



Federal Ministry for  
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,  
Women and Youth

# Reconciliation of private and professional lives

## German system and reforms



# Current trends and challenges

- | **Mothers** of very young children have an increasing desire to work or to work more than they do,
- | A growing number of **fathers** want to play a greater role in family life
- | A **majority of parents with young children wish to equally share family-responsibilities and labour market participation** – but only few live accordingly (experiencing conflicts with prevailing conditions).
- | Current surveys show:
  - a majority of fathers would like to spend more time with their family;
  - many mothers would like to increase working-hours
  - Parents wish for support in order to reconcile family and work and “dare to share”



# A new approach to the reconciliation of work and family life

- | Federal Government relies on **established benefits** and develops **new options** in order to support young parents to live family and career on a partnership basis:
  - | **Parental allowance**
  - | **Child benefit**
  - | **Childcare in ECEC centres and in family day-care**
  
- > Equal opportunities in the labour market for women and men, flexible working hours and needs-based, quality childcare and long-term care are further keys in providing greater support for families.



# Parental allowance

## I Parental allowance (2007)

- for fathers and mothers for a maximum of 14 months
- they can divide this time up between themselves (from 2 to 12 months each + 2 extra months if both partners participate / “partner months”)
- Single parents: full 14 months parental allowance
- The parental allowance replaces the loss in income by 65 to 100 percent of the net income before birth
- Minimum €300 to maximum €1,800



# Parental allowance Plus

- | Or: Parental allowance **Plus -PAP-** (since 2015) – part-time work:
- | With PAP parents can extend the entitlement period: 1 Parental allowance month becomes 2 PAP months = **twice as long** as basic parental allowance.
- | PAP, like Parental allowance, replaces income loss by 65 to 100 %.
- | maximum half of the monthly Parental Allowance sum to which parents without part-time income would be entitled.
- > more flexibility over and above the 14th month in order to combine the needs of the child with the requirements of parents' jobs
- | **Single parents** will benefit in just the same way as mothers and fathers with differing living arrangements.



# Parental allowance Plus

- | + Partnership Bonus (since 2015) – part-time work:
  - | If mothers and fathers **both** decide to **work part-time simultaneously** – for 4 months in parallel and between 25 to 30 hours per week – they will receive **4 additional PAP months each**.
  - | In this way, families remain financially secure for longer when holding down a part-time job, and are better able to divide tasks within the partnership.
- | Rules regarding parental leave have also been made more flexible.



# Parental allowance: facts and figures

I Since the introduction of the Parental Allowance in 2007, the father's contribution to parenting has increased continuously, reaching 34.2 percent as the national average in 2014 (regionally up to 57%)

I Fathers' share of Parental Allowance (nationally):

2010: 25.3%

2011: 27.3%

2012: 29.3%

2013: 32%

2014: 34.2%



# Parental allowance: facts and figures

- | The participation of fathers and, in particular, of mothers in the labour market has clearly increased since the introduction of the Parental Allowance. Amongst mothers whose youngest child is between one and eight years old – i.e. who were able to benefit from the newly introduced benefits from the beginning – the proportion of those employed has **increased by over 10 percentage points since 2006.**
- | PAP: in 4th quarter of 2016 (18 months after introduction of PAP), **22.7 % of parents** opted for PAP.



# Parental allowance: Objectives

- | To give parents more time for the family
- | To support a compatible partnership of family and vocation
- | To promote shared parenting
- | To ensure the livelihood of mothers

# Parental leave

## I Authorised group of persons:

- employees
- employees in vocational training

In principle, the German concept of employees is decisive.

## I Duration of entitlement

any parent is entitled to **three years** of parental leave.

## I Possibilities of using/combining it without gainful employment or in part-time during parental leave

## I Possible period of entitlement

From birth to the age of three, there is a right to claim for parental leave. Up to two years of parental leave can be taken up to the age of eight years.



# Parental leave: legal consequences

- | The employment relationship is suspended during the period of parental leave, that means
  - the mutual obligations do not need be provided
  - after the end of parental leave, there is a "right of return"
  - protection against dismissal with application of the parental leave



# Parental leave: Objectives

- | Ensuring compatibility between family and work
- | A balance of interests between parents and employers
- | Preserving social interests



# Future steps: supporting equal sharing through a new family benefit

- I Parents with young children need **time for employment AND time for care-taking** - and they wish for support in order to live in accordance with their preferred model of equally shared responsibilities:
  
- I The idea of a new „**Family working-time benefit for Kids**“ extends the Parental Allowance Plus concept:
  - **Parents** who both work reduced full-time when children are young shall each receive an income support of 150 Euro per month (per child)
  - for a maximum of 24 months; until the child is 8 years old
  - Single parents shall also be eligible.



# Effects and Advantages

## I The „Family working-time benefit for Kids“

- **encourages** parents to live equal partnerships - with time for kids **and** a full engagement in employment with good job opportunities for both parents
- **gives** children time with both parents
- **strengthens** both parents' economic participation and independence - thus reducing poverty risks esp. for mothers
- **enhances** gender equality by contributing to closing gender gaps (e.g. working time-, gender pay-, pension) and changing social norms
- **increases** quality of life and well-being for families in the „rush hour“
- can **improve** the financial situation in families with lower income



# Childcare in ECEC centres and in family day-care

- | Since **August 2013**, every child between the ages of one to school entry age has the **legal right to early childhood education and care (ECEC) in an ECEC centre or in family day care.**
- | Although the German states (*Länder*) and municipalities are primarily responsible for providing childcare centres or in family day-care, the Federal Government provides **extensive financial and qualitative support** for the needs-based expansion of day care services for children younger than three years:
  - | -> 400.000 new places for childcare
  - | -> Currently around 720.000 places for children under 3
- | In addition, federal programmes are established to ensure and improve the **quality of childcare.**



# Reconciliation of family, care and work

- | **Since January 2015:** new regulations in the **Family Caregiver Leave Act** and the **Caregiver Leave Act:**
- | **short-term absence from work and carer's grant** (care situation occurring at short notice and wage compensation benefit): close relatives can stay away from work for up to 10 working days in order to organise appropriate care.
- | **Caregiver leave:** a complete or partial release from work for up to 6 months in order to care for a close relative in need of long-term care at home; **NEW:** interest-free loan in order to cushion the loss of income
- | **Family caregiver leave :** a partial release from work for up to 24 months + interest-free loan



# Advisory services

- | **High-quality and nationwide** range of advisory services provided by different institutions and bodies for questions regarding the education of children and living together as a family.
- | Advice is given **free of charge** in more than 1,000 education and family advice centres and is generally **open to everyone**.



# A question of Gender Equality

- | Gender Equality needs both, economic independence and social involvement. Independence needs **own income**. Involvement needs **time**.
- | The expert commission for the Second Gender Equality Report (launched in 2017) suggests an **earner-carer-model** targeting equally at women and men to reconcile earning and caring over their individual life course.
- | “Reconciliation” therefore should address women and men. Structures and regulations to lead women and men into roles either as breadwinner or family carer deepen gender gaps in income and time.
- | See also: [www.gleichstellungsbericht.de](http://www.gleichstellungsbericht.de)  
(Summary in English will be available soon)



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# Thank you very much!

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