



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

# Family Report 2017

## Benefits, Effects, Trends



Dear Reader,

Family life is changing. A lot has happened since the last Family Report in 2014. One example is the positive trend seen in the birth rate. In 2015, it was 1.5 children per woman – a rate Germany has not seen since 1982.



Family policy is keeping pace. In this current electoral term, we have increased and improved key family-related benefits, expanded child-care infrastructure, brought the protective period for pregnant mothers in line with today's needs and improved support for single parents. And with the introduction of marriage for all, plus increases in child supplement and maintenance advance, we have made several other important steps. We have thus more than met the long list of requirements set out in the Coalition Agreement.

Good family policy focuses on families and their needs. Modern family policy adapts to families' changing realities and life visions, and creates the conditions needed for the future. But this is not only a government responsibility. Employers and social partners are also called upon to play their part to ensure that working parents are offered appropriate structures and options which enable them to better reconcile family and working life.

To make sure all of this happens, we need reliable information and data. The Family Report 2017 thus provides an informed insight into families in Germany and their needs. It also shows that ensuring children have a healthy environment in which to grow and providing equitable opportunities for all families whatever their form remains just as important as ever before.

With offerings such as parental allowance, parental allowance plus and good childcare services, family policy meets many and varied demands: those of mothers who want more opportunities to earn a living wage, those of fathers who want more time with their children and those of families who want to spend more time together. Children benefit especially if all of these demands are met.

In many families, responsibility for the children becomes particularly important when parents decide to live apart. There is still a lot to do if we are to help them through this difficult phase, find joint solutions and offer them better forms of support while they come to terms with their new situations.

Digitalisation is another big future-focused topic. It is already an integral part of family life, one that involves opportunity and challenge. Effective family policy can help families in a targeted way to seize the opportunities offered by digitalisation and avoid the risks it brings.

The new Family Report shows that we are keeping up and are moving with the times.

Our aim is to provide modern family policy that offers families in Germany the right conditions and keeps a keen eye to their changing needs.



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## Summary

The Family Report 2017 provides information compiled on the basis of current data, scientific studies and representative surveys on both the attitudes and the circumstances of families in Germany, and the family policy measures that lend them assistance and support.

- 1) Family way of life valued – diversity acknowledged.** This first chapter on Family Life in Germany shows the different family forms chosen in what people say is the most important aspect of life. The family constellation of married parents with children is still the most widely distributed form (5.5 million). There has, however, been a significant increase in the number of cohabiting couples, with the figure almost doubling to 843,000 over the past 20 years.

The number of single parents is also considerably greater than it was in the early 1990s, with figures hovering around 1.6 million for the past several years. Of the 13 million children in Germany in 2015, 2.3 million lived with a single parent. The number of divorces has been on the decline for some time and the number of marriages is on the rise. One in three families with under-age children has a migrant background, increasingly from non-European countries. Marriage for all has become possible, differences are socially accepted.

The birth rate has risen significantly. In 2015, it was 1.5 children per woman, the highest rate seen for 25 years. Three-quarters of children grow up with at least one sibling. More so than in other countries, the actual number of children born lags behind the number of children couples would like to have. Parents aged between 40 and 49 say an average 2.2 children is ideal, but in reality they have only 1.9 children on average.

- 2) Most families are economically secure, but not all have equal access to prosperity.** The second chapter describes families' economic situations and the effects that state benefits have. Most families say their economic situation is good or even very good. In actual fact, families' average (needs-weighted) per capita income rose by just under 23 percent between 2004 and 2014.

However, depending on the source of data involved, the risk of child poverty lies between 14.6 and 21.1 percent. Some 44 percent of single parent households are at risk. Their risk of poverty is more than four times as high compared with two-parent families with one or two children. 25 percent of families with three or more children face a disproportionately greater poverty risk. Also, migration has changed concerning the countries of origin, thus raising the risk of poverty rise even further in recent years.

Unemployment or marginal employment among parents is the main cause of poverty risk, dependency on benefits and precarious living conditions. In families where neither parent is employed, the children have a 64 percent poverty risk; if the household has one income from a full-time job, the risk of poverty lies at 15 percent. If the family has a second income from part-time work, the risk of poverty drops to just five percent.

In most families in Germany, the father earns the main portion of the family income and the mother earns to supplement it. This inequitable earning of the family income can harbour a poverty risk if the main earner is unable to work. If parents share both the family-related responsibilities and the amount of employment, the family's financial situation improves in the short and in the longer term.

To enable both parents to work and earn a living wage, it is vital to provide childcare. State funds made available for childcare provision rose from more than € 11 billion in 2006 to almost € 24.6 billion in 2015.

- 3) Opportunities for children are unequally spread – not all benefit from services and benefits to the same extent.** Chapter III focuses on the opportunities afforded to children and especially to those from low-income families. It shows, for example, that children from such families are significantly less able to engage in sports, early musical education, and creative or artistic activities or participate in other kinds of parent-child groups than are children from families with higher incomes. For these children in particular, good and reliable childcare is important for two reasons: sending children to childcare has a positive effect on their development and wellbeing, and it also enables parents to earn an income.

To ensure that the childcare chain is not broken when children start school, a legal right to after-school care and supervision must be introduced. To cover the demand for children up to the age of 12, a minimum of 280,000 new places must be created. In addition, the opening times for a similar number of existing places (275,000) must be increased.

To reduce the risk of poverty for families, the Federal Government has increased the financial assistance provided to parents – child benefit, child supplement, tax-free allowance for single parents and maintenance advance – have all been significantly improved. These benefits help to reduce poverty risk. Further developing the child benefit system is another way to improve opportunities for children from families with low incomes. These families could be given child benefit in a higher amount which would then automatically be reduced as and when the family income rose. Some 70 percent of the German population believe that raising the amount of child benefit for low income families is a good idea.

- 4) Mothers and fathers want to share the responsibility for work and family life equally as partners, even if they separate or divorce. Children want both parents to work and to have the same or a similar amount of time for the family.** Chapter IV “Partnership: wishful thinking and reality” sums up the key trend towards wanting and achieving the greater partnership in families which is fostered by the introduction of parental allowance and the increase in the number of childcare places available for small children. Key indicators for this trend are the growing number of mothers who go to work and the rise in the number of fathers who make use of the parental allowance and parental leave schemes. Since parental allowance was introduced, the number of working mothers with children aged between two and three has risen from 42 to 58 percent, especially among those in part-time jobs with a medium to high number of working hours per week.



Since 2006, the number of fathers who take parental leave has risen from 3.5 to 35 percent. More than half of all fathers in Germany today would like to assume either the same amount of responsibility or even most of the responsibility for looking after their children. Many children would like to see both work and family responsibilities shared more equally between their parents. Children who grow up with parents working close to full-time relate to their mother and their father in equal terms.

However, there is still a large gap between what parents would like for themselves and whether they are actually able to share family responsibilities equally as partners. Mothers would like to work more often and for longer hours, while fathers would like to reduce the number of hours they work and spend more time with their families.

The desire to share responsibilities equally also remains should a couple separate or divorce. Some 51 percent of separated parents would like the responsibility for childcare to be shared more or less equally. One in two fathers would like to assume more responsibility for childcare than is currently the case. By way of contrast, 42 percent of mothers would like to see their share of the responsibility reduced.

- 5) **Employers also want to promote equal sharing of work-life responsibilities.** A new approach to organising family and working life described in Chapter V places the spotlight on corporate culture and employers who want to support their employees by operating family-friendly policies. This “NEUE Vereinbarkeit” initiative (which roughly translates into NEW Balance in reconciling family and working life) aims to modernise working culture to provide more family-focused organisation of work for women and men in various phases of life, and give employees more options and more scope in organising their family and working lives. The idea is to reconcile company requirements with employees’ needs. At the moment, eight out of ten companies recognise the importance of operating personnel policies geared to the reconciliation of family and working life. However, surveys show that from the employee perspective there is still much that needs to be done.

According to recent studies, employers stand to gain considerable returns by operating policies that allow better reconciliation of family and working life. Given that the importance of a family-friendly corporate culture has further increased in times of a shortage of skills, there is an even greater need for improvement in this field. Human resources managers expect that in the future, more fathers will make use of family-working life reconciliation provisions than is currently the case.

- 6) **Digitalisation is now a part of family life, bringing greater opportunity and also risk.** Chapter VI addresses the importance of digitalisation in everyday family life. The main focus lies on the opportunities and challenges involved in the increasing options that the mobile office/working from home offers in reconciling family and working life. Some 90 percent of employees who work from home at least on occasion say that they are better able to reconcile family and working life. One of the main reasons is that travel time in getting to work falls away. Parents can save an average 4.4 hours per week, most of which they spend with the family. The biggest obstacle that stands in the way of fully exploiting the flexibility allowed in working at home or on the road is its implementation by employers.

Employees' demand for such options outweighs what employers currently provide. Families are a key aspect of a comprehensive approach to strengthening digital expertise – parents not only have to keep pace with regard to their own media skills, they must also find ways to support and guide their children in learning how to use and cope with digital technologies and devices.

- 7) Investing in childcare infrastructure and targeted family-related benefits pays off in many ways.** Chapter VII explains why investing in infrastructures to assist families in Germany pays off economically. It has positive outcomes in macroeconomic, fiscal and distribution policy terms. This becomes especially clear when expanding state childcare services. After-school care and supervision for school beginners in the afternoons ensure that more than 11 percent of mothers who were not employed before their children started school can take up paid work and mothers who already worked extend their working hours by an average 2.5 hours per week.

Although public budgets are hurt by investments in childcare provision and the operational costs that follow, the effects in terms of employment and income bring increased tax revenue and social contributions, and reduce benefit-related expenditure. The long-term rise in revenue through investment in daycare centres and full-day schools far outweighs the costs.

- 8) Families expect policy that meets their wishes and needs.** Chapter VIII “Public opinion” shows the expectations of the vast majority of families regarding family policy. Better reconciliation of family and working life is seen as priority number one. Some 71 percent of the population expect support not just from the state, but also from employers and trade unions. And 61 percent of parents believe that the state should improve conditions to enable both parents to work. This means flexible working hours, more opportunity to work from home and better childcare provision for small children and for children who go to school.

# I.

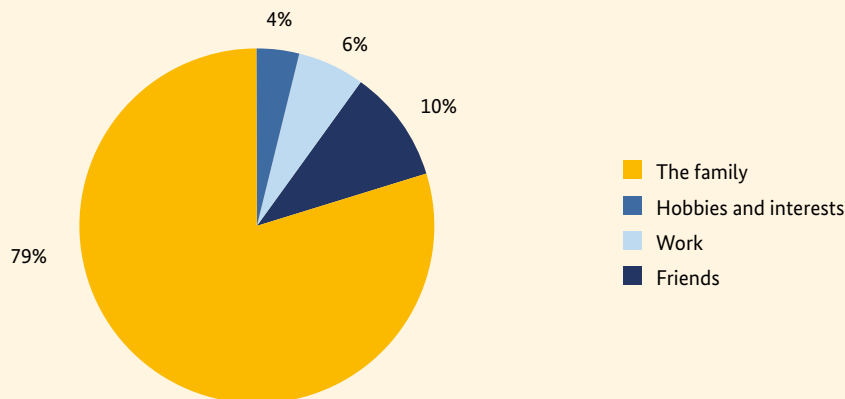
## Family Life in Germany

### 1.1 Family Life in Germany

To an ever-growing extent, the vast majority of people across all generations in Germany value the concept of family and lend it great importance. Some 79 percent say it is the central point of their lives (**Fig. 1**). Compared with 2006, when 76 percent ranked family in first place, the number of family-oriented people has steadily grown.<sup>1</sup> Among parents with under-age children, as many as 93 percent say the family is the most important part of their lives.<sup>2</sup> And for 90 percent of the population, watching children grow up is the best thing in life.<sup>3</sup> For more than 80 percent of 20 to 39-year-olds, it is important or very important to have children.<sup>4</sup> For almost nine out of ten parents with under-age children, the family stands for cohesion during difficult times.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 1: Family is the central point of life\***

What is most important to you, what comes first?



\* Figures short of 100%: Don't know/no response.

Source: IfD Allensbach (2016): Familie 2030. Allensbacher Archiv: IfD survey 11058.

1 IfD Allensbach (2016): Familie 2030. Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 11058.

2 IfD Allensbach (2016): Familie 2030. Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 11058.

3 WZB/Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): Datenreport 2013, p. 65, 67.

4 Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung (2013): FamilienLeitbilder. Vorstellungen, Meinungen, Erwartungen, Altersgruppe 20–39 Jahre.

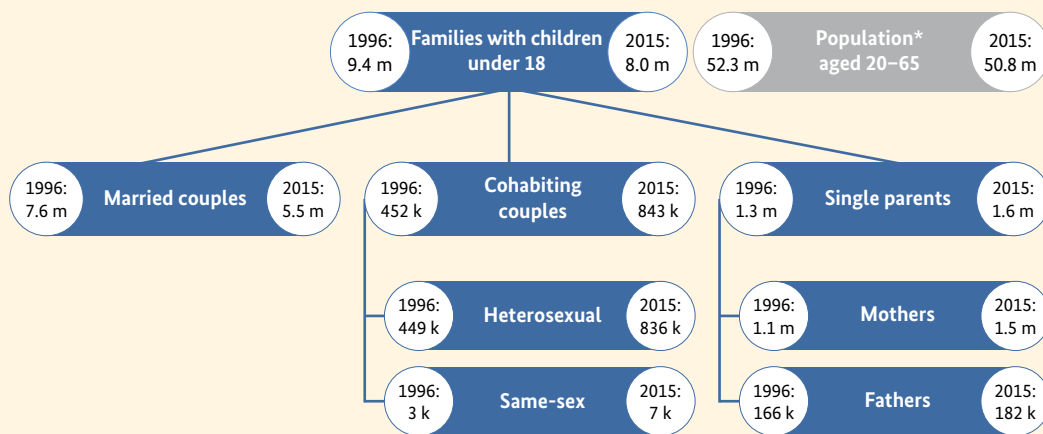
5 Allensbacher Archiv (2016): IfD-Umfragen 6009, 11058. Basis: Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bevölkerung ab 16 Jahre.

### Heterogeneous lifeform

Families today come in various forms. In a family policy context, family is where people of different generations accept long-term responsibility for one another and give each other mutual support and care. This includes married and cohabiting couples with children as well as single-parent families, separated parents who share childcare responsibilities, step families, blended families, rainbow families and families who care for dependent family members. *Marriage for all* is now a matter of course.

In 2015 there were eight million families with under-age children living in the household (Fig. 2). And at 5.5 million, married parents represented the most frequent family form – this is despite the fact that their numbers have decreased over time. By way of contrast, the numbers of cohabiting couples with children and of single parent families have increased. In 2015, there were 843,000 cohabiting couples with children and 1.6 million single-parent families. The number of rainbow cohabiting couples with under-age children living in the home was about 7,000 in 2015.

Figure 2: Families\* and population\* in 1996 and 2015:

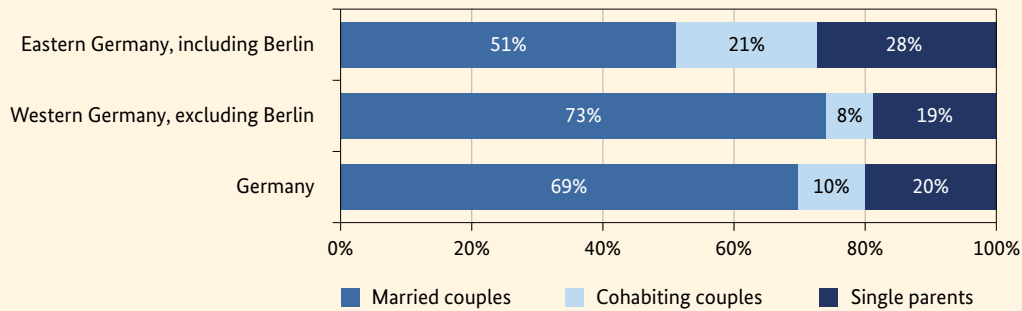


\* Figures for families and population 2015. From 2011: Results based on 2011 Census.

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus.

Family forms still differ in frequency between eastern and western Germany. In both western and eastern Germany, married couples are the most frequent family form. In eastern Germany, only just over half of parents are married, while in western Germany almost three-quarters of parents are married. As a result, the number of cohabiting couples with children (21 percent) and single-parent families (28 percent) is higher in the east than in the west, where only eight percent of parents are not married and 19 percent of families are single-parent families (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: Family forms in eastern and western Germany in 2015 (in %)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): *Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus*.

### Broad understanding of family

People in Germany have a broad understanding of what the term family means. For most, family is where children exist regardless of the family’s constellation. Thus, for 97 percent of the population, an unmarried heterosexual couple with children is a family, for 88 percent a homosexual couple with children, for 85 percent a mother who cohabits with a new partner and for 82 percent a single mother.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the general understanding of family, people also have their own ideas of what a family is or should ideally be. Everyone develops their own idea of what constitutes a family. These so-called family-related Leitbilder arise from observing other people, from personal experience and from films, advertisements and books. Thus, in a given society, there are different family-related Leitbilder on which many people agree.

In a recent study, the Federal Institute for Population Research (BiB) looked at the so called family-related Leitbilder of young people in Germany and how they have changed compared to those in the base year 2012.<sup>7</sup> The study shows that while their family-related Leitbilder have remained largely unchanged, they have become more modern and diverse. For example, preferences for more equal partnerships and shared parenting have risen. Within such, mothers are envisioned working more and fathers playing a more active role in the family.

Some 84.5 percent of respondents believed that mothers with small children should work. For mothers with a two-year-old child, two-thirds of those surveyed felt a working week of between 16 and 35 hours was ideal. Only 13 percent of men were “breadwinners” who were mainly responsible for going out to work and earning the family income.<sup>8</sup> By way of contrast, 40 percent were “work-family reconcilers”, working less in order to spend time with their children.<sup>9</sup> And, as

6 Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung (2013): *Familienleitbilder. Vorstellungen, Meinungen, Erwartungen, Altersgruppe 20–39 Jahre*.

7 In 2012, as part of a representative nation-wide survey, telephone interviews were conducted with 5,000 randomly selected individuals born between 1973 and 1992. In addition, all respondents who agreed to participate in a repeat survey were contacted again in 2013 and in 2014 to secure their future availability. 1,858 of those individuals participated in a new survey in 2016.

8 Agreed with the statement “a man must be the sole provider” and rejected the statement “fathers should work less and spend more time with their children”.

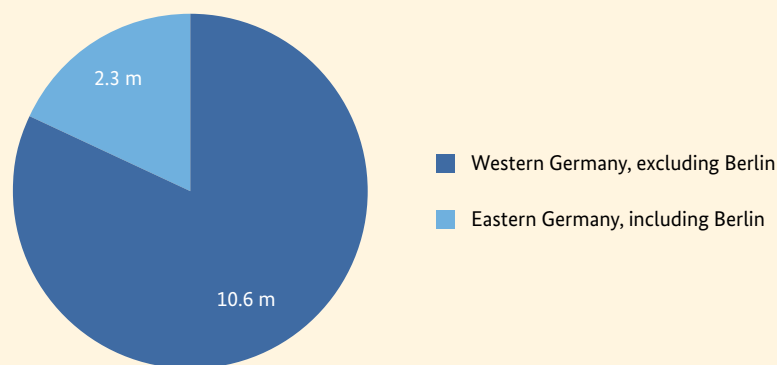
9 Rejected the statement “a man must be the sole provider” and agreed with the statement “fathers should work less and spend more time with their children”.

in the past, children remain at the core of the family-related Leitbilder: starting a family is the main focus for many young people. Some 53 percent say it is important that their partner wants to have children. A large majority of respondents also said that a partnership can work well if the couple has children.

## 1.2 Children in families

In 2015, some 13 million under-aged children lived in Germany, of these 2.3 million in eastern Germany (18 percent) and 10.6 million in western Germany (82 percent) (**Fig. 4**).

**Figure 4: Under-age children in Germany in 2015 (in millions)**

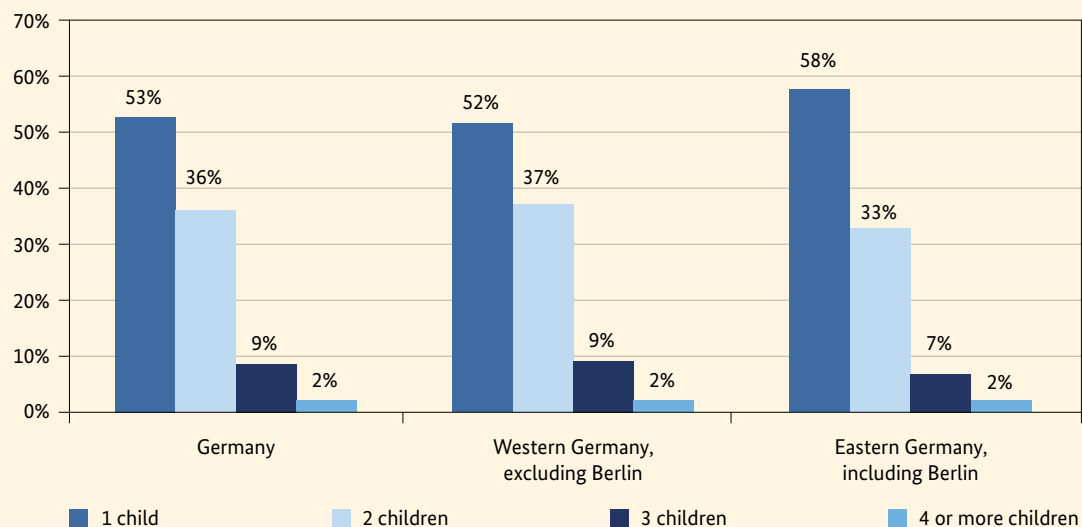


Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): *Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus*.

### Most families have one or two under-age children

In 2015, more than half of families with under-age children in Germany had one child (53 percent), more than one in three families had two children (36 percent) and 11 percent of families had three or more children (**Fig. 5**). While there is no significant difference between eastern and western Germany, there are slightly more families with one child in the east (58 percent) than in the west (52 percent). This does not, however, allow conclusions to be drawn regarding the number of children born per woman because the figure merely provides a snapshot of a situation at a given time and some women may have gone on to have more children (see also Section 1.6 Births).

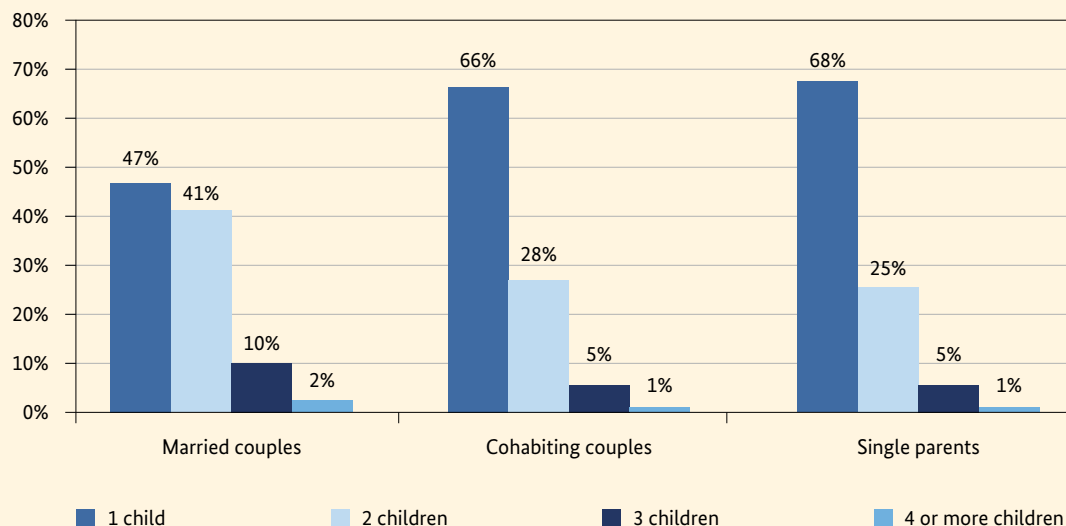
Figure 5: Families by number of children under 18 and region in 2015 (in %)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus.

Aggregated according to family form, married parents tend to have more children than cohabiting couples or single parents (Fig. 6). In 2015, 41 percent of married couples had two children, while only one quarter of cohabiting couples and single parents had two children (28 and 25 percent, respectively). While only just under half of married couples had one child (47 percent), this was the case for two-thirds of cohabiting couples and single parents (66 and 68 percent, respectively).

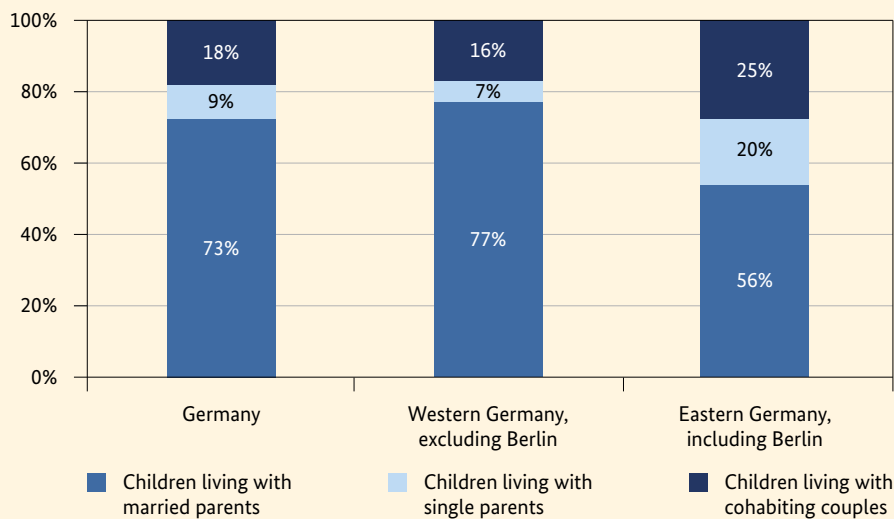
Figure 6: Family forms by number of under-age children in 2015 (in %)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus.

In 2015, almost three-quarters of under-aged children in Germany lived with married parents, 18 percent with a single parent and nine percent with cohabiting parents (**Fig. 7**). Thus, in recent years, there has been little change in the number of children growing up with married parents. In western Germany, most parents of under-aged children were married: 77 percent of minors lived with married parents. This compares with 56 percent in eastern Germany. In eastern Germany, more children tended to live with cohabiting parents or single parents than in western Germany (**Fig. 10**). Some 10,000 children lived with parents who cohabited in registered civil partnerships.<sup>10</sup> One in ten couples in registered civil partnerships had at least one child.<sup>11</sup>

**Figure 7: Under-age children by family type in 2015 (in %)**



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): *Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus*.

Three-quarters of children in Germany grew up with at least a sister or a brother (**Fig. 8**). Only a quarter had no sibling or siblings or had none yet at least. In 1996, an average 1.65 under-aged children lived in families, while in 2015 the average was 1.61.<sup>12</sup>

Of the 74 percent of children with siblings in the home, almost two-thirds had a sister or a brother (64 percent), a good quarter had two sisters (26 percent) and 10 percent had three or more siblings (**Fig. 8**).

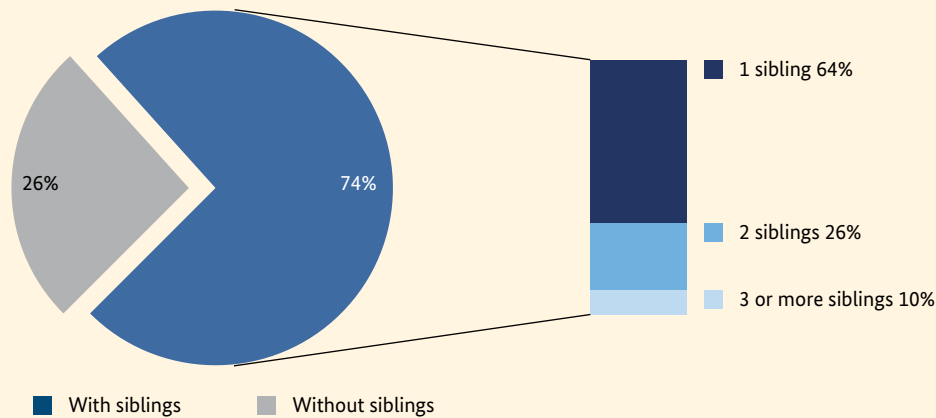
<sup>10</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): *Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus*.

<sup>11</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): *Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus*.

<sup>12</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): *Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus*.



Figure 8: Under-age children by number of siblings\* in the same household in 2015 (in %)



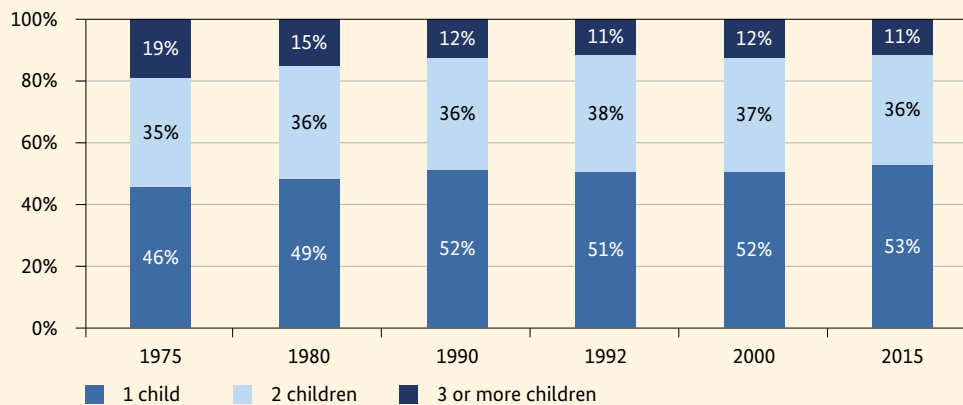
\* Unmarried siblings – including step, adopted and foster children – without age limit

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus.

### Number of large families unchanged

The number of large families with several children has remained almost unchanged since German reunification (Fig. 9). In 1975, 19 percent of families had three or more under-aged children and six percent had four or more. By 1990, the number of large families in former West Germany had dropped to a level comparable with the current figures for Germany overall.

Figure 9: Families by number of under-age children 1975–2015 (in %)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Microcensus. Up to 1990: figures for former West Germany. From 1992: figures for reunified Germany. From 2011 on basis of 2011 census.

In 2015, about one in nine families had more than two under-age children (865,000). Most of these had three under-aged children (697,000). Just under two percent of all families with under-aged children had four under-aged children (126,000) and 0.5 percent of families had five or more (42,000 families).<sup>13</sup> Western Germany had proportionately more large families (11 percent) than eastern Germany (9 percent) (see also Fig. 5). 11 percent of all large families are single parent families.<sup>14</sup>

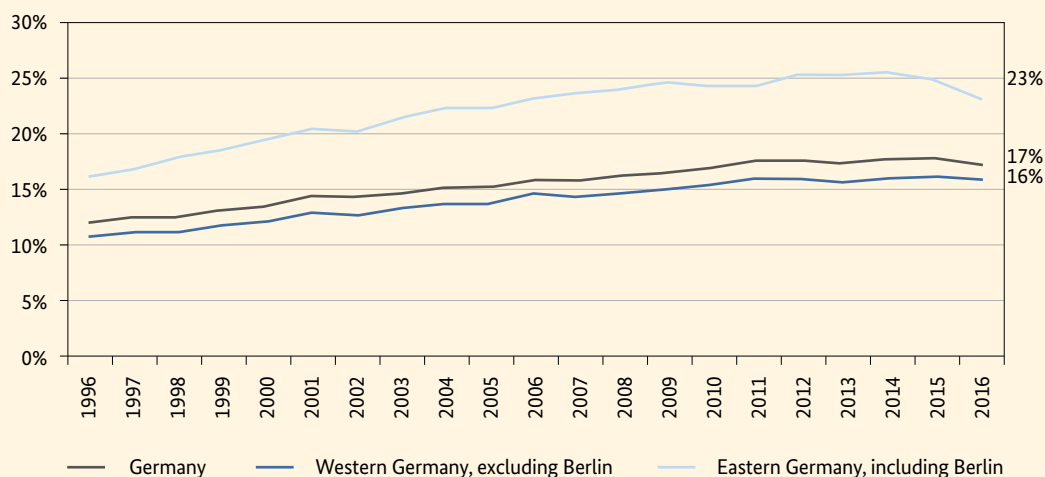
13 Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus.

14 Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus, eigene Berechnung.

### 1.3 Single parents

In 2016, there were 1.6 million single parents in Germany, among them 1.4 million single mothers and 182,000 single fathers. This means that nine out of ten single parents are women.<sup>15</sup> The share of single parent families within the various family forms differs depending on the size of the municipality in which they live: in 2016, single parent families made up 20 percent of the family forms in municipalities with less than 10,000 inhabitants, and 28 percent of those in large towns and cities with populations of over half a million.<sup>16</sup> Single parents are now an integral component of Germany's diverse family life. The number of under-aged children who live with only one parent has risen significantly in recent years, from 1.9 million in 1996 to 2.3 million in 2016.<sup>17</sup> Some 17 percent of minors lived in single parent households in 2016: almost one quarter of them in eastern Germany, and 16 percent in western Germany (**Fig. 10**).

Figure 10: Number of under-age children living with a single parent, 1996 to 2016 (in %)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, Microcensus. Calculations: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung (BiB).  
Presentation: Prognos AG.

15 The figure for single fathers is thus comparatively low. To enable an aggregated analysis, the following focuses on the lives of single mothers.

16 Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Kinderlosigkeit, Geburten und Familien. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2016.

17 Statistisches Bundesamt, Mikrozensus; Berechnungen: BiB. Pressemitteilung vom 17.05.2017 und Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Haushalte und Familien 2016, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus.

For statistical purposes, single parent families are defined as households in which a single parent lives alone with a child or children. This can, however, involve many different types of living arrangements. While in western Germany most single parents are divorced, in eastern Germany they are mostly unmarried.<sup>18</sup>

The single parent family is not necessarily a permanent family form. Only for a few women single parenthood is an unchangeable component of their self-perception. For most single parents, bringing up a child or children alone is a phase of life that has a beginning and an end. In some cases, it is a phase that can recur again and again. One quarter of single parents lose their single parent status within the first three years, in many cases because they meet a new partner.<sup>19</sup> More than a third of single mothers have a (new) permanent relationship and the vast majority see the phase of single parenthood as an open-ended process.<sup>20</sup> Subjective perception of single parenthood is less associated with the households actual constellation and more with the actual division of everyday responsibilities.

After a separation, 15 percent of parents equally share responsibility for looking after their children. These can be separated into two groups: single parents with whom the child or children live most of the time and separated parents who both look after their child or children even though they no longer live together. This is not always easy when a marriage or partnership has just ended, or if feelings are hurt and there are disputes. Families in which parents are able to equally share responsibility for bringing up the children benefit from the situation.<sup>21</sup> To find out how children can be provided for and develop well after their parents separate, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs has commissioned a study on child welfare and parental access. The study places the spotlight firmly on the children and asks them about their access to and relationships with their parents. It is designed to provide key findings for use in further relevant debate and assist the design of processes, models and solutions that meet children's needs.<sup>22</sup>

Although single mothers do not share their home with a partner it does not necessarily mean that they have no partner. Surveys show that almost one in three single mothers have a permanent relationship. This is often the case for young single mothers: 52 percent of 20 to 29-year-olds have a permanent relationship, while older single mothers tend to remain single (65 percent of 30 to 39-year-olds) (**Fig. 11**). Younger mothers are more likely to seek a new partner. The older the mother, the more likely they are to perceive the phase of single parenthood as permanent, or at least until such time as the children have grown up.<sup>23</sup>

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18 Ibid.

19 Monitor Familienforschung Issue. 28, BMFSFJ.

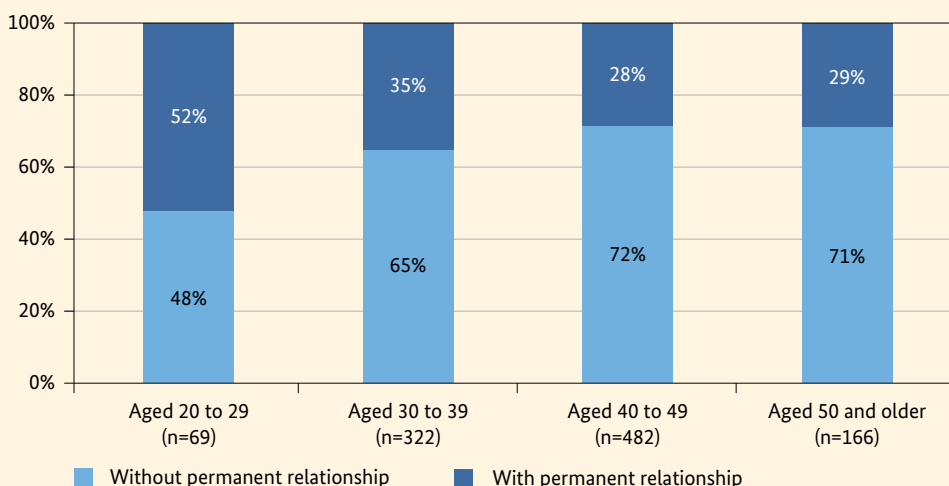
20 See BMFSFJ (2011);, Lebenswelten und -wirklichkeiten von Alleinerziehenden, p. 7.

21 BMFSFJ (2017): Partnerschaftlichkeit nach der Trennung ermöglichen. Hintergrundmeldung vom 08.08.2017. For more information on shared parenthood after separation and divorce, see Chapter IV.

22 BMFSFJ (2017): Partnerschaftlichkeit nach der Trennung ermöglichen. Hintergrundmeldung vom 08.08.2017.

23 Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (2012): Alleinerziehende in Deutschland – Lebenssituationen und Lebenswirklichkeiten von Müttern und Kindern, Berlin, p. 10 f.

**Figure 11: Relationship status of single parents, by age of mother, in 2015**

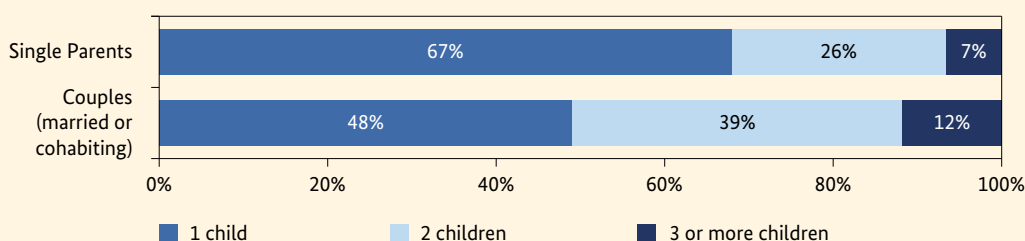


Source: SOEP survey wave v32 (survey year 2015). Calculations: Prognos AG.

Fathers remain important after they separate from their children’s mother and leave the family home. Some 63 percent of children living with their single mother say that their father of the child is very important or important.<sup>24</sup> More than half of fathers had contact with their children. Overall, a large majority of children up to school age have contact with their biological father.<sup>25</sup>

Households run by single parents are more likely to have only one under-age child<sup>26</sup> (67 percent) compared to those run by couples (48 percent). One quarter of single parents have two children and seven percent have three or more children at home (Fig. 12). This means that one in three single parents has two or more under-aged children.

**Figure 12: Single parent and couple-run households with children under 18 in 2015 by number of under-age children living in the home (in %)**



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Haushalte und Familien 2016, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus.

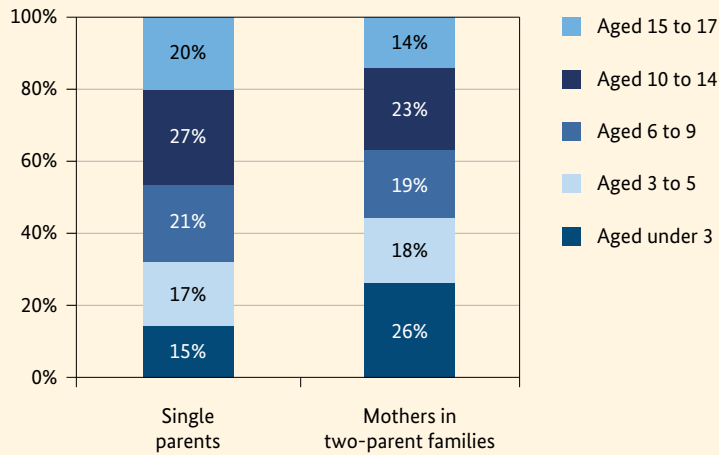
24 BMFSFJ (2012): Monitor Familienforschung: Alleinerziehende in Deutschland – Lebenssituationen und Lebenswirklichkeiten von Müttern und Kindern. Issue 28.

25 BMFSFJ: Alleinerziehend in Deutschland. Fakten über einen Familienstand. Unpublished study.

26 Unless otherwise stated, the following always refers to single parents with at least one under-age child.

In 2015, single-parent households tended to have children aged ten or older (47 percent). Mothers in two-parent families were slightly more likely to have small children aged up to three years old (26 percent compared with 15 percent) (**Fig. 13**).

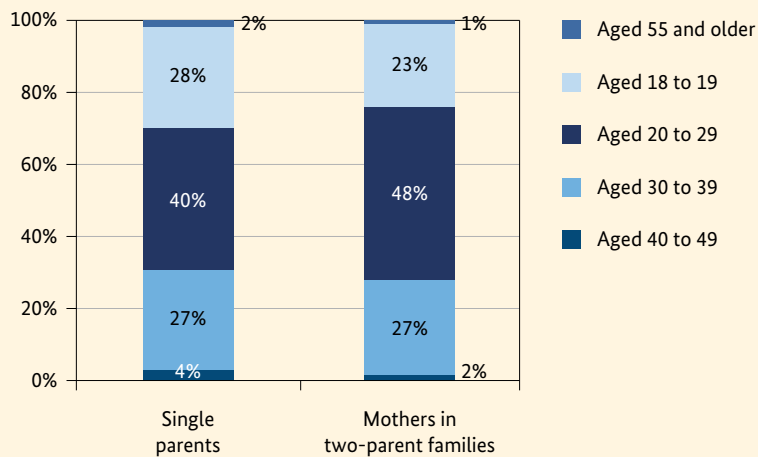
**Figure 13: Age of mother's youngest child, by family form, in 2015**



Source: *Microcensus special analysis f203\_006\_2*. Calculations: Prognos AG.

Separation and divorce are the most frequent reason why women (temporarily) become single parents. Consequently, around two-thirds of all single mothers with under-aged children are 35 or older: some 40 percent are aged between 35 and 44, and 30 percent are 45 or older (**Fig. 14**). Only around one quarter of single parents are aged between 25 and 34 (27 percent), and four percent are under 25.

**Figure 14: Single mothers and mothers in two-parent families by age group, in 2011 (in %)**

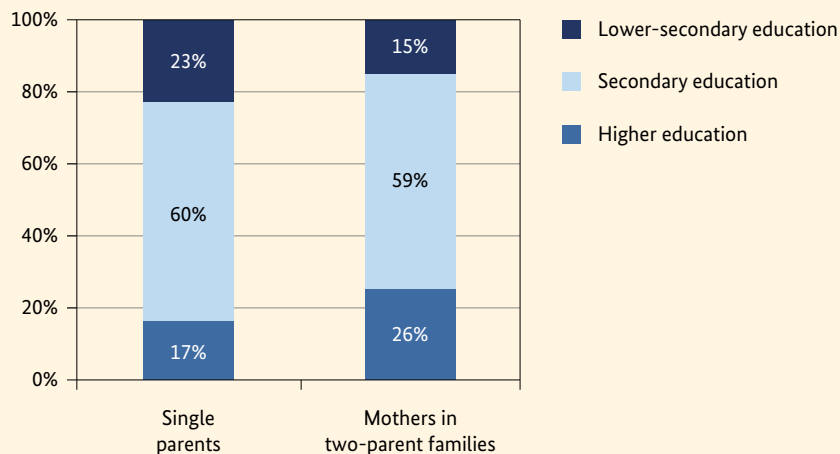


Source: *SOEP-Welle v32 (survey year 2015)*. Calculations: Prognos AG.

### Single parents mostly well educated

Some 78 percent of single parents have completed secondary education or tertiary education (Fig. 15). In 2015, almost one quarter of single mothers (23 percent) had poor educational qualifications. This compared with only 15 percent of mothers in two-parent families. About 12 percent of single mothers have an undergraduate (university) degree, eight percent have a technical college degree<sup>27</sup> and 50 percent have completed an apprenticeship or learned a trade under the dual vocational training and education scheme.<sup>28, 29</sup>

Figure 15: Highest level of education of mothers by family type in 2013



Source: Microcensus special analysis f203\_006\_2. Calculations: Prognos AG.

## 1.4 Families with migrant backgrounds

In 2015, one in three families in Germany with under-aged children living at home had a migrant background (Fig. 16).<sup>30</sup> These were most frequently found in western Germany – one in three (35 percent) versus just under one in seven (16 percent) in eastern Germany.

The countries of origin which contribute to migrant backgrounds have shifted significantly in recent years. This has given rise to a different set of challenges due to the differing levels of education, the different types of training and qualifications, and not least, the different family models involved. The impacts of this trend are evident in Federal Employment Agency statistics on unemployment and recipients of unemployment benefit II. Nonetheless, the solutions are not necessarily different from the ones already in place.

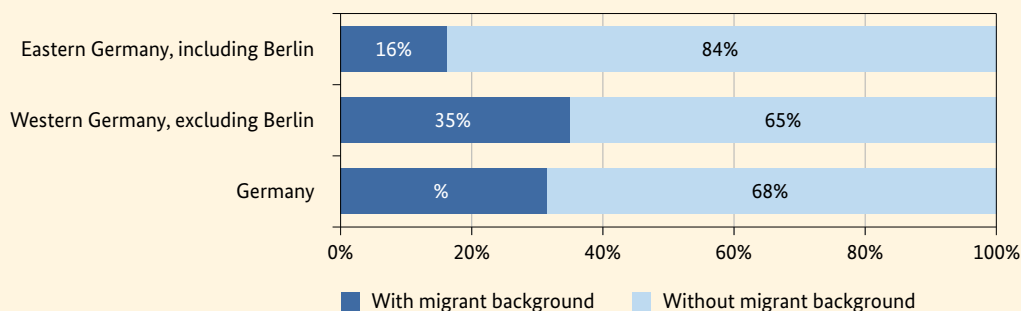
27 Including a master craftsman/technician certificate, completion of two or three year vocational training in a healthcare or welfare profession, or at teacher training college.

28 Including an equivalent vocational qualification, introductory training for mid-level civil service, on-the-job/semi-skilled training.

29 Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Haushalte und Familien 2015, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus. Results of the Microcensus.

30 The definition of migrant background matches that of the Federal Statistical Office: people with a migrant background are all Germans born in Germany with at least one migrant parent or one non-German parent born in Germany. This includes all migrant and non-migrant foreigners, and foreigners and naturalised citizens (former foreigners), all native Germans who after 1949 migrated to the territory of what is today the Federal Republic of Germany, and their offspring born as German citizens.

**Figure 16: Families with under-age children by migrant background in 2015**

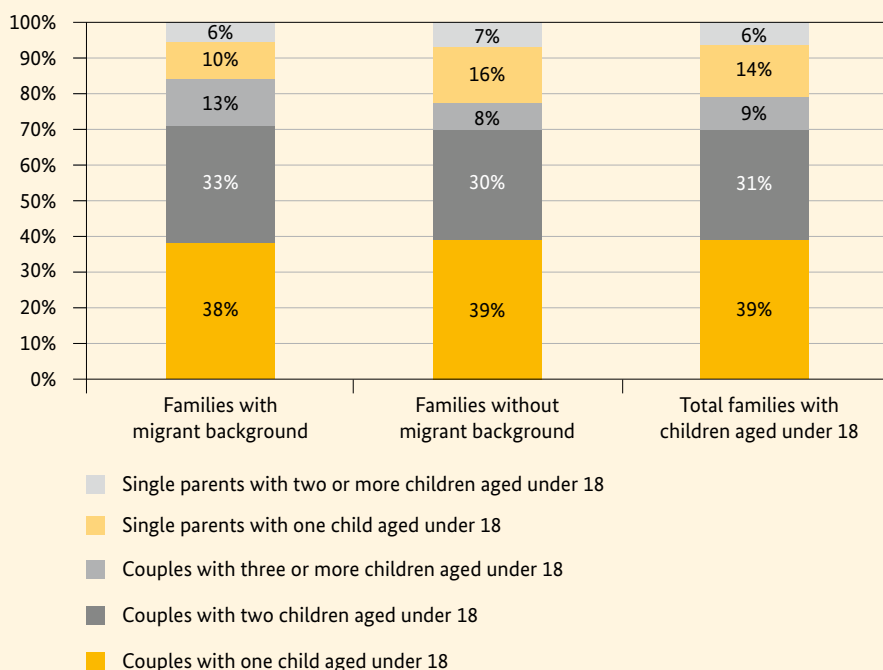


Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): *Bevölkerung in Familien/Lebensformen am Hauptwohnsitz*.

Some 84 percent of families with migrant backgrounds are two-parent families, 92 percent of which are married couples. This compares with 84 percent of married parents in families with no migrant background.<sup>31</sup>

Differences exist when compared to families with no migrant background where large families and single parent families are involved (**Fig. 17**). Single parent families are far less frequent among families with migrant backgrounds (16 percent) than among those with no migrant background (23 percent). There are also significant differences where large families are involved, meaning those with three or more children: couples with migrant backgrounds tend to have more than three children (13 percent) than couples with no migrant background (eight percent).

**Figure 17: Families with and without migrant background by family form and number of children aged under 18**



Source: *Special analysis, Microcensus 2015*.

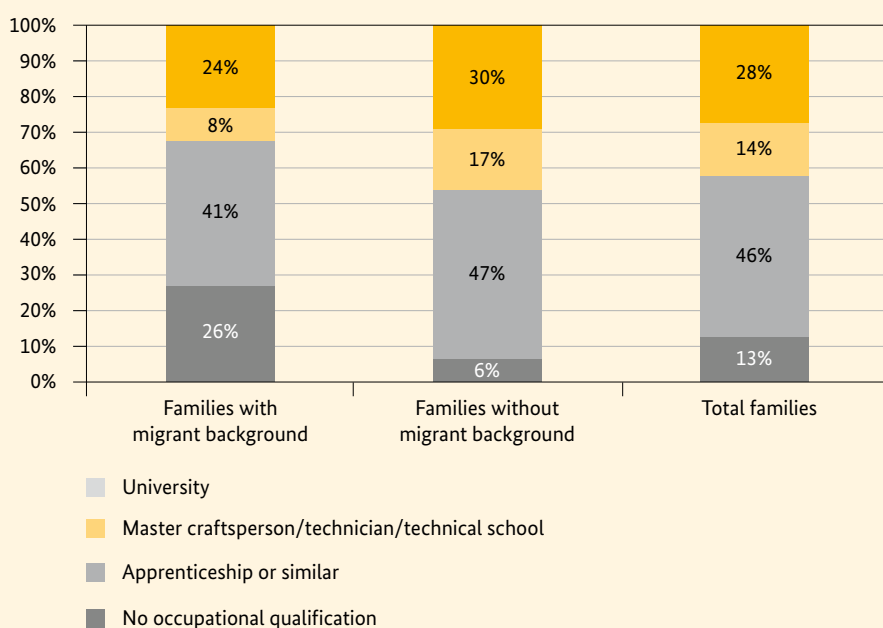
31 Special analysis of the Microcensus 2015. For more information see: BMFSFJ (2017): *Gelebte Vielfalt: Familien mit Migrationshintergrund in Deutschland*.

Some 4.3 million under-aged children in Germany live in families with migrant backgrounds. This represents 34 percent of all children under 18. The vast majority of these children (86 percent) have no personal migration experience, while almost all parents to whom the term “migrant background” applies have immigrated to Germany.<sup>32</sup>

### Educational qualifications in families with migrant backgrounds

Four out of ten mothers and fathers with migrant backgrounds (42 percent) have a university entrance qualification from an upper secondary school or a vocational college, while in almost one-third of families with migrant backgrounds both parents have either a lower-secondary school leaving certificate (23 percent) or no school qualifications at all (9 percent).<sup>33</sup> The picture is also varied with regard to vocational qualifications (**Fig. 18**): almost one-quarter of parents in families with migrant backgrounds (24 percent) have an academic qualification (which is also recognised in Germany). In every fourth family, neither the mother nor the father has a (recognised) vocational qualification. Especially mothers with migrant backgrounds (44 percent) often have no (recognised) vocational qualifications despite the fact that they have higher school-leaving qualifications in comparison to fathers with migrant backgrounds.<sup>34</sup>

**Figure 18: Highest (recognised) occupational qualification of a parent in families with and without migrant background (in %)**



Source: Special analysis, Microcensus 2015. BMFSFJ own presentation.

### Federal programme *Stark im Beruf* helps mothers with migrant backgrounds find work

Mothers with migrant backgrounds are significantly less likely to work and if they do, they work significantly fewer hours than mothers with no migrant background. While almost three-quarters of mothers with no migrant background go to work, only about half of mothers

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.



with migrant backgrounds have a job. More than two-thirds of unemployed mothers with migrant backgrounds would like to work or want to return to work, most preferring to work part-time (70 percent).

At some 80 contact points country wide, the federal programme *Stark im Beruf – Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund steigen ein* (Mothers with Migrant Backgrounds Go/Get Back to Work) offers mothers throughout Germany assistance in returning to work and supports them in matters of reconciling family and working life. High placement rates and strong demand testify to mothers' strong motivation to find work. The first phase of the programme, which is financed through the European Social Fund, runs from February 2015 to December 2018.

## 1.5 The desire to have children in Germany

People's desire to have children in Germany remains high and is now greater when compared with 2000 (**Fig. 19**). In western Germany, the number of people without children who would like to have three or more has risen from 17 percent to almost one-third (31 percent). In eastern Germany it has risen from nine percent to 20 percent. While most people aged 18 to 30 believe two children to be the ideal, many are starting to want three or more. In 2014, 31 percent of young adults in the west and 20 percent in the east wanted three or more children. In 2000, those figures were 17 and 9 percent respectively. The average number of children desired among people in western Germany has remained relatively constant over the years: in 2014 it was 2.2 in the west and 2.0 in the east.

**Figure 19: Desire to have children among 18-30 year-olds**

	Age 18–30					
	2000		2006		2014	
	West	East	West	East	West	East
<b>Desire for (additional) children (in %)</b>						
Among individuals with children	58	43	65	55	63	51
Among individuals without children	95	92	92	96	93	94
<b>Desired number of children (in %)*</b>						
1 child	9	27	9	16	8	17
2 children	74	65	73	72	61	64
3 or more children	17	9	17	12	31	20
<b>Average desired number of children*</b>	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.0	2.2	2.0

\* Childless population with desire for children

Data source: ALLBUS 2000, 2006 and 2014. Calculations: gesis – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences.

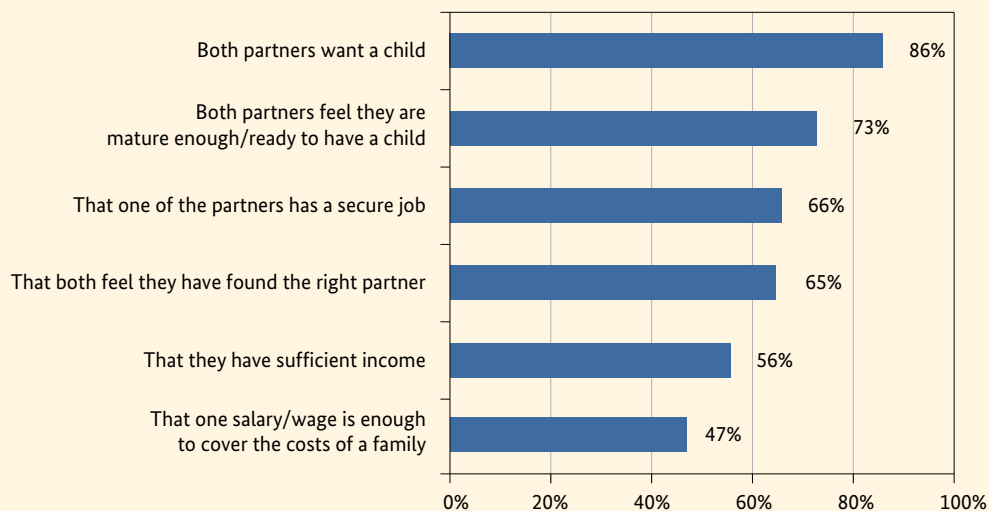
### Gap between desired and actual family size

Nonetheless, the actual number of children born in a family lags behind the ideal – and to a greater extent than in many other countries of similar make-up. In Germany, parents aged between 40 and 49 say an average 2.2 children is ideal. In reality, families have an average 1.9 children and a quarter remain childless.<sup>35</sup>

According to most respondents, a key prerequisite for having children is that both partners want to have a child and feel they are mature enough to start a family (86 percent and 73 percent, respectively) (Fig. 20). Two-thirds say that one of the partners must have a secure job. Almost half believe it is important to have sufficient income. Only 57 percent felt this was crucial in 2007. For those without children, not having found the right partner is the main reason for not starting a family and most say they are still too young.

Figure 20: Prerequisites for starting a family among 16 to 49 year-olds in Germany in 2013 (in %)

#### Conditions that must be fulfilled



Source: BMFSFJ (2015): Monitor Familienforschung No. 34 "Familienbilder in Deutschland und Frankreich".

## 1.6 Births

In 2015, the total fertility rate birth rate for Germany was 1.50 children per woman (Fig. 21). This represents a further increase in the birth rate overall.

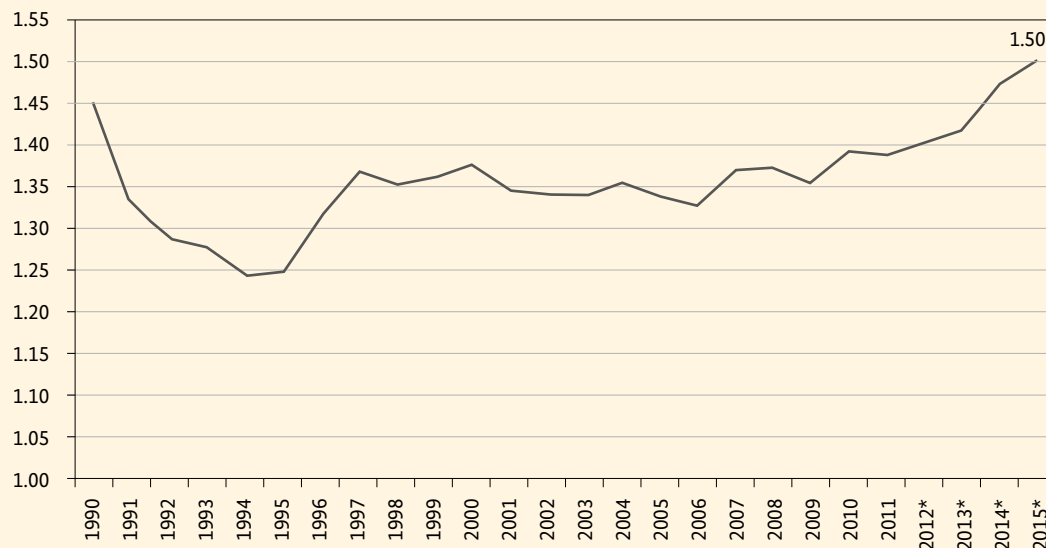
This is the highest birth rate for 33 years, showing that the positive trend seen since 2012 continues unabated. However, the total fertility birth rate provides little information about actual births because it only reflects births in a specific calendar year and not births to women

<sup>35</sup> BMFSFJ (2015): Monitor Familienforschung Nr. 34 „Familienbilder in Deutschland und Frankreich“ und IfD Allensbach (2015): Familienbilder in Deutschland und Frankreich.

in the course of their lives (see also the section relating to the number of children per mother (**Fig. 27**) elsewhere in this chapter).<sup>36</sup>

Because the birth rate is linked to the number of women aged 15 to 45, it is influenced by the new population figures arising from the 2011 census. Prior to the census, the birth rate for 2012 was 1.38. After the 2011 census it was 1.40 for the same year.

**Figure 21: Total fertility birth rate trends 1990–2015, Germany**



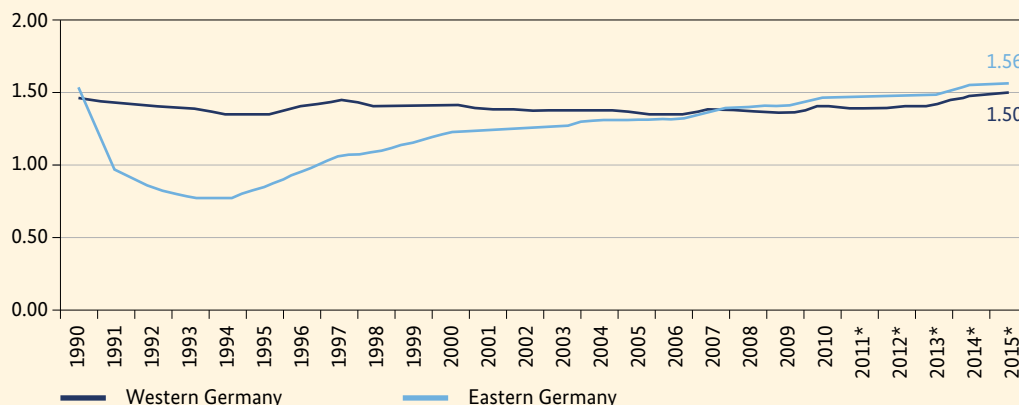
\* From 2011, results of the 2011 census taken into account. 2011: based on population figures on the date of the census (9 May 2011).

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2015): Statistik der Geburten.

Thus, the birth rate from 2011 onwards, which was calculated based on the 2011 census, can only be compared with previous years to a limited extent. The following illustrates the trends for eastern and western Germany up to 2011, excluding the results from the 2011 census and after 2011 including the new figures obtained from the census (**Fig. 22**).

<sup>36</sup> See also Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): Geburtentrends und Familiensituation in Deutschland and BMFSFJ (2012): Geburten in Deutschland.

Figure 22: Total fertility birth rate trends 1990–2015 in eastern and western Germany



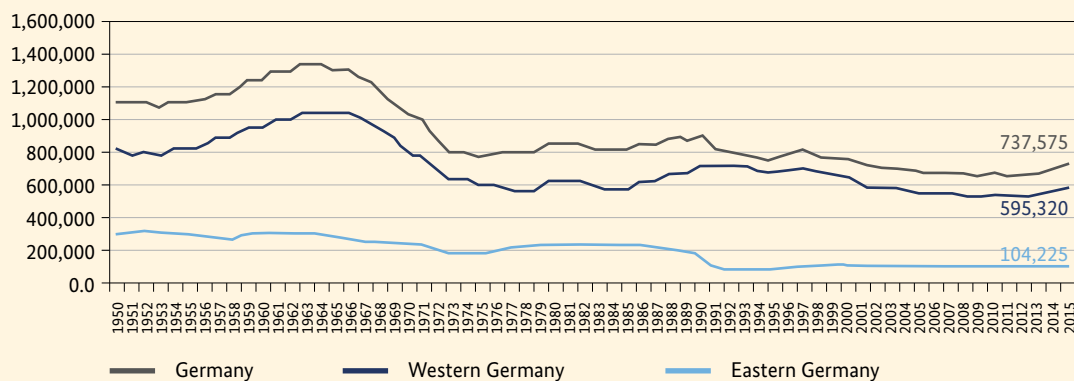
\* From 2011, results of the 2011 census taken into account. 2011: based on population figures on the date of the census (9 May 2011). Birth year method; from 2001: Eastern and western Germany, each excluding Berlin.

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, (2017).

### Live births in Germany

Some 737,575 children were born in Germany in 2015 (Fig. 23). This is half the number in 1964, the year with the highest live birth rate ever recorded in Germany (around 1.4 million), but some 22,650 more than in 2015.

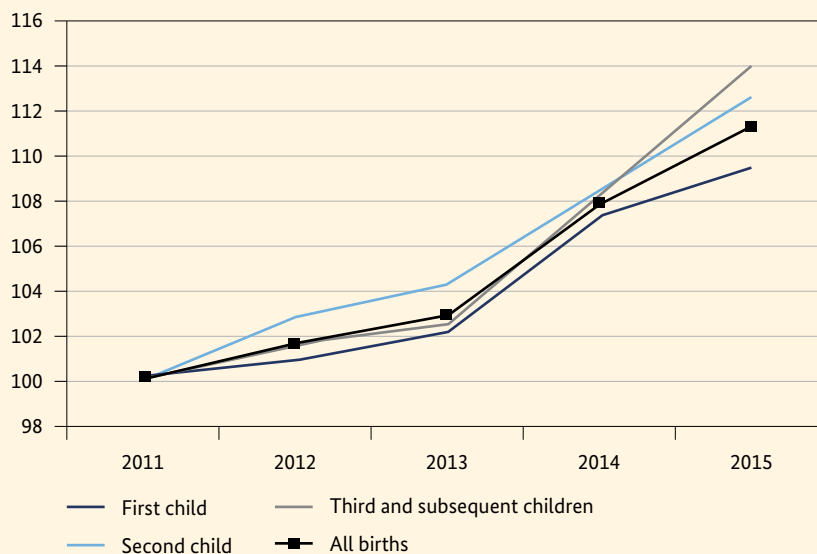
Figure 23: Live births 1950–2015 (in thousands)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Statistik der Geburten; from 2001: Eastern and western Germany each excluding Berlin.

Some 49 percent of live births were first children, 34 percent were second children and 17 percent were third or fourth children. Looking at the birth rate overall, the number of second children has had the greatest impact, with an increase since 2011 (Fig. 24).

Figure 24: Relative change in birth rates by birth order compared with 2011 (2011 = 100)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Statistik der Geburten.

The number of children born each year largely depends on the number of women of child-bearing age (official statistics usually define these as aged 15 to 45 or 15 to 49) and the average number of births per woman.<sup>37</sup> Changes in the age structure and/or number of women in the population influence the birth rate.<sup>38</sup> While in former East Germany (GDR), the number of 25 to 45 year-old women dropped by almost one million between 1946 and 1960, the number of women in former West Germany (FRG) increased by 1.2 million women of childbearing age, due either to migration (including from the GDR) or demographic change.<sup>39</sup> By 1960, the proportion of women aged 18 to 45 in the GDR had dropped by one quarter. As a result, the baby boom seen in the 1950s and 1960s received a boost in West Germany and lessened off in East Germany.<sup>40</sup> This did not, however, lead to a similar-sized drop in birth rates in East Germany, the reason being the rise in the frequency of births, meaning the number of children born per woman.

Between 1997 and 2013, the birth rate among younger-aged women (under 20) was lower for almost all ages than it was in the previous year. The proportion of women of childbearing age thus declined (see **Fig. 26**). The birth rate remained relatively constant during the same period. In 2014, an increase was seen for the first time among mothers in the under-20 age group.<sup>41</sup>

37 Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): Geburtentrends und Familiensituation in Deutschland.

38 Ibid., p. 11.

39 Nowossadeck (2010): Die Herkunftsfamilien der Babyboomer, in: DZA (Ed.): Report Altersdaten, Heft 3/2010, p. 9 ff.

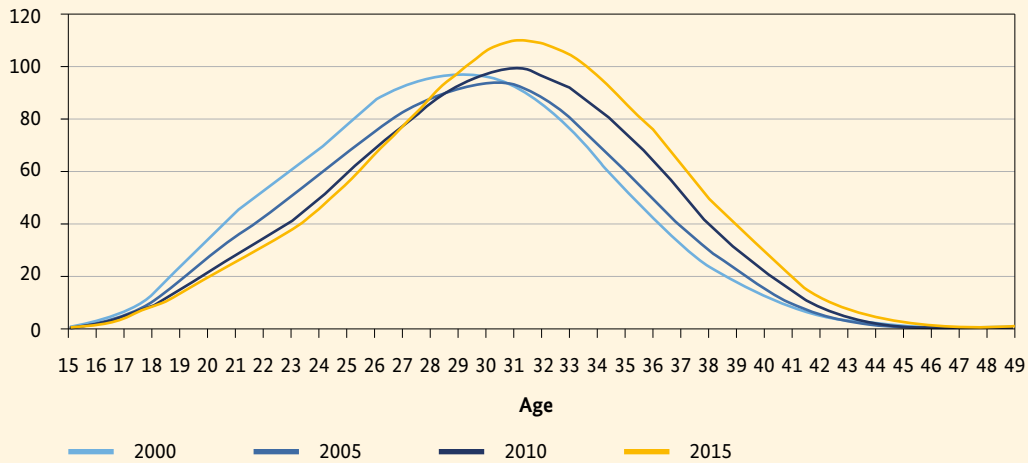
40 Ibid.

41 Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Fortschreibung des Bevölkerungsstandes auf Grundlage des Zensus 2011.

### First-time mothers aged 29 on average

In 2015, first-time mothers were 29.6 years old on average. The trend towards later births thus continues.<sup>42</sup> In 1970, first-time mothers in former West Germany were still just over 24, while in former East Germany they were between 22 and 23 years old until 1989.<sup>43</sup> In 2015, women aged between 26 and 36 had the highest birth rate (**Fig. 25**). This compares with women aged 19 to 29 in 1970.<sup>44</sup> This trend can be seen across Europe, for example in France.<sup>45</sup>

Figure 25: Live births per 1,000 women by mother's age, Germany



From 2011: Results based on 2011 census.

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Statistik der Geburten, Geburtsjahrmethode.

The number of women in this age group (26 to 36) has dropped significantly since the end of the 1990s. This is why the overall number of births declined despite the same number of children being born per woman (**Fig. 26**).

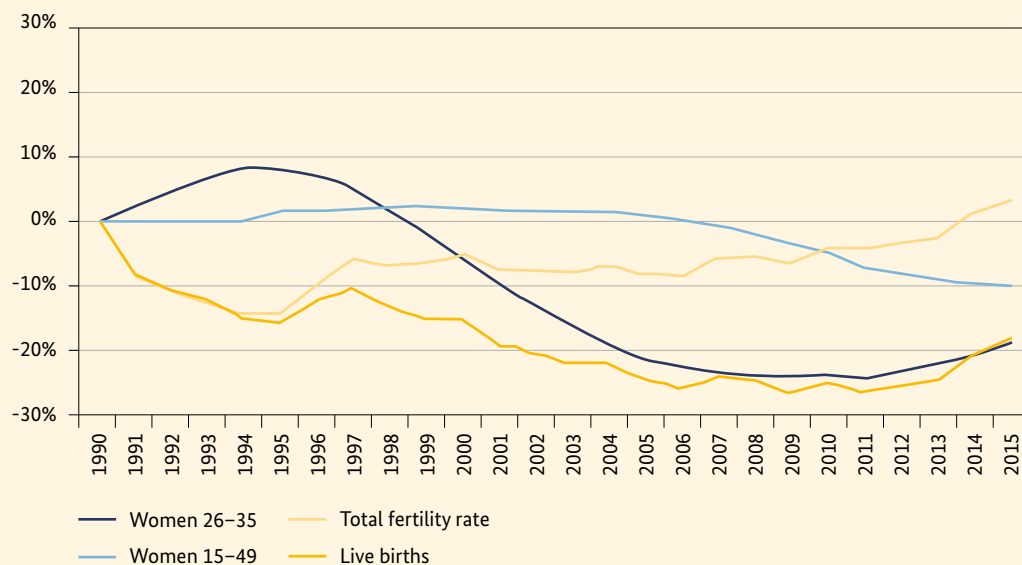
42 Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Statistik der Geburten. Durchschnittliches Alter der Mutter bei der Geburt des Kindes (Geburtsjahrmethode).

43 Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): Geburtstrends und Familiensituation in Deutschland.

44 Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Statistik der Geburten.

45 BMFSFJ (2015): Monitor Familienforschung Nr. 34 „Familienbilder in Deutschland und Frankreich“.

Figure 26: Trends in specific birth indicators compared with 1990 (in %) (1990 = 100%)



From 2011: Results based on 2011 census.

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Fortschreibung des Bevölkerungsstandes sowie Statistik der Geburten. Calculation and presentation: Prognos AG.

### Average number of children per mother stable

At two children per mother, the average number of children per mother has remained relatively stable over the years (Fig. 27). Almost half of mothers have two children and one in five has more than three.<sup>46</sup>

Figure 27: Average number of children per mother\*, 2016

Year of birth	Age in 2016	Germany	Western Germany**	Eastern Germany**
1987-1991	Aged 25-29	1.5	1.5	1.5
1982-1986	Aged 30-34	1.7	1.7	1.7
1977-1981	Aged 35-39	1.9	1.9	1.9
1972-1976	Aged 40-44	2.0	2.0	2.0
1967-1971	Aged 45-49	2.0	2.0	2.0
1962-1966	Aged 50-54	2.0	2.0	2.0
1957-1961	Aged 55-59	2.0	2.1	2.1
1952-1956	Aged 60-64	2.0	2.1	2.1
1947-1951	Aged 65-69	2.0	2.0	2.0
1941-1946	Aged 70-75	2.1	2.1	2.1

\* Only mothers who stated the number of children born. \*\* Each excluding Berlin.

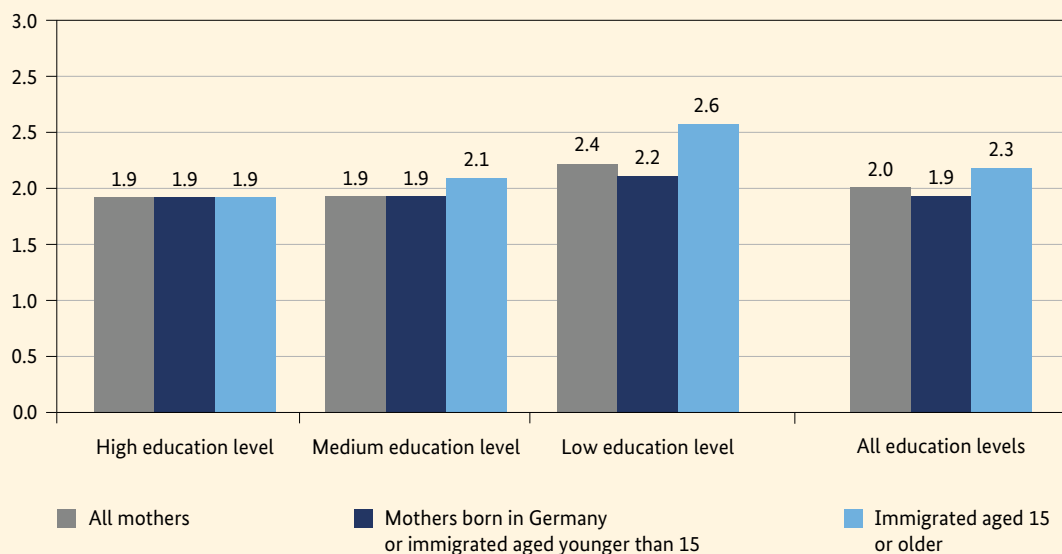
Source: Special analysis, Microcensus 2016.

46 Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Kinderlosigkeit, Geburten und Familien: Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2016.

### Number of children born depends on mother's education – especially for women with migrant backgrounds

The average number of children born to mothers aged 45 to 54 with poor education<sup>47</sup> was 2.3 children, while for mothers with academic qualifications it was 1.9 (Fig. 28). Women with a migrant background and an academic qualification had the same number of children on average as mothers born in Germany who received a high level of education. For women migrants with mid-level education, the average number of children was slightly higher than for mothers born in Germany with mid-level education (2.1 versus 1.9 per mother). The differences were greatest between mothers with poor education: while migrant mothers with poor education had an average 2.6 children, mothers born in Germany had an average 2.2 children.

Figure 28: Average number of children per mother by education level, 2016



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): *Kinderlosigkeit, Geburten und Familien, Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2016*.

In 2015, half of second-born children followed the first-born within 3.2 years.<sup>48</sup> Some 18 percent of second-born children followed the first-born within two years and 45 percent within three years. Second and third-born children were born approximately 3.8 years apart.<sup>49</sup>

47 According to the International Standard Classification of Education 2011 (ISCED 2011) the highest educational level achieved is a combination of all characteristics of general school-leaving qualifications and vocational/professional qualifications. Poor: for example, lower secondary school (Hauptschule/Realschule), polytechnic upper school and no vocational/professional qualification or no educational qualification. Mid-level: for example, a vocational qualification and/or a university entrance qualification (upper secondary/technical college, health-care/medical college. High-level: for example, an academic qualification or a craftsman/technician or technical college certificate).

48 Statistisches Bundesamt: *Zahlen und Fakten, Lebendgeborene 2015*.

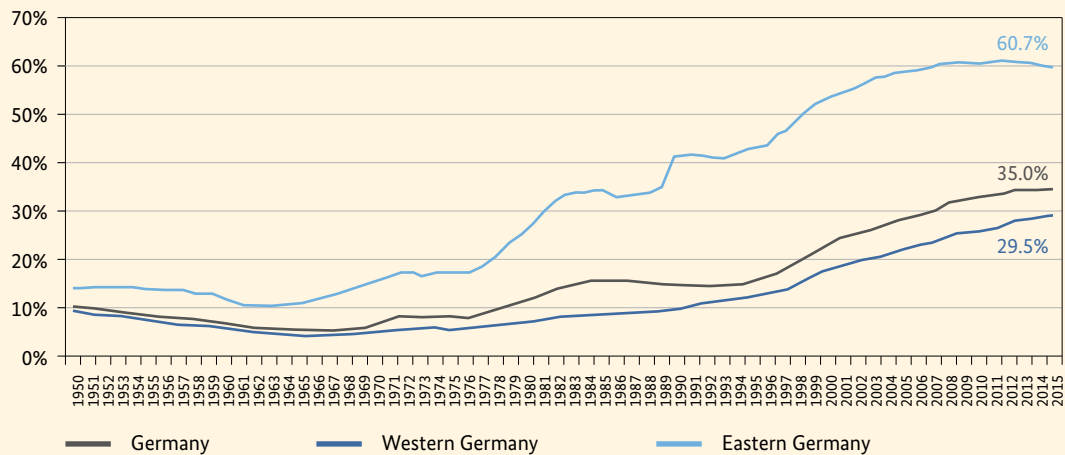
49 Ibid.



### More than a third of births out of wedlock

A look at the number of live births in 2015 shows that 35 percent of all new-born children were born to parents who were not married (Fig. 29). In eastern Germany, the number of live births out of wedlock was 61 percent – almost twice that in western Germany (30 percent).<sup>50</sup> There were strong regional differences: in 2015, the Baden-Wuerttemberg district of Böblingen had the lowest figure (18 percent) and the town of Brandenburg an der Havel had the highest (70 percent).<sup>51</sup>

Figure 29: Live births out of wedlock among all live births in a given year in Germany from 1950 to 2015 (in %)



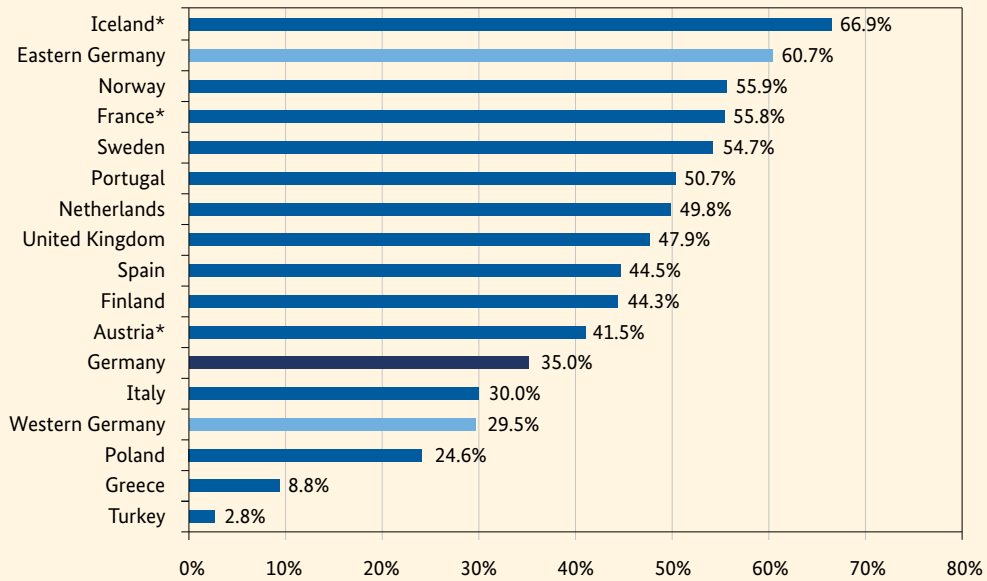
Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Statistik der Geburten, from 2001: Eastern and western Germany, each excluding Berlin.

Compared with other countries in Europe, western Germany is the exception. Most countries in Europe are seeing a continual rise in the number of live births out of wedlock. Apart from eastern Germany, only Iceland has a higher number of live births out of wedlock (67 percent). In countries such as France, Norway and Sweden, one in two new-born children now has parents who are not married (Fig. 30).

50 Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Statistik der Geburten.

51 Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder (2017): Statistik der Geburten, Lebendgeborene nach Legitimität.

**Figure 30: Live births out of wedlock compared with all live births in Europe in 2015 (in %)**



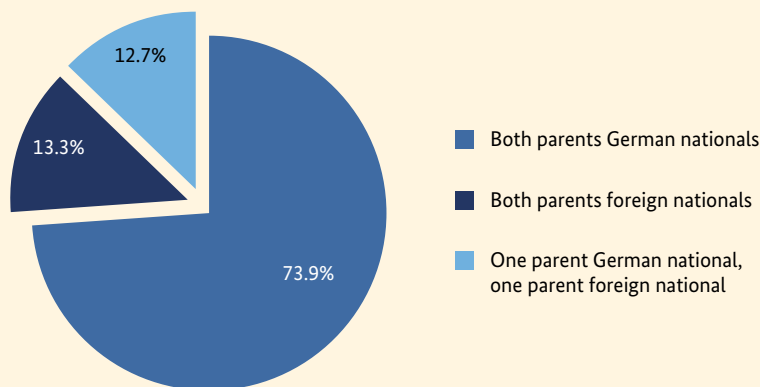
\* Data for 2012

Source: Eurostat (2017) and Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Statistik der Geburten; eastern and western Germany, each excluding Berlin

The high number of births out of wedlock in eastern Germany did not, therefore, result from German division. Prior to the division in 1949, there were already regional differences throughout Germany.<sup>52</sup> These go back to the 18th and 19th century. In 1920, for example, the number of births out of wedlock in what would become the GDR was 18 percent. In the future West Germany, it was nine percent.<sup>53</sup>

In nine out of ten live births in 2015, at least one parent was German. While more than three-quarters of live births were to parents of German nationality, almost 13 percent were to parents of foreign nationality (Fig. 31).

**Figure 31: Live births in 2015 by parents' nationality**



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2017).

52 MaxPlanckInstitut für demografische Forschung 2014, Press release dated 24 July 2014, Sebastian Klüsener, [http://www.demogr.mpg.de/de/news\\_presse/pressemitteilungen\\_1916/nichteheliche\\_geburten\\_deutschland\\_auf\\_dauer\\_geteilt\\_3771.htm](http://www.demogr.mpg.de/de/news_presse/pressemitteilungen_1916/nichteheliche_geburten_deutschland_auf_dauer_geteilt_3771.htm).

53 Ibid.

## 1.7 Childlessness in Germany

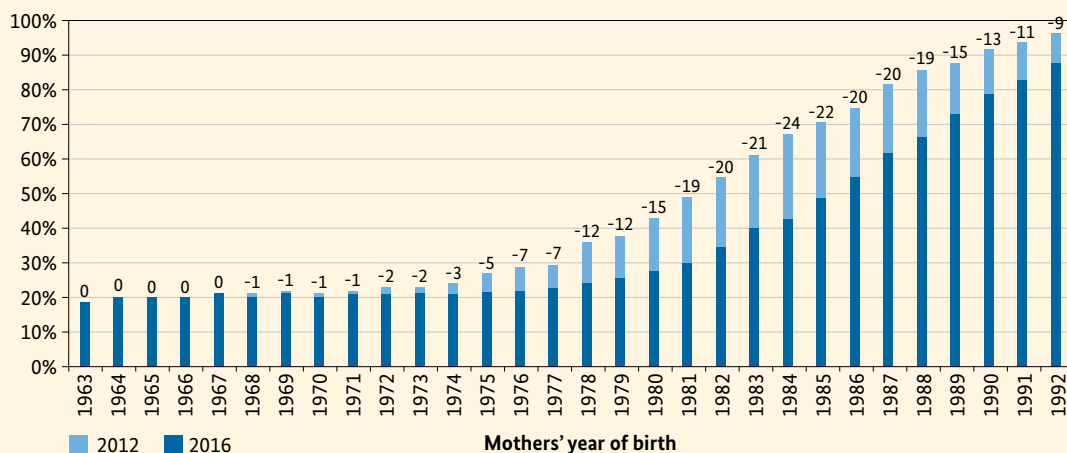
In recent years, both the number of births and the birth rate have risen after several decades in which they largely declined. Also, there has been no further increase in the rate of childlessness that was responsible for the fall in the birth rate among women born between 1947 and 1968.<sup>54</sup>

### No further increase in childlessness

From the age of 45, childlessness is seen as final. Childlessness almost doubled among those born between 1937 and 1967, rising from 11 to 21 percent. In 2016, the rate of childlessness among women aged between 45 and 49 (born between 1967 and 1971) was 20 percent and had not there-fore increased.<sup>55</sup>

Compared with 2012, the (preliminary) figure for childlessness among women born between 1981 and 1988 (aged 28 to 35 in 2016) had significantly decreased (**Fig. 32**). The rate of childlessness has dropped most among women born in 1984, meaning those aged 28 in 2012 and 32 in 2016. This means that since 2012, more women born in 1984 have had their first child compared with women born in other years. This is reflected in the average age of mothers when giving birth to their first child (29.6). Among women born in or after 1974 (aged 42 or older in 2016), there was hardly any change in the rate of childlessness since 2012, because only few women of that age become pregnant and have a child.

**Figure 32: Childless women among all women of a given age in 2016 (in %) and changes compared with childlessness in 2012 (in percentage points)**



*Example: Among women born in 1984, childlessness in 2016 is down 24 percentage points on 2012. Among women born in other years, the decrease was smaller. In other words, women born in 1984 were more likely to have a first child between 2012 and 2016 than other women.*

*Source: Special analysis, Microcensus 2016. Calculations and presentation: Prognos AG.*

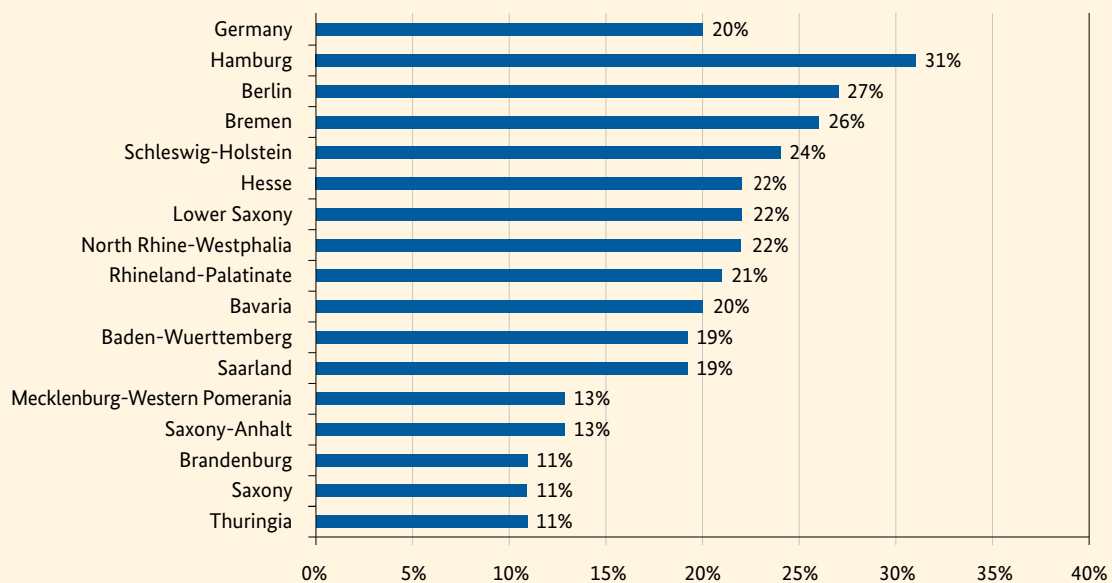
<sup>54</sup> A recent study looked at the reasons for the drop in the birth rate among women born in Germany between 1933 and 1968. While the drop in the number of births among women born between 1933 and 1947 was linked to the drop in the number of women with three or more children, the drop in the number of births to 63 percent among women born between 1947 and 1968 can be explained by the growing rate of childlessness.

Source: Bujard, Martin/Sulak, Harun (2016): „Mehr Kinderlose oder weniger Kinderreiche?“ Eine Dekomposition der demografischen Treiber in unterschiedlichen Phasen des Geburtenrückgangs in Deutschland, in: Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie 68 (3), pp. 487–514.

<sup>55</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Kinderlosigkeit, Geburten und Familien: Results of the Microcensus 2016.

Childlessness is particularly high in Germany’s city states and particularly low in the rural areas in the east. Hamburg had the highest rate of childlessness in 2016: almost one-third (31 percent) of women aged 45 to 49 had no children. The lowest rate of childlessness is shared by Brandenburg, Saxony and Thuringia, each with 11 percent (**Fig. 33**). Across the German states, childlessness is lower in rural regions compared with urban areas. For example, in 2016, childlessness in rural parts of Bavaria was only 15 percent; in Bavarian towns and cities it was 30 percent.<sup>56</sup>

**Figure 33: Childless women\* aged 45 to 49, 2016 (in %)**



\* Women who responded to births question only.

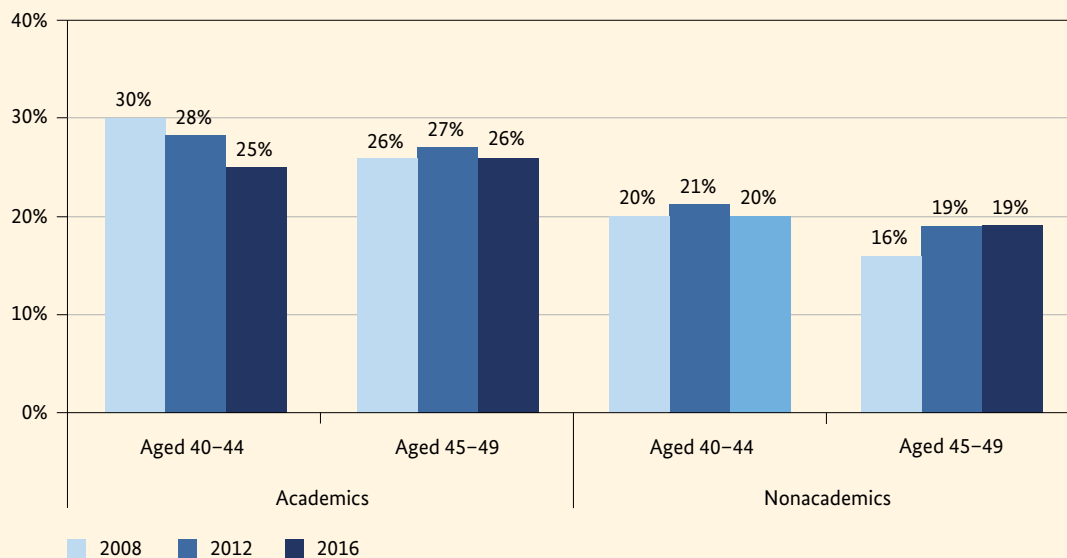
Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): *Kinderlosigkeit, Geburten und Familien: Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2016*.  
Presentation: Prognos AG.

### Childlessness among women academics versus non-academics

Childlessness is higher among women academics than among women with no academic qualifications. Some 19 percent of non-academic women aged 45 to 49 were childless in 2016 (**Fig. 34**). Compared with 2008, the number of childless women academics aged between 40 and 44 in 2016 had dropped from 30 to 25 percent. Childlessness among women academics aged 45 to 49 has remained constant compared with the figures for 2008 (26 percent in 2008 and 2016, and 27 percent in 2012). Since 2012, the number of childless non-academic women aged 40 to 44 and aged 45 to 49 has remained constant, at around 20 percent.

56 Ibid.

**Figure 34: Childless women\* among of a given age according to the highest professional qualification\*\* in 2008, 2012 and 2016 (in %)**



\* Women who responded to births question only.

\*\* Each excluding Berlin.

Note: The ages shown in the chart are the ages reached in the reporting year (reporting year minus year of birth).

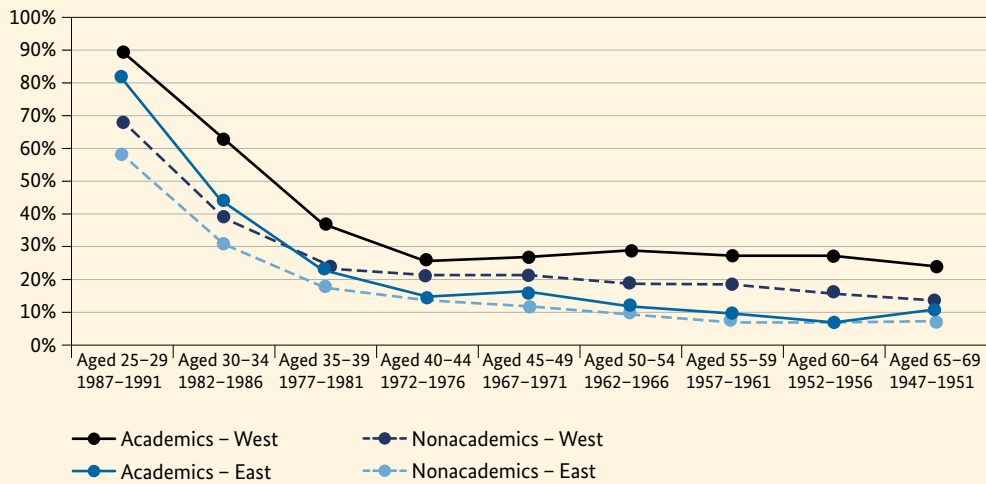
Source: Special analysis, Microcensus 2016. Calculations and presentation: Prognos AG.

Overall, in 2016 the gap between childless women academics and childless women non-academics was narrower compared to 2008: among those aged 45 to 49, the gap narrowed from 10 to seven percentage points and from 10 to five percentage points among those aged 40 to 44. The same situation applies regarding the gap between east and west: among those aged 46 to 49, it narrowed from 14 to 10 percentage points and from 14 to seven percentage points among those aged 40 to 44.

### Differences between east and west by age

The differences between eastern and western Germany and between women academics and women non-academics vary depending on the age group concerned (Fig. 35). On the whole, in 2016 the differences between women academics and women non-academics were greater in the west than in the east. The differences were greatest among those aged 25 to 34: in both eastern and western Germany, childlessness among women academics was significantly higher than among women with no academic qualifications. In eastern Germany, childlessness among women academics aged 35 and older almost matches that among non-academics. In western Germany, this is only evident in women aged 40 to 49.

Figure 35: Childless women\* among of a given age by year, highest professional qualification and region\*\*, 2016 (in %)



\* Women who responded to births question only.

\*\* Each excluding Berlin.

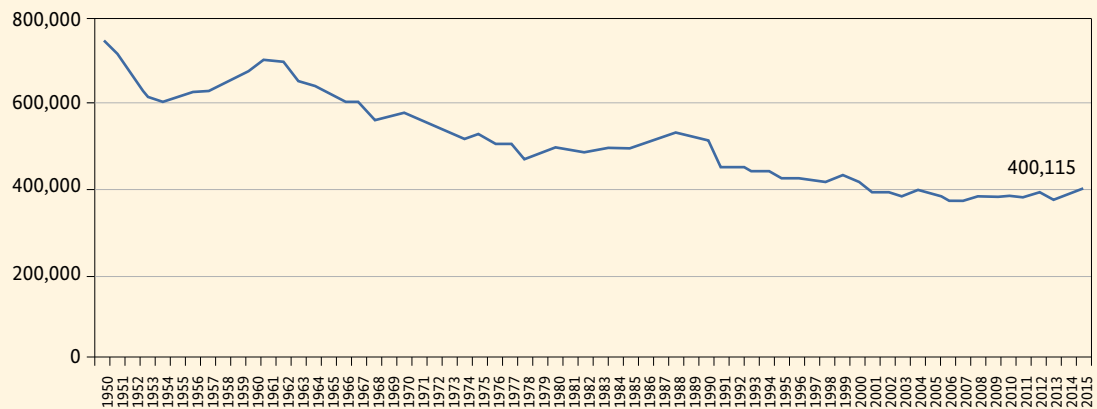
Note: The ages shown in the chart are the ages reached in the reporting year (reporting year minus year of birth).

Source: Special analysis, Microcensus 2016. Calculations and presentation: Prognos AG.

## 1.8 Marriage

There has been a slight, but steady rise in the number of marriages in Germany over the past ten years. Some 400,155 couples married in 2015. This is 14,163 more than in 2014 (**Fig. 36**).

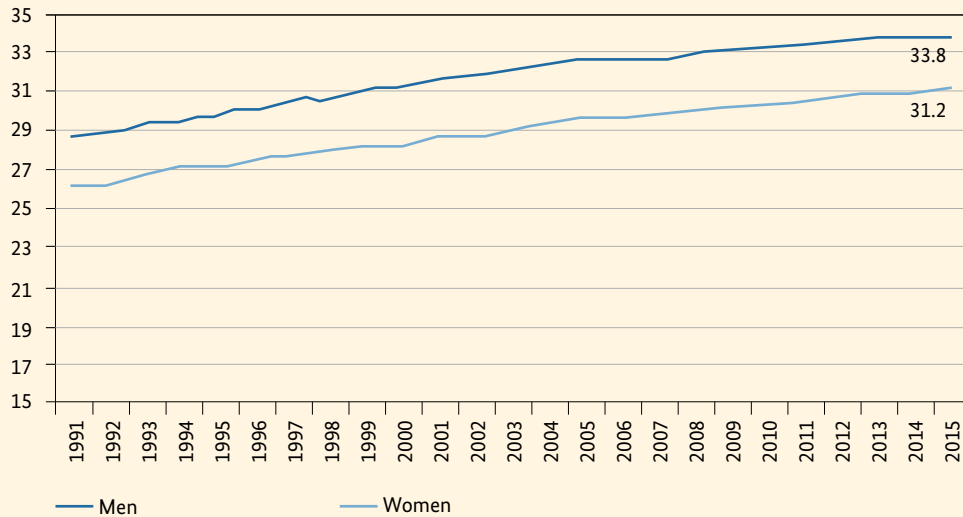
Figure 36: Marriages in Germany between 1950 and 2015 (absolute figures)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Eheschließungen, Geborene und Gestorbene.

In 2015, two-thirds of marriages in Germany were first marriages and 15 percent were second or successive marriages in which the partners were divorcees, widowers or widows. In the same year, the age of couples entering into their first marriage was 33.8 for men and 31.2 for women (Fig. 37).

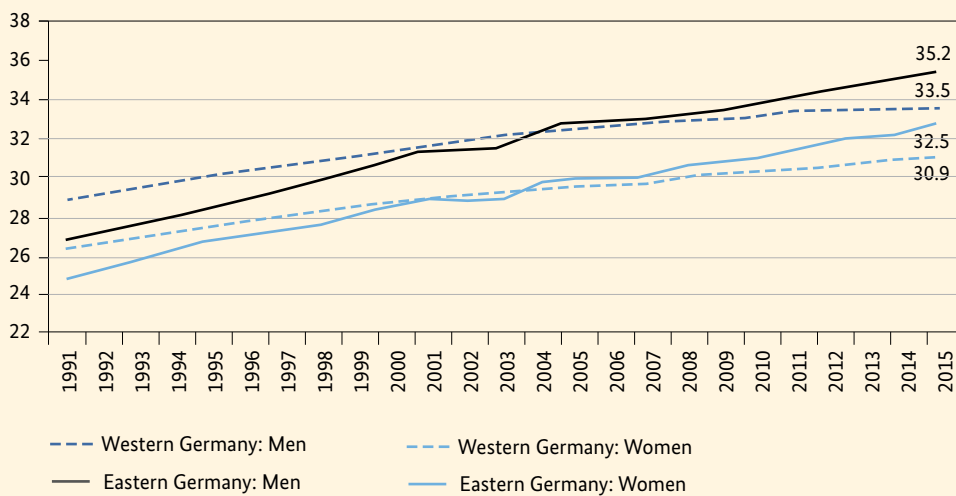
Figure 37: Average age at first marriage in Germany, women and men, 1991-2015



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2016): Statistik der Eheschließungen.

Ages at the time of a first marriage have gradually levelled out between eastern and western Germany. Particularly among women and men in the east, their ages when marrying for the first time are rising continually. Couples marrying in eastern Germany tend to be slightly older when marrying for the first time compared with those in western Germany (Fig. 38).

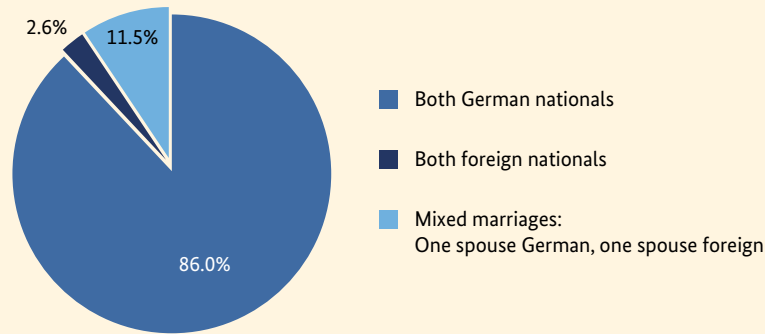
Figure 38: Average age at first marriage in eastern and western Germany between 1991 and 2015



Source: (2016): Statistik der Eheschließungen. From 2001: Eastern and western Germany, each excluding Berlin.

In some 86 percent of marriages that took place in 2015, both partners held German citizenship (**Fig. 39**). Among 12 percent, at least one of the partners was of foreign nationality (binational or mixed marriage) and in three percent of marriages both partners were of foreign nationality. Binational marriages have thus remained constant when compared with 2014.

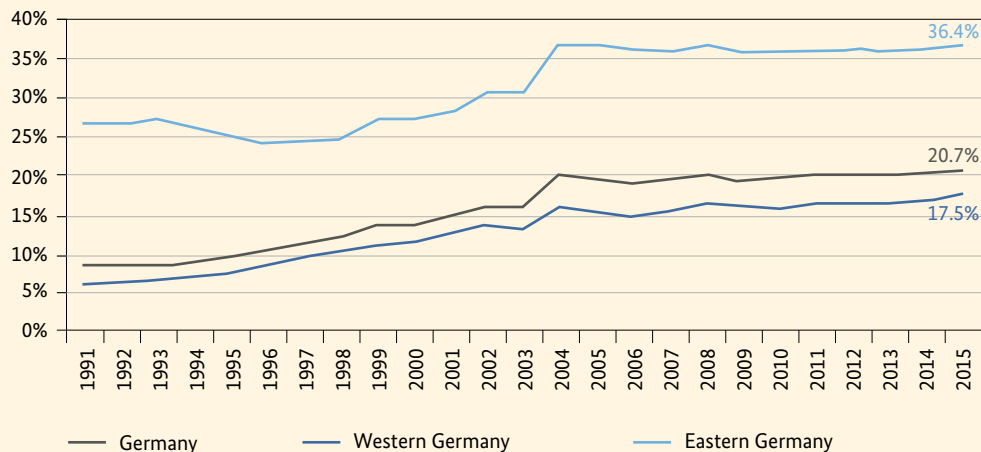
**Figure 39: Marriages by marrying partners' nationality in 2015**



Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2017).

In 21 percent of marriages entered into in 2015, children had been born prior to the marriage. This is more than double the figure for 1991 (**Fig. 40**). The number in western Germany was 18 percent and in eastern Germany more than one in three newly married couples already had children (36 percent).

**Figure 40: Children born prior to parents' marriage in 2012 (in %)**



Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2017). From 2001: Eastern and western Germany, each excluding Berlin.

More and more same-sex couples are officially registering their partnerships. Around half of all same-sex couples who live together have legally registered their relationship as an official life partnership. Some 78,000 same-sex couples currently cohabit in Germany.

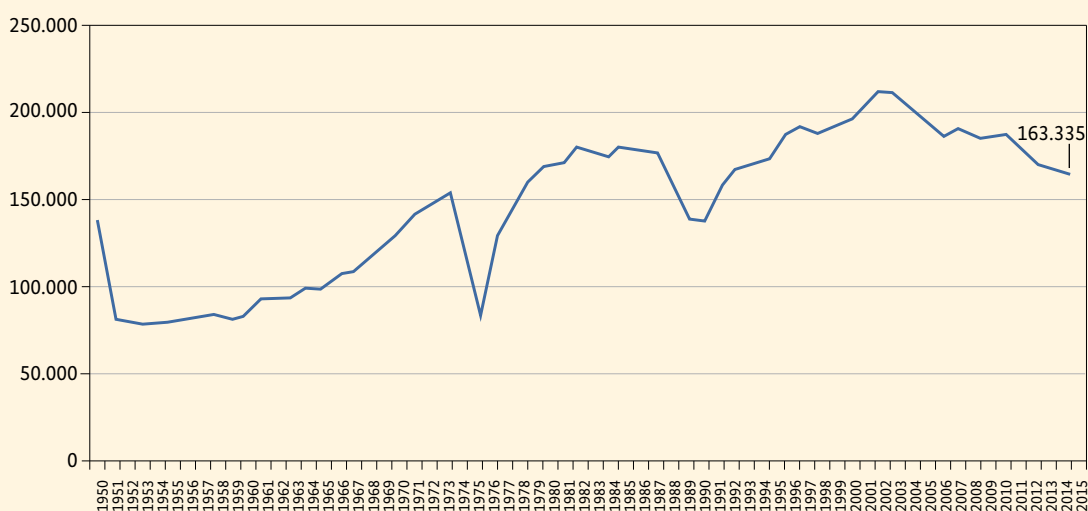


## 1.9 Divorce

Most people marry at least once in their lives, even though marriage is no longer seen as a life-long commitment or an absolute necessity when planning a family.<sup>57</sup> Expectations placed on marriage and partnerships have changed in recent times. While in the past, the security aspect of marriage was the main focus, today it is more the need and desire to share a life together as partners.<sup>58</sup> And expectations on marriage are rising. If these are not fulfilled, people tend to opt for divorce far faster than they did ten or twenty years ago.<sup>59</sup> This also affects general attitudes to divorce.

Some 530,497 marriages were dissolved in 2015. As in the past, this was mostly due to the death of a spouse. In 2015, this was the reason behind 69 percent of cases, while 163,335 marriages ended in legal divorce. This represents about one third of all marriage dissolutions (**Fig. 41**). Of the 18 million marriages entered into in 2015, one percent ended in legal divorce and three percent were annulled.

**Figure 41: Divorces 1950–2015 (absolute figures)**



*Note: The large decrease in 1977 to 1979 is due to a change in divorce law in former West Germany with effect from 1 July 1977. This replaced the fault principle with the principle of irremediable breakdown and substantially reorganised the division of assets and pension entitlements between divorcees.*

*Data basis: Statistisches Bundesamt (2015): Statistik der Ehescheidungen.*

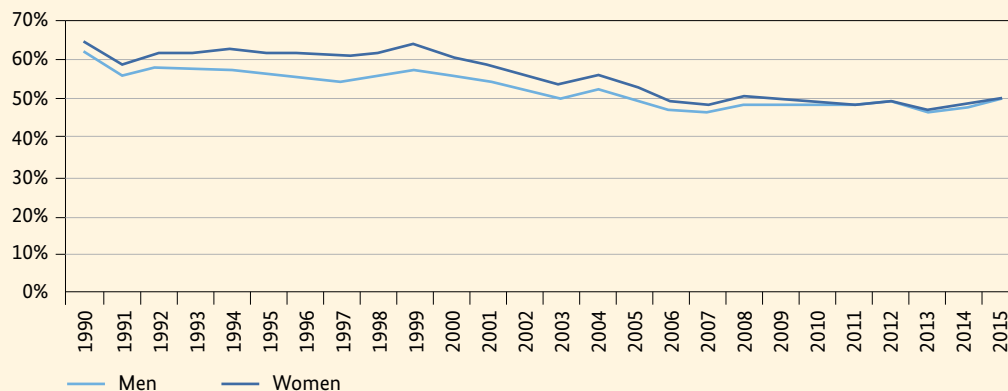
57 Grünheid, E. (2013): Ehescheidungen in Deutschland: Entwicklungen und Hintergründe, BiB Working Paper 1/2013, Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, Wiesbaden.

58 Ibid, p. 7.

59 Ibid.

In 2015, marriages that ended in divorce lasted an average 14 years and eight months, indicating that the trend towards longer marriages continues. In 1990, marriages lasted an average 11.5 years. According to current divorce rates, around 35 percent of marriages entered into in a given year will end in divorce within the following 25 years. The highest number of divorces occurs after six years of marriage. This is associated with an increase in the average age of women and men at the time of divorce. In 2015, men were on average 46.3 years old at the time of divorce and women 43.3 years old. Ten years previously the average age at the time of divorce was 36.8 for women and 39.5 for men.<sup>60</sup> Almost half of divorced women and men in Germany remarry. The rate of remarriage is slightly higher among women than among men (**Fig. 42**).

**Figure 42: Combined figures for remarriage among divorcees\* in Germany for the period 1990–2015**



Source and calculations: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, Wiesbaden 2014.

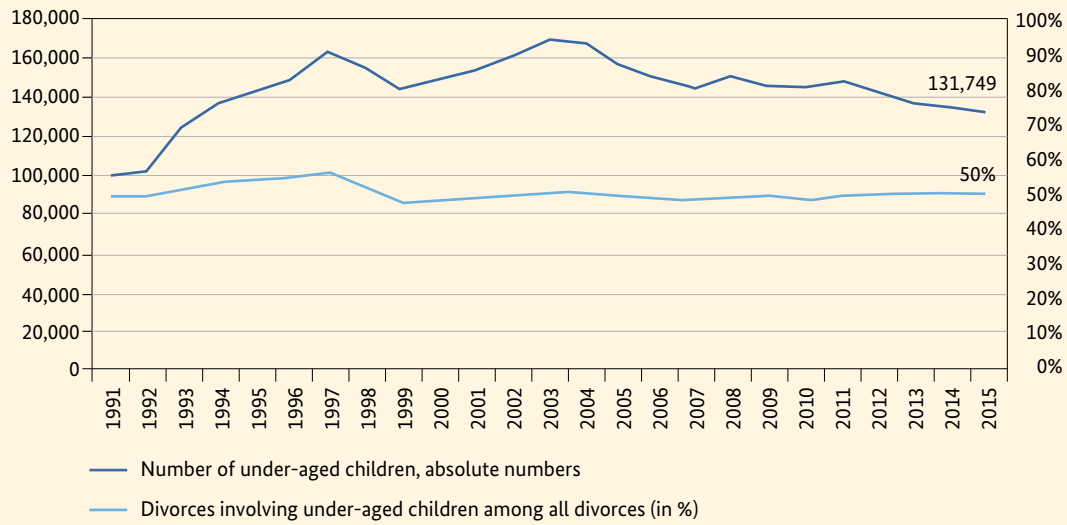
\* Note: in calculating the combined figures for remarriage among divorcees, the couples entering into marriage who were divorced prior to the new marriage are counted against the number of divorces for the year in which those couples were divorced. The addition of the figure for remarriage for individual divorce cohorts over the past 30 calendar years results in the combined figure for remarriages among divorcees.

In about half of all divorces, the couple had common under-aged children (**Fig. 43**). In 2015, a total of 82,019 divorces involving common under-aged children took place, representing 50 percent of divorces (**Fig. 43**, right axis). This means a total of 131,749 under-aged children were affected by divorce in 2015 (**Fig. 43**, left axis). Compared with the previous year, this meant 3,000 fewer children whose parents divorced.<sup>61</sup>

60 Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Statistik der rechtskräftigen Beschlüsse in Eheauflösungssachen (Scheidungsstatistik) 2015.

61 Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Statistik der rechtskräftigen Beschlüsse in Eheauflösungssachen (Scheidungsstatistik) 2015.

**Figure 43: Common under-age children involved in divorces (in %) and divorces (in absolute figures) between 1991 and 2015**



Data basis: Statistisches Bundesamt (2017): Statistik der rechtskräftigen Beschlüsse in Eheauflösungssachen (Scheidungsstatistik) 2015.

In 2016, some 1,238 registered same-sex partnerships were dissolved. These involved more partnerships between women (698) than partnerships between men (540). Compared with 2015, dissolutions of registered partnerships have increased by around nine percent.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Press release by the Statistisches Bundesamt dated 11 July 2017: [https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/zdw/2017/PD17\\_28\\_p002.html](https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/zdw/2017/PD17_28_p002.html).

## II.

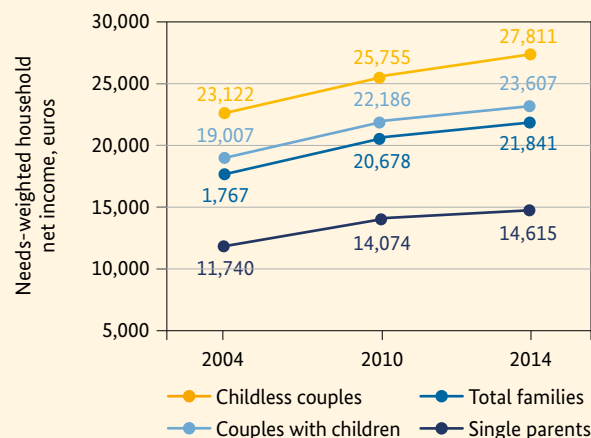
### Economic Situation of Families and the Impact of Family-related Benefits

#### 2.1 Family incomes and families' subjective perceptions

On the whole, the financial situation for families in Germany has improved in recent years. However, a differentiated analysis shows that not all families have been able to enjoy the effects of this positive trend (see Chapter III).

Incomes have grown in the past few years. While in 2004, the (needs-weighted) net income of families with under-age children was just under €18,000, it had risen to almost €22,000 in 2014. But despite this rise, the average (needs-weighted) net income of families is significantly lower – by an average of about 21 percent – than that of childless couples (see Fig. 44).

Figure 44: Needs-weighted net income of families with children aged under 18 by family form and among childless couples, euros



Source: SOEP 2015 (v32); incomes from previous year. Calculations: Prognos AG.

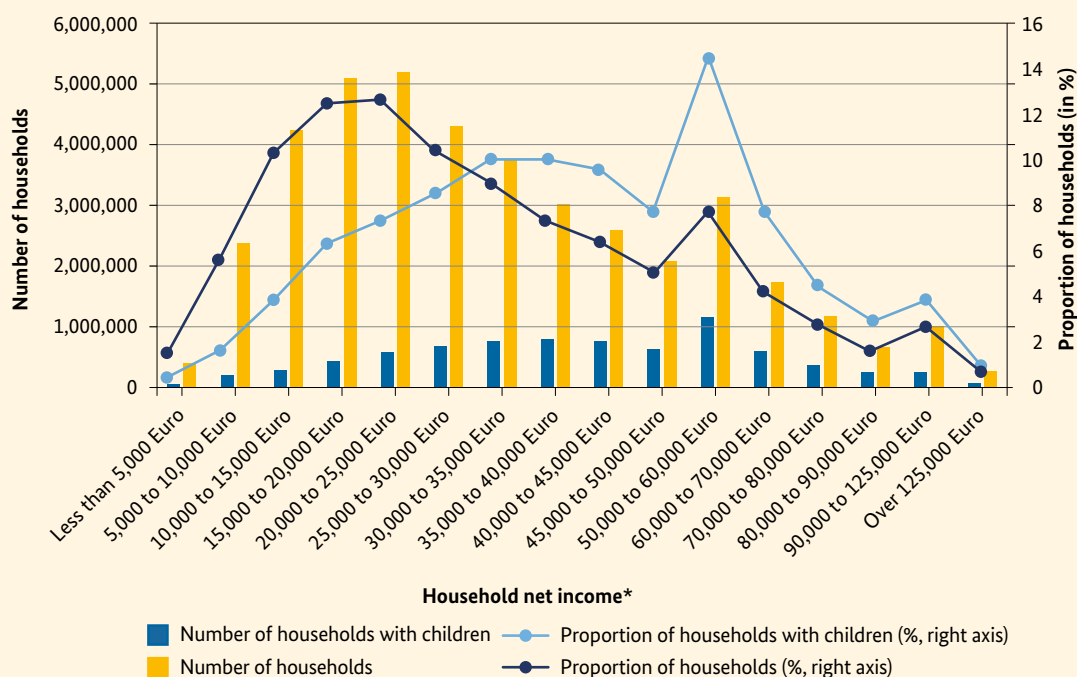
The positive trend seen in family incomes is reflected in families' subjective perceptions. Most families today say that their financial situation is good or very good. They believe that the economic situation for families have improved in the past ten years. In 2005, only 38 percent of families assessed their economic situation as positive.<sup>63</sup>

63 Allensbacher Archiv, AWA 2005, 2015.

## 2.2 Income distribution in households with children and without

On the whole, the incomes of families are similarly distributed to those of childless households. Looking at families' nominal disposable income, families tend to have more disposable income than childless households (**Fig. 45**). More childless households than those with children have incomes of up to €30,000, while more households with children (blue line) have disposable incomes of €30,000 or more compared to childless households (black line).

**Figure 45: Distribution of household net incomes, 2014**



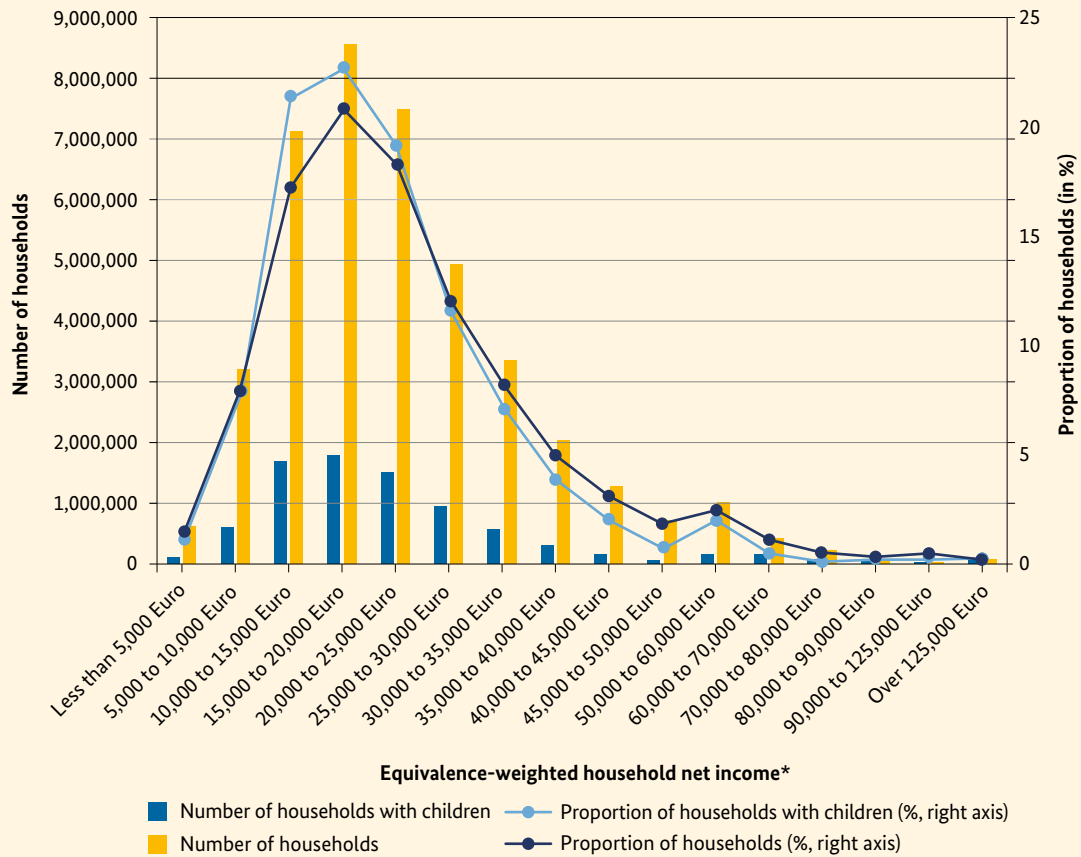
\* Household post-government income and imputed rent.

Source: SOEP 2015 (v32); incomes from previous year. Calculations: Prognos AG.

Looking at nominal disposable income, this view does not take into account that in families, disposable income has to be spread across more individuals than is the case in childless households. To take this into account, an equivalent weighting is applied.<sup>64</sup> After the weighting has been applied, the two sets of income appear more similar than in the nominal disposable view (**Fig. 46**). Up to an equivalent weighted income of €15,000, families and childless households have almost identical incomes – about 30 percent of households in each group have weighted incomes of up to €15,000. In the next income group, up to €25,000, households with children take the lead. Households with no children are in the majority in the higher equivalent income groups. This explains the difference in average needs-weighted income (see also **Fig. 44**).

<sup>64</sup> Weighting is based on an age and needs-based model used by the OECD. According to the current scale, the first adult receives a weighting of 1.0, additional adults and youths aged 14 and over a weighting of 0.5 and each child under 14 a weighting of 0.3. The income of a couple with two children under 14 is divided by an equivalent weighting of 2.1 (=1 + 0.5 + 0.3 + 0.3) and can then be compared with the income of a one-person household.

Figure 46: Distribution of equivalence-weighted household net incomes, 2014



\* Household post-government income and imputed rent.

Source: SOEP 2015 (v32); incomes from previous year. Calculations: Prognos AG.

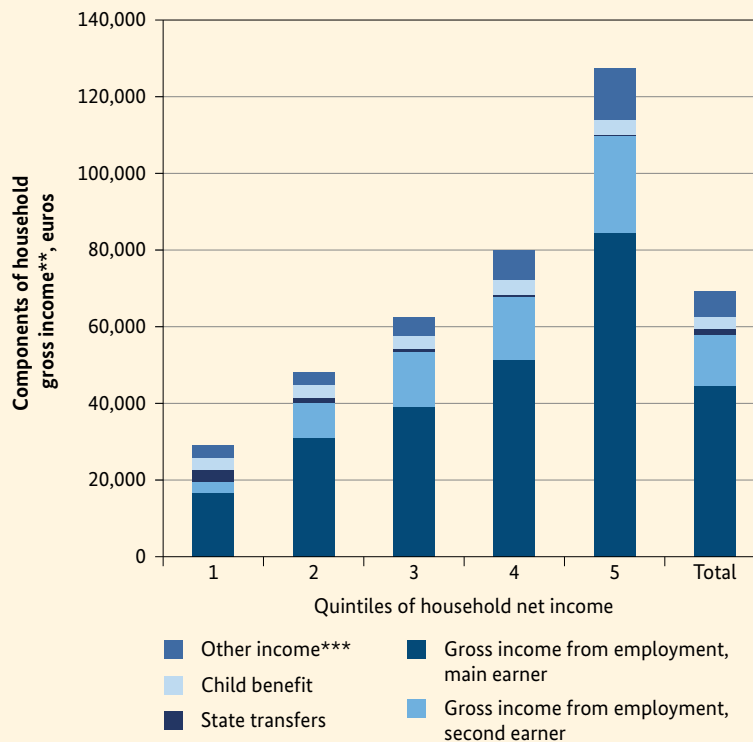
### 2.3 Main earner income is the biggest source of family income

In addition to income distribution, the source of family income also reflects a family's financial situation. The main source of family income is the earnings of adult members of the household, child benefit and other forms of income. Families also receive other transfer payments such as unemployment benefit I, basic security benefits, child supplement, housing benefit and social assistance.

The following view is limited to two-parent families because in single-parent households, there is no second income available and any attempt to include them would distort the picture regarding partners' incomes. If two-parent families are separated into five equally-sized groups (quintiles) according to their gross income, it becomes clear that in all groups the income of the main earner represents the biggest component of the family income (Fig. 47). Family income rises across the quintiles in step with the income of the main earner. But in addition to the main earner's income rising across the quintiles, the importance of the partner's income also rises significantly.

Among two-parent families in the lowest income group, the partner's income plays only a subordinate role because on average the partner contributes less to the household income than the amount of child benefit or other transfers received. In families in the second quintile, the partner makes a significantly greater contribution to the household income. The importance of transfers drops accordingly. Families in which both partners contribute substantially to the household income are less reliant on transfers. The higher the partner's income, the more likely families are to be found in the higher quintile groups.

Figure 47: Components of household gross income\*\* in couples with children by quintiles of household net income\*, 2014



\* Household net income: Household post-government income and imputed rent.

\*\* Household gross income: Household net income plus taxes paid and household social insurance contributions.

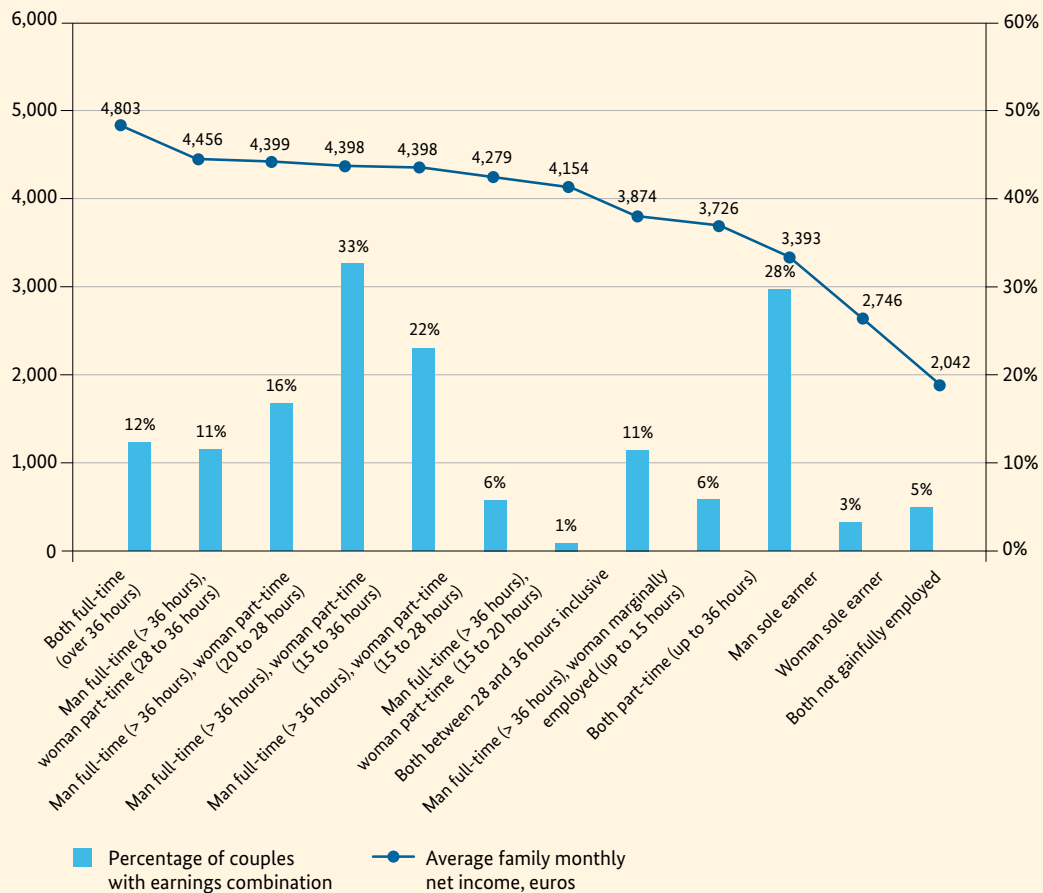
\*\*\* Other income from assets, private transfer payments, social insurance benefits, private pension income and children's income from employment.

Source: SOEP 2015 (v32); incomes from previous year. Calculations: Prognos AG.

As can be seen, in most cases the main portion of family income is earned by one of the parents, while the other generally contributes a significantly lower amount. This inequitable distribution can be a poverty risk if the main earner is unable to work. The importance of a second income becomes clear when looking at average monthly net incomes (Fig. 48).

A family in which the man works full-time and is the sole earner has an average monthly net income of €3,393. Their net income is about €1,000 higher if the mother also earns and works between 15 and 28 hours per week. If the parents share the responsibility for employment equally and both work between 28 and 36 hours per week, they achieve an average net income of €4,154 per month. This close to full-time working arrangement enables more time for the family and matches the wishes of a large number of mothers and fathers.

**Figure 48: Average net monthly income of couples with children aged under 18 at home**



Source: Microcensus special analysis f203\_006. Calculations: Prognos AG.

## 2.4 Risk of poverty among families

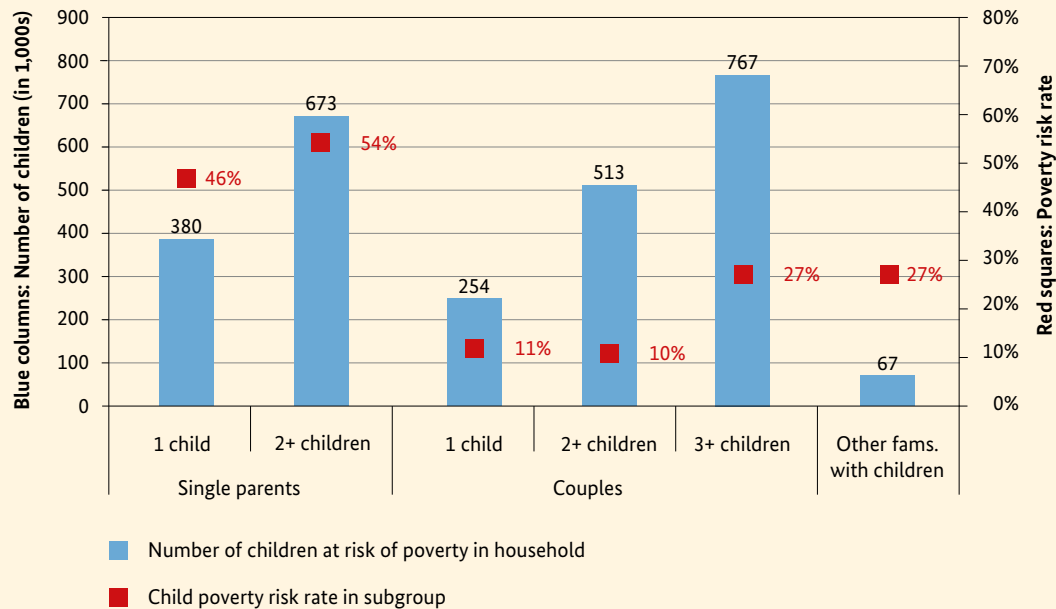
Despite the largely positive financial situation of families in Germany, a significant number of families live on incomes that lie below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. Depending on the source of data used, the risk of child poverty in Germany is 14.6 percent (EU SILC, income year 2014), 19.7 percent (Microcensus, income year 2015) or 21.1 percent (SOEP, income year 2014). Children in single-parent households are more likely to face precarious financial situations. The at-risk-of-poverty rate<sup>65</sup> also rises commensurate with the number of children in the

<sup>65</sup> At risk of poverty rate: the number of individuals with an equivalent income of less than 60 percent of the median equivalent income of people in private households in the vicinity of the main residence. The equivalent income is calculated using the new OECD scale.



household (Fig. 49). In 2014, some 54 percent of children who lived with siblings and a single mother or father were at risk of poverty. Among couples with three or more children, the at-risk-of-poverty rate was 27 percent.

Figure 49: Number and proportion of children at risk of poverty, by family type and number of children, 2014



Source: SOEP 2015 (v32); incomes from previous year. Calculations: IAW.

### Financial situation often difficult for single parents

While slightly more single parents now tend to go to work than mothers in two-parent families (68 versus 67 percent) and work an average five hours more per week, some 32 percent are unemployed.<sup>66</sup> Because in single-parent households it is mostly only the single parent who is able to contribute to the household income to any great extent, the financial situation for single-parent families is generally more precarious than for two-parent families. Approximately 44 percent of single parents are at risk of poverty; only 10 percent of two-parent families with one or two children face the same risk.<sup>67</sup>

As a result, entitlement to benefits is high among single parents. They receive basic security benefits more than five times more often than two-parent families: 38 percent of single parent families with children under 18 do so, while only seven percent of couples with children do. One problem that leads to the often precarious financial situation for single parents is that although they go to work, they are unable to earn enough to cover their needs. Some 35 percent of single parents who receive basic security benefits are actually employed.<sup>68</sup>

66 Prognos AG, based on the Microcensus 2015.

67 Results of the Microcensus. From 2011 based on extrapolation for the expected results of the census 2011. IT.NRW. Tabelle A 1.1.0 Deutschland.

68 Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2016): Analyse des Arbeitsmarkts für Alleinerziehende, BA-Statistik 2015.

### **Large families: the more children, the worse their economic situation**

The more children a family has, the more difficult their financial situation. Large families are more at risk of poverty than a family of average size. One quarter of two-parent families with three or more children<sup>69</sup> were at risk of poverty in 2015, while only 10 or 11 percent of couples with one or two children faced the same risk.<sup>70</sup>

In general, the incomes of large families are no lower than those of smaller families. Their greater risk of poverty results from the larger number of people in the household who must be considered when calculating the weighted per capita income. Large families have less income available per person than couples with fewer children. Looking at the various family constellations according to income and taking account of the number of people in the household, 68 percent of large families have less than the average family income.<sup>71</sup>

The difficult financial situation is also evident in the relatively high number of large families who receive basic security benefits under Book II of the German Social Code. One in five two-parent households with three or more children received such benefits at the start of 2017. Among families with one or two children, it was only between six and seven percent.<sup>72</sup>

### **Adequate employment for both parents is the best form of poverty prevention**

A family's financial situation largely depends on both the extent to which the parents are employed and the impact of the family-related benefits they receive. Basically, the best form of protection against poverty is for both parents to work. This applies both to improving their immediate income situation and to ensuring their long-term financial security. It also applies with regard to securing personal livelihoods. At present, only about one-third of all mothers with children under eight earn a living wage. This compares with more than 80 percent of fathers with children of the same age. Looking only at mothers who work more than 26 hours per week, this figure rises to 85 percent. This shows that if parents share the responsibility for family and paid work equally, the arrangement stabilises the family's short-term and long-term existence. Unemployment or marginal employment is the most frequent reason why families face poverty, are dependent on benefits and live in precarious situations.

This is also the case with regard to child poverty. Around two-thirds of children in households with no income from paid work are at risk of poverty. If at least one parent works full-time, the risk of poverty drops to 15 percent. If the family has a second income from part-time employment, it has a five percent poverty risk (**Fig. 50**).

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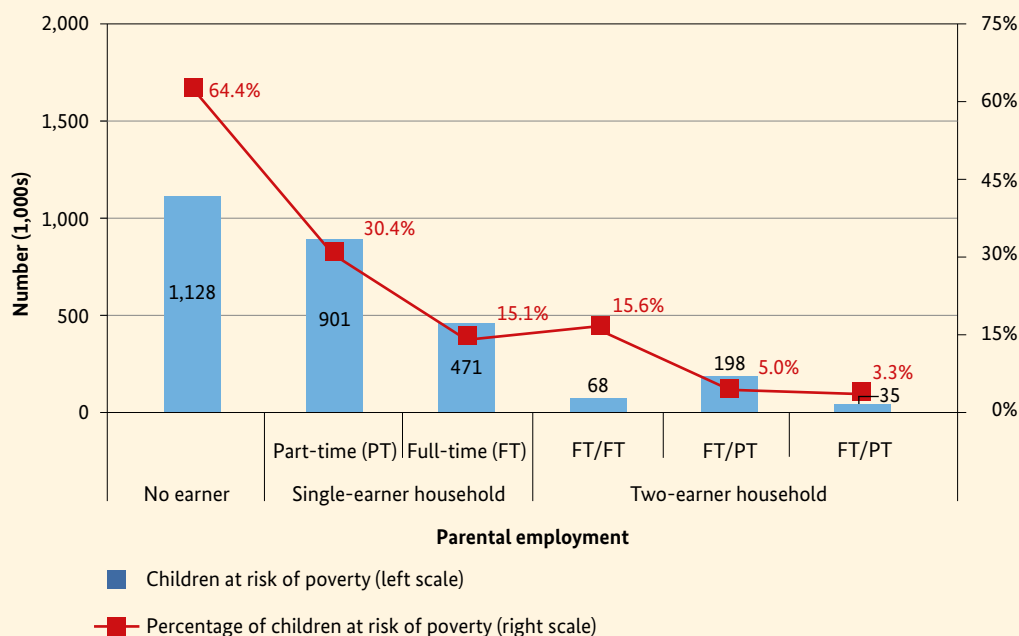
69 Children include individuals under 18 with no partner or children in the household.

70 Results of the Microcensus. IT.NRW. Tabelle A 1.1.0 Deutschland.

71 SOEP-Welle v32 (Erhebungsjahr 2015, Einkommen aber aus dem Jahr 2014). Berechnung: Prognos AG.

72 Bundesagentur für Arbeit: Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende in Zahlen. Berichte: Blickpunkt Arbeitsmarkt | April 2017. p. 7.

Figure 50: Children at risk of poverty by parental employment



Source: SOEP v32 (survey year 2015, incomes from 2014). Calculations: Prognos AG.

For both parents to be able to work, mothers and fathers need suitable arrangements to enable them to reconcile family and working life. Being able to reconcile both sides of life helps families improve their economic situation. This can be seen in an overall evaluation of marriage and family-related benefits.<sup>73</sup>

Benefits which help to improve reconciliation of family and working life help to secure the situation of families in economic terms, ensuring that children are well provided for (see also Chapter III).

## 2.5 Family-related benefits: An overview

The Federal Government wants to provide all families in Germany with the conditions they need to enjoy a happy, financially secure family life. It also wants to help couples wanting a family to fulfil their desire for a child. To do this, the Federal Government uses a variety of measures and benefits. For example, benefits help parents cover their child-related costs and bridge the expenditure gap between parents and childless adults. They also foster good, partnership-based reconciliation of family and working life, thus allowing parents more freedom of scope and time. Many policy measures, including those at Länder and municipal level, promote children's development and wellbeing and provide parents with localised support.

The following table illustrates the trend in expenditure for specific benefits provided to families in the areas shown.

73 Prognos AG (2014): Gesamtevaluation der ehe- und familienbezogenen Leistungen, p. 218.

Figure 51: Selected family-related benefits/measures, 2006 to 2016, in millions of euros, (estimated expenditure/reduction in income)

Measure	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Child benefit (for 2009 including €100 additional amount as part of economic stimulus package)	35,004	34,293	33,607	36,972	38,920	38,552	38,649	38,514	38,618	39,498	40,348
Tax-free allowance for single parents	405	360	370	350	350	350	355	360	370	545	570
Child support supplement as part of pension supplement	547	683	1,054	1,121	1,183	1,241	1,259	1,337	1,385	1,443 (provisional)	
Child supplement	138	109	146	363	399	385	371	352	324	283	306
Parental allowance	-	1,710	4,186	4,450	4,583	4,709	4,825	5,105	5,676	5,822	6,097
Payments under the Maintenance Advance Act (Federal and Länder expenditure)	853	845	847	819	911	922	880	859	849	843	861
Federal contributions to statutory pension insurance for child-raising periods	11,393	11,547	11,478	11,466	11,637	11,574	11,628	11,585	11,858	12,149	12,530
Family membership in statutory health insurance for non-employed family members (children and adolescents)	13,700	14,135	14,771	16,152	16,409	16,492	16,633	17,381	18,031	18,559	
Daycare	11,097	11,846	13,003	14,574	16,183	17,352	18,904	21,408	22,888	24,574	

Source: BMFSFJ, own presentation

The **biggest rise in expenditure has occurred in relation to childcare**: between 2006 and 2015, expenditure at Länder, municipal and Federal Government level rose from just over €11 billion to almost €24.6 billion.

The following improvements were also introduced:

- **Child benefit** rose by €38 in the period 2008 to 2017 and will rise by another €2 in 2018 (in 2009 it rose by €10 per month and child, and parents also received a one-time payment of €100 to help overcome the effects of the financial crisis. Child benefit increased by €20 in 2010, by €4 in 2015, by €2 in 2016 and 2017, and it will increase by another €2 in 2018).
- **Child supplement** paid to low-income families independent of basic security benefits was improved in 2008. In 2016, child supplement was increased from up to €140 to up to €160 per month and child. In 2017, it rose by another €10, to €170 per month and child.
- **The tax-free allowance for single parents** was increased by almost 50 percent on 1 January 2015, from €1,308 to €1,908 per year, and was also staggered in amounts of €240 according to the number of children. This eases the burden for more than one million single parents and helps them take up gainful employment because they are able to keep more of the money they earn.
- **Maintenance advance** which can be claimed by single parents with children under 12 was adjusted in keeping with the tax-free allowances for children. It was also expanded retroactively with effect from 1 July 2017. Maintenance advance is now paid until a child is 18 and the previous maximum period of entitlement of 72 months has been withdrawn for all children. In 2017, the amount of maintenance advance paid for children from birth up to the age of five rose from €145 to €150, and from €194 to €201 for children aged six to 11. Maintenance advance for children aged 12 to 17 will be €268.
- The **child allowance portion of supplementary pension allowance (Riesterrente)** for children born after 31.12.2007 rose from €185 to €300 per year.
- Until 2013, Federal Government contributions for **childrearing periods credited under the state pension scheme** remained constant at €11.6 billion per year. An increase in 'mothers' pension' (Mütterrente) paid for children born before 1992 was agreed in 2014, leading to an overall increase to almost €12.5 billion in 2016.
- Expenditure for free insurance of children with their parents under the statutory health insurance scheme more or less matched the increase in expenditure for health insurance overall.

# III.

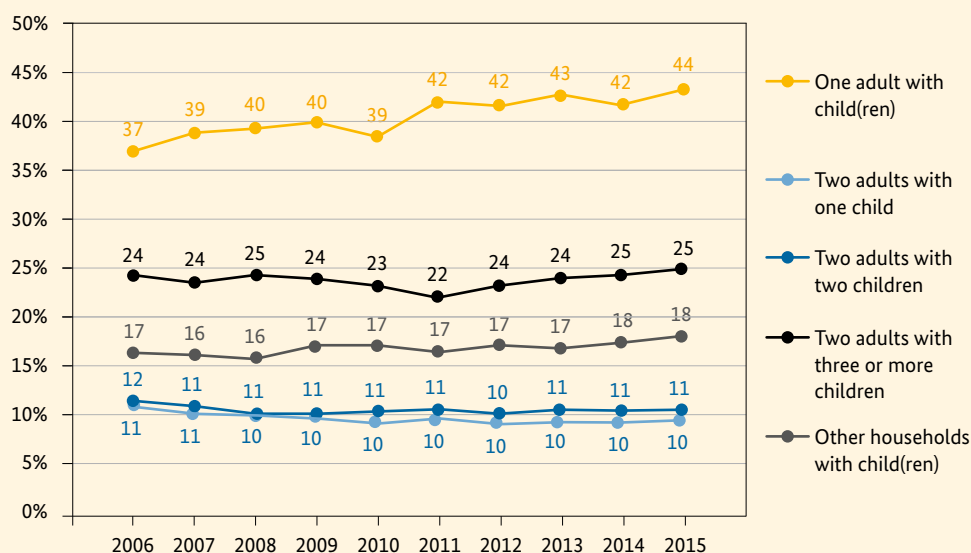
## Equal Opportunities for Children

### 3.1 Financial Situation of Children

A significant number of families in Germany live on an income which lies below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. According to microcensus data, the at-risk-of-poverty rate<sup>74</sup> among under-aged children in 2015 was 19.7 percent (income year 2015). This means that some 2.8 million children and youths were at risk of poverty. Compared with 2010, this represents an increase of 1.5 percentage points in the at-risk-of-poverty rate.<sup>75</sup>

As can be seen (see also Chapter II), the risk of poverty is strongly determined by family form and the number of children in the household. Some 44 percent of single-parent households are at risk of poverty; their poverty risk is more than four times higher than that of two-parent families with one or two children – also because their employment intensity is lower when their children are small (Fig. 52). 25 percent of families with three or more children have an especially high poverty risk.

Figure 52: Poverty risk rate by type of household relative to national median (in %)



Source: Results of the Microcensus. From 2011, projection based on extrapolated results of 2011 census. IT.NRW. Table A 1.1.0 Germany.

74 The at-risk-of-poverty rate is an established scientific method used to illustrate the financial situation of children. The at-risk-of-poverty rate shows the number of people with an equivalent income of less than 60 percent of the median equivalent income of the entire population. The equivalent income is the needs-weighted per capita income per household (net).

75 The at-risk-of-poverty rate varies according to data source: EUSILC: 14.6 percent (income year 2014). Microcensus: 19.7 percent (income year 2015); SOEP: 21.1 percent (income year 2014).

At present, the influx of children with migrant backgrounds is increasing the at-risk-of-poverty rate among children in Germany. Between 2011 and 2015, the proportion of children at risk of poverty among unaccompanied immigrant minors rose from 36 percent to 49 percent. Among children with no migrant background, the figure remained constant, at about 13 percent.<sup>76</sup>

The risk of poverty has differing negative effects on children. On the one hand, children in families at risk of poverty often experience poorer wellbeing. On the other, insufficient financial means restrict the family’s quality of life overall. Especially with regard to housing, mobility, seasonal clothing and activities outside the home, clear differences can be seen in relation to families’ financial means.<sup>77</sup>

There is also a clear relationship between children’s social and cultural inclusion and families’ financial situations. For example, children under six who are entitled to benefits from the education and participation package of measures participate significantly less often in sports, early musical education, creative or artistic activities or in a parent-child group (**Fig. 53**).

**Figure 53: Children who participate in none of the activities listed, by entitlement to benefits under the education and participation package and by age group**

	Not entitled	Entitled	Total
Aged 0 to 2	59.6%	76.6%	<b>62.3%</b>
Aged 3 to 5	39.0%	62.0%	<b>43.5%</b>
Total: Aged 0 to 5	48.2%	67.7%	<b>51.7%</b>

Source: SOEP v31, weighted. N=3,035. Own analysis: Prognos AG.

### 3.2 Children’s wellbeing and participation

Children’s wellbeing, seen as their positive development, is dependent on various factors. It is especially influenced by their parents’ educational level, how satisfied their mother is with her life, the family’s living conditions and their state of health. A study conducted by the Ruhr University Bochum shows that the amount of income a family has available has no great influence on children’s wellbeing. However, children in families at risk of poverty demonstrate considerably poorer wellbeing (measured in terms of their speech and cognitive and socio-emotional development) than children from families with no poverty risk.<sup>78</sup>

Thus, an objective or perceived ‘financial burden’ on the part of the parents leads to significant negative effects on children’s wellbeing. That financial burden comprises several factors – for example, a risk of poverty, the risk of unemployment, job-related concerns and high housing costs (rent). This burden has a negative impact on children’s health and mothers’ general satisfaction, which in turn has an additional effect on children’s wellbeing. By making use of child-care facilities, these negative effects of financially difficult family circumstances can be

76 WSI 2017: Kinderarmut in Deutschland. Auswertungen auf Basis des Mikrozensus 2015.

77 Bertelsmann Stiftung (2015): Kinder und Familienarmut – Lebensumstände von Kindern in der Grundsicherung.

78 Schölmerich, A. u. a. (2013): Wohlergehen von Kindern. Endbericht für die Gesamtevaluation der ehe- und familienbezogenen Leistungen des Bundes, Berlin.

reduced or completely avoided. Mothers' sense of satisfaction and shared activities among parents and children (such as reading out loud) can also help to lessen the negative effects.

Family-related benefits also have an indirect, positive effect on children's wellbeing if they reduce a family's poverty risk. These are largely child benefit, basic security benefits for low-income families (basic security benefit, housing benefit and child supplement) and parental allowance in a child's first year. Parental allowance has a number of positive effects on children's wellbeing. It enables fathers to participate in childcare and this in turn has positive effects on early childhood development.<sup>79</sup> It also helps mothers in their desire to go to work. The number of mothers who work has continued to grow since parental allowance was introduced and more mothers are working longer hours. Thus, as mothers contribute to the family income, the risk of poverty sinks. The best way to prevent child poverty, therefore, is for both parents to be in substantial gainful employment.

### **Early childhood education has a positive impact on wellbeing**

If children are placed in a daycare centre, it has a positive effect on their development and wellbeing. This is particularly the case for children from families with a migrant background, with low-incomes and where the parents are poorly educated. Children aged between two and three who go to daycare are more advanced in their abilities to adapt than children who have never attended daycare. They have better speech, motor and social skills and their everyday skills are also more advanced. In the medium term, it can be shown that the earlier they visit a daycare centre, the more stable school-age children are in their socio-emotional behaviour. Looking at the longer term, there is also evidence of positive links between the length of time a young child attends daycare and its cognitive and non-cognitive skills in teenage years.

Childcare also has a protective function. Thus, family-related benefits which promote the use of childcare have an indirect, positive effect on children's wellbeing. Along with subsidised childcare, such benefits include tax-deductible childcare costs and the tax-free allowance for single parents.<sup>80</sup>

Against this backdrop, when compared with children of well-educated parents, problems can arise for children with poorly educated parents as these tend to make less use of public childcare services. This is a problem because it has been proven that childcare can act as a social leveller: if the parental home offers fewer development opportunities, then access to childcare options is particularly important.<sup>81</sup>

There is also evidence of a link between children's and teenagers' health and their parents' social status.<sup>82</sup> Children's health depends on the family's available income and the parents' level of education. There are huge differences, for example, regarding obesity, and also regarding susceptibility to psychological and developmental problems. The KiGGs studies propose that

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79 Studies have shown that, among other things, fathers' active participation in their children's care and upbringing promotes children's intellectual development and memory skills, and has positive effects on their speech development, school performance, ability to empathise as well as their socio-emotional development.

80 Prognos AG (2014): Gesamtevaluation der ehe- und familienbezogenen Leistungen.

81 Prognos AG (2014): Gesamtevaluation der ehe- und familienbezogenen Leistungen.

82 Robert Koch-Institut (2013): Die Gesundheit von Kindern und Jugendlichen in Deutschland.



some of the factors related to social origin can be compensated for in daycare and at school. They conclude that it is important for children to have better access to sports in their free time and for the associated fees to be kept low.

### 3.3 Targeted support for families

The Federal Government is thus committed to supporting and strengthening families so that all children have equal development, education and integration opportunities regardless of their origins and backgrounds. All children should have the best-possible conditions when growing up. Family-related benefits, programmes and other activities are helping us to achieve this goal. It is, however, necessary to place even greater focus on families with very limited financial means.

#### **Family-related benefits help reduce poverty risk**

Overall, the number of children at risk of poverty is approximately halved by the provision of benefits and transfers.<sup>83</sup> The overall evaluation of marriage and family-related benefits<sup>84</sup> has shown that child supplement, subsidised childcare and maintenance advance for single parents are particularly effective in reducing the risk of poverty for families. Child supplement reduces the risk of poverty in recipient households by some 16.5 percentage points. Subsidised childcare reduces the risk of poverty for two-parent families by 12 percentage points and for single parents by 19 percentage points. Childcare is especially effective because it enables mothers to go out to work.<sup>85</sup>

Family benefits help families to cope with child-related costs. Benefits received by a large recipient group and payments involving large sums are spread across a great number of families with great effect. They enable many families in Germany to live without having to depend on basic security benefits under Book II of the Social Code. The provision of child benefit enables 1.2 million families to live without having to claim such benefits, while child supplement helps 110,000 families to do the same. Parental allowance reduces the risk of poverty in young families by some 10 percentage points in a child's first year.<sup>86</sup>

Daycare centres and childminders make a great contribution to improving children's educational and participation opportunities. It is thus of particular importance that access to these services be simplified for all families regardless of their form.

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83 Daten von Eurostat, abrufbar unter: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>.

84 Prognos AG (2014): Gesamtevaluation der ehe- und familienbezogenen Leistungen. Die Ergebnisse wurden überwiegend auf der Datenbasis von 2010 ermittelt.

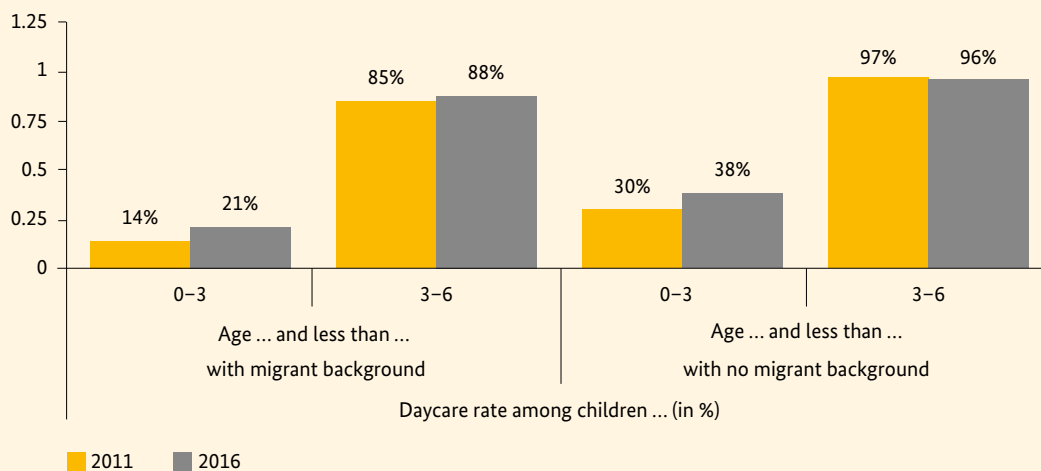
85 Prognos AG (2014): Gesamtevaluation der ehe- und familienbezogenen Leistungen, p. 167, 189; ZEW (2013a): Evaluation zentraler ehe- und familienbezogener Leistungen in Deutschland. Endbericht. Gutachten für die Prognos AG, p. 71 f.

86 Prognos AG (2014): Gesamtevaluation der ehe- und familienbezogenen Leistungen, p. 167, 189; ZEW (2013a): Evaluation zentraler ehe- und familienbezogener Leistungen in Deutschland. Endbericht. Gutachten für die Prognos AG, Chapter 8.

### Federal programme *Kita-Einstieg* offers families better access to early childhood education

The number of children with migrant backgrounds in the German education system has increased in recent years. This is especially the case regarding early childhood education. Take-up of daycare services for children with migrant backgrounds rose by several percentage points in the period 2011 to 2016 – for children aged up to three, it rose by seven percentage points to 21 percent (Fig. 54). Nonetheless, it lags significantly behind the daycare rate for children with no migrant background (38 percent). The gap between the numbers of children with and without migrant backgrounds who attend daycare is, however, closing for children aged three to five.

Figure 54: Daycare rate among children aged under 6 with and without migrant background (in %)



Source: *Kinder- und Jugendhilfestatistik (2017)*.

As in the past, children with migrant backgrounds start daycare significantly later than those with no migrant background. Some 41 percent of children with no migrant background were under two when starting the daycare centre they currently attend. This compares with only 22 percent of children with migrant backgrounds (Jehles/Meiner-Teubner 2016).<sup>87</sup>

With its *Kita-Einstieg* (Starting Daycare) programme, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs promotes low-threshold services which prepare families for and help them make use of daycare services. The programme focuses on children and families who have not been properly reached or not reached at all by the institutional daycare system – these include children with migrant backgrounds. Up to 300 participating locations receive funding to set up a coordination office and employ specialist staff to provide the programme-based service. Additional funds are also provided to finance related projects.

<sup>87</sup> Jehles, N./Meiner-Teubner, C. (2016): Ganz ähnlich oder ganz anders?, in: KomDat – Kommentierte Daten der Kinder und Jugendhilfe, Heft Nr. 3/2016, p. 1-4.

### **Federal programme *Elternchance* (Opportunities for Parents): Early childhood education for children by means of parental support**

Investing in early childhood has proven to have a lasting effect.<sup>88</sup> As a result Germany has broadened its focus on early childhood education and processes that begin before a child starts school. The main emphasis is placed on improving cooperation between staff and parents in matters concerning institutional early learning, daycare and education, and forging links between family-based early childhood development and education services. At an early phase, educational programmes for parents and families which take place in the broader social environment can reach families to improve life chances and educational opportunities, not least for people from disadvantaged backgrounds – such as socio-economically disadvantaged children.

Suitable and successful support is now offered by some 8,000 parental advisors under the federal programmes *Elternchance* I and II. As persons of trust, they give sound, easy-to-understand advice on child development and early education, provide information on the transitional phases of a child's educational path and refer parents to educational offerings in their local area. Be it a daycare centre, a family education centre, a multi-generation centre or an adult education centre – parental advice is available in many places where families seek guidance and make use of early education programmes. Parental advice simplifies access to education across the board and boosts parents' skills in deciding on and promoting their child's educational future. Education and childrearing partnerships are also formed between families and educational institutions such as family education centres, daycare centres and primary schools.

Parental advice plays a key role in the country-wide, prevention-focused programmes on education and family support, and also in working with parents. With the *Elternchance* I and II programmes, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs adds a new family policy approach and expands its activities in providing targeted support for low-income families by providing early education programmes and education-related advice. The findings of longitudinal studies show that socially disadvantaged families benefit in particular from parental guidance programmes.<sup>89</sup>

The growing number of parental advisors and the high quality of the training they receive are helping to develop the family education landscape further in the direction of early childhood education. It is becoming easier to reach more families with a special need for guidance in their everyday lives. More than half of parental advisors are also early education specialists who work in daycare centres.

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88 BMFSFJ (2016): Monitor Familienforschung Nr. 35 „Familie und frühe Bildung“.

89 Barnett W. S. (2011): Effectiveness of early educational intervention, in: Science p. 333, 975–978.

## Family Policy Review 2013–2017

### Family-related benefits improved

- Child supplement, child benefit and tax-free allowance for children increased.
- Tax-free allowance for single parents increased and staggered according to the number of children in the household. Maintenance advance for children of single parents increased.
- Protective period for pregnant mothers extended, expanded to include self-employed women, school girls, women students, and more.

### Daycare services improved

- 400,000 new places created for children under three with funding from federal investment programmes.
- Promotion of quality daycare through various federal programmes focusing, for example, on language acquisition, longer opening hours, access to daycare for migrant families and state-subsidised childminders (*Sprach-Kitas, Kita-Plus, Kita-Einstieg and Kindertagespflege*).

### Promoting equal partnerships

- Introduction of parental allowance plus and a partnership bonus for parents who both want to work part-time after the birth of a child.
- Legal entitlement to family care time and care support allowance.
- Marriage for all – same-sex couples now have the same right to marry as heterosexual couples.
- Drafting of a joint memorandum on the NEW Balance of family and work (*Memorandum Familie und Arbeitswelt – Die NEUE Vereinbarkeit*) with the top industry associations and the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB). Results presented in the form of a Progress Index 2017 (*Fortschrittsindex 2017*).

### Social Support

- *Elternchance II* trains family education counsellors as parental advisors.
- With advisory offices in 80 locations, the federal programme *Stark im Beruf* – a programme to help mothers with migration backgrounds find work – focuses on getting mothers back to work/into jobs.
- 630 Local Alliances for Families and over 7,900 employers participating in the Success Factor Family Network.

# Family life in facts and figures

## More family



Family comes first

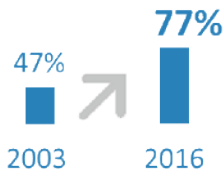


BIRTH RATE  
(avg. children per woman)



## More reconciliation of family and working life

Importance of family-friendly policies  
(among employers)



Federal, Länder and local daycare expenditure

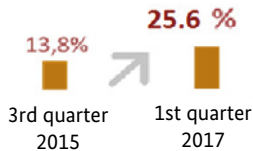


DAYCARE RATE  
among children under 3



### Elterngeld Plus

Parental allowance plus claimants with children born from 2015



FATHERS' TAKE-UP  
of parental allowance

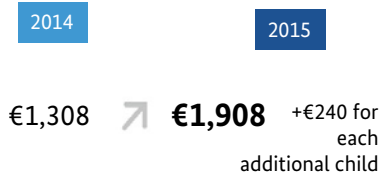


EMPLOYMENT RATE  
among mothers with children aged 2-3

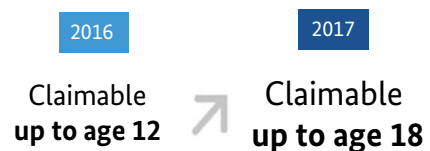


## More support for single parents

Tax allowance



Maintenance advance:  
maximum claim period withdrawn, age limit raised



## More approval for family policy

"Family policy does a good job promoting families"

Yes answers in population



This is an ideal way to reach families with education-related programmes. Parental advice has become an integral component of municipal support infrastructures for families.<sup>90</sup>

#### **Federal model programme *Starke Netzwerke Elternbegleitung* for successful integration**

The challenge of integrating children from refugee families into German schools gives rise to a further need for parental guidance and advice. Many parental advisors have been working with newly-arrived families for some time. The new federal model programme *Starke Netzwerke Elternbegleitung* (Robust Networks for Parental Advice) launched in May 2017 builds on the knowledge and expertise of specially trained parental advisors. At 50 programme-funded project locations throughout Germany, these parental advisors aid the integration of refugee families through work in local networks.

Parental advisors play a pro-active role in shaping their local network which operates not only as part of the tried and tested programmes offered in family education, daycare centres, primary schools and welfare services, but also on the basis of new cooperation partnerships with organisations providing refugee aid. Local resources and those of the social and institutional stakeholders are used to a greater extent and in a more systematic way. The programme is designed to aid development, coordination and, in conjunction with the respective municipal authorities, implementation of low-threshold support and advisory services.

Strengthening refugee parents' childrearing and educational skills, providing childcare options and referring their children to educational institutions such as daycare centres and schools are top agenda items. Supporting language acquisition is another important service performed by parental advisors. For newly-arrived families, this sociospatial approach improves cooperation between the various parties and is especially effective where the families are concerned.

### **3.4 The need for results-oriented family-related benefits**

To ensure that all children have the right conditions in which to develop and grow family policy must place greater focus on low-income families. These families need more financial resources and their children need better access to adequate daycare, education and integration programmes. Data analyses show that around one million children grow up in families with incomes which exclude them from the entitlement to receive basic security benefits, but are still not enough for them to pay tax and make use of tax-free allowances. They are not covered by the current benefits system and they lack the resources to provide the right conditions for a healthy and happy childhood.

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90 According to a survey of child welfare service department heads, almost 70 percent place high or medium importance on family education in the scope of services they provide. Some two-thirds of child welfare service department heads are aware of the availability of parental advisor training. Almost 60 percent express interest in training to become parental advisors themselves. See BMFSFJ (Ed). (2017): Familienbildung und Familienförderung zum gelingenden Aufwachsen von Kindern als Aufgabe des Jugendamts.

People in Germany have a heightened awareness to these needs. They expect family policy to provide better support for low-income families and for single parents. Almost two-thirds of the population (65 percent) believe that providing better financial support for low-income families is especially important, while 62 percent are in favour of providing more financial support for single parents.<sup>91</sup>

### **Better support for low-income families**

As described above, in addition to child benefit, other family-related benefits provide targeted support to assist families in specific situations and meet specific needs. These include basic security benefits, child supplement, housing benefit, benefits from the education and participation package, and maintenance advance for single parents. These benefits play an important role in preventing poverty risk – at least in families who claim them. However, certain of these benefits have only a limited reach.

Many families do not make use of the effective and efficient child supplement because they are unaware that it exists, it involves too much red tape and the chance of receiving it seems slight given the eligibility and deduction rules that apply. Thus, between 60 and 70 percent of those entitled to receive child supplement are not reached. By way of comparison, child benefit is easy to apply for, is paid reliably every month and is a means of assistance that families in Germany value and appreciate. Assistance for low-income families can be improved if the accuracy of child supplement is coupled with the simplicity of basic child benefit. A new benefit provided in the amount of their average subsistence needs could provide security for children in low-income families.

Because employment is the best and most sustainable safeguard against family poverty, it must be ensured that working more pays off for both parents – that more work means more available income for families even if it means that the increased amount of child benefit is reduced. This is why child benefit should be gradually withdrawn. And most importantly, the eligibility and accounting rules applied to a child's income must be changed to ensure that more single parents are reached. This could lift a great many children who are in need of support out of hidden child poverty.

The vast majority of people in Germany are in favour of the idea of child benefit that provides targeted support for low-income families: some 70 percent welcome the proposal to increase child benefit for families where parents' incomes are low (**Fig. 55**).

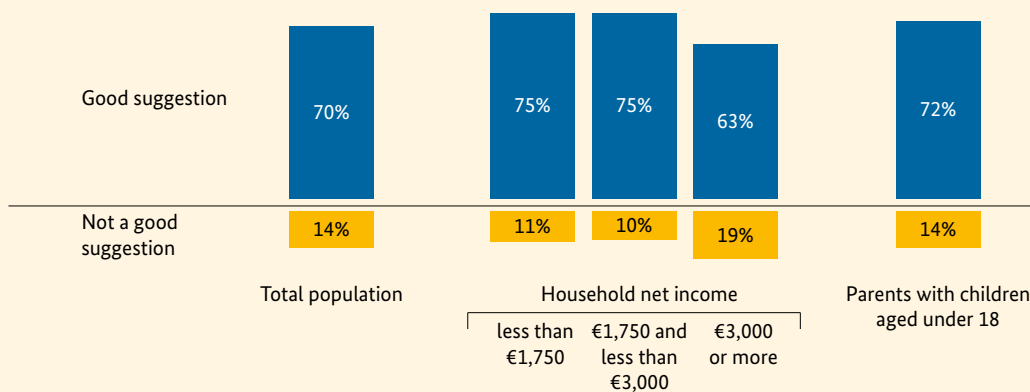
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91 Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 11058, July 2016.

Figure 55: People in Germany welcome the proposal to increase child benefit for families where parents' incomes are low

**More child benefit for low-income families?  
Majority in favour**

Question: "There is a suggestion that child benefit should be increased for families with low incomes. Do you generally find that a good suggestion or not a good suggestion?"



% short of 100: don't know/no response

Basis: Germany, population aged 16 and over.

Source: Allensbacher Archiv: IfD survey 11071, May 2017.

**Improved child education and integration through reliable, quality all-day childcare**

To give children the best-possible access to daycare, education and integration programmes, it is not only necessary to continue expanding pre-school facilities. There is also a need for reliable, quality all-day childcare for school-age children. It secures education and daycare for the children and enables their parents to better reconcile family and working life.

When the time comes for their child to start school, many parents are faced with a gap in their daycare options. This is because in Germany, daycare centres stay open in the afternoons whereas primary schools close at midday. While most pre-school children have an expanded half-day or all-day childcare place, primary school children have far fewer options when it comes to after-school supervision and care.

Against this backdrop it is clear that parents believe that expanding all-day childcare for primary school children is a key family policy task. Some 65 percent of parents with under-age children and as many as 76 percent of parents with children aged between six and ten say that this should be a focal point of German family policy.<sup>92</sup>

All-day services for school children are a prerequisite for optimal reconciliation of family and working life. They enable parents, and especially mothers, to go to work. Almost 60 percent of mothers with children aged two have a job. When children switch from pre-school to primary school, 35 percent of mothers who did not work until then go back to work if they have an after-school place for their primary school child. Without an after-school place, only 21 percent of

92 Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 11071, May 2017.



mothers return to work. After-school supervision also helps mothers who had worked prior to their child starting school to either maintain or improve their desired employment level.

In 2015, some 96,000 mothers with children aged between six and ten worked part-time because they had no daycare option for their child or were unable to afford one. One quarter of these were single parents, a group whose options are especially limited by the lack of daycare places.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to enabling better reconciliation of family and working life, all-day schools also have a positive effect on child development. Quality all-day school offerings can foster children's social behaviour, willingness to learn and self-image. And it has been shown that children from low-income families and families with migrant backgrounds benefit in particular from attending all-day schools or after-school clubs.<sup>94</sup>

Some 61 percent of children of primary school age are happy with this type of school, feel especially motivated and often feel they are valued and taken seriously.<sup>95</sup> All-day offerings meet the children's own ideas of how to spend their afternoons doing their homework and spending time with friends.

In general, quality all-day offerings also help to ensure that children receive the support and encouragement they need. They foster positive educational careers and, through a cooperative approach, can support parents as well.<sup>96</sup> A legal entitlement to all-day care with qualified homework supervision helps children receive equal access to education. Parents are not forced to reduce their working hours to look after a school-age child and families' risk of poverty is reduced because both parents earn. Teachers also believe that homework supervision is an important factor in providing equal opportunities for children: 74 percent of teachers and 83 percent of parents are in favour of homework supervision.<sup>97</sup>

To implement the legal entitlement it is necessary that all parents who need an all-day place receive an all-day place. According to research institute Prognos AG, to achieve this, another 280,000 places are needed solely for those children who are currently without a place. Added to this comes the additional need for all-day places for some 275,000 children who already attend after-school clubs.<sup>98</sup> Plus, if low-income families were exempted from paying all-day place fees, children's education and integration could be further improved.

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93 Source: Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung s16199\_6. Berechnung: Prognos AG.

94 Konsortium der Studie zur Entwicklung von Ganztagschulen (2016): Ganztagschule: Bildungsqualität und Wirkungen außerunterrichtlicher Angebote. Ergebnisse der Studie zur Entwicklung von Ganztagschulen 2012–2015; see also Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung (2016): Bildung in Deutschland 2016.

95 World Vision Institut (2013): Dritte World Vision Kinderstudie.

96 Bertram, Hans (2017): Offene Gesellschaft, Teilhabe und die Zukunft für Kinder.

97 IfD Allensbach (2013): Hindernis Herkunft. Eine Umfrage unter Schülern, Lehrern und Eltern zum Bildungsalltag in Deutschland. Im Auftrag der Vodafone Stiftung Deutschland.

98 Prognos AG (2017): Gute und verlässliche Ganztagsangebote für Grundschul Kinder (in publication).

## IV.

### Equal Sharing of Responsibility for Work and Family Life: Wishful Thinking and Reality

#### 4.1 Parental Allowance since 2007, Parental Allowance Plus since 2015: A paradigm shift

Some eight million people have claimed parental allowance since its introduction 10 years ago. It is one of the best-known family-related benefits: 91 percent of people in Germany have at least heard of it and 82 percent of recipients say that parental allowance is especially helpful in boosting the family income. Both family research and opinion polls say that parental allowance has quickly become symbolic of successful family policy that focuses on the realities and desires of young parents, which is what makes it so popular with them.

That parental allowance has fostered a change in values has been confirmed.<sup>99</sup> It is now a matter of course that many mothers only take a short break from work when they start a family. And many fathers who now reduce their working hours after the birth of a child are far more accepted than was previously the case. Mothers and fathers both want to spend time with their children, pursue their careers and take responsibility for earning the family income. Some 60 percent of parents with children under three say that it is best when the mother and the father both work to the same extent and both spend the same amount of time caring for the family and the home.<sup>100</sup>

#### **Trend towards equal partnership – study results**

A clear majority of young women and men want a partner who earns their own living.<sup>101</sup> And two-thirds of parents with children under six say that childcare should be equally shared.<sup>102</sup> Some 53 percent of people in Germany and 61 percent of families with children under 18 (see Chapter VIII) would like to see options for families where both parents want to work to the same extent. More than 80 percent of parents who would like to share responsibilities equally believe that family policy should support parents who want to work to the same extent and share childcare responsibilities equally.

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99 „10 Jahre Elterngeld – eine wichtige familienpolitische Maßnahme“ (DIW Wochenbericht 49/2016).

100 DIW Wochenbericht 2013.

101 WZB-Studie 2013.

102 IfD Allensbach, Weichenstellungen, 2015.

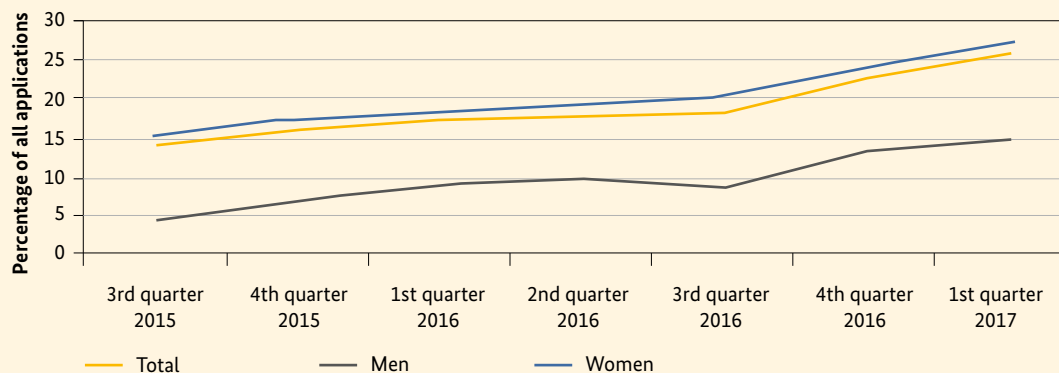
Against this backdrop, in the 18th electoral term, family policy took people’s desires for equal partnership seriously and helped mothers and fathers in Germany achieve better reconciliation of family and working life. This was done with the introduction of parental allowance plus, which also aids earlier return to work for both parents and, with the associated partnership bonus, targets parents who both want to work and take care of their children.

Take-up of the new parental allowance plus shows it is just as popular as parental allowance was when it was introduced. In 2016, of the 1.64 million recipients of basic parental allowance, 1.2 million parents had chosen to apply for the new parental allowance plus. Mothers in particular made wide use of the new benefit: one in five mothers (20.1 percent) opted for parental allowance plus, as did 17.4 percent of parental allowance recipients overall. Thuringia leads the field, with 26.9 percent in 2016 and 25.6 percent in the first quarter of 2017 – in some parts of Thuringia as many as 37 percent of parents opted for parental allowance plus.

Fathers especially appreciate the availability of the partnership bonus. As many as 47 percent of fathers who apply for parental allowance plus also opt for the partnership bonus. And fathers who claim parental allowance plus also claim basic parental allowance for longer periods of time (an average of 8.5 months, see above).

Since the introduction of parental allowance plus, the number of parents claiming the new benefit has almost doubled; the number of fathers claiming it has more than tripled.

**Figure 56: Parental allowance plus applications**



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt: Statistik zum Elterngeld – Leistungsbezüge. Own presentation: BMFSFJ.

People in Germany have come to see the need for state assistance to support couples who want to share their responsibilities equally. More than 80 percent are now in favour of state benefits for fathers. And some 53 percent of the population overall and 61 percent of parents with under-age children think that family policy should improve conditions for parents so that both parents can work.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 11056, May 2016.

The trend towards equal partnership in sharing responsibility for family and working life can also be seen among parents who separate or divorce: they both want to continue being responsible for their child or children and in many cases they want to do so together as a team.

The offerings now available to families in Germany are developing just as dynamically as the families themselves. These include expanded and better-quality daycare and provisions granting a legal entitlement to a daycare place, both of which have resulted in more widespread use of daycare for children under three – for many families, this is now a part of everyday life. Reliable, quality all-day childcare for school-age children would also help those parents who want to continue sharing responsibility for family and working life when the child for whom they claimed parental allowance goes to primary school.

## 4.2 More mothers in work since Parental Allowance introduced

For most mothers in Germany, combining work and family life is now a matter of course. More than three-quarters (79 percent) of women with children up to the age of six say they enjoy going to work or did so in the past and that it is important to have a job (75 percent).<sup>104</sup> Parental allowance has enabled mothers to have shorter breaks in employment and to work more between their children's births. Also, significantly more mothers with three or more children and larger numbers of single parents with small children are now returning to work earlier than has been the case in the past. In the longer term this means better opportunities in terms of pay and old-age pension, an especially important factor for people with low incomes. It can thus be said that parental allowance has a long-term effect in preventing poverty risk.

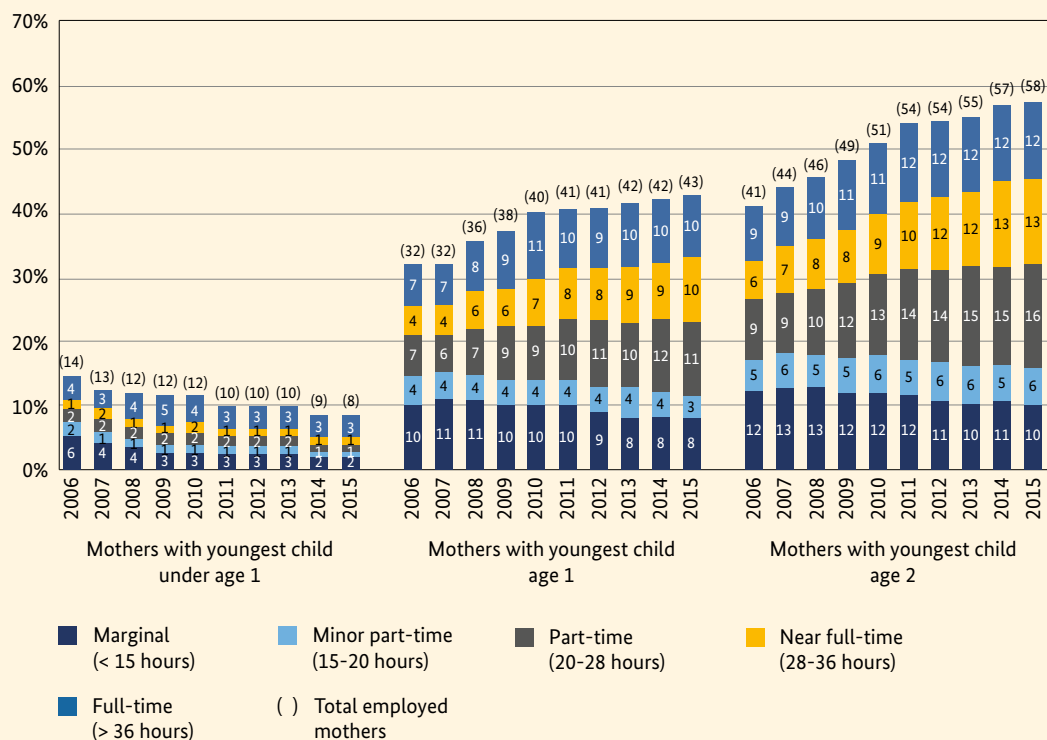
From 2006 to 2015, the number of mothers in work rose from 60 to 67 percent.<sup>105</sup> This increase is especially evident among mothers with children aged between one and two and between two and three (**Fig. 57**) – their numbers had risen to 43 and 58 percent respectively in 2015. This compares with only 32 and 41 percent in 2006. Also, the increase in the employment rate for these mothers is largely due to an increase in part-time jobs with medium to high working hours of between 20 and 36 hours per week. The number of mothers in full-time jobs has also risen slightly. By way of contrast, the number of mothers with children aged between one and two who work up to 20 hours per week dropped from 14 percent in 2006 to 11 percent in 2015.

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104 Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 11056, May 2016.

105 Berechnung Prognos AG auf Basis der Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung f203\_006.

Figure 57: Changes in employment of mothers between 2006 and 2015 by weekly hours worked and age of the youngest child up to age 2 (in %)



Source: Microcensus special analysis f203\_006; calculations: Prognos AG. Hours worked include normal weekly working hours including regular overtime. Any variation between employment rates and sum totals for hours worked is due to rounding.

In Germany, working mothers work an average 26 hours a week and there are clear differences between east and west: while mothers in western Germany work an average 24.5 hours per week, the average working week for those in eastern Germany is 32.5 hours.<sup>106</sup> And familiar patterns remain: well qualified mothers tend to work more in eastern Germany, with the number and age of their children still depending on the likelihood of the mother being able to work. At the same time, more mothers with small children, with three or more children and also single parents now have a job. Almost 30 percent of working mothers would like to work more than they actually do.<sup>107</sup>

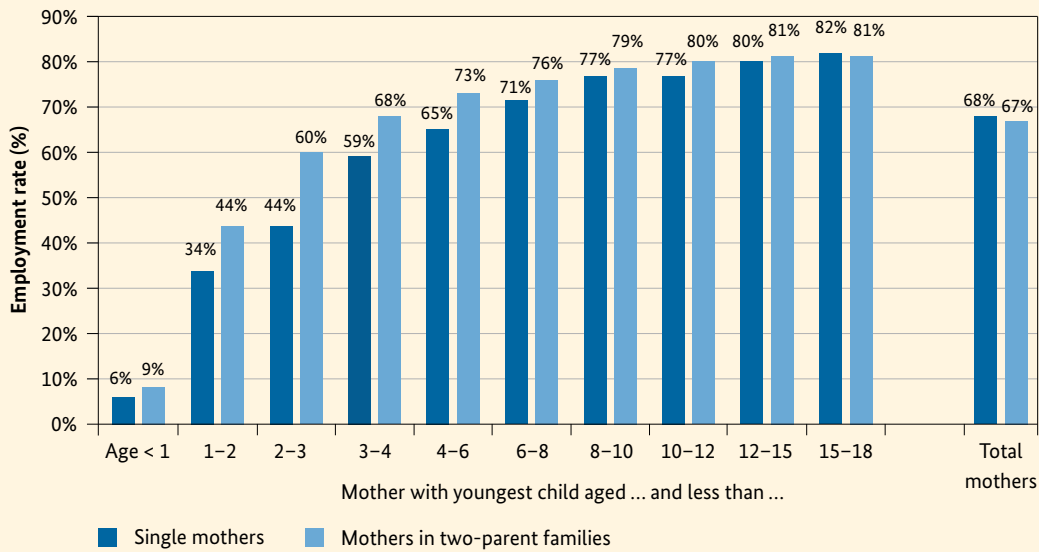
### 4.3 Single mothers who work

As with mothers in two-parent families, the number of single mothers who go out to work rises relative to the age of their youngest child: more than 44 percent of mothers with a youngest child aged between two and three years old said that they went to work. More than half of single mothers with children aged three-plus (nursery school age) are employed. And more than 71 percent of single mothers with children of school age (six and over) have a job (Fig. 58).

106 Quelle: Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung f203\_006. Berechnung: Prognos AG.

107 Destatis (2015): Zeitverwendungserhebung 2012/2013.

Figure 58: Employment rate (employment engaged in) among mothers by family form and age of youngest child (in %)



Source: Microcensus special analysis f203\_006; calculations: Prognos AG. Hours worked include normal weekly working hours including regular overtime.

Of the single mothers who have under-age children and a job, one-third work full-time (more than 36 hours) and 29 percent in longer part-time or close to full-time jobs, working between 28 and 36 hours per week. Some 28 percent work between 15 and 27 hours, and 10 percent are marginally employed, and working less than 15 hours a week on average.

The desire to go to work is greater among single mothers than among those in two-parent households<sup>108</sup> and more want to go to work than actually do. In 2015, one quarter of single mothers without a job and with children under 18 were looking for work. This compared with nine percent of mothers in two-parent households.<sup>109</sup> Almost half of single mothers said they would prefer to work part-time or would only work part-time.<sup>110</sup> Compared with mothers from two-parent families, a disproportionate number of single mothers want to work full-time. This is to avoid career-related disadvantages given that they are solely responsible for earning the family income. As a result, one in five single mothers who work say they would like to increase their working hours in order to earn more; only half of mothers from two-parent families say the same.<sup>111</sup>

Irrespective of their wishes and interests, most single mothers still experience difficulties in finding a suitable job. This is largely due not to the actual availability of jobs, but to the incompatibility of available jobs with single mothers' diverse family commitments (even those with children of school age). In particular, the discrepancy between the desire and the need to go to work – which is today often linked to expectations of flexibility and mobility (perhaps in the form of employer requirements) versus infrastructure that is perceived to be inflexible (as with

108 Sinus Sociovision (2013): Alleinerziehende in Deutschland: Fakten über einen Familienstand, unveröffentlichte Studie 2013, im Auftrag des BMFSFJ.

109 Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung s16199. Berechnung: Prognos AG.

110 Ibid.

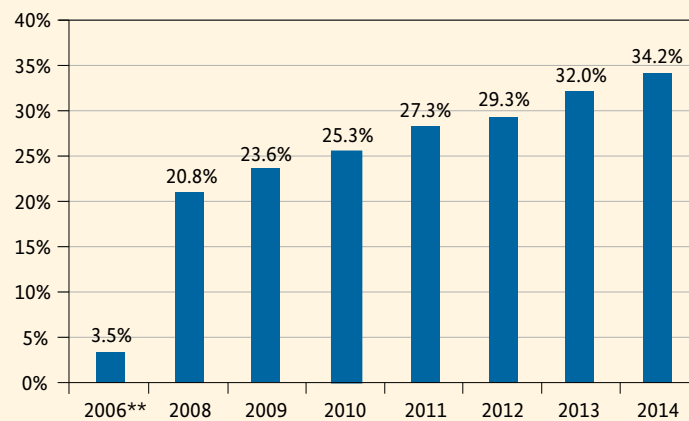
111 Ibid.

daycare opening times) – is seen as one of the main problems. Single mothers’ perceived poor employment opportunities go hand in hand with general financial insecurity.<sup>112</sup>

#### 4.4 Fathers want (more) family time

Parental allowance now enables more fathers to assume a more active role in the family. More and more fathers are reducing their working hours for a limited period or are taking a break from work to look after their child or children and enjoy more family time. Only a year after parental allowance was introduced, one in five fathers entitled to claim parental allowance (21 percent) did so; their numbers have been increasing ever since, with the national average reaching just over 34 percent in 2014 (Fig. 59). And that number has risen again, to 35.7 percent in the second quarter of 2015.<sup>113</sup>

Figure 59: Trends in fathers claiming parental allowance\*, 2008–2014 (in %)



\* Number of children born whose fathers received parental allowance by child's year of birth.

\*\* Percentage of men claiming benefit.

Data basis: Statistisches Bundesamt (2009–2016): Statistiken zum Elterngeld. Beendete Leistungsbezüge.

Fathers who claim parental allowance are shown to spend more time with their children and develop closer bonds with them. The latter applies to almost all fathers who have claimed parental allowance for at least three months. The effects of parental leave on fathers are proven to be lasting and to remain beyond the period of parental leave. On average, fathers who return to work after taking parental leave spend an hour longer with their children every day compared to before their period of parental leave. They also share family-related work more equally with their partner, even years later. Fathers who take parental leave are also shown to support their partners’ return to work. Among mothers whose partner is on parental leave, twice as many are employed during that time compared with mothers whose partners are not on parental leave.<sup>114</sup>

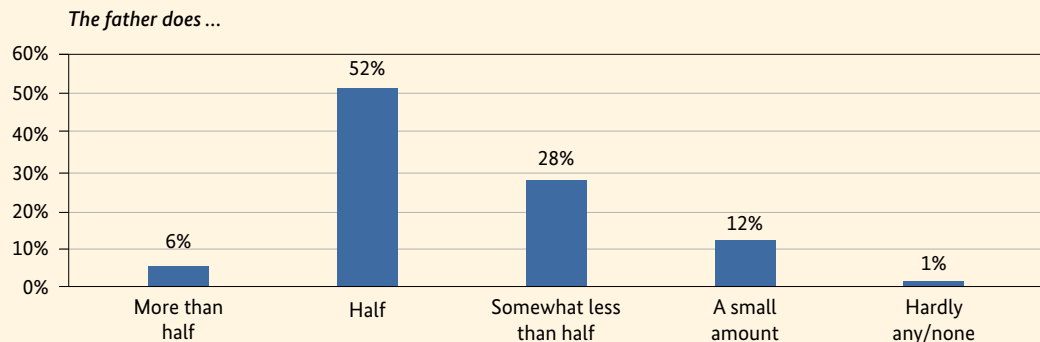
112 Sinus Sociovision (2013): Alleinerziehende in Deutschland: Fakten über einen Familienstand, unveröffentlichte Studie 2013, im Auftrag des BMFSFJ.

113 Statistisches Bundesamt: Väterbeteiligung beim Elterngeld steigt weiter an. Press release No. 054 dated 15.02.2017.

114 See BMFSFJ (2016): Väterreport 2016.

The desire among fathers to assume responsibility for looking after their children and performing family-related tasks has become something of a social trend. Significantly more than 50 percent of fathers would like to take on half or more than half of childcare responsibilities (Fig. 60). Some 79 percent of fathers would like to have more family time, many of them wanting to reduce their working hours as a result. More than half of fathers would like to spend less time going to work.<sup>115</sup>

Figure 60: Fathers' wishes on sharing of childcare



Source: Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2015).

In a survey of fathers with under-age children, one third said they would like to work part-time.<sup>116</sup> And even when asked to consider that a change in working hours would mean a change in the amount of money they earn, almost one in five fathers with children of pre-school age say they would like to work less. This applies largely to couples where the father works full-time and the mother is also employed.<sup>117</sup> Fathers who work full-time in Germany have comparatively longer working hours (see OECD 2016) and they especially want to reduce the amount of overtime they work. In 2016, some 46 percent of young fathers – twice as many as in 2015 – said they would like to reduce their working hours by as much as 20 percent (see BMFSFJ 2016: 2. Väter-Barometer).

People in Germany see the trend in fathers wanting to assume more responsibility for the family as a positive thing: 82 percent of those over 16 think it is good that more fathers are using the partnership months linked to parental allowance to reduce their working hours or take a longer break from work in order to stay at home and look after their children. Only eight percent rejected the idea.

Among parents with under-aged children, as many as 89 percent welcomed the trend: almost all mothers (97 percent) and 79 percent of fathers did. In 2016, only one percent of people born between 1973 and 1992 were against the idea of fathers taking parental leave. This shows that a social norm has been established in which it is acceptable for fathers to take parental leave.

<sup>115</sup> Väterreport 2016.

<sup>116</sup> Forsa (2013): Meinungen und Einstellungen der Väter in Deutschland, Berlin.

<sup>117</sup> DIW (2014): Ausgewählte Auswertungen zum Thema: Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie von Paaren mit nicht schulpflichtigen Kindern – unter spezifischer Berücksichtigung der Erwerbskonstellationen beider Partner, Berlin, p. 56 f.



## 4.5 Children want time with both parents

Children benefit from the attention of both parents. It strengthens family cohesion and family bonds. Also, it has been shown to have a positive effect on children's development if fathers play an active role in their upbringing and care, and if father and child are able to form a close bond. This can have a positive effect, for example, on a child's intellect, memory, problem-solving ability and also on speech development, school performance and ability to empathise.

In addition to the findings on how mothers and fathers want to use their time, studies also show that school-age children spend differing amounts of time with their mothers and fathers and many of them would like their situation to change.<sup>118</sup> While two-thirds of children are happy with the amount of time they spend with their mothers (64 percent), only one-third say the same with regard to their fathers (34 percent). Some 16 percent of children say they rarely spend time with their fathers, while only six percent say this in relation to their mothers. It is thus evident that children would often like to see their fathers work fewer hours than their mothers.<sup>119</sup>

Against the backdrop of previous findings, a recent study conducted by SowiTra on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs focused on children's experience of both parents working close to full-time and having the same or a similar amount of time to spend with the family at home.<sup>120</sup> The study shows that children think it is right if both parents work and if both work a similar number of hours. They also think that both parents should each assume half of the family responsibilities and half of the time they spend with their children. Most children are happy with their parents' current work arrangements and would like to be able to secure the same for themselves later in life. They benefit from the fact that they can choose between their mother and father depending on the activity concerned, are equally attached to both, feel they can approach both in matters of trust and do not perceive them as having any hard and fast roles.

Also, equal working arrangements bring benefits when it comes to organising parent-child time. Reducing a full-time working week by 10 or 20 percent makes a huge difference where school-age children are concerned. It means that at least one parent comes home one or two hours earlier in the afternoons. Even if it is only ever one parent who is present earlier in the afternoons, for the children it means a significant gain in time spent with a parent at an important time of the day. This does not, however, negate the need for institutional daycare services or membership of sports clubs or other activity groups during the afternoons.

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118 See Andresen/Hurrelmann (2013); Hurrelmann et al. (2014); Prokids (2011).

119 Prokids (2011).

120 BMFSFJ (2017): Partnerschaftliche Arbeitszeiten aus Kinder und Elternsicht. Monitor Familienforschung, Ausgabe 37. As part of this explorative study, quality interviews were conducted with 56 parents and 43 children.

The children would like their mothers and fathers to participate in their afternoon activities. The shorter full-time working week helps to ensure that they have sufficient time with their parents in the afternoon and that these are calmer and more relaxed when parent-child time begins. Thus, the vast majority of children attach equal importance to both their parents and see them equally as persons of trust.

For children and their everyday family life, it is not only the number of hours that their parents actually work, but also the quality of the time they spend at work that make it possible to have reliable, quality family time. Some children still say they would like to see a change when it comes to the number of hours that their parents work, especially when one parent (mostly the father) works long hours in a full-time job or works irregular hours on some days. Children whose father currently works slightly longer than their mother say they would like to see their father reduce his working hours to match the hours their mother works.

#### 4.6 Sharing responsibility after separation or divorce

Until now, a lack of reliable data has made it difficult to obtain empirical evidence regarding the wishes and needs of parents who separate or divorce. Against this backdrop, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs commissioned Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach with Germany's first detailed representative survey on separated parents' wishes and needs and on public perceptions of separated parents.<sup>121</sup>

According to the study, some 15 percent of separated parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, with both father and mother spending large amounts of time in doing so. Among these parents, 93 percent have good or very good experience with their childcare arrangements. On the whole, 51 percent of separated parents would like that their children spend half of their time or more or less the same amount of time with each parent. More than three-quarters of people in Germany believe it is best if a child is looked after by both parents after they separate (77 percent).

Many fathers say they would like to assume more responsibility for looking after their children than is currently the case, while many mothers would like to be able to pass more childcare responsibility to fathers (**Fig. 61**). Some 48 percent of separated fathers say that increasing their share of childcare and child provision would be ideal; by way of comparison, 42 percent of separated mothers would like to reduce their share.

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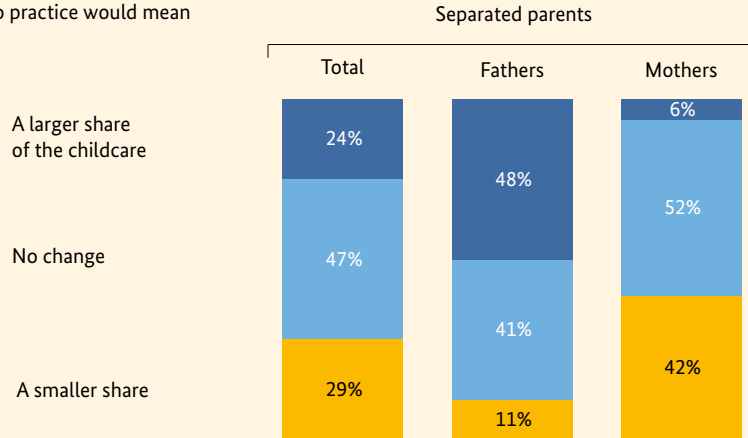
121 BMFSFJ (2017): Getrennt lebende Eltern wollen gemeinsam erziehen. Aktuelle Meldung, Zukunftsgespräch dated 11.07.2017.

**Figure 61: Wishes of separated parents on childcare**

Wishes on childcare: Many fathers would like to do more while many mothers would like to leave more to the father

What putting parents' ideal childcare arrangement into practice would mean compared with the current arrangement

Putting the ideal arrangements into practice would mean



Basis: Germany, parents with under-age children from past partnerships; specific responses on actual and ideal childcare arrangements.

Source: Allensbacher Archiv: IfD survey 7255 (2017).

Economic and legal conditions play an important role when it comes to shared parenting. Parental allowance, parental allowance plus and the partnership bonus are all available to help parents who separate. Nonetheless, 64 percent of separated parents say the state should do more to help parents who live apart: a large majority of mothers would like to see this, far outweighing the number of fathers (76 versus 58 percent). Only 17 percent think that state assistance for separated parents is adequate, while 19 percent are undecided.

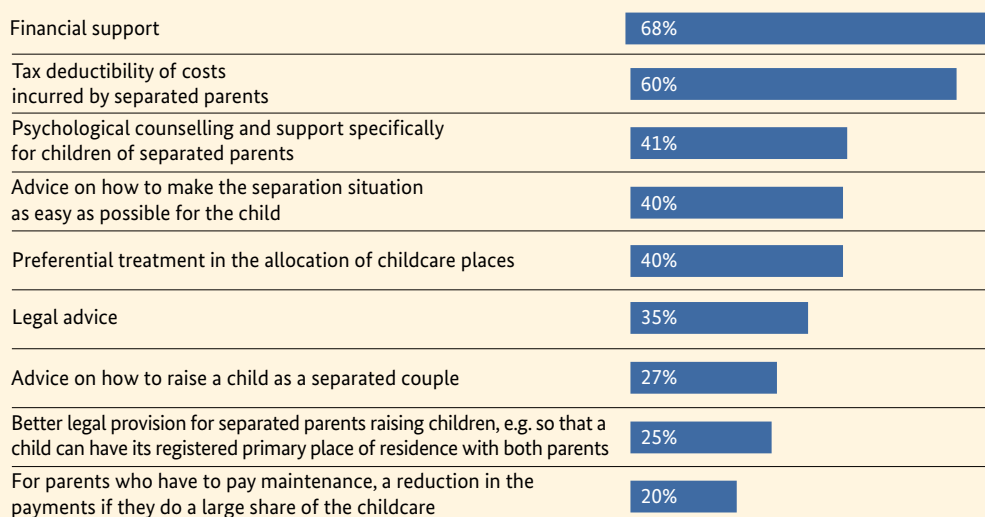
Those who would like to see more state support tend to associate this with increased financial assistance (68 percent) and better tax-free allowances in respect of the costs incurred by parents who separate (60 percent). Many also thought that psychological counselling and support for children of separated parents (41 percent) and also counselling for parents to give them coping mechanisms to help their child or children come to terms with the new situation (40 percent) were also attractive options (**Fig. 62**). Fathers especially would like their share of childcare to be taken into account in child maintenance law.

Figure 62: Support needs among separated parents

### Support needed

#### Separated parents who would like more support

##### Forms of support I find important:



Basis: Germany, parents with under-age children from past partnerships; specific responses on actual and ideal childcare arrangements.

Source: Allensbacher Archiv: IfD survey 7255 (2017).

It is especially notable that more than half (56 percent) of separated parents believe that the state does not sufficiently acknowledge their personal circumstances and the level of effort involved. Where family-related benefits are concerned, there is a continued need to keep an eye to the personal circumstances of these families and to further improve both social and legal conditions to enable couples to share family responsibilities even after they have separated.

## 4.7 From Parental Allowance Plus to family working time with family allowance

Shared working time arrangements where both parents work close to full-time – a model that many young parents would like – helps them distribute time for the family equally between themselves. This fosters closer bonds between the parents and their child or children, and also helps secure both parents' livelihoods, but more so that of mothers. With an average working week of 25 hours, only 28 percent of mothers with children aged between one and four are able to earn an income above the minimum subsistence level – this compares with 83 percent of fathers with children of the same age. In many cases, a reduction of the father's working hours is not an option because they would not earn enough to meet the family's needs.<sup>122</sup>

122 IfD Allensbach (2015): Weichenstellungen.

This is the aim behind the idea of family working time (Familienarbeitszeit) linked with an associated family allowance (Familiengeld). A family working time model with an associated family allowance is currently being developed to help parents of young children share their time in such a way that they both have equal amounts of time for their child or children, are able to pursue their careers and secure their personal livelihoods in the way that they see fit. The new model is designed to help parents, both mothers and fathers, take an equally pro-active role in work and family life by choosing arrangements to suit their specific needs. It will also improve mothers' earning potential, poverty prevention and old-age security, and give families the quality time they need.

The family working time and family allowance model, which was presented by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs in 2016, is already proving popular and great interest is being shown among the target group – parents with children under eight. Some 63 percent of those families say it is a good idea; among mothers that figure rises to 71 percent. The greatest acceptance is seen among the parents of tomorrow: of those who are currently childless but who would like to have a child, 75 percent say that family allowance is a good thing.<sup>123</sup>

#### 4.8 Equal partnership between parents in Germany and elsewhere

A country-to-country comparison shows that the situation for families in terms of their problems, the challenges they face, their wishes and desires are similar no matter where they live. In many countries, equal partnership between parents has become a key social trend. In its *Dare to Share – Germany's Experience Promoting Equal Partnership in Families* report, the OECD sets out the conditions needed for optimal reconciliation of family and working life, and shows the extent to which parents in various countries really share responsibility for family and work as equal partners.<sup>124</sup>

The study shows that in many countries, a growing number of people would like to see mothers and fathers share responsibility for work and family life equally. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that the traditional sole-earner model is becoming less and less accepted. In Germany and also in other countries such as Austria, Sweden, Finland, France and Spain, there has been a significant drop in the number of people who think that mothers should stay at home (**Fig. 63**). In Finland, France and Sweden, no more than two percent of the population believe that mothers of school-age children should not go to work. In Germany, the figure is similarly low in the east, but it still lies at just below six percent in the west.<sup>125</sup>

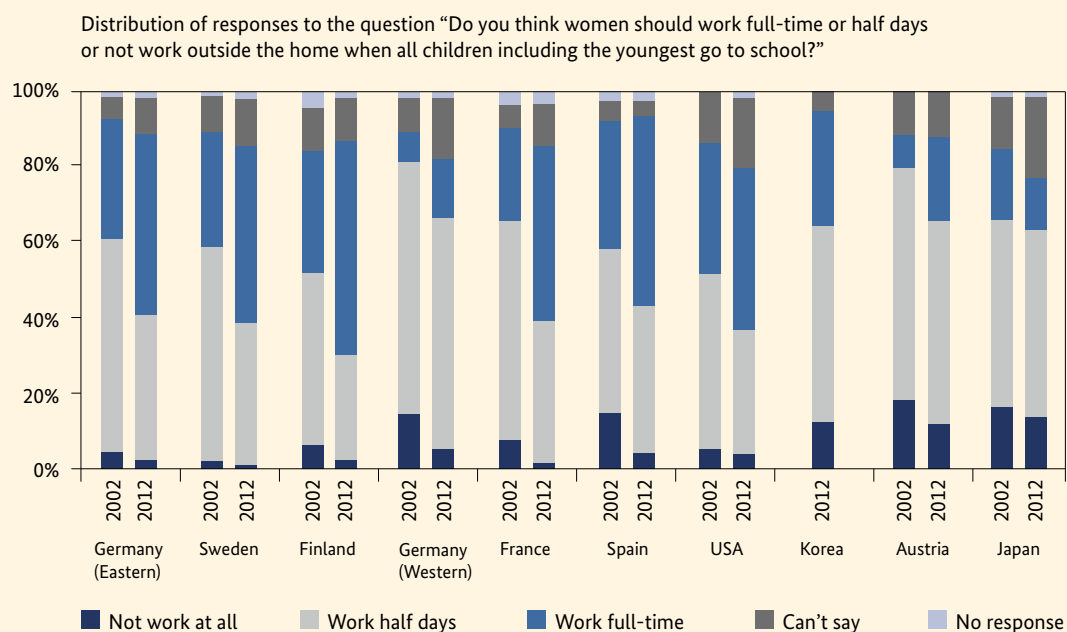
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123 Allensbach, August 2016.

124 OECD (2017): *Dare to Share – Deutschlands Weg zur Partnerschaftlichkeit in Familie und Beruf*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

125 OECD (2017): *Dare to Share – Deutschlands Weg zur Partnerschaftlichkeit in Familie und Beruf*, OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 64.

**Figure 63: Attitudes on mothers going to work: International comparison**



Source: OECD (2017)

At the same time, parents in many parts of Europe would like their partners to work less and spend more time with their family. In Germany in particular, mothers would like their partners to reduce the number of hours they work by almost six hours per week. But mothers in the Netherlands, Finland, France and Sweden would also like their partners to reduce their average working hours by four or more hours per week.<sup>126</sup>

In general, the OECD study says that Germany has made great progress in supporting working parents and acts as a role model when it comes to promoting equal partnership between mothers and fathers. With the expansion of its childcare infrastructure, the partnership months and the partner-based components of parental allowance plus, Germany has paved the way for parents to share responsibilities for family and work more equally as partners. Its public expenditure on small children has moved in the direction of the level seen in Sweden. For example, there are significantly more external daycare options available for children under three. The availability of affordable early childhood daycare and adequate non-school daycare offerings is vital for working parents. It makes sense to invest public funds in the ongoing promotion of education and childcare services. Investment in early childhood education pays in many ways, preventing subsequent costs to society later on.

<sup>126</sup> OECD (2017): Dare to Share – Deutschlands Weg zur Partnerschaftlichkeit in Familie und Beruf, OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 63.

The parental allowance and parental leave periods reserved exclusively for fathers encourage young parents to (continue to) share responsibilities equally as partners. The reforms introduced in relation to parental allowance in 2007 and parental allowance plus in 2014 are in line with international best practice and were an important step towards achieving a balance between women and men in terms of paid and unpaid work. Family working time can have positive effects for mothers and for fathers. The OECD estimates that 1.7 million people (or 4.3 percent of all people who work) could potentially make use of family working time and with only a negligible impact on available jobs.

How parents divide up responsibility for family and work between them also depends on the conditions offered by their employers. An international comparison shows that for the most part, companies in Germany have adopted family-friendly approaches. Germany, along with Austria, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, is one of the five countries in which with the highest number of companies offer flexible working hour arrangements. According to the OECD study, more than 90 percent offer flexitime and/or working time accounts.<sup>127</sup>

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127 OECD (2017): Dare to Share – Deutschlands Weg zur Partnerschaftlichkeit in Familie und Beruf, OECD Publishing, Paris, p. 118.

# V.

## NEW Balance in Reconciling Family and Working Life: Family-friendly Corporate Culture

### 5.1 Background

In today's world, reconciling family and working life is no longer just a matter of mothers trying to look after their children and also go to work. Against the backdrop of increasingly heterogeneous lifestyles, the shift in values among younger generations and the current shortage of skilled labour, innovative models for all are needed which reflect the realities of modern families: women and men, single parents, separate parents and those who care for dependent family members. Life-phase oriented work organisation is the key to future-focused family and labour policy that will help to secure much-needed skills. The *NEUE Vereinbarkeit* (NEW Balance in reconciling family and working life) initiative aims to modernise working culture to provide more family-focused organisation of work for women and for men in various phases of life, give employees more options and more scope in reconciling family and working life, and enable couples to share their responsibilities as equal partners. For this to happen, a balance must be achieved between ensuring company requirements are met and accommodating employees' needs.

Policymakers, employers and society have responded to these new challenges and have begun to pave the way. With a jointly developed memorandum on the NEW Balance in Reconciling Family and Working Life (*Memorandum Familie und Arbeitswelt – die NEUE Vereinbarkeit*) signed in autumn 2015, a new quality was added to the reconciling family and working life debate. In the memorandum, emphasis is placed on equal partnership in family and working life. In conjunction with the Federal Society of German Employer Associations (BDA), the German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK), the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (ZDH) and the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB), the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs agreed ten guiding principles for the NEW Balance approach. These principles focus on modernising work culture to enable family-conscious organisation of work. In many and diverse projects introduced since the memorandum was signed, the partners have helped to make family-friendly corporate and leadership culture an integral component of companies' human resources policies.

### 5.2 Corporate programme/competition

As early as in 2006, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs worked with Germany's top industry associations (BDA, DIHK, ZDH) and the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) to initiate the Success Factor Family (*Erfolgsfaktor Familie*) programme to promote a family-friendly working



world. As part of a sustainable, systematic process, the partners have since used a wide range of projects and activities to raise awareness to the positive effects of family-friendly human resources policy, both for employers and employees.

The programme provides best-practice examples, cost-benefit analyses and practice-related guidelines on human resources issues such as returning to work after a period of parental leave, introducing flexible work models and reconciling work with caring for dependent relatives at home. In a range of special events and specialist publications organised in conjunction with the industry partners, the economic and social benefits of family-friendly corporate culture are brought to the public's attention. The programme has a proven track record of helping family friendliness to be seen as a strategically important human resources issue in German business and industry.

With the first *Wirtschaftstag Familie* (Industry & Families Day) held on 28 June 2016, a further milestone was reached in the NEW Balance cooperation. With some 400 guests from business, government and administration, trade unions and industry associations, the partners looked at the progress made and the action areas that still need to be addressed. They also discussed innovative solutions, among them father-friendly human resources policy, opportunities for reconciling family and working life in the digital working world, and models for local-level cooperation between companies and partners.

As a best-practice example of the NEW Balance in reconciling family and working life, the winners of the Success Factor Family 2016 competition were announced. These are exemplary family-friendly businesses big and small from many different sectors. The practices adopted by the participating companies show how modern human resources policy can enable reconciliation of family and working life in companies whatever their size and whatever the sector they operate in. Among the winners were:

- The Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE): this university hospital runs a company crèche with opening times coordinated to coincide with staff shifts, offers some 250 different work time models and has a cross-ward pool of substitute nursing staff. It serves as a benchmark for family-conscious organisation of hospital-based work.
- The Stuttgart-based cable producer U.I. Lapp GmbH: this medium-sized, family-run company supports its employees with an innovative shift-swapping programme, an advisory workshop for employees who care for dependent family members and job-sharing models for managers.
- FingerHaus GmbH: at this family-run business which manufactures prefabricated houses, fathers who assemble the houses can opt to work a four-day week and are deployed close to home.

According to the experts involved in the Success Factor Family programme, the competition in 2016 showed that the quality of the measures used in introducing policies to promote reconciliation of family and working life have improved significantly compared with previous years. With their models and approaches, the six companies who received the award serve as role models and idea-givers for others wanting to adopt the NEW Balance approach and make it part of everyday working life for their managers and employees.

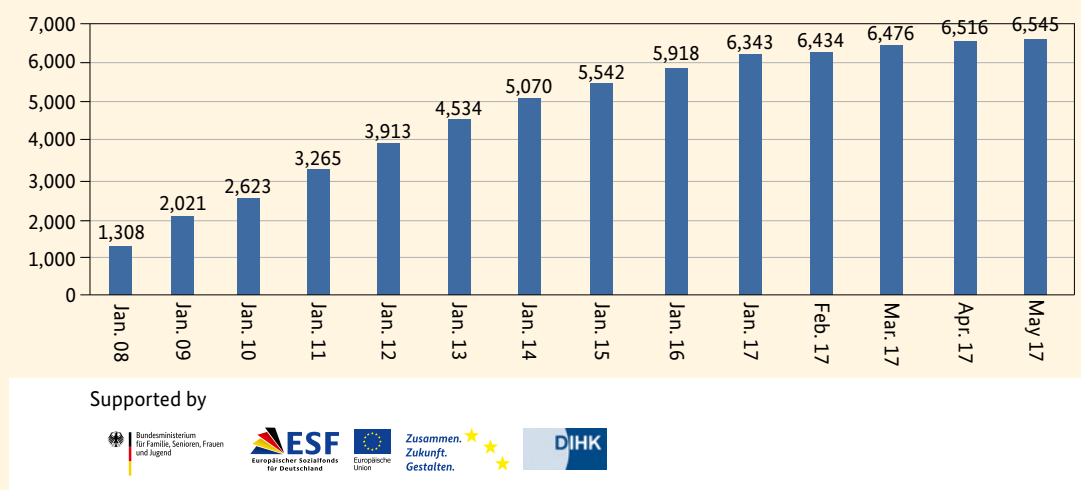
### 5.3 Success Factor Family programme

The Success Factor Family network jointly launched in 2006 by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs and the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce has become the country's largest corporate network providing employers with information and points of contact on the topic of reconciling family and working life. With membership currently at 6,550 (Fig. 64), the network offers members and other interested parties free information on matters relating to family-friendly human resources policy. These include the NEW Balance initiative for equal partnership in reconciling family and working life, family-friendly working arrangements, employer-subsidised childcare, reconciling work with caring for dependent relatives, and internal and external communication of the respective family-friendly corporate culture.

The Success Factor Family office regularly publishes best-practice examples and organises around 70 workshops, seminars and presentations every year to communicate strategies for use in implementing family-friendly provisions. With these offerings, the Success Factor Family network reached almost 12,000 business and industry stakeholders in 2015 and 2016. Special publications issued in cooperation with industry associations – for example, for the catering trade, care centres, the finance industry and crafts and trades – focus on the peculiarities of the sector involved and provide concrete examples for the implementation of more family-conscious provisions.

At the large-scale annual companies days and facilitators' events, network members are invited to exchange views and experience with representatives from industry and government regarding recent developments and current trends for improved reconciliation of family and working life in Germany.

Figure 64: Success Factor Family corporate network membership since 2007



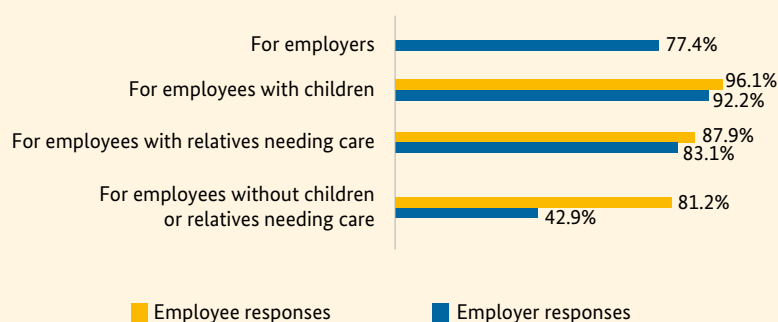
Source: Erfolgsfaktor Familie (Success Factor Family) network office.

## 5.4 Reality Check I: Employers

Looking at their offerings, employers in Germany have become much more family friendly.<sup>128</sup> About eight out of ten companies stress the importance of human resources policy that is sensitive to their employees' need to reconcile their family and working lives (**Fig. 65**). They see such policy as a key strategic tool with which to recruit, retain and motivate employees, and give them greater job satisfaction. A win-win situation has already been established, because this is the direction that employees wish to see employers take. That the rate of acceptance is higher among employees than among company management should be seen as a challenge: the available opportunities have not yet been exhausted and the results that are needed have not yet been achieved in every case. In the main, human resources managers tend to underestimate the importance attached to family-friendly policy by employees (still) without children and by those who do not (yet) care for a dependent family member. Only 43 percent of human resources managers see a need for their company to take action in this direction, while 87 percent of employees would like to see their employers become engaged in efforts to improve reconciliation of family and working life.

**Figure 65: Importance of family-friendly policies**

**Statement:** "Family-friendly policies in companies are important/somewhat important", yes answers (in %)



Source: Unternehmensmonitor Familienfreundlichkeit 2016, IW Köln, for BMFSFJ.

The survey of company managers and employers also shows that action is needed when it comes to corporate culture. Only when incentives and policies are not just announced by management, but are made an integral part of everyday working life, can the positive effects of optimal reconciliation of family and working life be experienced and enjoyed. There still appears to be a gap between how employers view their own approaches and attitudes and how their employees perceive them to be. While some 89 percent of managers say that equal development and promotion opportunities exist for employees with and without family commitments, only 68 percent of employees agree. The difference of a good 20 percentage points shows that there are some companies in which the shift in corporate culture has yet to be achieved.

Managers and supervisors play a key role in bringing the perceived family-friendly corporate culture into line with what employees would like to see. The findings of the survey show that

<sup>128</sup> BMFSFJ (2016): Unternehmensmonitor Familienfreundlichkeit.

managers' attitudes have a signal effect: those who encourage employees to make use of options to reconcile family and working life create a positive work environment. Employees look at an employer based on various aspects involved in reconciling family and working life, perceiving them to be more family friendly (by up to 60 percentage points more) if management promotes and supports the policy measures they put in place. Another finding of the survey shows that where male managers themselves make use of the family-friendly working arrangements on offer, for example by taking parental leave, the proportion of male employees who follow suit is five times as high as in companies where managers fail to play a pioneering role.

This indicates a clear need for action on the part of employers who want to adjust and enhance their family-conscious corporate cultures. They need to sensitise their managers and supervisors to the subject of reconciling family and working life, and give them the tools and skills they need to lead in a family-conscious way. The effort and investment pays off: in companies where family-consciousness is seen as a management task, job satisfaction among employees lies at an impressive 95 percent.

## 5.5 Reality Check II: The NEW Balance approach pays off

If an employer invests in the NEW Balance approach, it has a positive effect on company profitability. This is confirmed in a study on the potential return on investment in adopting the NEW Balance in reconciling family and working life.<sup>129</sup> It sets out the benefits to be had from introducing modern, family-conscious human resources policy and supplies data for use in estimating the returns on family-friendly investment.

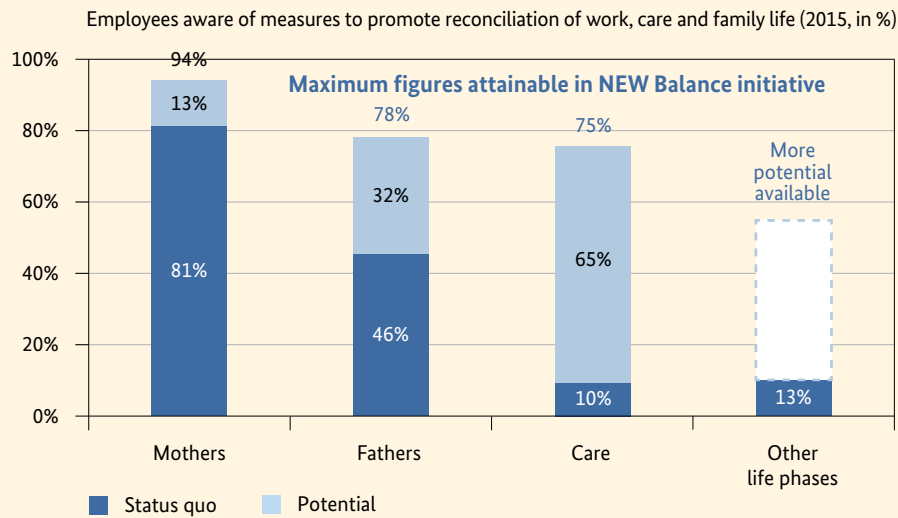
Traditional offerings for reconciliation of family and working life – such as part-time work, working from home and children's daycare services – yield returns of as much as 25 percent. Other effects include reduced absenteeism and employees returning to work faster after a family-related break.

By adopting the NEW Balance, companies can yield returns of up to 40 percent on family-friendly investments if, in addition to the traditional target group of mothers, they exploit the potential of other target groups such as fathers and employees with family members in need of care. Through targeted communication and by offering needs-based working models, a broader user base can be encouraged to consider taking up the family-friendly working arrangements on offer, thus increasing the economic potential of the policies in place.

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<sup>129</sup> BMFSFJ (2016): Renditepotenziale der NEUEN Vereinbarkeit.

Figure 66: Untapped potential for reconciliation of work, care and family life, 2015 (in %)



- I **Mothers** are the traditional target group and are already addressed
- II The NEW Balance initiative addresses both fathers and mothers – but so far only one in two **fathers** makes use of the related measures
- III Awareness of the needs of **carers and other target groups** is already there, but the **untapped potential** shows need for adjustment.

Source: Study: “Renditepotenziale der NEUEN Vereinbarkeit”, Roland Berger GmbH, for BMFSFJ (2016).

The NEW Balance is less about introducing a range of new measures and more about enhancing the quality of those already in place. Those measures must be tailored to the needs of employees and allow them the flexibility they need to coordinate their family and working lives. Reconciling family and working life must also become firmly embedded in corporate culture, with managers serving as role models by making use of the policies themselves.

## 5.6 Reality Check III: Desired working arrangements versus actual working time

More and more parents would like to be able to share responsibility for family and work equally as partners. Whether the goal of equal sharing can actually be achieved depends to a significant extent on employers: company policies greatly influence whether mothers and fathers with small children are able to share their responsibilities equally. When it comes to equal division of work between parents, working time models, the various ways in which they can be used and the career development options available to both parents all play an equally important role.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (2016): Warum nicht fifty-fifty? Betriebliche Rahmenbedingungen der Aufteilung von Erwerbs- und Fürsorgearbeit in Paarfamilien.

Equal partnership in families is more of an option when parents work for employers who link family friendliness with equal opportunity targets and allow both women and men to switch between full-time and part-time work without harming their careers. Some 20 percent of parents with small children in Germany currently work in companies that operate policies like this. Those companies are found in all sectors of business and industry and have employees with all levels of training and qualification. Although the challenges differ according to the sector involved, what counts is that employers are willing to embrace and implement family-friendly change.

Figure 67: Employer types

**STILL TOO FEW EMPLOYERS WITH ALL ROUND CULTURE OF RECONCILIATING WORK, CARE AND FAMILY**

Employer type	Family orientation	Modern male concept	Management example	Equal promotion opportunities	Workforce makeup
Progressive	■	■	■	■	23% mothers 16% fathers
Modern	■	■	■	■	26% mothers 21% fathers
Work comes first	■	■	■	■	18% mothers 17% fathers
Equal opportunity/ full-time oriented	■	■	■	■	15% mothers 21% fathers
Traditional	■	■	■	■	19% mothers 26% fathers

■ very high   
■ high   
■ medium   
■ low   
■ very low

Total over 100% due to rounding.

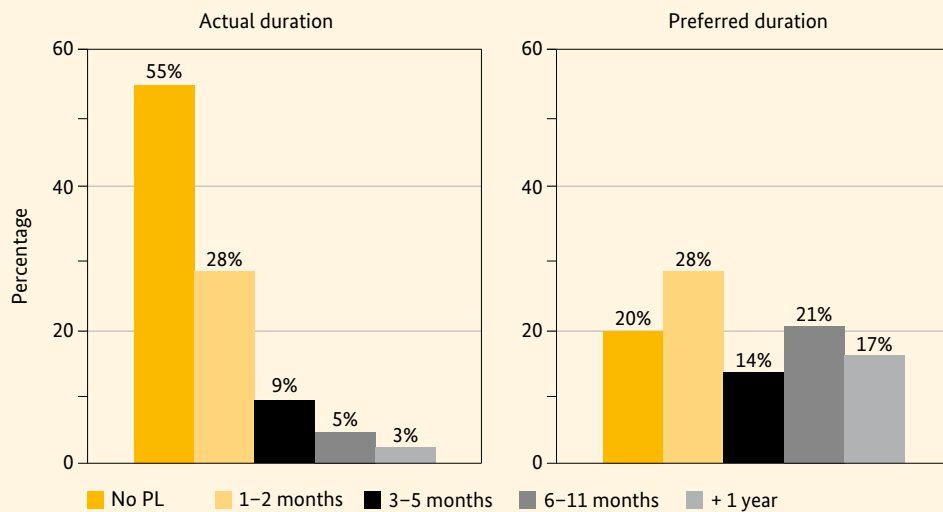
Source: WZB (2016).

To enable optimal reconciliation of family and working life, companies need a corporate culture that is family-conscious and equality-focused. They also need innovative solutions, the right leadership approach and modern staffing structures, with appropriate rules on replacement and substitution. Ideally, the policies in place will apply for all company employees.

**5.7 Reality Check IV: Fathers as drivers of workplace change**

Fathers in particular are unhappy with their current work arrangements and would like to work an average of 35 hours per week. If given the right to return to full-time work at a later date, they would reduce their working hours even further, to less than 35 hours a week. When it comes to parental leave, there is a considerable gap between what fathers would like to see for themselves and what they are actually able to achieve. While 83 percent have either taken no parental leave at all or only two months at the very most, more than half (52 percent) would like to have taken a period of leave lasting at least three months (Fig. 68).

Figure 68: Actual and preferred parental leave duration among fathers with children born 2007 or later



Note: Analysis sample comprises parents whose youngest child was born 2007 or later and where at least one parent is in gainful employment as an employee. The sample includes parents who took parental leave for their youngest child and were on parental or maternity leave at the time of the survey, parents who did not or did not want to take parental leave, and parents who planned to take parental leave for their youngest child. The composition of the sample explains differences relative to other statistics.

Source: Telephone survey of couples; N (actual duration) = 613; N (preferred duration) = 603, weighted data, WZB (2016).

The focus on fathers has really taken hold in companies in recent years.<sup>131</sup> More than 80 percent of human resources managers say that fathers now have a greater desire for more flexible working arrangements. Those managers expect that in the future, even more fathers will want to make use of options to reconcile family and working life. And for the most part, they associate ‘father-friendly’ human resources policy with economic advantage: they expect it to boost productivity and make their companies more attractive to male employees. Although most companies (69 percent) already have family-friendly measures in place, they still see room for improvement. Around two-thirds of companies are already looking for ways to offer “more individualised, flexible and also mobile working models” to the fathers they employ.<sup>132</sup>

131 This is shown in father-focused studies conducted by the Commerzbank in 2007 and 2015 on the needs of fathers and the challenges of and solutions for father-friendly human resources policy. Commerzbank (2015): Väter bei der Commerzbank. Ein Kulturwandel entsteht, Frankfurt.

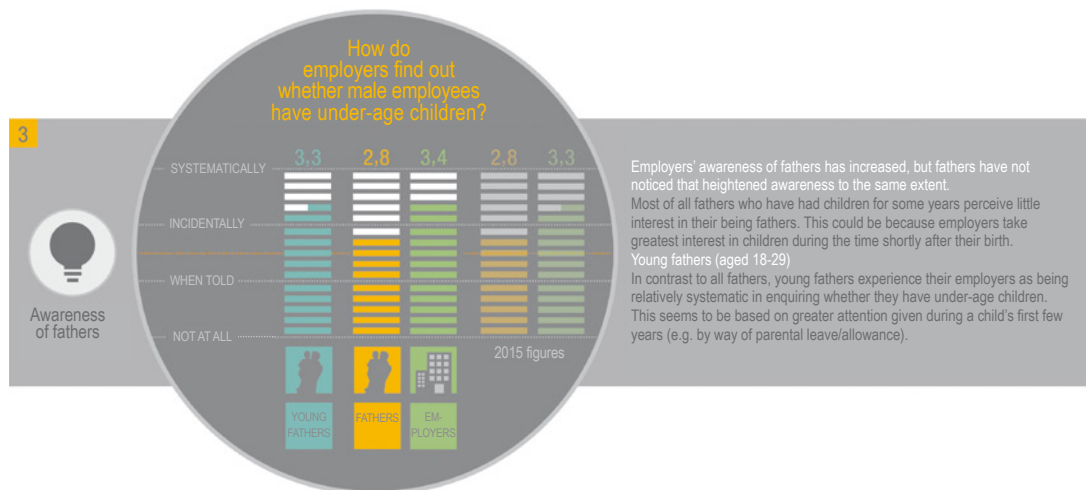
132 Erfolgsfaktor Familie (2014): Einschätzung von Personalverantwortlichen zur Väterorientierung in deutschen Unternehmen. Zentrale Ergebnisse einer Befragung zur strategischen Bedeutung und Entwicklungstrends der Väterförderung, Berlin. Basis: gemeinsame Onlinebefragung des Bundesverbands der Personalmanager (BPM) und des Bundesministeriums für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend von 1.737 Personalverantwortlichen aus Unternehmen verschiedener Branchen und aller Größen.

That much is being done with regard to fathers in the working world is confirmed by the results of the Fathers Barometer (Väter-Barometer) survey.<sup>133</sup> When developing the first Fathers Barometer in 2015, human resources managers were asked about the degree of acceptance within their companies for the growing number of fathers who want to spend more time at home with their families, even if it means they spend less time at work. The survey showed that human resources managers tend to perceive their employer's corporate culture as more father-friendly than fathers do themselves. Many fathers feel that employers are not fully in favour of their increased desire to be more involved in family life.

In 2016, the second Fathers Barometer<sup>134</sup> highlighted a remarkable trend: among young fathers aged 18 to 29, the desire for a reduced working week in favour of additional family time has increased significantly. Seven out of ten respondents say it is an arrangement that they would like for themselves. In this age group, the desire for close to full-time part-time work is especially high. Since 2015, the proportion of young fathers wanting to reduce their working week by as much as 20 percent has doubled, to 46 percent.

Also, young fathers tend to perceive their employer's corporate culture as more father-friendly than do fathers overall (Fig. 69). They believe their employer has a greater systematic interest in them as individuals and in their role as fathers, and feel they are better addressed through corporate communications compared with fathers overall. This shows that in recent times, employers have become more sensitive to fathers' specific needs and that this especially benefits men who have recently become fathers.

Figure 69: Young fathers feel better informed than older fathers



Source: Väter-Barometer (2016). Responses on a scale from 1 (do not agree at all) to 4 (wholly agree).

133 For the 1st Fathers Barometer, conducted for the Success Factor Family programme run by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, in June and July 2015 GfK conducted a representative survey of 1,000 permanently employed fathers of under-age children and 300 employers across all sectors and company sizes.

134 For the 2nd Fathers Barometer, the above mentioned survey was repeated in August 2016.



The Second Fathers Barometer shows that employers in Germany have a more realistic attitude to their family-friendly policies than they did in 2015. The companies surveyed have recognised that ‘traditional’ models for reconciling family and working life (such as part-time work) do not really address fathers’ needs in an adequate way and are thus starting to offer more individualised options such as flexible working hours, flexible management models and mobile office arrangements for working from home. As things stand, one in four companies is planning to introduce flexible working models.

Their plans tend, however, to focus on young employees or fathers with young children. Where older fathers with older children are concerned, there are still gaps to be filled when it comes to father-friendly communication and policy. In particular, a culture is needed where fathers’ family-related engagement is accepted and where fathers can make use of family-friendly options without having to worry about it harming their careers.

If employers work to serve fathers’ wishes and needs, it pays off in business terms. Such policy measures tend to alleviate parents’ time management problems, foster corporate identity and lessen employees’ readiness to leave their jobs. In family-unfriendly companies, some 70 percent of fathers have problems in managing time between family and work. And in those family-unfriendly companies, more than 80 percent of fathers are planning to change their employer and leave.<sup>135</sup>

## 5.8 Achievements so far: The Progress Index 2017

When it comes to family-friendliness, a lot has happened in recent years. Reconciliation of family and working life has improved and Germany’s working environment has become more family-conscious – not least due to the cooperative approaches adopted by policymakers, industry and the unions.

Today, one in three fathers claims parental allowance – in some regions as many as one in two. This is a bonus for industry because these fathers help their partners to return to work earlier after the birth of their child.

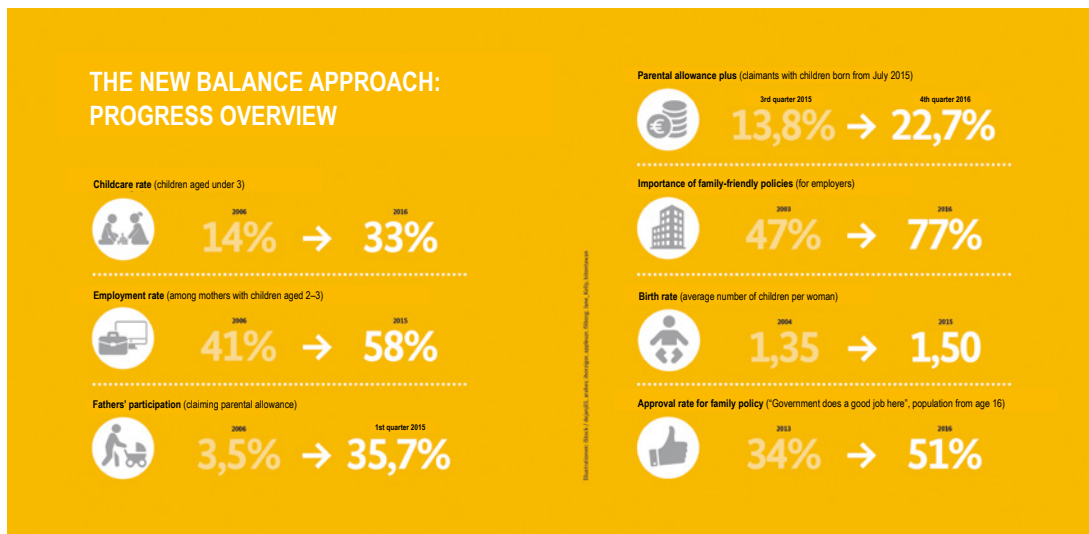
From 2006 to 2015, the number of working women with children aged between two and three rose by 17 percent. There has also been a considerable rise in the number of companies that believe family-friendly policies are important, from 47 percent in 2003 to 77 percent in 2016. And as shown in the Progress Index 2017, many companies have developed their standardised family-friendly measures even further, turning them into individualised and innovative working models.<sup>136</sup>

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135 WZB (2016).

136 BMFSFJ: Fortschrittsindex 2017.

Figure 70: NEW Balance approach: Progress overview



But despite the progress made so far, there remains a need for action. Even with the expanded daycare services, the available places do not cover the demand from parents who work. This is especially the case regarding after-school places for children in primary schools. And in the working world, reconciliation of family and working life can only be achieved if family-friendly policies are made an integral part of everyday company life. There are still many employers who perceive their own ideas of family-friendliness far differently to the way in which they are seen by their employees. The task at hand, therefore, is to ensure that this gap is closed.

# VI.

## Families and the Digital Society: A Development Issue

### 6.1 Digitalisation continues apace

There is hardly a comparable process that has transformed society to the extent seen and experienced with digitalisation. While smartphones were a technological innovation just ten years ago, around two-thirds of people in Germany use them today – among people under 50, as many as 80 percent.

The digital transformation that is changing the working world is by no means complete. The Internet of Things, meaning machines and devices of all kinds which are connected via the internet, is advancing at a rapid pace. There are now digital refrigerators that can go online and order replacement food by themselves, intelligent heating systems that regulate room temperatures after checking the traffic reports and calculating how long it will take for us to get home, robot vacuum cleaners that keep the house clean while we are away, and alarm clocks that analyse our sleep patterns and wake us up gently in our lightest sleep phase. For many people these have all become a part of everyday life. They use digital technology to organise their lives and to cope with the challenges that digitalisation brings. Where families are concerned, digitalisation can also mean that they have more time. They can use digital devices to save time travelling to and from work, in organizing and cleaning their homes, coordinating leisure time, engaging in voluntary work, completing paid work and work required for college, university or school.

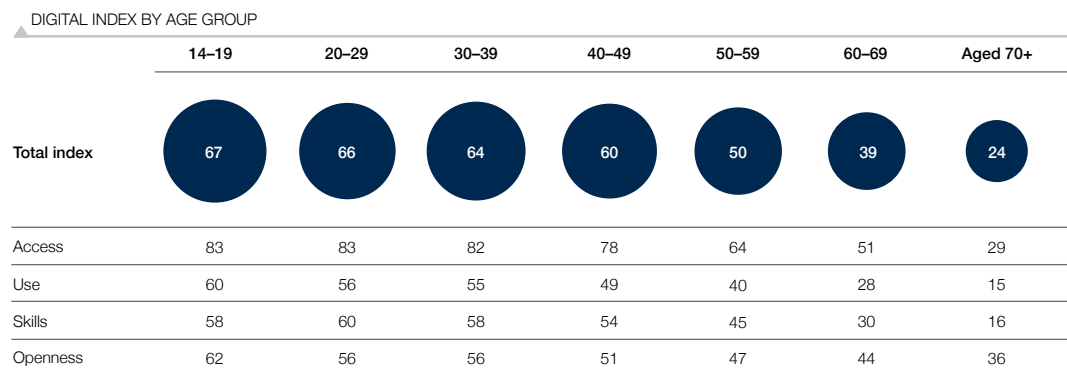
### 6.2 New challenges ahead

Digitalisation also brings risks and obligations. When it comes to access to the internet and digital technology, there are still gaps that need to be filled. For the most part, fast broadband internet connections are still limited to towns and cities, and they can sometimes be expensive. The older people are, the more their digital devices and their digital skills are dependent on whether or not they have a job. Older people still spend less time online than younger people. But far more important than actual access to digital technology is how people use it and the skills they have to do so. People with differing social backgrounds, levels of education, available resources and genders use the internet and digital media in different ways. Social inequality and social disadvantage can be both amplified and increased by digitalisation.

Added to this comes the pressure involved with the digital shift. Many people feel uncomfortable and are disturbed by expectations for constant availability. Rapid development of new digital

tools means that people have to try and keep pace in learning to use new technologies and can become overwhelmed as a result. Added to this are the vast opportunities and risks involved, such as in collecting and analysing huge amounts of data (big data). In the course of these fast-pace changes, trying to keep on top of things, grasp opportunities and safeguard oneself (while neither withdrawing from nor making oneself vulnerable to the online world) is one of the biggest challenges of our times – for families, for companies and for the state.

**Figure 71: Digital index by age group**



**BASIS** Age 14-19: n=82 (small case numbers); age 20-29: n=149; age 30-39: n=278; age 40-49: n=463; age 50-59: n=681; age 60-69: n=511; age 70+: n=413



D21 Digital Index 2016, a study by Initiative D21 conducted by Kantar TNS, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence.

Source: Initiative D21

### 6.3 Families at the core of digitalisation

It is in families in particular that the varying impacts of digitalisation meet. Parents of children face the difficult task of helping their offspring in learning to use online media sensibly and safely. Children are now using digital media at an ever-younger age and teenagers bring their matter-of-fact attitude to online life, the latest apps and the opportunity to use digital environments that are largely inaccessible for grown-ups into the midst of the family home. Flexibilisation of work means more free time and better reconciliation of family and working life. This in turn calls for more planning and better coordination. Older family members have no choice but to embrace digital media. Grandparents are integrated into childcare and family life in much the same way that they are connected to an online news group.

In today's world, the issue is no longer whether people are online, but how. Digitalisation can be a huge source of opportunity, especially for families. The conditions that enable them to grasp that opportunity are created by the state. Shaping digitalisation to secure a liveable, family-friendly, democratic society calls for the pro-active and reflective efforts of all citizens and social groups: policymakers, employers, associations and civil society groups. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs sees its role in proactively helping to drive digitalisation through social policy to ensure the integration of interest groups and citizens, making them members

of the digital society and providing them with the support they need to secure their place and their participation in the digital world.

At a specialist conference on the Digital Agenda for Liveable Society (*Digitale Agenda für eine lebenswerte Gesellschaft*) held at the end of June, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs met with representatives from various civil society groups to discuss the concrete measures needed to achieve this digitalisation goal. The basis for the discussion was provided by an impulse paper containing a ten-point plan, setting out the need for action in digital government and administration, reconciliation of family and working life, integration into the digital society (including for older people), digital competence and skills, aiding the development of family-friendly applications, diversity and equality in the digital economy, and promotion of digital research.

## 6.4 Digital society and its effects on family life

There are many and varied ways in which the digital working world affects family life. Employees often report that digitalisation of the workplace means more work and more stress, both of which can negatively affect family life. Thus, what counts is how people approach and embrace the digital shift. In many jobs, it allows more flexibility and freedom in terms of place and time. Wise utilisation of the time saved and of the planning freedom that digitalisation brings could well be the biggest 'digital' benefit for families.

A large number of studies have now been conducted on the benefits, pitfalls, opportunities and challenges involved in the digital, mobile, flexible working world. But there are few that have looked at these areas in relation to family life. A study on Digitalisation: Opportunities and Challenges for Equal Partnership in Reconciling Family and Working Life (*Digitalisierung – Chancen und Herausforderungen für die partnerschaftliche Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf*) conducted on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs attempts to fill these gaps.<sup>137</sup>

Around one-third of working parents with under-age children say that they would like, at least on occasion, to use digital devices and the internet to be able to work from home. Only around six percent actually do. But working from home can play an important role in helping parents reconcile family and working life. The Ministry study shows that in many cases, families can benefit from mobile arrangements in which parents are afforded flexible working hours. Only one-third of parents who are not able to work from home say that they are able to reconcile family and working life in a way that adequately meets their needs. This compares with some 85 percent of parents who use a computer and the internet to (also) work from home. By working from home, parents have more scope and flexibility in meeting their family-related commitments and can spend more time with their children.

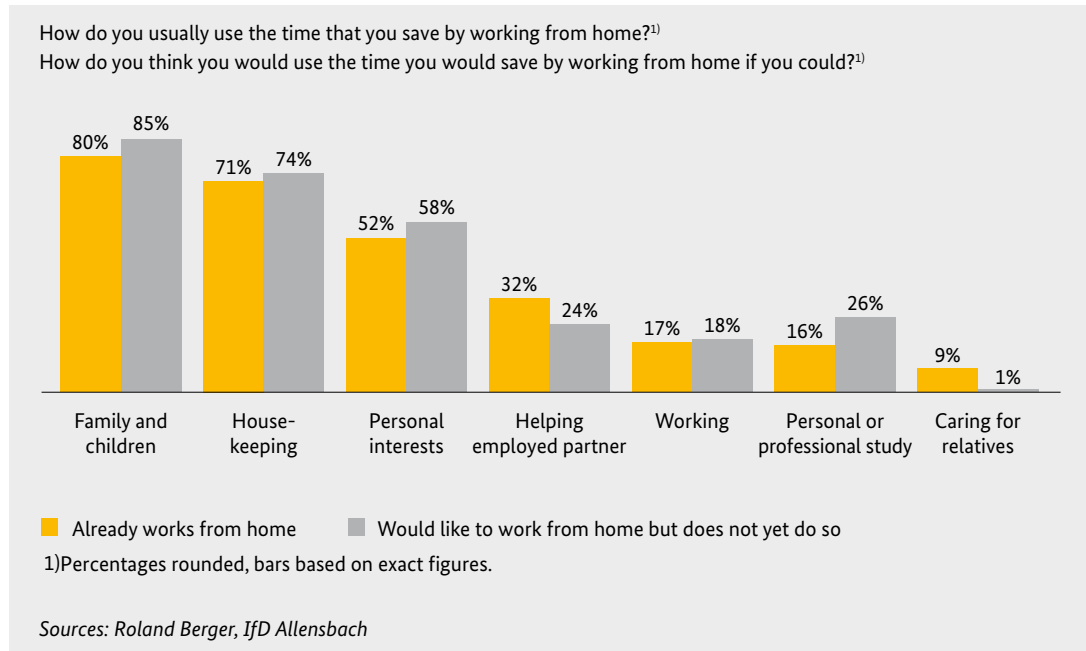
Working from home saves parents time, especially when it comes to travelling back and forth to work: time saved amounts to an average 4.4 hours. This is time largely spent with the family and children. Some 80 percent of parents use it as family time, 75 percent for managing the household and one-third to help their partners pursue their careers (**Fig. 72**). Apart from time saved,

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<sup>137</sup> Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (BMFSFJ) (Hrsg.): Digitalisierung – Chancen und Herausforderungen für die partnerschaftliche Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf, Berlin 2016.

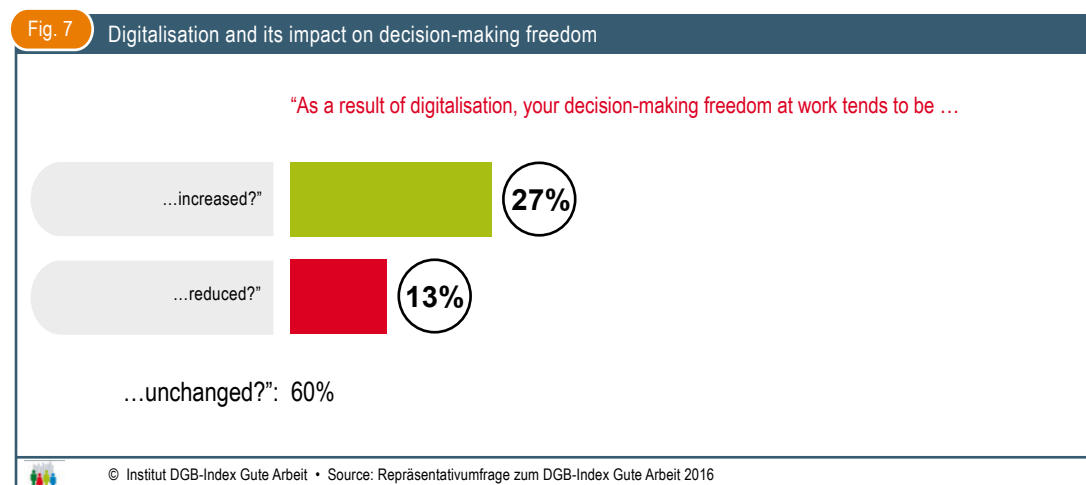
the benefit of being able to plan time flexibly plays an important role. More than three-quarters of parents with under-age children see it as an advantage. They are able to better meet their children's needs, respond to unexpected events and situations, and can tend to private matters in between.

**Figure 72: How employees use time saved by working from home**



But digitalisation of the working world can also have its downsides. Employees report that their workload intensifies or grows, but that they also have considerably greater scope when it comes to making decisions. For working parents with experience of working from home, the impact is clear: more than 90 percent say that it aids reconciliation of family and working life. Thus, parents' experience with this working model far outweighs the expectations of parents who only wish that they could work from home.

**Figure 73: Digitalisation and its impact on decision-making freedom**



Source: Institut DGB-Index Gute Arbeit (2016): DGB-Index Gute Arbeit. Der Report 2016. Wie die Beschäftigten die Arbeitsbedingungen in Deutschland beurteilen.

But parents do not see working from home as the sole solution. If well organised, occasional periods spent working from home can serve to improve reconciliation of family and working life. It should not, however, be seen as a substitute for regular working hours and it cannot replace face-to-face contact with colleagues at work. Flexible working arrangements can, however, be a tool to aid an earlier and more intensive return to work.

## 6.5 Digitalisation in reconciling family and working life

Employers' attitudes are the biggest obstacle to broader use of technology-supported, mobile, flexible work organisation. Studies show that employee-side demand is greater than employer-side supply. While small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in particular are observing the digital shift, they have no plans to expand in the same direction right now. More than half of working parents shy away from working from home because it is not the done thing in the companies where they work (54 percent). Employees also cite reasons such as technological barriers in accessing company networks, security concerns and employers' scepticism with regard to them adhering to the rules on working hours. Employers also say that they are worried about the effects it could have on employees.

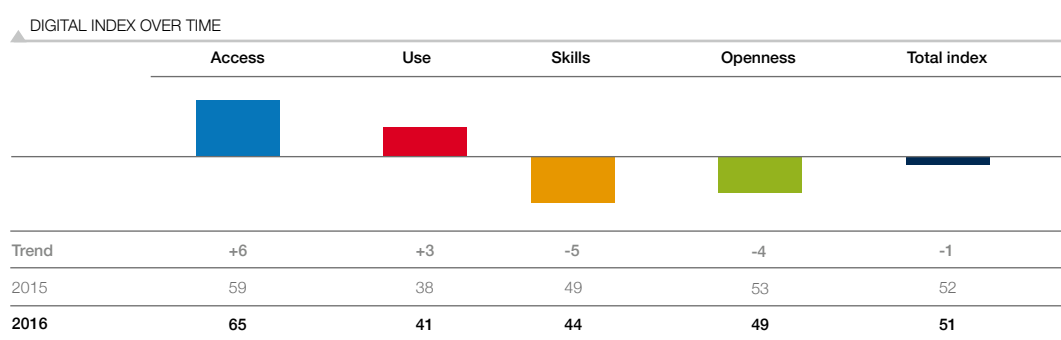
While employers fear a blurring of work-related boundaries, this is not an issue for parents. Only 16 percent say it is the reason why they prefer not to increase their working hours. The task at hand is thus to allay the fears of all concerned, communicate best-practice examples and use them as a basis for constructive agreements and rules. Flexibilisation of work can result in more work and also in over-work. But, as seen with parents who work from home and have under-age children, flexible arrangements can help to improve reconciliation of family and working life. There are benefits all round: parents no longer have to choose between equal partnership in organising family, work and leisure time on the one hand, and developing a new career path on the other. Companies gain from employees who are more satisfied in their jobs, who return to work earlier after having a child and want alternatives to marginal employment. Children and teenagers have more from their parents, especially in the important hours between getting home from school in the afternoon and settling down for the night.

In shaping reconciliation of family and working life, it is clear that the potential offered by digitalisation can only be realised if all concerned reach clear agreements and cooperate with one another well. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs has thus decided to lead by example and introduce a works agreement making mobile, flexible working arrangements possible for almost all employees. To ensure its success, it is vital that employees reach clear agreements within their teams, that they receive resilience training and that they are guaranteed the right not to be available or disturbed.

## 6.6 Achieving the digital shift by promoting families' digital skills

Digitalisation has taken hold in all areas of life. The way in which people respond to the digital shift thus plays an increasingly important role. Digital competence and skills are vital assets in life as we know it today. They are the key to achieving successful education and employment biographies, are indispensable in safeguarding and securing one's private sphere and independence, and a prerequisite in embracing technologies and applications to make our lives better rather than us feeling inadequate and exposed. But acquiring the knowledge and skills needed is not always easy. Studies show that people in all areas of life would like to see better and increased provision of training and help. Employees would like to receive more support, even in using the technologies they need for their daily work.<sup>138</sup> If skills are lacking, risks cannot be recognised and opportunities can be missed. It is thus worrying that although the latest D21 Digital Index indicates a slight improvement in access and use of digital media compared with the previous year, it also shows a decline in the areas of acceptance, competence and skills.<sup>139</sup>

Figure 74: Digital Index over time



D21 Digital Index 2016, a study by Initiative D21 conducted by Kantar TNS, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence.

Source: Initiative D21.

Families are where a wide range of different media worlds meet and sometimes clash. Not only do parents have to try to keep pace with the latest digital media trends, they also have to find ways to guide and support their children as they enter and explore the digital world. To do this, they need to look at and reflect critically on their own online usage and habits. And while they need to assume responsibility and act as role models, they cannot be expected to know or be able to do everything where digital media are concerned. So how can parents find a balance between assuming responsibility for their children's promotion, participation and protection and striving to establish a relationship of trust? Where do the boundaries lie between children's and teenager's digital self-determination and independence, and their safety and protection,

138 Initiative D21 e. V. (2016): D21-Digital-Index 2016: Jährliches Lagebild zur digitalen Gesellschaft. Eine Studie der Initiative D21, durchgeführt von TNS Infratest.

139 Ibid.



particularly during their development phase? And how can parents find answers to these questions when the ways in which children and teenagers use online media now differ so greatly from those of older generations, when they change at a far more rapid pace and when children and teenagers often start following new digital trends much earlier than their parents?

This complex family mesh of mutual responsibility and communicating knowledge and skills highlights the extent to which digitalisation is changing society. It also shows why families are the key arena in which to adopt an holistic approach to strengthening digital competence and skill. Every member of the family needs support in acquiring the digital skills they need. But with the different levels and types of experience within the family as a whole, strengths and weaknesses become clear. If families' knowledge and skills in using different types of digital media can be improved, then not only will family life itself be enhanced – in turn, the degree of participation and self-determination for each of the family members will also improve in other areas of life.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs has thus developed the Family Laboratories (*Familien-Labore*) project. With support from experienced mentors, children, parents and grandparents attend full-day workshops to work together to develop digital tools and creative approaches, and come up with new ideas and technical solutions to either improve family life in general or aid reconciliation of family, working life and school. Positive experience of digital technologies and the feeling of self-efficacy are the main focus of the workshop programme. Knowledge acquired about how things work and how they can be used can help to allay fears and reservations, promote dialogue and encourage parents to keep up with their children in digital terms.

## 6.7 Diversity in shaping the digital world

In many cases, the euphoria seen in the early days of the internet was followed by scepticism and disillusionment. In addition to the hope that by removing barriers to access and 'freeing up' information, the internet could make a significant contribution to achieving equality and justice and promoting free speech and democracy, came the observation that negative developments were also a possibility: greater exclusion, filter bubbles, hate speech, misinformation, monitoring and control. Looked at in terms of its social policy dimension, digitalisation is not some self-perpetuating force that fosters a world that is more peaceful, just and free. It merely supplies a set of tools and altered conditions – how we as a society use them is left entirely up to us.

Strengthening social cohesion is thus of vital importance. Voluntary work and civil engagement play an important role in keeping society together, including in families. Numerous initiatives, associations and clubs shape both society and everyday life in many and varied ways. Sometimes the aim is to respond to a specific problem, as in the case of self-organised children's daycare (*Kinderladen*) or in refugee aid and integration. At others, the focus is on organising recreational programmes, such as in youth associations and sport. And often, the aim is simply to do good, as

can be seen in the level of voluntary engagement in a great number of social projects. Digital devices and digital media play an ever-greater role. They are used in organising and further developing traditional structures. Just as digital technologies can help to improve reconciliation of family, working life and school, they can also help people to combine social engagement with family commitments and other areas of life.

Digitalisation is able to:

- Boost both the effectiveness and reach of social engagement.
- Remove obstacles to engagement, enabling people of all ages and abilities to participate in social life earlier, more intensively and for longer periods of time.
- Strengthen democratic self-organisation in civil society and strengthen participation in political discourse.
- Create new scope, occasion and need for engagement.

As low-threshold, interactive structures, social networks also foster the spread of fake news, hate speech, prejudice and harassment. But because the problem cannot be solved through regulation and control alone, people are becoming socially engaged online. In initiatives such as *#Ichbinhier* (I'm here), people are connecting online to counter hate speech and fake news in social networks with respect, objectivity and truth. In doing so, they perform an indispensable grassroots service to democratic society.

## 6.8 Participation for all in shaping the digital shift

Representing a diverse society in the digital world poses a tremendous challenge. People often underestimate the role that digitalisation plays in producing software and hardware for use in removing and/or reproducing fake news and discrimination. For example, women are still under-represented among digital start-ups and programmers. This is partly due to the still widely instilled gender stereotypes, but also to the poor availability of start-up loans for women and the below-average achievements of the digital sector in reconciling family and working life.

The female perspective is thus lacking in the development of software applications. If in their development, such applications fail to fully meet the needs of and adequately address the challenges faced by specific groups, or if they ignore them altogether, the members of those groups are disadvantaged. Even algorithms, applications which are based on data processing and analysis, also have an impact in today's digital world: they are never completely neutral and can reproduce stereotypes and result in discrimination. Thus, when developing digital tools, it is thus important to have many different perspectives around the table to prevent those tools from having unintended obstacles and barriers built in. If, for example, a company's human resources software fails to accommodate the fact that fathers can also take parental leave, it prevents promotion of this social trend in the company concerned.

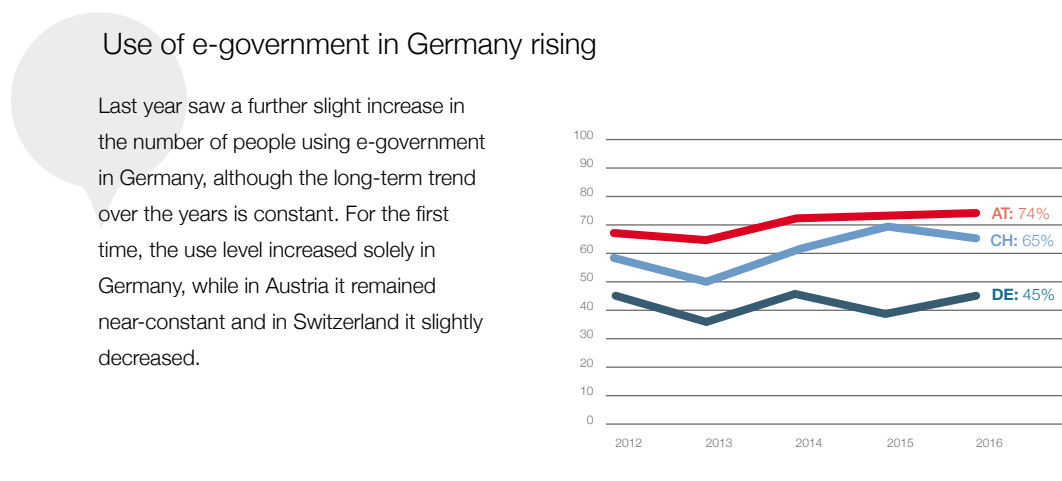
The different perspectives of young and old must also contribute to digital media’s design and use. As co-developers of new technology, they can help to make solutions more inclusive from the start, create a socially enabling space for all generations and enrich family lives. For example, public transport and personal mobility play a key role for people of all ages. Taking public transport in rural areas as an example, expectations and patterns of use differ greatly between primary school children, teenagers, parents and senior citizens. Technical aids can help solve many mobility-related problems. For example, small buses equipped with digital assistants can be ordered via an app and pick up passengers as needed. But if solutions that suit all generations are to be found, members of all generations must be involved in their development.

Thus, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs places great importance on strengthening the digital knowledge and skills of all generations and social groups, improving their communicative faculties, promoting their self-efficacy and encouraging needs-solutions dialogue to enable adequate reflection of social diversity in a diverse digital world.

## 6.9 Future-focused Families Ministry: e-Government and online services

The opportunity to use digitalisation to improve people’s lives is not restricted to families and work. It also applies to government and administration and poses something of a challenge. Family policy in Germany offers a broad spectrum of benefits which are tailored to differing family-related circumstances and are continuously developed and enhanced in response to scientific findings and changing desires and needs. Only recently, the OECD encouraged Germany to continue its successful family policy approach.

**Figure 75: Use of e-government in Germany**



eGovernment MONITOR 2016, conducted by TNS Infratest for Initiative D21 and ipima, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence.

Source: Initiative D21.

However, parents are not always aware of all the family-related benefits that are available or of how they work. And in cases where several different benefits are involved, they can easily become confused. They are also often required to fill out complex forms requiring detailed explanations. Added to this comes the fact that dealing with the authorities can be difficult, time-intensive and not always possible during normal working hours. This is why more and more people are choosing to use e-government services online.<sup>140</sup> It thus makes sense to look at how e-government can be used for an improved family policy approach. The Federal Government sees great opportunity in using digital technology to simplify family-related benefits, make them more accessible to target groups and thereby increase their intended effects. It must be made easier for parents and families to find out which benefits they are entitled to. They must be able to submit their applications easier and more flexibly. Intelligent application systems can help to reduce complexity and assist in the process of submitting benefit claims. It is also an opportunity to show how digitalisation can be implemented in accordance with and in service to the values and principles we uphold. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs is thus working to develop a range of online tools. The online tool for family-related benefits (*Infotool Familienleistungen*) is designed to enable parents and families to enter certain information and receive feedback on the benefits they are entitled to. Through ongoing development and alignment with prevailing law, the tool can provide assistance and raise awareness to benefits which often go unclaimed.

Parental allowance, currently the most widely-claimed family-related benefit, will be the first benefit that can be claimed online. From autumn 2017, parents will be able to submit their claims with the help of an online assistant that guides them step by step. Over time, various pilot regions will be added to the online system so that people can submit their claims electronically to the parental allowance office responsible for their case.

Looking to the future, other benefits could also be claimed online and more information and advice could be provided by digital means. It is technically possible to automatically analyse data collected to check if the person claiming a certain benefit is also entitled to claim others and to inform them of that fact. However, shaping digitalisation should not be seen as a means in itself, but as a way to critically review use of digital media as part of an ongoing process. People in Germany must be given a choice with regard to the extent to which they want to use e-government services. Neither traditional claims processes nor personal advice and support must be allowed to disappear. Not all benefits are suited to digitalisation to the same extent. And it must be remembered that modern government and administration gives users ownership of their data. They must be able to view the data they provide, delete it and find out who had access to it and when.

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140 D21 E-Government Monitor, available at: <http://initiatived21.de/publikationen/egovernment-monitor-2016/>.

# VII.

## Investing in Families for Inclusive Growth

### 7.1 Creating opportunity through investment in results-oriented family and social policy

#### **Family policy is growth policy**<sup>141, 142</sup>

Inclusive growth reflects the tradition of a social market economy that sees life chances for all and equal participation in earned prosperity as key factors of success. Targeted investment in sustainable family policy is needed if this is to be achieved. Thus, the goals of family policy and economic policy are closely interlinked. The goal of reconciling family and working life has a strong impact on the labour market, the goal of child development is linked to education, the goal of families' financial stability is linked to preventive social policy and the goal of helping couples to have children is linked to demographic change. In the 18th electoral term, this set of goals was extended in family policy terms by the addition of the goal to enable mothers and fathers to share responsibilities equally as partners in reconciling family and working life.

Since the publication of the Seventh Family Report, family policy goals have been based on the three pillars of money, infrastructure and time (see **Fig. 76**). The growth policy reference system is based on three growth factors: the human potential from which the skills base needed for work-related economic processes can be obtained comes from the number of people in employment (heads), the number of hours they work (time) and their time or per capita-related output (productivity). Looking at the reference system for growth creation, family policy such as that described above is of huge importance because it affects all three paths to success (see **Fig. 76**):

- Family-related benefits and measures can increase the number of 'heads' by creating the conditions needed to help young couples in their decisions to have their first child or an additional child.
- Family-related benefits and measures could have a positive effect on the time factor in that they improve reconciliation of family and working life, thus assisting those with family responsibilities – especially mothers – to work to the extent they desire.

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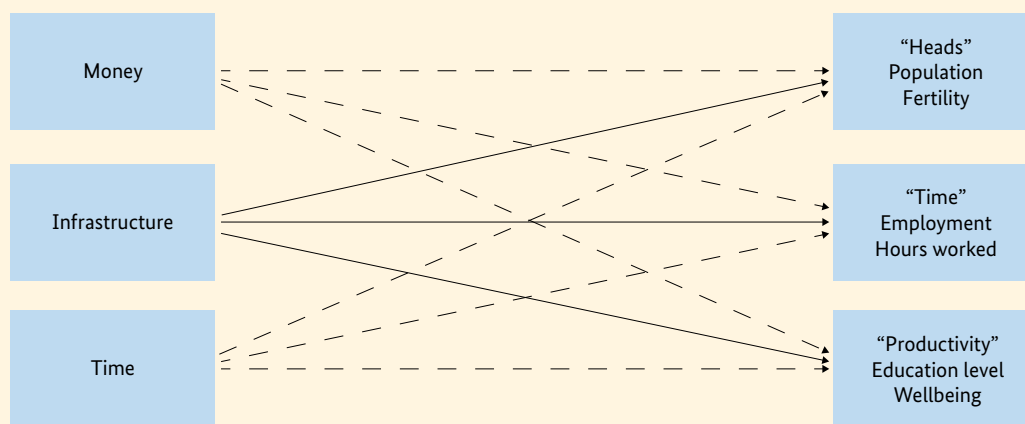
141 This chapter is based on BMFSFJ (Ed.) (2017): Monitor Familienforschung Nr. 36; Investitionen in Infrastruktur für Familien – ein Motor für inklusives Wachstum.

142 This section is based on the work of Dr. Hans-Peter Klös (IW Köln), as presented in: Prognos AG (2016): Zukunftsreport Familie 2030 (Langfassung unter: [https://www.prognos.com/uploads/tx\\_atwpubdb/160928\\_Langfassung\\_Zukunftsreport\\_Familie\\_2030\\_final.pdf](https://www.prognos.com/uploads/tx_atwpubdb/160928_Langfassung_Zukunftsreport_Familie_2030_final.pdf), last viewed on 15.03.2017).

- Family policy can also increase productivity by making early childhood education a solid foundation on which young people are able to develop knowledge and skills.

Means-end relationships also exist between the three family policy pillars of time, money and infrastructure and the three growth policy goals of heads, time and productivity. For example, in monetary terms the expansion of childcare services equals the transfer of funds which occurs when families buy those services. At the same time, infrastructure expansion allows more scope with regard to managing and spending time. In **Figure 76**, the arrows with broken lines illustrate the links between money and time, because in this perspective infrastructure is shown as the main object of observation.

**Figure 76: Family policy and growth (stylised linkages)**



Source: Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln.

### Opportunities for 2030<sup>143</sup>

Mothers and fathers want more flexible arrangements in sharing responsibility for family and working life. If policymakers act on parents' wishes and assist them by providing suitable family-related benefits, it can have positive effects. Against this backdrop, Prognos AG has developed various scenarios. For 2030, a scenario of used opportunities (opportunities scenario) is foreseen in which mothers further intensify their degree of employment and fathers work less and are able to dedicate more of their time to the family.

143 See Prognos AG (2016): Zukunftsreport Familie 2030 (<https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/111074/6b3a8f95d3ee2f671c80ab910ca58aaa/zukunftsreport-familie-2030-prognos-data.pdf>, last viewed on 15.03.2017).

Concrete calculations show that if the wishes of mothers and fathers are met, the socio-economic situation of families will have significantly improved in 2030. The opportunities scenario shows that:

- 1) Average family income, in addition to a general rise in prices, can rise by some €1,400.
- 2) The number of parents and children at risk of poverty can drop by some 470,000.
- 3) The number of people in households receiving basic security benefits can drop by about 670,000.
- 4) Some 790,000 more mothers can be employed in jobs subject to mandatory social insurance contributions.

Further development of family policy would thus also have a positive effect on the economy as a whole. The increase in employment figures and the number of hours worked leads to an increase in work volume of more than three percentage points. Gross domestic product can thus be some €70 billion higher.

The figures support statements made by the Federal Ministry of Finance on the sustainability of public budgets, whereby targeted design of family-related benefits can further improve growth and employment in Germany, and refinancing effects can positively impact public finances.<sup>144</sup>

## 7.2 How good infrastructure affects family life

Time policy is a tool used in family-related benefits. It includes the parental leave and parental allowance that give young parents more opportunity and financial security in the early days of family life. A meta-analysis of what are largely economic studies shows that in the form of income replacement, parental allowance increases young families' average financial security in the first year following the birth of a child. Parental allowance has also resulted in a drop in the number of mothers who work in the first year after the birth of a child and also in an increase in those working in the second year after the birth.<sup>145</sup>

Time policy also gives families an element of scope in managing the actual time they work.

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<sup>144</sup> See BMF (2016): Vierter Tragfähigkeitsbericht des Bundesfinanzministeriums.

<sup>145</sup> See Mathias Huebener/Kai-Uwe Müller/C. Katharina Spieß und Katharina Wrohlich (2016): Zehn Jahre Elterngeld: Eine wichtige familienpolitische Maßnahme, in: DIW Wochenbericht Nr. 49/2016.

## Aspects of localised time policy for families<sup>146</sup>

Systematisation of time policy approaches in localised family time policy was developed by IW Köln for an empirical study of its costs and benefits. Six approaches were assessed.<sup>147</sup>

- 1) **Extended afternoon opening times in daycare centres, nursery schools and primary schools:** Extended daycare for children into the afternoon (e.g. until 3 pm) gives parents around two hours more with their families and four hours more for work.
- 2) **Coordination of daycare services for off-peak times:** Time savings amount to 1.5 hours for the family and some two hours for work per week.
- 3) **Safe routes to school:** Greater mobility and independence for children together with safer routes to school (by reducing existing dangers) would give parents around 45 minutes more per week for family and work.
- 4) **Intensified frequency of public transport during typical rush-hour times:** Parents can gain as much as 2.5 hours for the family and 1.5 hours for work if a minimum frequency of 30 minutes were achieved.
- 5) **Flexibilisation of working time:** If even just one or two working hours could be flexibly arranged, parents could gain an average half hour each for family and work per week. Looking only at parents who are able to make use of flexible working arrangements, the time gained amounts to more than one hour.
- 6) **Work place flexibilisation:** The opportunity to work from home on occasion would result in an average gain of 20 minutes each for family and work per week. Looking only at parents for whom working from home is an option, the time gained amounts to well in excess of an hour each for family and work.

In terms of the time gained through work place flexibilisation, these are extremely conservative estimates. In another representative study, families gain a significantly greater amount of time: working parents who either work from home or use a mobile office each gain an average 4.4 hours per week. In most families, the extra time gained from not having to travel to work is used as family time.<sup>148</sup>

### Focus on childcare and working mothers

Basic research conducted as part of the overall evaluation of marriage and family-related benefits has confirmed and current methodologically refined approaches show the positive effects of state-subsidised childcare on reconciling family and working life. Mothers who use external

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146 See. IW Köln & Finanzwissenschaftliches Forschungsinstitut an der Universität zu Köln (2017): Kosten und Nutzen lokaler Familienzeitpolitik – Kurzfassung: <https://www.bmfsfj.de/blob/jump/119848/kosten-nutzen-familienzeitpolitik-kurzfassung-data.pdf>.

147 Ibid.

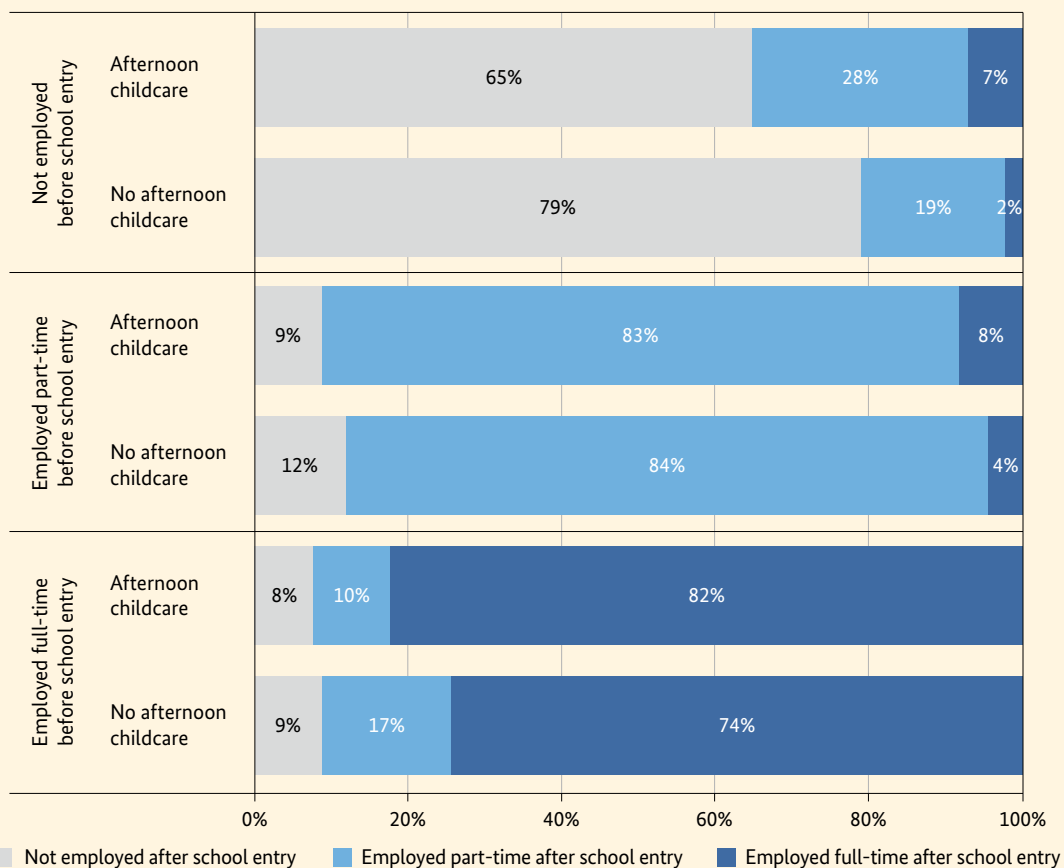
148 BMFSFJ (2016): Digitalisierung – Chancen und Herausforderungen für die partnerschaftliche Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf. Expertise der Roland Berger GmbH im Rahmen des Unternehmensprogramms Erfolgsfaktor Familie.



childcare services for children under the age of three have a 35 percent greater chance of working compared with other mothers. They work an average 12 hours more per week compared with mothers who do not make use of such services. These effects are largely due to the fact that mothers are able to pull themselves out of unemployment and take on paid work. Similar results are evident for mothers who use external childcare services for children aged between three and five, and also for mothers who use all-day childcare services for their school-age child or children.<sup>149, 150</sup>

The need for children’s daycare does not end when a child starts school. The DIW has thus placed the primary school phase in the focus of a study to look at how afternoon daycare options for children of primary school age meet the needs of working mothers. **Figure 77** shows that mothers who were not employed before their child started school often enter employment if the child also attends an after-school daycare institution. And for mothers who worked full-time before their child started school, the study shows that they remain in their full-time jobs far more frequently if their child is looked after in the afternoons.

**Figure 77: Change in the employment rate among mothers on child starting school**



Source: SOEP v31 (1999–2014 survey waves), calculations by DIW Berlin (DIW Wochenbericht 47/2016, p. 1129).

149 See Helmut Rainer et al. (2011): Kinderbetreuung, ifo Forschungsbericht 59.

150 See Stefan Bauernschuster et al. (2016): Children of a (Policy) Revolution: The Introduction of Universal Child Care and Its Effect on Fertility, in: Journal of the European Economic Association (2016) 14 (4), 975–1005.

A further key finding is that institutionalised afternoon daycare for first-graders in all-day schools or after-school clubs ensures that more than 11 percent of mothers who did not work before their child started school are able to take up employment. Mothers who already worked tend to extend their working hours by an average 2.5 hours per week.<sup>151</sup>

Similar effects are seen for mothers with older school-age children. If there is an all-day school in the local area, then mothers with children aged 15 work 2.8 hours more per week than those with no access to a local all-day school.<sup>152</sup>

### 7.3 Return on investment in families

The expansion of all-day childcare services makes it easier for mothers to extend their working hours. This is confirmed by official statistics: the number of children under three who attend daycare rose from 14 percent in 2006 to 33 percent in 2015. In the same period, the number of working mothers with children aged between two and three rose from 42 percent to 58 percent.

With the rise in the number of working mothers, additional income is earned. This leads to increases in tax revenue and social insurance contributions. Social transfers drop as a result. The studies conducted in the overall evaluation of self-financing rates, meaning the share of additional income and savings in overall (current) expenditure, lies between 41 and 48 percent in crèches and nursery schools, and between 66 and 99 percent in daycare provided in all-day schools.<sup>153</sup>

#### **Overall economic effects of extensive daycare expansion**

Recent studies confirm and underpin these findings with regard to payback periods and distributional and intergenerational equity in relation to programmes to expand all-day childcare. Direct influencing factors include 1) children's improved school performance, which over time increases the number of people in employment with vocational training or a university education, and 2) the positive effects on employment opportunities for mothers.

In calculating the overall economic effects of public investment in all-day childcare centres and schools an increase in employment of +520,000 full-time equivalents (FTEs) results.<sup>154</sup> This increase can be apportioned to a drop in unemployment (-220,000 individuals), especially among single parents, to a reduction in atypical employment (-218,000 FTEs) and, in the longer term, to greater educational success among the children involved and to the dwindling number of people in employment who have no school qualifications or vocational training. Even without this education-related effect, positive employment effects could be expected in the range of some +470,000 FTEs. Thus, investment in all-day childcare services contributes to

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151 See Ludovica Gambaro/Jan Marcus/Frauke Peter (2016): Ganztagschule und Hort erhöhen die Erwerbsbeteiligung von Müttern mit Grundschulkindern, in: DIW Wochenbericht 47/2016, p. 1123–1131.

152 See Christina Boll/Malte Hoffmann (2017): Elterliches Erwerbsverhalten und kindlicher Schulerfolg – Analysen für Deutschland mit einem separaten Fokus auf Interaktionseffekten des Ganztagschulsystems und einem Ländervergleich Deutschland – Schweden.

153 See Helmut Rainer et al. (2011): Kinderbetreuung, ifo Forschungsbericht 59.

154 See Tom Krebs et al. (2016): Quantifizierung der gesamtwirtschaftlichen und fiskalischen Effekte ausgewählter Infrastruktur und Bildungsinvestitionen in Deutschland.

inclusive growth because it not only promotes growth, but also enables single parents and people in atypical employment to benefit from that growth. It also increases their options for social interaction, thus helping them to participate in society as a whole.

On the one hand, public investment in all-day childcare services puts pressure on public funds in the form of one-off investments and the ongoing costs of operations. On the other, the resulting employment and income effects raise tax revenue and social insurance contributions, while expenditure on state benefits is reduced. What this boils down to is that investment pays off: budget surpluses accrue after just six years; the payback period for the investment programme is eleven years.

Prosperity gains would manifest from a 1.1 increase in GDP compared with today. After 20 years, net revenue would lie at around €10,634 billion.

### **Tax effects from investment in all-day childcare for children in primary schools**

A recent study has highlighted the fact that for mothers to have uninterrupted employment biographies, it is vital that all-day childcare services be guaranteed when children start primary school. Germany must increase its provision of this type of daycare service. Around 560,000 additional places together with supplementary programmes are needed to meet the demand concerning primary school children requiring afterschool care and supervision.<sup>155</sup>

The creation of some 280,000 all-day childcare places for school-age children can have a positive effect on taxation. This is because some 135,000 mothers with a youngest child aged between six and nine do not use all-day childcare. These mothers would like to be able to take up paid employment without delay or extend the number of hours they currently work. If newly employed or working longer hours, they would generate additional tax revenue in the range of €230 million per year. This would refinance some 58 percent of the additional, current state expenditure for all-day childcare places (around €400 million).<sup>156</sup>

In addition to these tax-related effects, the state and society would also benefit in other ways. With more people in employment, more contributions would be generated for the social insurance funds. And looking at the longer term, returns on investment in education would occur because quality all-day childcare means that primary school children receive individualised support.

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155 Prognos AG (2017): Gute und verlässliche Ganztagsangebote für Grundschul Kinder.

156 Unveröffentlichte Schätzungen der Prognos AG für das BMSFSJ (2017).

# VIII.

## Public Opinion

### 8.1 Families expect family policy-based support

Most mothers and fathers in Germany expect family policy to provide support for themselves and their families. This is not new. More than twenty years ago, as many as 92 percent of parents with under-aged children and 83 percent of people overall were in favour of state support for families. Only a minority of three percent of parents and nine percent of people overall believed that parenthood and children were “purely a private matter.”<sup>157</sup> Attitudes are more or less the same today. Some 92 percent of parents and 87 percent of people overall are in favour of family-related benefits and some would even like to see them increased. Only two percent of parents and of people overall believe the state provides too much in the way of benefits.<sup>158</sup>

The reasons behind these almost across-the-board expectations on the state can be seen in recent qualitative analyses.<sup>159</sup> In many cases, the expectations are based on the image of the family as the “nucleus of society”. By giving birth to and rearing children, mothers and fathers are deemed to provide an indispensable service to society as a whole. They are thus seen to be disadvantaged compared with others. Society must thus support families and compensate for any disadvantages in return. Both parents and people in general see providing support for families as a key family policy task.

People also believe that the state support provided should take account of families’ differing forms and circumstances. In addition to financial and tax-based assistance for all, needs-based assistance should also be provided. Special assistance is received by parents in many different family forms. The most frequently mentioned are single parents, low-income families, families with three or more children and, last but not least, families where both parents work.<sup>160</sup>

Many would like to see family policy help people to help themselves. They expect support in realising their plans and ideas, for example in regard to starting a family, parents wanting to work or ways to promote children’s development and wellbeing.

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157 Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 6002, 1994.

158 Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 11056, 2016.

159 Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, (2017): Familien erreichen. Wie Familien leben und was sie von der Familienpolitik erwarten, Allensbach.

160 Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 11072, 2017.

## 8.2 The role of family policy in securing a prosperous future

Proactive family policy that assists families in all areas of life is also a precondition in securing a prosperous future for society as a whole. If asked about the most important tasks in securing a prosperous future for Germany, around one half of people cite family policy goals such as promoting young families with children (51 percent) and expanding and improving daycare and educational institutions. Some 43 percent cite improved reconciliation between providing care and work.<sup>161</sup>

This places public perception of the contribution that family policy makes in securing a prosperous future on an equal footing with a whole range of other widely-discussed policy goals. These include improving inland security (55 percent), improving education (53 percent), price stability (51), climate change mitigation (48 percent), stabilising the euro (46 percent) and reforming the healthcare sector (45 percent). The two policy goals cited slightly more frequently than family policy goals are combating unemployment (58 percent) and promoting economic growth (58 percent).

The greatest importance by far is placed on securing old-age pensions (79 percent).<sup>162</sup> For parents with under-age children, implementing and achieving family policy goals is equally important: 69 percent of mothers and fathers say that promoting families is one of the most important tasks in securing a prosperous future for people in Germany.<sup>163</sup>

## 8.3 Policy on reconciliation of family and working life a priority action area

For people in Germany, better reconciliation of family and working life is the main task of family policy. Some 71 percent of people in general and 74 percent of parents would like to see this made a top agenda item. Even in recent years, it has remained a priority issue in public debate.

Better reconciliation of family and working life includes improved daycare services for school-age children (55 percent of people in general and 59 percent of parents with under-age children), assistance for families where both parents would like to work to an equal extent (53 and 61 percent) and better conditions to make it easier to return to work after taking time out to raise a child (48 percent and 55 percent). And to a lesser extent, it includes better reconciliation of caring for dependent relatives and work (55 and 48 percent), as most dependents in need of care are cared for in the home. Some 66 percent believe more support should be available to care-giving relatives of people with dementia.<sup>164</sup>

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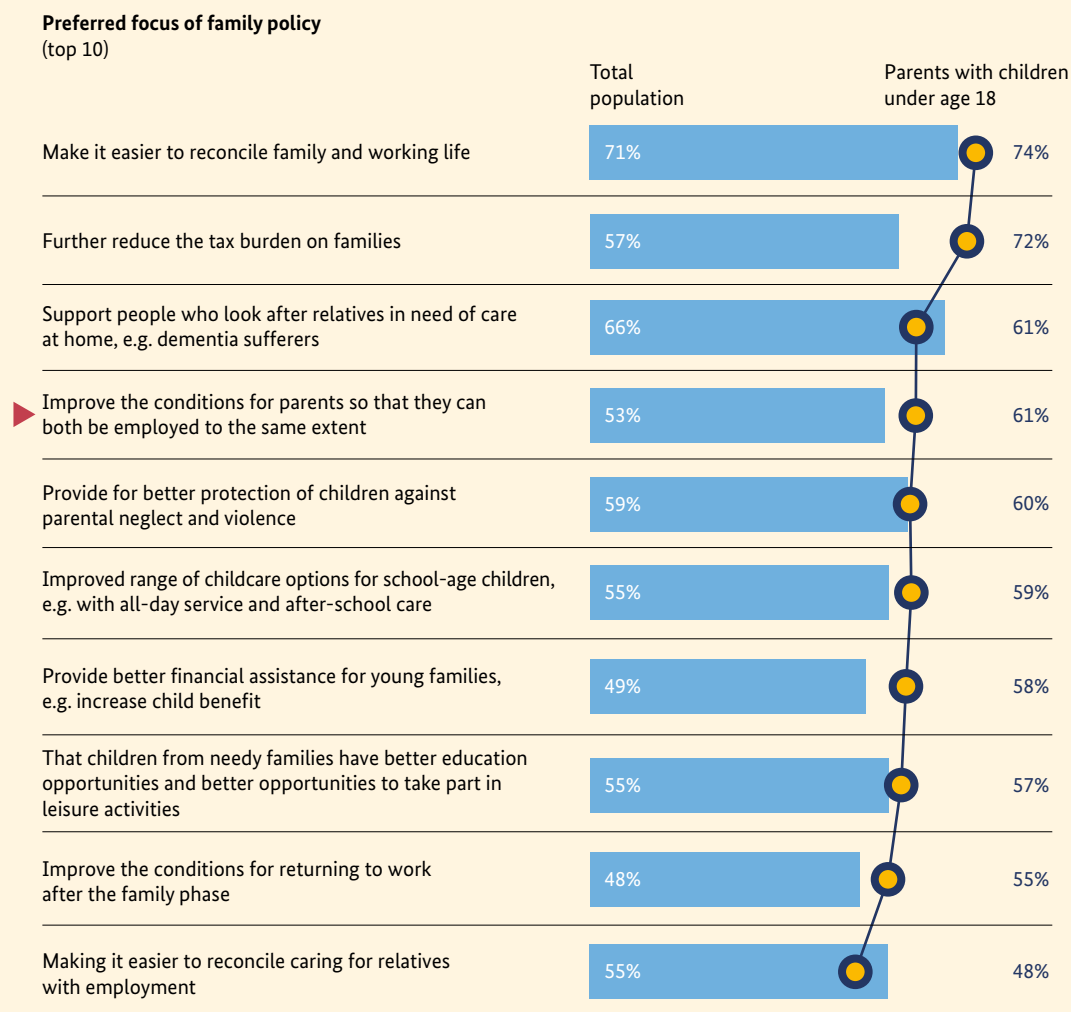
161 Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 11056, 2016.

162 Ibid.

163 Ibid.

164 Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 11056, 2016.

Figure 78: The population's family policy agenda



Basis: Germany, population aged 16 and over.

Source: Allensbacher Archiv: IfD survey 11056, May 2016.

## 8.4 Support for working parents

Flexible working and daycare hours are seen by many as key prerequisites in enabling both parents in a family to work. Some 78 percent of people overall see flexible working hours as the best form of support for working parents, while 59 percent say the same of flexible opening hours in daycare centres (Fig. 79).

Family policy is expected to provide measures to enable both parents to work. Such measures include better daycare services (63 percent), easier return to work after a family-related break (54 percent) and financial support for parents who would like to reduce their working hours for a specific period to have more time for their family (43 percent). But people also focus on employment-related measures: company-provided daycare (59 percent), various part-time

models which are not restricted to half-day jobs (56 percent) and simplified return from part-time back to full-time work (50 percent).

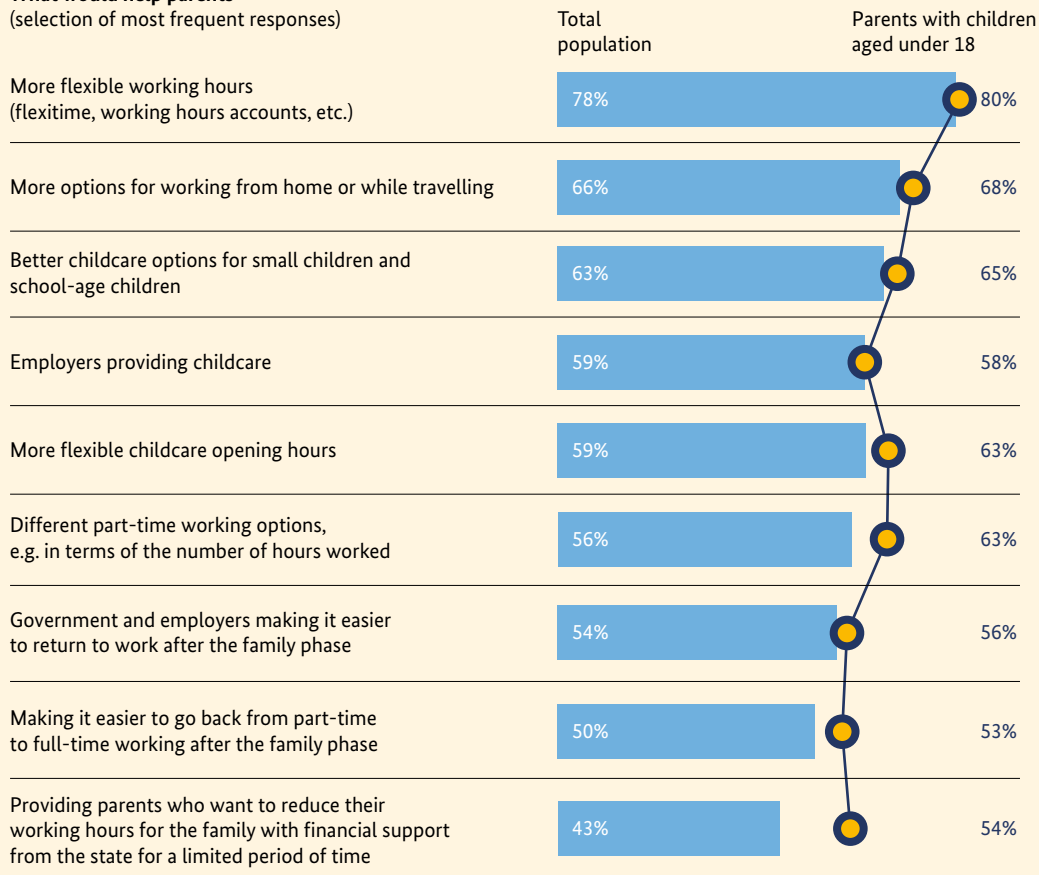
Certain expectations are linked to the opportunity to work from home instead of on the employer's premises. Some 66 percent of people overall and 68 percent of mothers and fathers with under-age children believe that working from home would make life easier for families where both parents work. While the broad interest seen some years ago has lessened to an extent, this modern form of working from home remains attractive to working parents whose children are very young. In a survey of such parents who use a computer and the internet to work from home, a clear majority said it made it far easier for them to reconcile family and working life.<sup>165</sup>

**Figure 79: Assistance for employed couples with children**

Question: "If in a family with children both parents want to work and both want to have time for the family, what do you think would help the parents most – what would you say from this list?"

**What would help parents**

(selection of most frequent responses)



Basis: Germany, population aged 16 and over.

Source: Allensbacher Archiv: IfD survey 11056, May 2016.

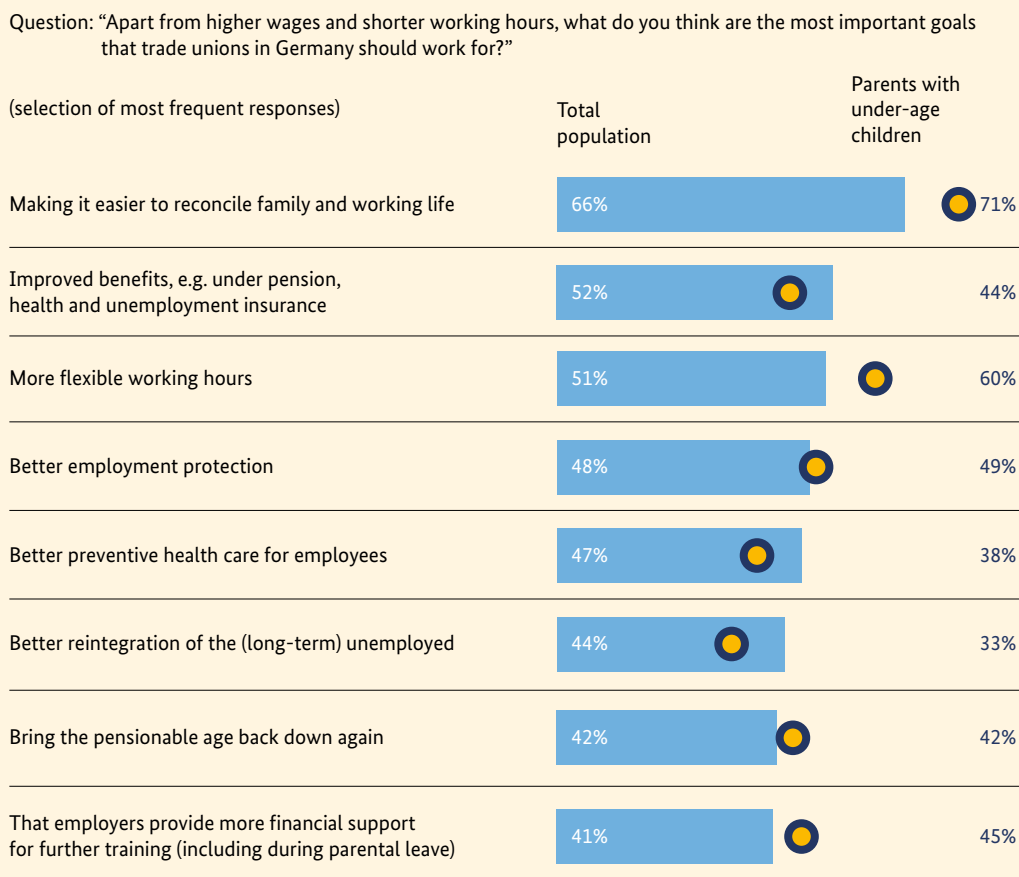
165 Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2015): Zu Hause arbeiten. Chancen der Digitalisierung für die Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf, Allensbach.

## 8.5 Policy to improve reconciliation of family and working life the joint responsibility of employers, the unions and the state

People in Germany see improving reconciliation of family and working life as a joint responsibility of employers, the unions and the state. Two-thirds direct their expectations towards the state and employers (67 percent). Some 17 percent believe responsibility lies solely with the state, while 10 percent say it is a matter for employers.<sup>166</sup>

But people also believe that the unions have a role. Some 71 percent of parents with under-age children and 66 percent of people overall also believe that the unions must act to enable better reconciliation of family and working life. Flexible working hours are also seen as an important goal in trade union activity: 60 percent of parents with under-age children and 51 percent of people overall expect the unions to act in this regard (**Fig. 80**).<sup>167</sup>

**Figure 80: Additional issues that ought to be addressed by trade unions**



Basis: Germany, population aged 16 and over.

Source: Allensbacher Archiv: IfD survey 11049 (November/December 2015).

<sup>166</sup> Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfrage 11042.7227, 2015.

<sup>167</sup> Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2015): Bessere Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf. Aufgabe für Gewerkschaften und Betriebsräte, Allensbach.



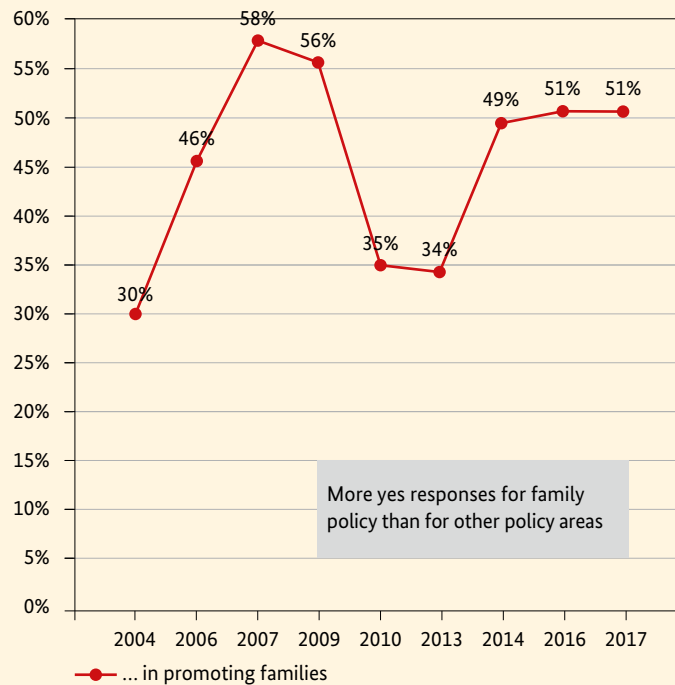
Many would like to see the unions working to introduce measures which enable couples with children to share responsibility for employment equally as partners. Some 59 percent expect the unions to fight to counter the career-development disadvantages for fathers who take time out from work to look after their children. And 52 percent would like the unions to do more to enable fathers with small children to work part-time. The idea of close to full-time work is thus important in this regard. Finally, 55 percent of respondents believe it is important for the unions to fight for more close to full-time part-time work for parents.

Also, half of people in Germany expect the unions to help make it possible for parents with small children to be able to work more from home. This expectation is partly based on the experience of some parents that working from home makes it easier to reconcile family and working life, largely due to the greater flexibility it allows and the fact that they no longer have to travel to work.

## 8.6 Family policy evaluation

People in Germany are aware of and appreciate the availability of family-related benefits and initiatives. In 2016, 51 percent said that the Federal Government did a good job in promoting families. This compares with 34 percent in 2013 (**Fig. 81**). The recent evaluation also shows broad acceptance of the family policy approach when compared with other policy fields.<sup>168</sup>

**Figure 81: The government is doing a good job there, 2004-2017 (in %)**



Source: Allensbacher Archiv: IfD surveys.

Most people agree with the current focus areas contained in German family policy. Measures which help parents reconcile family and working life are especially welcome. The findings of the recent qualitative evaluation show that parents see approaches such as parental allowance and extended daycare services as lighthouse projects which are designed to meet families' actual needs and take account of their altered realities.<sup>169</sup> As a result, in 2016 the vast majority of people in Germany (75 percent) said parental allowance was "a good thing"; back in 2013, 73 percent were in favour of a legal entitlement to a daycare place for children under three.<sup>170</sup>

Such measures are seen to serve in reducing and removing the obstacles faced by parents due to altered working arrangements and changing family circumstances. Thus, in qualitative interviews, parents whose children do not attend daycare often speak out in favour of extended daycare services. They believe it is fair if mothers are given better opportunities to take up paid work and if fathers are afforded more options to give them more family time.

Many parents also talk of the deficits which they believe should have received greater attention in the past and which must be made a focal point of family policy in the near future. At 46 percent in 2013 and 36 percent today, such perceptions imply that family policy does not take enough account of families' altered circumstances.<sup>171</sup> More attention should have been given to improving daycare services in the afternoons, improving tax-relief for families and providing better opportunities to obtain more family time. Quantitative analyses indicate broad acceptance of the idea of potential new benefits and enhanced existing benefits which are designed to achieve these goals.<sup>172</sup>

## 8.7 Family life up to 2030: Anticipated and desired developments

Looking to the future, most people in Germany expect to see things develop in the direction seen in recent years. In particular, they foresee more mothers working full-time or longer part-time hours (66 percent) and more all-day childcare provision for children (78 percent). With these developments in mind and looking at the period up to 2030, 62 percent of people overall and 71 percent of parents with under-age children would like to see the state and employers doing even more to foster better reconciliation of family and working life.

Almost all of the measures people believe will be necessary in the longer term serve that goal: more all-day childcare for children (67 percent) and more take-up of those services (57 percent) making it easier for mothers to work full-time (47 percent) and providing better career and promotion opportunities for mothers (42 percent).

At the same time, most people in Germany would like to see more parents being able to share responsibility for family and work equally as partners (56 percent). In this regard, many are in

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<sup>169</sup> Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2017): Familien erreichen. Wie Familien leben und was sie von der Familienpolitik erwarten, Allensbach.

<sup>170</sup> Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfragen 11056, 2016, und 11007.6265, 2013.

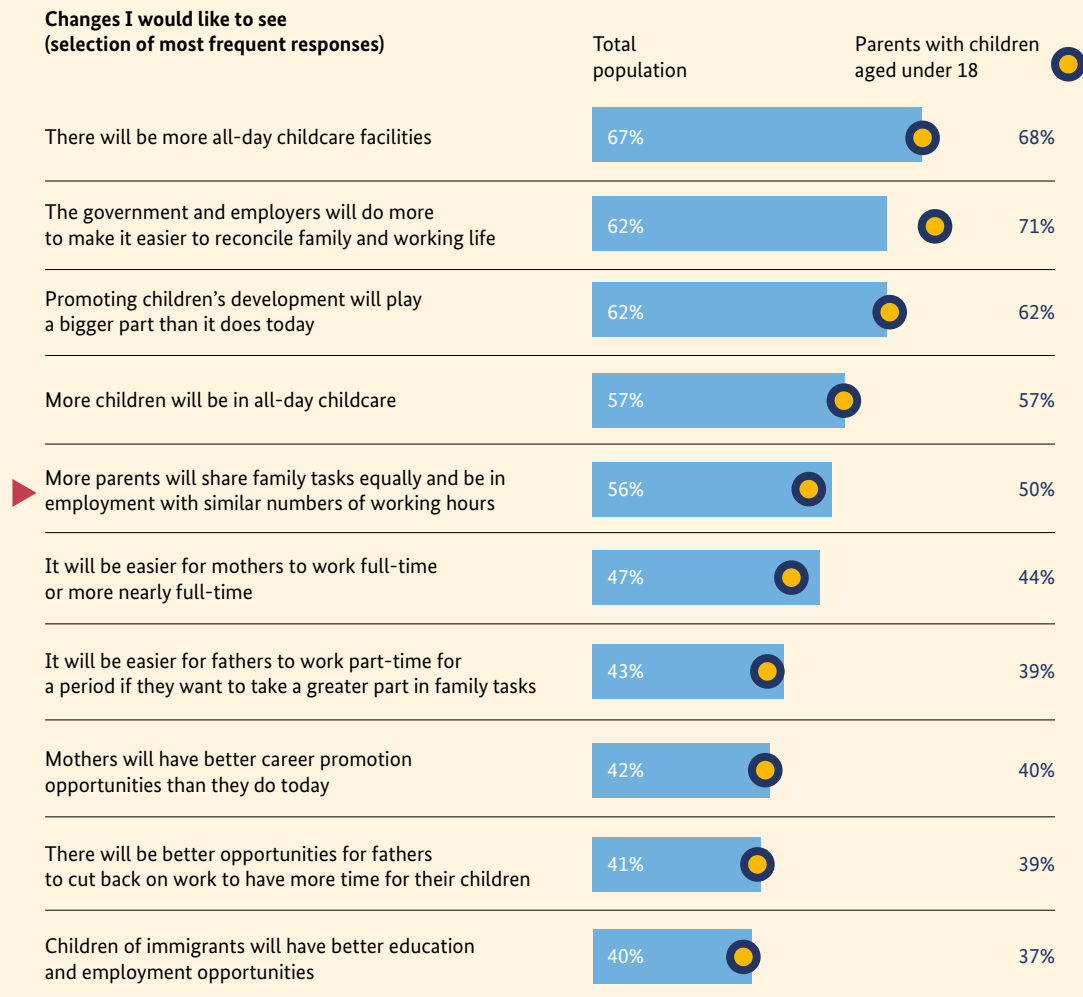
<sup>171</sup> Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfragen 11007, 2013, und 11066, 2017.

<sup>172</sup> Allensbacher Archiv: IfD-Umfragen 11071 und 11072, 2017.

favour of providing assistance for fathers and particularly with regard to giving them better options to work part-time for a given period (43 percent) or to reduce their working hours overall in order to have more family time (41 percent).

**Figure 82: What changes people want to see by 2030**

Question: "In this list, there are a number of ways how the situation of families could change in about 15 years, meaning in around 2030. Which of these changes would you like to see?" (list presented to respondents)



Basis: Germany, population aged 16 and over.

Source: Allensbacher Archiv: IfD survey 11058, July 2016.

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