



PRESS RELEASE

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Attention: All News Editors/Reporters

Jamaica to Tackle Declining Birth Rate with National Family Support Strategy

Kingston, Jamaica. Tuesday, May 12, 2026: A National Fertility and Family Support Strategy is to be developed as the Ministry of Health & Wellness looks to address the country's declining fertility rate.

Speaking on Tuesday (May 12), Minister of Health & Wellness, Dr. the Hon. Christopher Tufton, OD, MP, announced in his Sectoral Presentation to Parliament, plans to engage in national dialogue on the issue and proposes a multi-stakeholder *National Taskforce on Fertility and Responsible Parenting*, to include representatives from health, labour, education, finance, academia, civil society, and the private sector. The Taskforce would be responsible for developing the family support strategy within 12 months, with targets for 2030.

Over the next two years, the Ministry will lead conversations around community and society-based interventions focused on five key areas:

- Financial support for families and responsible parenting
- Expanded maternity, paternity, and shared parental leave
- Affordable childcare and early childhood support
- Improved reproductive and postnatal health services
- Parenting education and stronger community support systems

“The Government is not asking Jamaicans to have children for statistical reasons. It is committed to building conditions where family formation is genuinely affordable, structurally supported, and celebrated. The intention is to pursue this initiative to affirm that this Government continues to believe that family remains the foundation of the nation's future,” the Minister said.

The country's fertility rate has now fallen to approximately 1.3 children per woman, significantly below the replacement level of 2.1. The decline poses serious implications for Jamaica's long-term economic stability, workforce sustainability, and social support systems, including an ageing population, rising dependency ratios, and reduced economic activity.

Global evidence shows that countries with strong family support systems, including parental leave, affordable childcare, and early childhood support, have seen improved fertility outcomes, while short-term financial incentives alone have had limited impact.

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While no specific policies have yet been finalised, the Ministry remains committed to engage the public, exploring evidence-based solutions, and strengthening Jamaican families and communities.

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