (2019)
- parents' social participation and civic engagement e.g. Balbo & Bolano, (2023)



## Our question

How does children's disability affect fathers' and mothers' labour trajectories?

What is a disability?

WHO definition: any condition of the body or mind that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities and interact with the world around them.

Who is considered to have a disability?

- In surveys: classification based on self-reported functional limitation
  - High degree of subjectivity + substantial sampling and coverage issues
- Legal definition: typically required to access specific benefits, typically requires a medical examination and a certificate validated by a "legal" doctor.
- In our study: we focus on families receiving a disability allowance

## Disability in numbers

- Individuals with a disability are the **world's largest minority**
- **Quantifying the phenomenon is complex:** no universal definition and under-representation in administrative and survey data.
- The best available estimates suggest that 1B people worldwide have some form of disability, **240M of them are children**

## 2 Data & setting

INPS data: matched employer-employee **administrative data** on the universe of workers in the **Italian** non-agricultural private sector in **2000–2019**, which include

- detailed information on work and pay history (e.g. annual gross earnings, weeks worked, type of contract, occupation, maternity or parental leaves, sick leaves) and demographic information of the worker (e.g. gender, province and year of birth, educational level, province of residence)

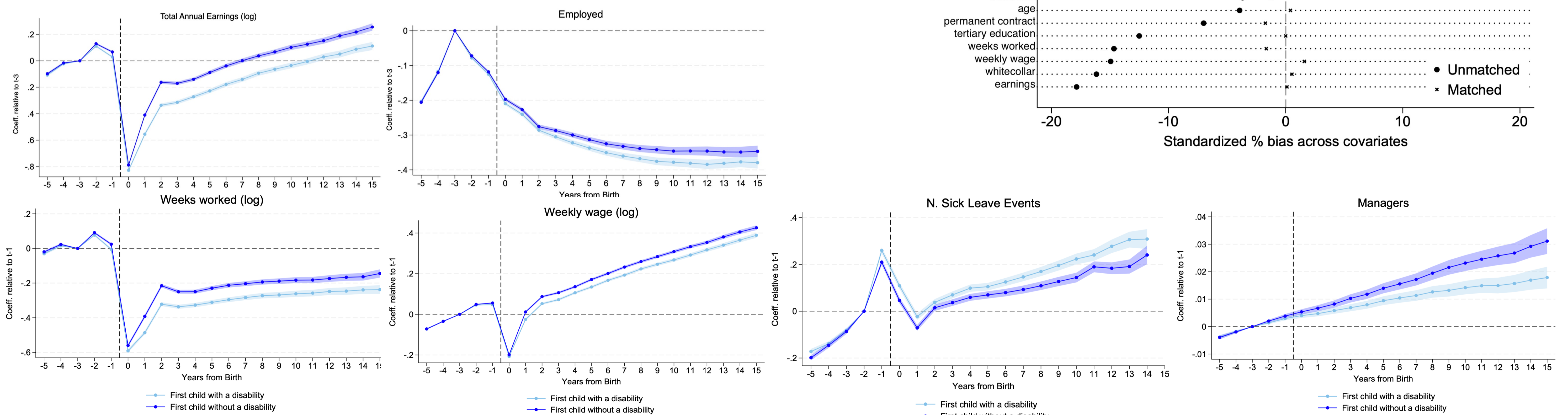
→ **We identify mothers and their partners from the maternity leave claim register**

→ **We identify children with a disability, observing whether parents receive a disability allowance**

## 3 Empirical design

As the incidence of disability is **not exogenous**, we first perform **propensity score matching** to derive two comparable group of families, and then we perform an **event study comparison** of parental career trajectories after the birth of a child with/without a severe disability.

## 4 Results



## Main takeaways

We find a significant child disability penalty (extra penalty) for mothers in terms of:

- The probability of being **employed** (extensive margin)
- Total **earnings**, number of **weeks worked**, and weekly **wage** (intensive margin)
- The probability of being a manager
- The number of sick leave events

Effects are **long lasting**, and seem to **increase over time**

Preliminary evidence suggests that there is substantial child **disability-related extra-penalty for fathers as well**