



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

# Family Report 2014

## Benefits, Effects, Trends



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## Dear Reader,

For people in Germany, the idea of family remains an important part of life. Families stand for cohesion, happiness and contentment. And they can be highly dynamic constellations. Families take many forms and are no longer seen as strictly father, mother and child. In the reality of modern German society, these trends have been evident for some time. People have come to perceive family as something much broader and far more diverse.



There is one particular trend that can be seen across the many types of family that exist: mothers have an increasing desire to work or to work more than they do, and a growing number of fathers want to play a greater role in family life. Particularly for younger women and men, the idea of the mother going out to work and the father looking after the children is firmly anchored in their perceptions of family life. But while many couples want to share their family responsibilities equally, their everyday reality can be somewhat different. This is because prevailing conditions are not compatible with their desired lifestyles: current surveys show that many parents feel extremely pressured and in many cases, mothers and fathers find it difficult to meet their self-imposed expectations. The main problem that families face is time or lack of it. Mothers especially feel that the age-old imbalance in the division of parental responsibilities remains a problem, even today. At the same time, many parents would like to achieve a better balance in reconciling family and working life. Young parents today belong to a generation that faces many challenges.

To be tailored to people's needs, modern family policy therefore requires a new approach to the reconciliation of work and family life. This Family Report clearly highlights the importance that families place on taking an equal approach to finding the right level of family-work reconciliation for women and for men. I want to make it possible for parents to adopt this approach in managing their responsibilities at home and at work. From this year, we are able to offer parents new options that will afford them more scope in organising family life. Parents of children born on or after 1 July 2015 can combine Parental Allowance (*Elterngeld*) with Parental Allowance Plus (*ElterngeldPlus*) and the Partnership Bonus (*Partnerschaftsbonus*). This gives mothers and fathers the opportunity to share the responsibility for looking after their children from an early stage while working part-time. They will be able to receive parental allowance over a longer period and make better use of their parental allowance budget than has been the case to date. Parental allowance plus is paid for twice as long as basic parental allowance (one month of parental allowance equals two months of parental allowance plus). Single parents will benefit in just the same way as mothers and fathers with differing living arrangements. Rules regarding parental leave have also been made more flexible.

Equal opportunities in the labour market for women and men, more flexible working hours and needs-based, quality childcare are further keys in providing greater support for families. This Family Report thus provides valuable insight. I want to see the introduction of a family working hours model (*Familienarbeitszeit*) which will allow parents to adjust their working hours in their child's early years. Fathers can shorten their working week, while mothers can go out to work for a similar number of hours to their partners. Parental allowance plus is a first step on the road to providing family working hours. Parents must be afforded the opportunity to share responsibility for family and working life equally.



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# I.

## Introduction

Attitudes to family life and partnership have undergone tremendous change. Young people in particular want an equal partnership, an equal division of responsibilities and a financially independent partner. Some 93 percent of young women aged between 21 and 34, and 76 percent of young men in the same age group, want a partner who earns their own living. More than 90 percent expect their partner to support them with their own career plans<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Expectations placed on partners 2012 (in %)

... I expect my partner to	Women	Men
... earn their own living	93.1	75.7
... support me in pursuing my career	93.8	94.1

Note: Excerpt, agreement (scale values 1 and 2) on the question: "You can place different expectations on your partner. Please tell me whether the following statements apply to you." Possible answers: "applies in full", "applies", "not really", "not at all".

Source: Allmendinger/Haarbrücker (2013): *Lebensentwürfe heute. Wie junge Frauen und Männer in Deutschland leben wollen*. Discussion Paper 2013-002, Ed. WZB

More than 90 percent of 20 to 39 year olds believe that both women and men should look after the children, and over two-thirds of young people say that both partners should earn the family income.<sup>2</sup> Both in eastern and western Germany, there has been a rise in egalitarian notions of the division of roles between women and men. This means that more people are in favour of aligning women's and men's roles.<sup>3</sup> Only 16 percent of those surveyed in eastern Germany and 29 percent in western Germany agree with the division of responsibilities whereby the man goes out to work as the breadwinner while the woman stays at home to run the home and bring up the children. This compares with 33 percent in eastern Germany and 50 percent in western Germany in 1991.<sup>4</sup>

1 Allmendinger/Haarbrücker (2013): *Lebensentwürfe heute. Wie junge Frauen und Männer in Deutschland leben wollen*. Discussion Paper 2013-002, hrsg. vom WZB.

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

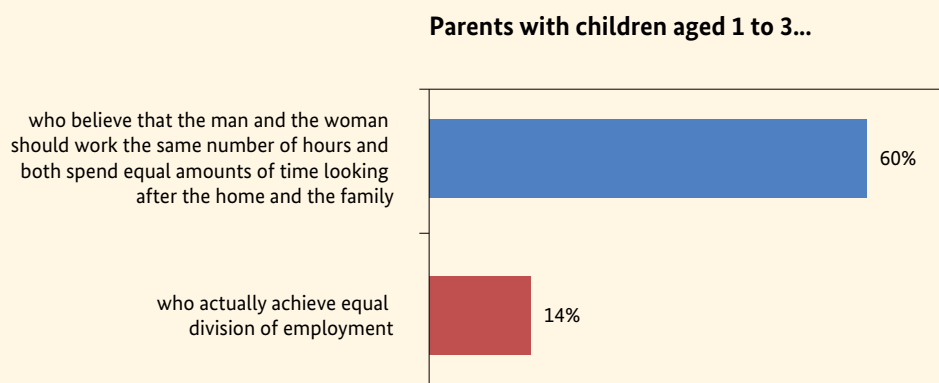
3 WZB/Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): *Datenreport 2013*, p. 386 ff.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 388. Based on agreement with the statement: It is better for all concerned if the man goes out to work as the breadwinner and the woman stays at home to run the home and bring up the children.

People were more in favour of women going to work in 2012 than they were in 1991. In 2012, only 19 percent of those surveyed across Germany believed it was more important for a woman to support her husband's career than to pursue a career herself. In 1991, one-third said this was the case. More than half of parents surveyed want to convey to their children that going to work is a normal state of affairs (mothers 49 percent, fathers 58 percent). And for children, having parents who go out to work is part of everyday life and they view their parents' employment as something positive. Around 60 percent of six to 14 year-olds are happy that their parents have jobs. On the whole, children in this age group demonstrate great understanding for the fact that their working parents are able to spend less time with them.<sup>5</sup>

It is also evident, however, that only few parents with small children already live in a constellation where both the mother and the father work to the same extent. However some 60 percent of parents with children under three believe the realm of the ideal is where they both spend equal amounts of time with the family and at work (Fig. 2).

**Figure 2: Ideal versus reality in the division of roles between parents**



Source: Calculations based on *Familien in Deutschland (FiD)*, SOEP. Quote taken from: *DIW Wochenbericht Nr. 46/2013*

Apart from these ideals, one in three couples with children under three (32 percent) would prefer for them both to work part-time (around 30 hours per week) or full-time (seven percent) and share the work of looking after the family and home.<sup>6</sup> But only nine percent of these couples today are able to actually share responsibilities in this way.<sup>7</sup> Family and work commitments remain unequally distributed between women and men – often not just in certain life phases, but for their entire lives. The main burden of reconciling family and working life, and of managing time, continues to be borne by mothers. Parents need time to look after children and care for the family and home. For working parents, this gives rise to problems as regards caring for the family, planning a family, general satisfaction and the financial opportunities available to the family as a whole and the mother in particular.

<sup>5</sup> GEOLino-UNICEF-Kinderwertemonitor 2014.

<sup>6</sup> IfD Allensbach 2014, Allensbacher Archiv.

<sup>7</sup> IfD Allensbach 2014, Allensbacher Archiv.

A new approach to reconciling family and working life thus forms the keystone of effective family policy that focuses on equal opportunities for mothers and fathers and excellent development opportunities for children.

**New family policy approach: equal sharing of responsibility in reconciling family and working life**

The Federal Government focuses both on the desires and the real-life circumstances of families. It wants to support them in achieving an equally shared division of responsibilities, thus adding a new quality to the reconciliation of work and family life. The new parental allowance plus combined with the partnership bonus and a more flexible form of parental leave provide an alternative to basic parental allowance and constitute a first step towards more equally shared division of responsibility for family and working life. The new parental allowance plus is based on knowledge gleaned from an evaluation of parental allowance and an overall evaluation of marriage-related and family-related benefits. The overall evaluation identified parental allowance and state subsidised childcare as the most effective forms of support in promoting family-work reconciliation. At the same time, the German government, in cooperation with the state governments (Länder) and municipal administrations, has improved conditions in Germany's childcare infrastructure to promote equally shared responsibility for work and family life. The aim, after all, is to create supportive working conditions that give families more time with each other at home. This calls for modern working hours and work cultures that allow mothers **and** fathers time with their families without suffering setbacks in their careers. In many spheres of work, but not in all, digitisation offers a wealth of opportunity for more family-friendly employment. This is an opportunity that must be explored and taken up. With this in mind, the German Ministry for Family Affairs is realigning the way it cooperates with German business, since more equally shared responsibility in reconciling family and working life benefits both companies and the economy as a whole.

If mothers and fathers take an equal approach to work and family life, fathers have a greater chance of spending more time with their children and thus of developing closer father-child relationships. Mothers are afforded greater scope to pursue gainful employment in the way they wish for themselves. This improves families' financial situation, enables more flexible time management and boosts mothers' financial independence. Children benefit from parents who both play a role in looking after and rearing their offspring. In a family-friendly environment that offers the conditions, young women and men can more easily decide to either start a family or have more children without the risk of jeopardising their jobs or harming their careers.

# II.

## Family Life in Germany

### 2.1 Family values, attitudes and perceptions

#### **Family still highly valued**

For people in Germany, families and children remain a highly valued concept. In 2012, 81 percent of people in eastern Germany and 75 percent in western Germany said families and children were extremely important.<sup>8</sup> The idea of a family was also important or very important for 97 percent of six to 14 year-olds.<sup>9</sup> For more than 90 percent of the population, watching children grow up was the best thing in life (93 percent in western and 96 percent in eastern Germany).<sup>10</sup> And for more than 80 percent of 20 to 39 year-olds, it was very important or important to have children.<sup>11</sup> More than 50 percent of people throughout Germany were either completely happy or very happy with their family life.<sup>12</sup> For more than three-quarters of parents, the family stood for cohesion when dealing with difficult times (79 percent).<sup>13</sup>

#### **Broad understanding of family**

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 in doing so, support and care for each other. This includes married and cohabiting couples with children as well as single-parent families, step families, blended families, rainbow families and families who provide care for dependent family members.

People in Germany have a correspondingly broad understanding of the concept of family. For most, family involves children regardless of their parents' living arrangements. There is also broad acceptance (80 percent) for other parent-child constellations: 88 percent of 20 to 39 year-olds perceive a homosexual couple with children as a family and 85 percent say step and blended constellations are also families. For most people, couples with children are seen as families. Single parents are increasingly seen as a family, especially by younger generations. In 2000, only 40 percent of the population said that a single parent was a family.

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

9 GEOLino-UNICEF-Kinderwertemonitor 2014.

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

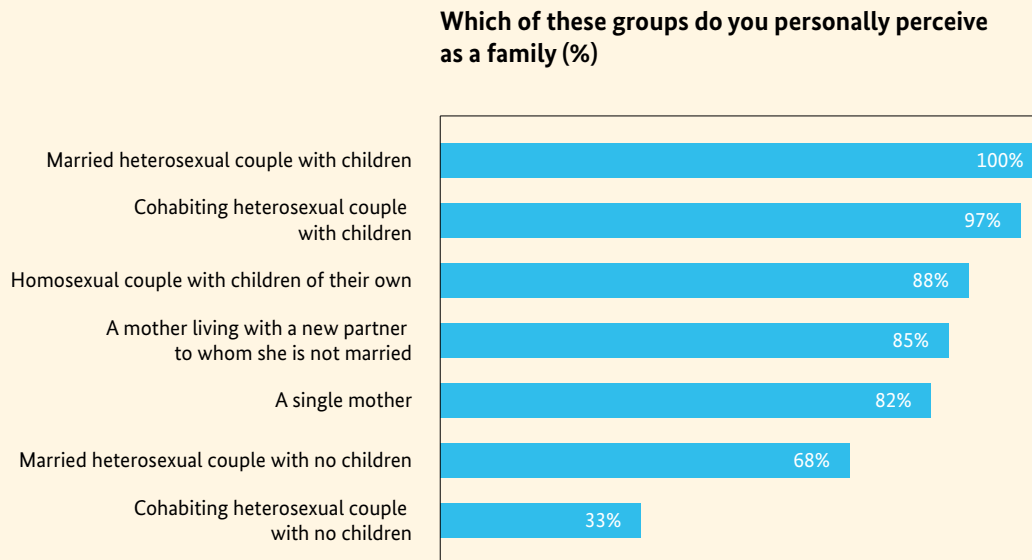
11 Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung (2013): Familienleitbilder. Vorstellungen, Meinungen, Erwartungen, Altersgruppe 20-39 Jahre.

12 Ibid., p. 67

13 IfD Allensbach 2014, Allensbacher Archiv.

In 2012, that figure had risen to 58 percent and in 2013, 68 percent of younger respondents in the 20 to 40 age group said that single parents were also families (Fig. 3).

**Figure 3: Perceptions of family among 20 to 39 year-olds in 2013**



Data source: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, FLB (2012), weighted data

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

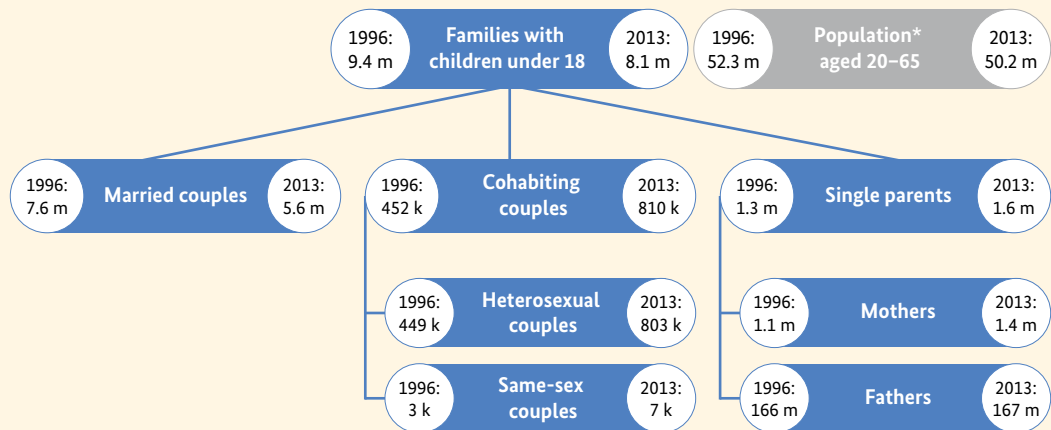
## 2.2 Families in Germany

### Married parents still the most frequent family form

In 2013, there were 8.1 million families with under-aged children living in the home. That was 1.3 million families fewer than in 1996. And at 5.6 million, married parents represented the most frequent family type (70 percent of all families) – this is despite the fact that their numbers have dropped since 1996. By way of contrast, the number of cohabiting couples and single parent families has increased since 1996. In 2013, there were 810,000 cohabiting couples (10 percent of all families) and 1.6 million single-parent families (20 percent of all families). This amounts to 300,000 more cohabiting couples and single-parent families than 16 years previously (Fig. 4). In the same period, the number of people aged between 20 and 65 dropped by approximately two million.<sup>14</sup> The number of families and the trends in their constellations reflect demographic change in Germany.

<sup>14</sup> Census figures 2013: From 2011 results based on 2011 Census, preliminary population figures. For further information on the 2011 Census, see [www.zensus2011.de](http://www.zensus2011.de)

Figure 4: Families\* and population\* in 1996 and 2013

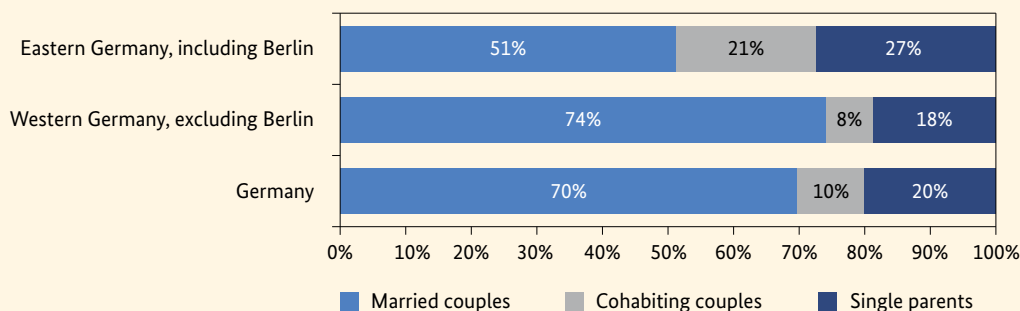


\* Figures for families and population 2013. From 2011: Results based on 2011 Census, preliminary population figures  
 Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Haushalte und Familien. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2013

In 2013 there were 7,000 same-sex, cohabiting couples with under-aged children living in the home (rainbow families). This represents less than one percent of all families in Germany.

As in the past, family forms 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 the figure for western Germany is almost two-thirds. As a result, the number of cohabiting couples (21 percent) and single-parent families (27 percent) is higher in the east than in the west, where only eight percent of parents are not married and 18 percent of families are single-parent families (Fig. 5).

Figure 5: Family forms in eastern and western Germany in 2013 (in %)

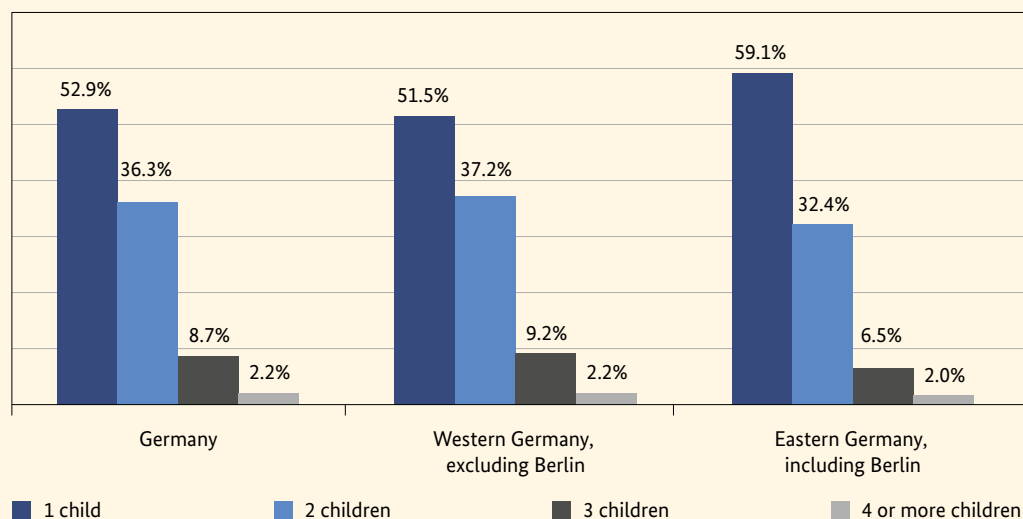


Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Haushalte und Familien. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2013

### Most families have one or two children

In 2013, more than half the families in Germany had one child (53 percent), more than a third had two children (36 percent) and 11 percent had three or more. While there is no notable difference between eastern and western Germany, in the east slightly more families have one child (59 percent) than in the west (52 percent) (Fig. 6). This does not, however, allow conclusions to be drawn regarding the total number of children born per woman because the figures represent a mere snapshot and some women may have gone on to have more children (see Section II 2.7 Births in Germany).

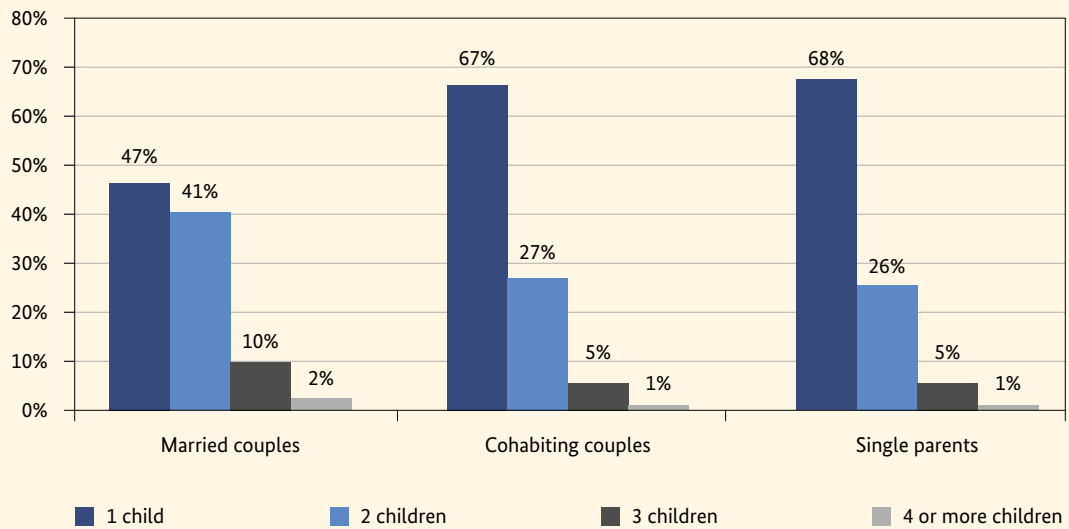
Figure 6: Families by number of children under 18 and region in 2013



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Haushalte und Familien. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2013

Segregated according to family type, married couples tend to have more children than cohabiting couples or single parents. In 2013, 41 percent of married couples had two children, while only just over a quarter of cohabiting couples or single parents had two children (Fig. 7). Consequently, in 2013, cohabiting couples and single parents tended to have only one child.

Figure 7: Family forms by number of under-age children in 2013



Note: All children are under 18

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Haushalte und Familien. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2013

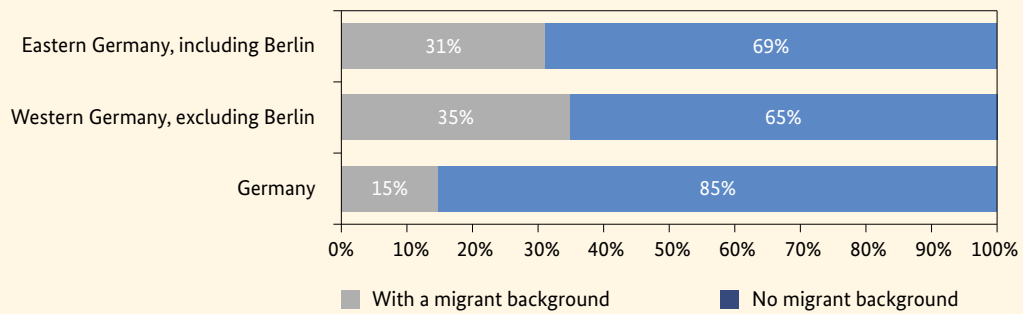
### One in three families have migrant backgrounds

In 2013, one in three families in Germany with under-aged children living at home had a migrant background.<sup>15</sup> These were most frequently found in western Germany – one in three (35 percent) versus just under one in seven (15 percent) in eastern Germany (Fig. 8).

15 The definition of migrant background matches that of the Federal Statistical Office: people with a migrant background are all 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 all Germans born in Germany with at least one migrant parent or one non-German parent born in Germany.



Figure 8: Families with under-age children by migrant background in 2013

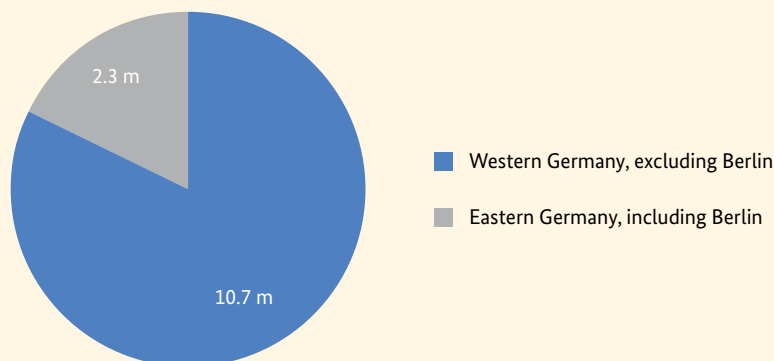


Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): *Bevölkerung in Familien/Lebensformen am Hauptwohnsitz*

### 2.3 Children in families

In 2013, some 13 million under-aged children lived in Germany, of which 2.3 million in eastern Germany (18 percent) and 10.7 million in western Germany (82 percent) (Fig. 9).

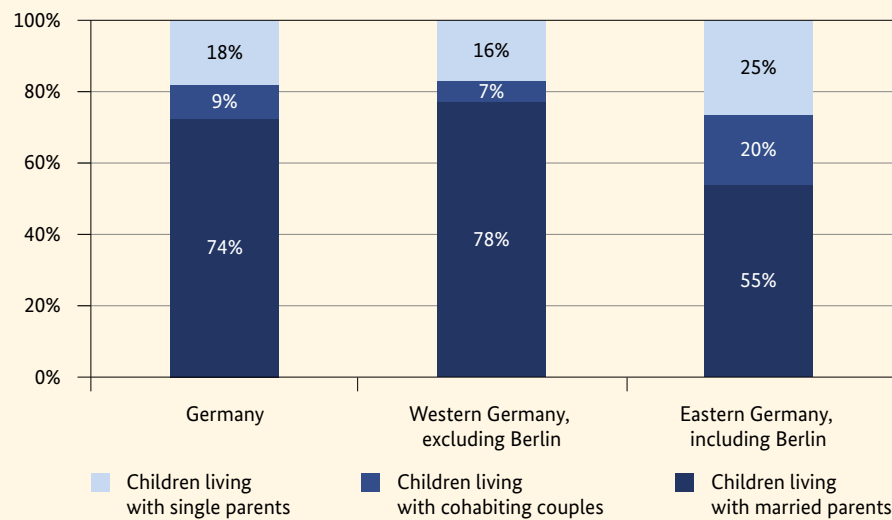
Figure 9: Under-age children in Germany in 2013 (in millions)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): *Haushalte und Familien. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2013*

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. 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: 78 percent of minors lived with married parents. This compares with 55 percent in eastern Germany. In eastern Germany, children tended to live more frequently with cohabiting parents or single parents than those in western Germany (Fig. 10).

**Figure 10: Under-age children by family type in 2013 (in %)**

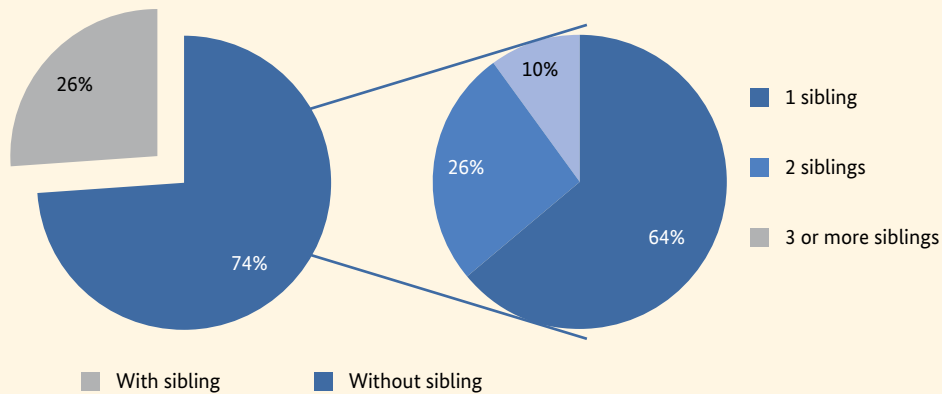


Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): *Haushalte und Familien. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2013*

Although slightly more than half of families had only one child in 2013 (see also Fig. 6), three-quarters of children in Germany grew up with at least a sister or a brother (Fig. 11). Only a quarter had no sibling or siblings or did not yet have any. Looked at over time, families in Germany still have two children on average. In 1996, an average 1.65 under-aged children lived in families, while in 2013 the average was 1.61.<sup>16</sup>

Of the 74 percent of children with siblings, almost two-thirds had a sister or a brother, a quarter had two siblings and ten percent had three or more.

Figure 11: Under-age children by number of siblings in 2013 (in %)



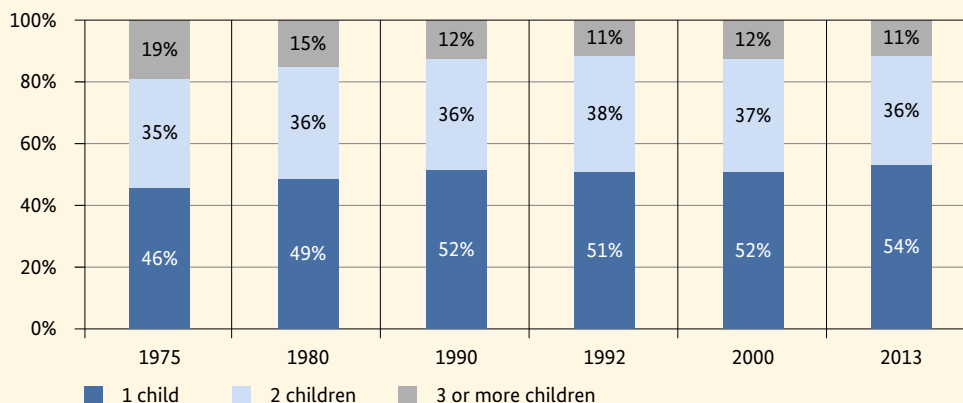
Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Haushalte und Familien. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2013

## 2.4 Spotlight on large families

The number of large families in Germany with several children has remained almost unchanged since German reunification and lies within the European average. 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 (Fig. 12).

In 2013, about one in nine families had more than two children (873,000). Most of these had three under-aged children (700,000). Almost two percent of all families with under-aged children had four under-aged children (128,000) and almost one percent had five or more (45,000 families).<sup>17</sup> Western Germany had proportionately more large families (11 percent) than eastern Germany (9 percent) (see also Fig. 7).

Figure 12: Families by number of children 1975–2013 (in %)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt: Mikrozensus. Up to 1990, figures refer to former West Germany, and from 1992 for reunified Germany. Figures from 2011 are based on the 2011 Census.

17 BMFSFJ (Ed.) (2014): Mehrkindfamilien in Deutschland. Dossier.

Large families usually include small children. In 2012, in more than half of the families with three children, the youngest child was under six (in 71 percent of families with four or more children).<sup>18</sup> In 11 percent of all large families, the family was headed by a single parent.

### **Large families are socially heterogeneous**

In 2012, 36 percent of all large families were middle class. That means they had enjoyed mid-level education and were averagely situated financially. Some 30 percent of large families were resource rich in terms of education and income, while 23 percent were resource poor.<sup>19</sup> Parents with three or more under-aged children were basically happy with their lives, as were parents with fewer children.

However, large families face an above-average risk of poverty. When compared with couples with only one or two children, parents with three children are three-times as likely to face poverty (16 percent). In families with four or more children, one in four is at risk of poverty (28 percent).

In general, large families' incomes 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. When looking at the various family constellations according to income and taking account of the number of people in the household, 70 percent of large families have less than the average family income.<sup>20</sup>

At 12 percent, twice as many couples with three children receive basic security benefits under Book II of the German Social Code than do couples with one or two children. Among families with four or more children, one in five receives basic security benefits.<sup>21</sup>

## **2.5 Spotlight on single parents**

In 2013, there were 1.6 million single parents in Germany, among them 1.4 million single mothers and 167,000 single fathers. Nine out of ten single parents are women.<sup>22</sup> This means that one in five families comprise a single parent with a child or children living at home. Single parents are now an integral component of Germany's diverse family life. For statistical purposes, they are defined as households in which a single parent lives alone with children. This can, however, involve many different types of living arrangements.

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18 BMFSFJ (Ed.) (2014): Mehrkindfamilien in Deutschland. Dossier.

19 Ibid.

20 BMFSFJ (Ed.) (2014): Dossier Mehrkindfamilien in Deutschland. Dossier, p. 47 ff.

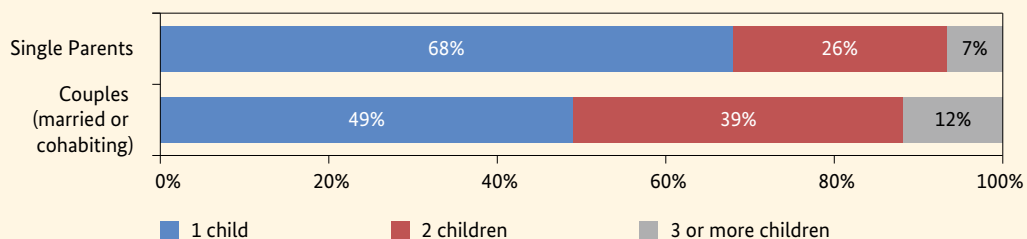
21 BMFSFJ (Ed.) (2014): Dossier Mehrkindfamilien in Deutschland. Dossier, p. 25 ff.

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

The single-parent family is on the rise. Only for a few women is single parenthood an unchanged 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 as time goes by. 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>23</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>24</sup> Subjective perception of single parenthood is less associated with the household and more with the actual division of everyday responsibilities. While single mothers do not share their home with a partner, they are not necessarily solely responsible for their child or children. Some 63 percent of children living with their single mother say that their father is very important or important.<sup>25</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>26</sup>

Households run by single parents are more likely to have only one under-age child<sup>27</sup> (68 percent) compared to those run by couples (49 percent). One quarter of single parents have two children and seven percent have three or more children at home (Fig. 13).<sup>28</sup> This means that one in three single parents have two or more under-aged children.

**Figure 13: Single parent and couple-run households with children under 18 in 2013 by number of under-age children living in the home (in %)**



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): *Haushalte und Familien. Ergebnisse des Mikrozensus 2013*

23 BMFSFJ (2012): *Monitor Familienforschung: Alleinerziehende in Deutschland – Lebenssituationen und Lebenswirklichkeiten von Müttern und Kindern. Ausgabe 28.*

24 See BMFSFJ (2011): *Lebenswelten und Lebenswirklichkeiten von Alleinerziehenden*, p. 7

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

26 Data source: Sozio-oekonomisches Panel (SOEP), „Familien in Deutschland“, FiDv1.2. Calculations: Sinus Sociovision.

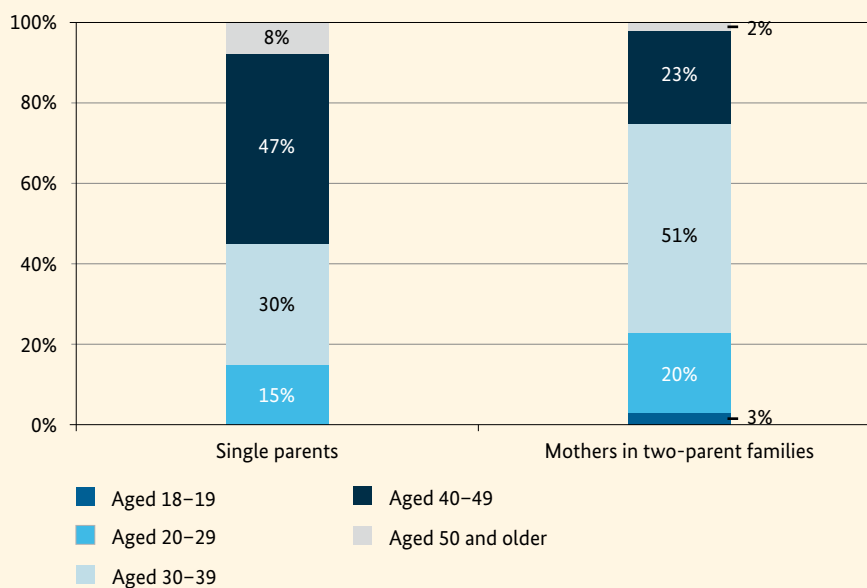
27 Unless otherwise stated, the following always refers to single parents with at least one under-age child.

28 Microcensus results taken from: Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): *Fachserie 1 Reihe 3: Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit. Haushalte und Familien. Results of the microcensus 2012.*

In 2013, single-parent households tended to have children aged ten or older (46 percent). By way of contrast, mothers in two-parent families were slightly more likely to have small children aged up to three years old (25 percent compared with 15 percent).

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 41 percent are aged between 35 and 44, and 27 percent are 45 or older. Only around one quarter of single parents are aged between 25 and 34 (26 percent), and six percent are under 25 (Fig. 14).

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

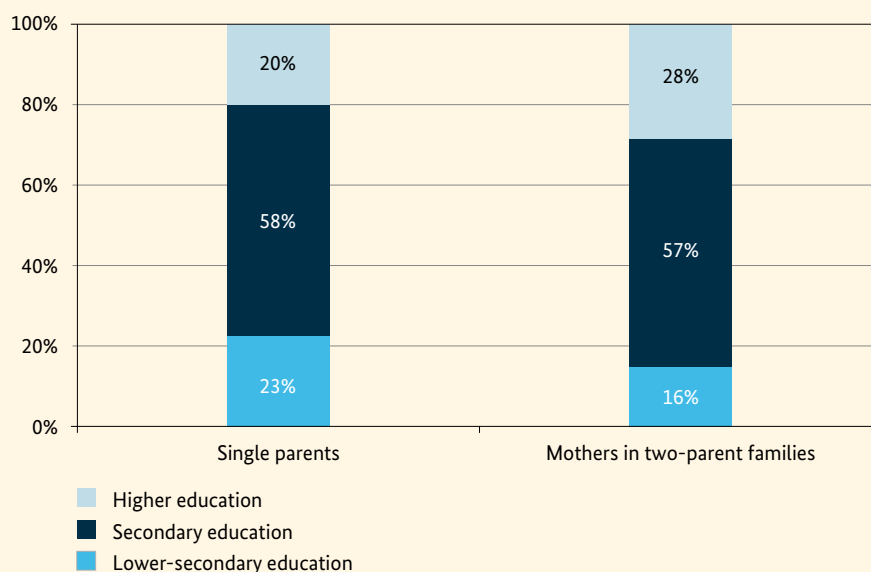


Data source: Sozio-oekonomisches Panel (SOEP), „Familien in Deutschland“, FiDv1.2. Calculations: Sinus Sociovision.

### Single parents mostly well educated

Some 78 percent of single parents have completed secondary education or tertiary education. In 2013, almost one quarter of single mothers had poor educational qualifications. This compared with only 16 percent of mothers in two-parent families (Fig. 15). The older the single mother, the more likely she is to have a high level of education. Only about four percent of single mothers under 25 and 28 percent aged 45 to 55 have a high level of education, such as an undergraduate (university) degree, a master craftsman/technician certificate or a doctorate.

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



Source: Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung s14225. Calculations: Prognos AG.

### Single parents poorly off financially despite high employment rates

Two-thirds of single parents go to work (see Section III). Nonetheless, their financial situation is often more fraught than that of two-parent families with one or two children. Looking at the various family types and taking account of the number of people in the household, it appears that 80 percent of single parents earn less than the average family income. This is reflected in the number at risk of poverty: while 40 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>29</sup>

In some cases, single parents do not earn sufficient income to avoid having to claim benefit. Some 35 percent of single parents receiving basic security benefits (Book II of the Social Code) are employed. Single parents receive basic security benefits more than five times as frequently as two-parent families, while 39 percent of single parents with children under 18 receive basic security benefits, but only seven percent of two-parent families.<sup>30</sup> Overall, 29 percent of single mothers with under-age children receive unemployment benefit II (Arbeitslosengeld II) or social benefit (Sozialgeld). The number of mothers with relatively young children is particularly high: 45 percent of all mothers whose youngest child is aged between one and three are reliant on welfare support.<sup>31</sup> The older the age of the youngest child, the less likely the mother needs to claim benefit.

29 Prognos AG (2014): Gesamtevaluation der ehe- und familienbezogenen Leistungen, p. 386.

30 Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2013): Analyse des Arbeitsmarktes für Alleinerziehende in Deutschland 2012.

31 Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2013): Analyse des Arbeitsmarktes für Alleinerziehende in Deutschland 2012

To offer single parents greater opportunity to take on gainful employment and become financially independent, they need a well-established network of flexible, needs-based childcare options, ongoing and timely work placement, needs-based training and a family-friendly working world.

## 2.6 The desire to have children in Germany

People’s desire to have children in Germany remains high and is now greater when compared with 2001. In 2011, people aged 20 – 39 saw an average 2.26 children as ideal. Taking account of their actual circumstances, the same group wanted 1.77 children on average in 2011 (Fig. 16).

**Figure 16: Desire to have children among 20 to 39 year-olds**

	2001	2006	2011
<b>Ideal number of children desired</b>	1.57*	2.06*	2.26**
		2005	2011
<b>Realistic number of children desired</b>		1.44***	1.77**

\* Data source: Eurobarometer (20–39 age group); \*\* Data source: pairfam (age groups 20, 26–30, 36–39);

\*\*\* Data source: GGS (20–39 age group)

Note: With regard to the **ideal number of children desired**, respondents are usually asked how many children they would like to have in an ideal world. With regard to the **realistic number of children desired**, they are usually asked how many children they would like to have given their current circumstances.

Source: Dorbritz/Naderi (2013)<sup>32</sup>

Young people between the ages of 16 and 24 in particular believe that having several children is ideal. In 2013, 26 percent of 16 to 24 year-olds saw three or more children as ideal. Only 11 percent thought so in 2007.<sup>33</sup>

When compared with France, a country with a significantly higher birth rate than Germany, the desire to have children among people under 30 differs hardly at all. Fewer than five percent of under 30s in both countries say they do not want to have children. In France, 82 percent of 16 to 49 year-olds say their country is child-friendly. This compares with the majority of people (52 percent) in the same age group in Germany, who say that Germany is not very child-friendly. Only a third say that Germany is child-friendly.<sup>34</sup>

32 Dorbritz/Naderi (2013): Trendwende beim Kinderwunsch?, in: Bevölkerungsforschung Aktuell, Mitteilungen aus dem Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, Ausgabe 4/2013, p. 2–7

33 BMFSFJ (2015): Monitor Familienforschung Nr. 34 „Familienbilder in Deutschland und Frankreich“ and IfD Allensbach (2015): Familienbilder in Deutschland und Frankreich.

34 Ibid.



### Gap between desired and actual family size

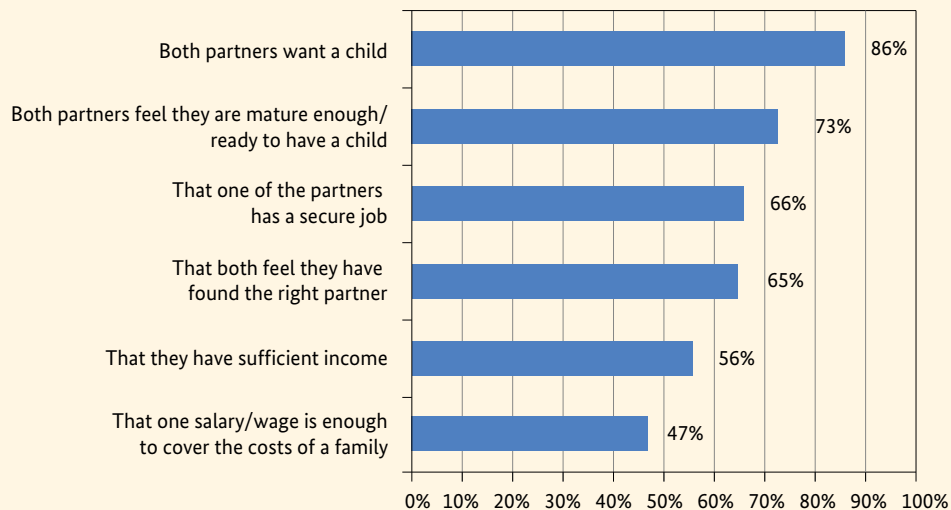
Nonetheless, the actual number of children born in a family lags behind the ideal. In Germany, parents aged between 40 and 49 say an average 2.2 children is ideal. In reality, families have an average 1.9 children and a quarter remain childless.

Age is the most common reason not to have more children. Some 56 percent of mothers in Germany say that they are too old to add to the family. This is the case for 40 percent of 35 to 39 year-olds. In France, 42 percent of mothers overall and 27 percent of mothers aged 35 to 39 say they feel they are too old for more children. By way of contrast, one in three childless women aged between 25 and 29 in Germany feel they are too young to start a family. This compares with nine percent in France. Thus, in Germany, the subjective period for having children is considerably narrower than in France.

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. 17). 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.<sup>35</sup>

Figure 17: 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 Nr. 34 „Familienbilder in Deutschland und Frankreich“ and IfD Allensbach (2015): Familienbilder in Deutschland und Frankreich; own presentation

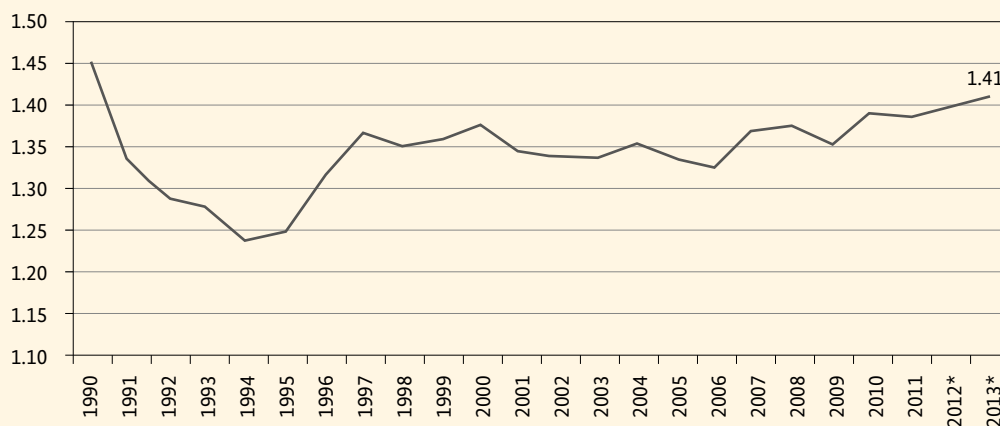
35 BMFSFJ (2015): Monitor Familienforschung Nr. 34 „Familienbilder in Deutschland und Frankreich“ and IfD Allensbach (2015): Familienbilder in Deutschland und Frankreich.

## 2.7 Births

In 2013, the total (crude) birth rate for Germany was 1.41 children per woman (Fig. 18). This was slightly higher than the rate for 2012 (1.40). However, the total birth rate provides little information about actual births because it only reflects births in a specific calendar year and not births to women in the course of their lives (see also Fig. 24: Average number of children per mother, in this section).<sup>36</sup>

Because the birth rate is linked to the number of women aged 15 to 49, 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 census it was 1.40 for the same year.

**Figure 18: Birth rate trends 1990 – 2013**



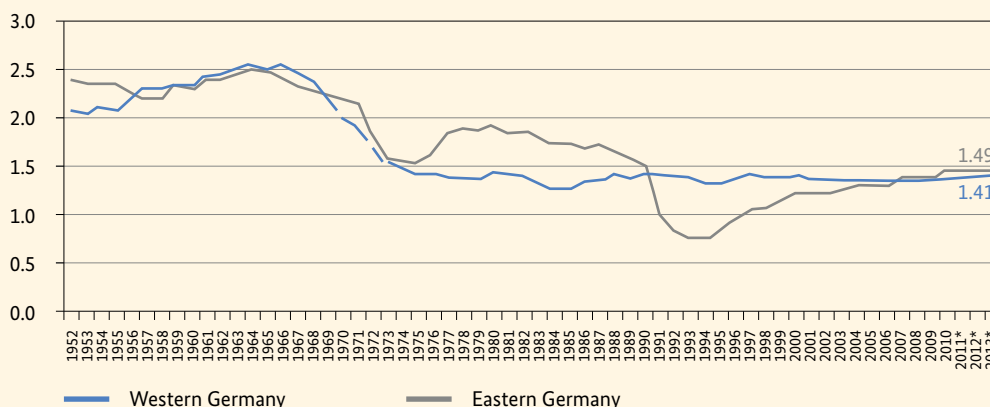
\* From 2011, results of the 2011 census taken into account. 2011: based on population figures on the date of the census (9 May 2011)

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. 19).

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

Figure 19: Trends in total birth rates 1990 – 2013 in eastern and western Germany



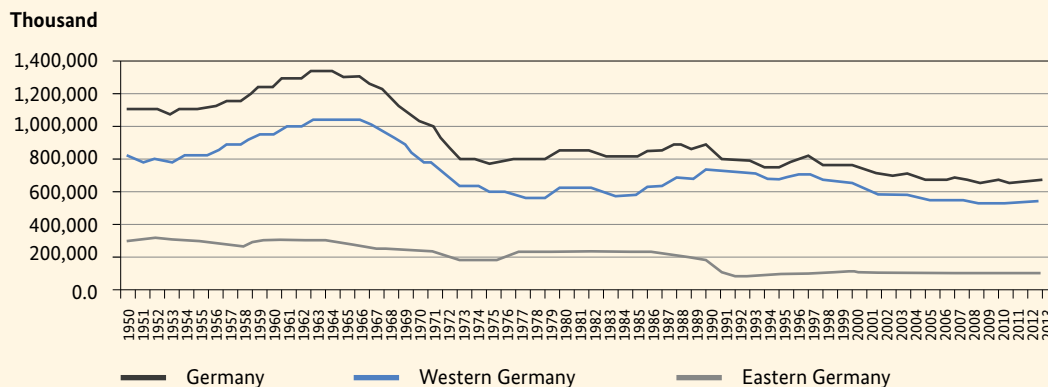
\* Results based on the population count on census day (9 May 2011). Preliminary figures for 2012 and 2013.

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2015

### Live births in Germany

Some 682,069 children were born in Germany in 2013 (Fig. 20). 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 8,500 more than in 2012.

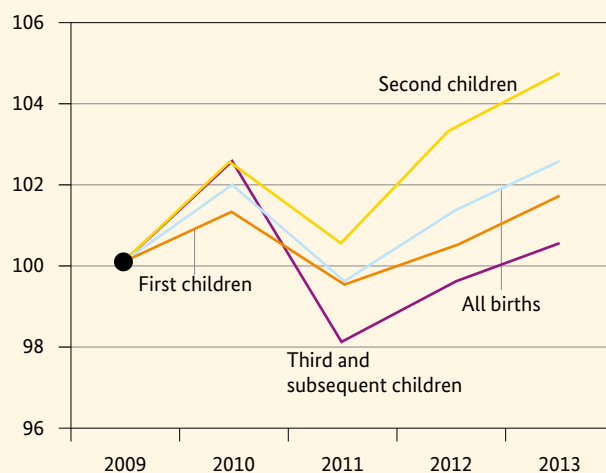
Figure 20: Live births 1950 – 2013 (in thousands)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Statistik der Geburten, neue und alte Bundesländer jeweils ohne Berlin

Some 49 percent of live births were first children, 34 percent were second children and 16 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 2009 (Fig. 21).

Figure 21: Relative change in birth rates by birth order compared with 2009 (2009 = 100)



Source: © Statistisches Bundesamt, Wiesbaden 2014

The number of children born each year largely depends on the number of women of childbearing 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. This did not, however, lead to a similar-sized drop in birth rates in East Germany,<sup>40</sup> the reason being the rise in the frequency of births, meaning the number of children born per woman. Today, the birth rate among younger-aged women (under 20) is lower for almost all ages than it was in the previous year.<sup>41</sup> The proportion of women of childbearing age has consequently been on the decline for several years, although the birth rate remains relatively constant.

37 Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): Geburtenverhalten 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.

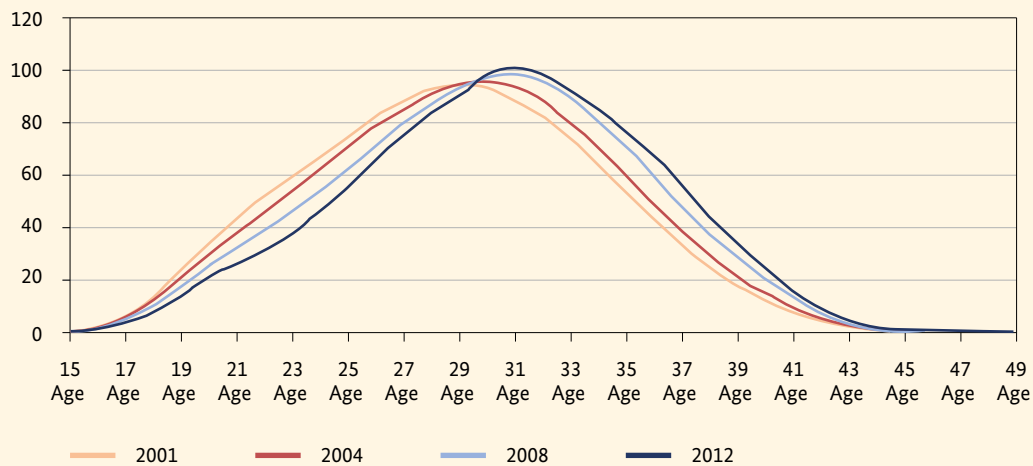
41 Ibid.

### First-time mothers aged 29 on average

In 2013, first-time mothers were 29 years old on average. The trend towards later births thus continues. 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. More than half of first-born children were born to mothers aged between 26 and 33 (55 percent), while only three percent of first-borns had mothers aged over 40.

In 2012, women aged between 26 and 36 had the highest birth rate (Fig. 22). This compares with women aged 21 to 30 in 1964.<sup>42</sup> This trend can be seen across Europe, for example in France.

Figure 22: Live births per 1,000 women by mother's age

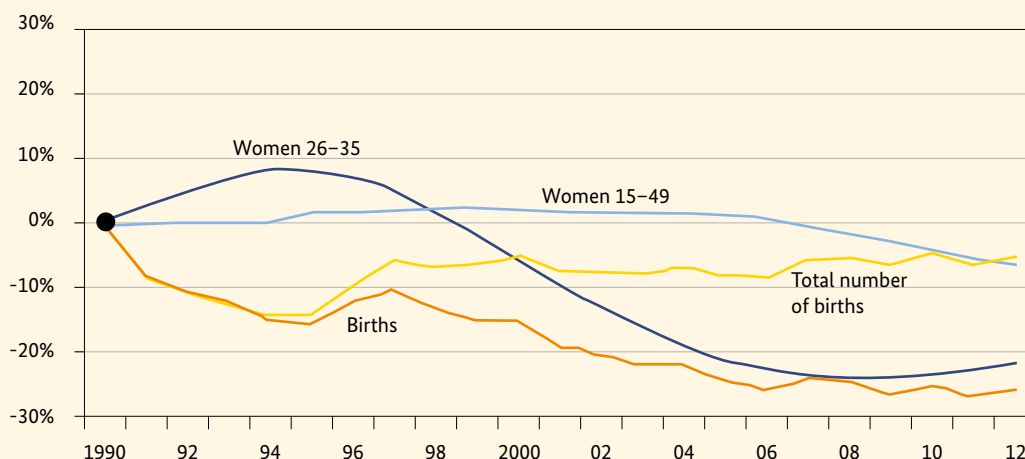


Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): *Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit – Natürliche Bevölkerungsbewegung 2012, Geburtsjahrmethode*

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. 23).

<sup>42</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): *Geburtenverhalten und Familiensituation in Deutschland*, p. 13. Figures for 1964 relate to former West Germany only.

Figure 23: Trends in specific birth indicators compared with 1990 (in %) (1990 = 100%)



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): *Geburtenverhalten und Familiensituation in Deutschland*, p. 14

Half of second-born children followed the first-born within 3.3 years.<sup>43</sup> In 2012, 18 percent of second-born children born followed the first-born within two years and 44 percent within three years. Second and third-born children were born approximately 3.9 years apart.<sup>44</sup>

Of all women born in or before 1977, those who became mothers had an average two children (Fig. 24).<sup>45</sup> Almost half of mothers had two children and one in five had more than two.

Figure 24: Average number of children per mother<sup>1</sup> in 2012

Year of Birth	Age in 2012	Germany	Western Germany <sup>2</sup>	Eastern Germany <sup>2</sup>
1983-1987 .....	25-29 Jahre	1.5	1.5	1.4
1978-1982 .....	30-34 Jahre	1.7	1.7	1.6
1973-1977 .....	35-39 Jahre	1.9	1.9	1.8
1968-1972 .....	40-44 Jahre	2.0	2.0	1.8
1963-1967 .....	45-49 Jahre	2.0	2.0	1.8
1958-1962 .....	50-54 Jahre	2.0	2.1	1.9
1953-1957 .....	55-59 Jahre	2.0	2.0	2.0
1948-1952 .....	60-64 Jahre	2.0	2.0	1.9
1943-1947 .....	65-69 Jahre	2.1	2.1	2.0
1937-1942 .....	70-75 Jahre	2.3	2.3	2.2

<sup>1</sup> Only mothers who stated the number of children born

<sup>2</sup> Excluding West Berlin and East Berlin, respectively

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): *Geburtenverhalten und Familiensituation in Deutschland*, p. 25 ff., results of the Microcensus 2012

43 Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): *Geburtenverhalten und Familiensituation in Deutschland*, pp. 23-25

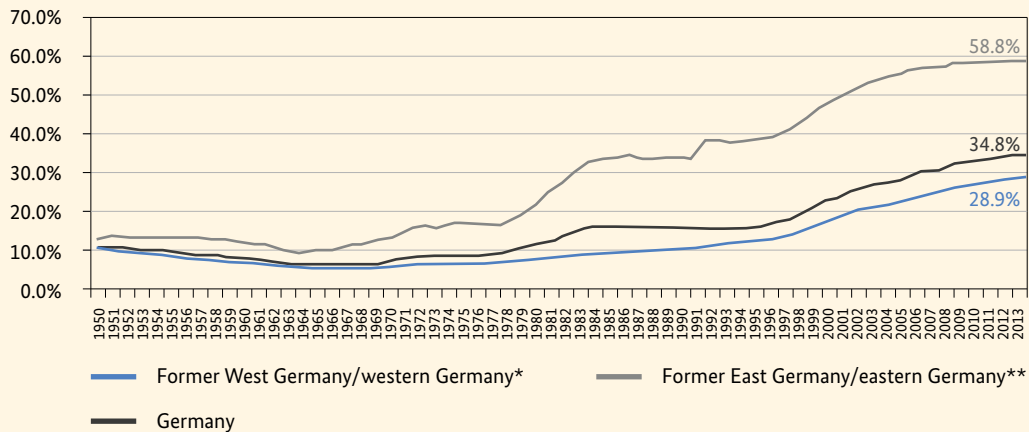
44 Ibid.

45 Ibid., p. 25

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

A look at the number of live births in 2013 shows that 35 percent of all new-born children were born to parents who were not married. In eastern Germany, the number of live births out of wedlock was 59 percent – almost twice that in western Germany (29 percent) (Fig. 25).<sup>46</sup> There were strong regional differences: in 2012, the Baden-Württemberg district of Alb-Donau had the lowest figure (17 percent) and the Brandenburg district of Ostprignitz-Ruppin the highest (71 percent).<sup>47</sup>

Figure 25: Live births out of wedlock among all live births in a given year in Germany from 1950 to 2013 (in %)



\* From 1990, excluding Berlin

\*\* From 1990, including Berlin

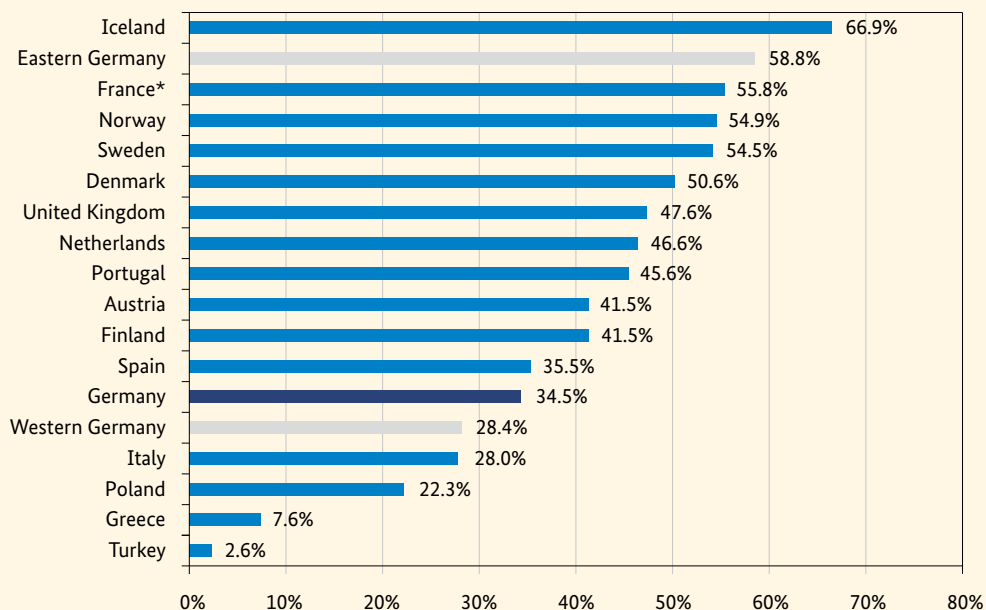
Data source: Federal Statistical Office

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. 26).

46 Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014 and Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, 2014, Wiesbaden.

47 Max-Planck-Institut für demografische Forschung (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)

Figure 26: Live births out of wedlock compared with all live births in Europe in 2012 (in %)



\* Data for 2011

Data source: Eurostat 2015, eastern Germany, including 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>48</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>49</sup>

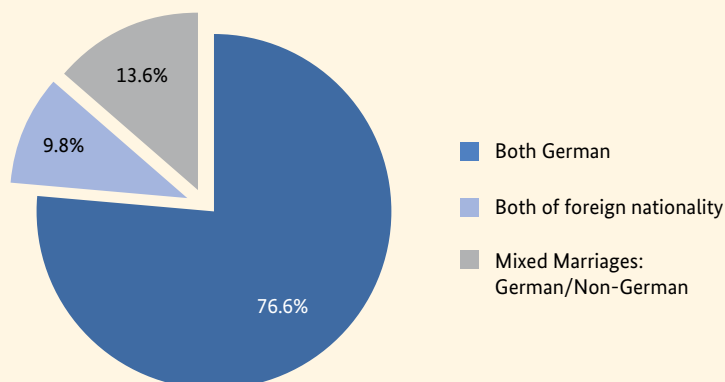
In nine out of ten live births in 2012, at least one parent was German. While more than three-quarters of live births were to parents of German nationality, almost 10 percent were to parents of foreign nationality (Fig. 27).

48 Max-Planck-Institut für demografische Forschung (2014): Press released 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)

49 Ibid.



Figure 27: Live births in 2012 by parents' nationality



Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): *Bevölkerung und Erwerbstätigkeit – Natürliche Bevölkerungsbewegung 2012*

## 2.8 Childlessness in Germany

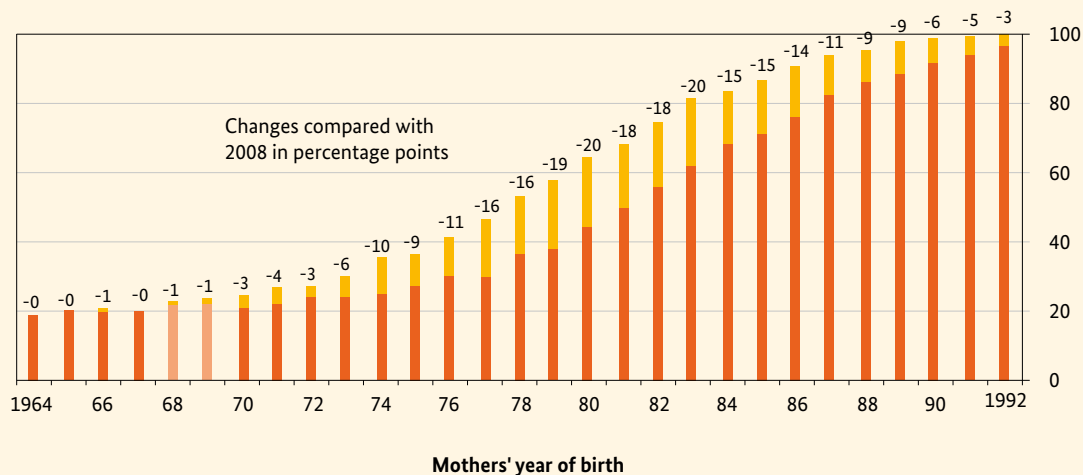
In 2012, 22 percent of women aged 40 to 44 were childless. Childlessness was thus almost twice as high in 2012 as in 1990. In recent years, however, the increase has been only minimal. At 15 percent, the number of childless women aged 40 to 44 in eastern Germany was lower than in western Germany (23 percent).<sup>50</sup>

While the number of childless women has increased overall, it dropped significantly when compared with 2008 – especially in the periods 1979 to 1983 (women aged 29 to 33 in 2012) and 1974 to 1978 (women aged 34 to 38 in 2012) (Fig. 28). Since 2008, childlessness among women aged 29 to 33 has dropped by between 18 and 20 percentage points and by between 9 and 16 percentage points among women aged 34 to 38.<sup>51</sup> Conversely, this means that since 2008, women in these age groups gave birth to children more often than women of other ages.

<sup>50</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): *Geburtenverhalten und Familiensituation in Deutschland*, p. 32

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33

**Figure 28: Childless women among all women of a given age in 2012 and changes compared with childlessness in 2008 (in %)**

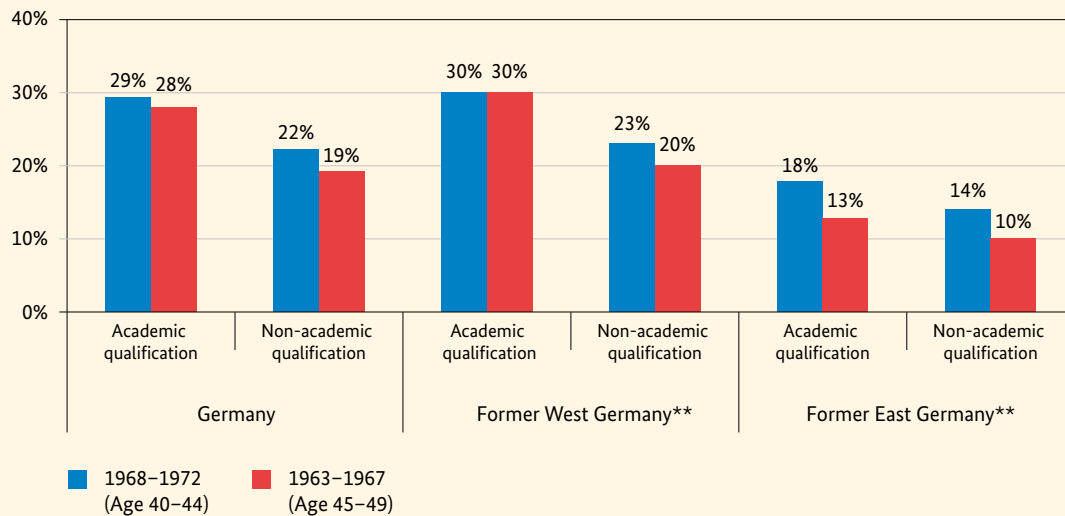


Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): *Geburtenverhalten und Familiensituation in Deutschland*, p. 32

Childlessness is higher among women academics than among women with mid-level or poor education. However, this can only be observed for women in western Germany (Fig. 29). In 2012, 30 percent of women in western Germany aged 45 to 49 who had an academic qualification were childless. This compared with 20 percent of women with no academic qualification. No further increase in childlessness occurred. The number of childless women aged 40 to 44 is no higher than among those aged 45 to 49. Both age groups have a childlessness rate of around 30 percent. Recent studies also show that childlessness among women academics has not risen further and actually dropped slightly in the past few years.<sup>52</sup>

52 See M. Bujard (2012): *Talsole bei Akademikerinnen durchschritten? Kinderzahl und Kinderlosigkeit in Deutschland nach Bildungs- und Berufsgruppen*. Expertise für das BMFSFJ, Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung, Wiesbaden, also published as: BiB Working Paper 4/2012. See also BMFSFJ (2012): *Familienreport 2012*.

**Figure 29: Childless women among all women born in given years according to the highest professional qualification in 2012**



\* Only women who responded to the question regarding births

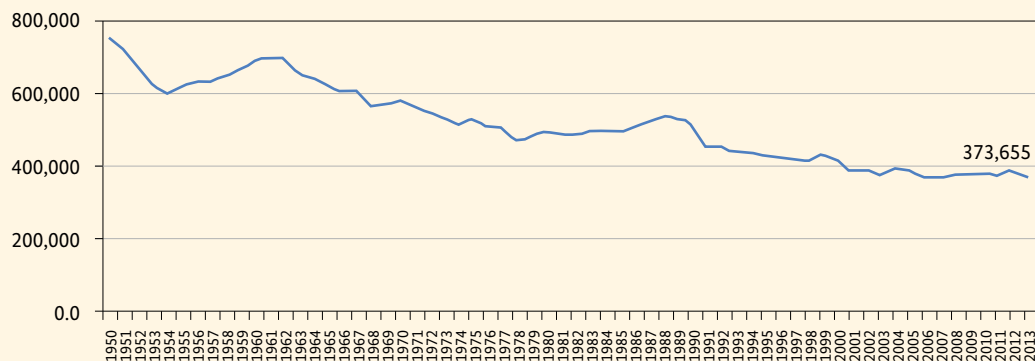
\*\* Berlin only

Source: Extract and own presentation from Statistisches Bundesamt (2013): *Geburtenverhalten und Familiensituation in Deutschland*, p. 36

## 2.9 Marriage

Some 373,655 couples married in 2012. This is 13,768 fewer than in the previous year (Fig. 30).

**Figure 30: Marriages in Germany between 1950 and 2013**

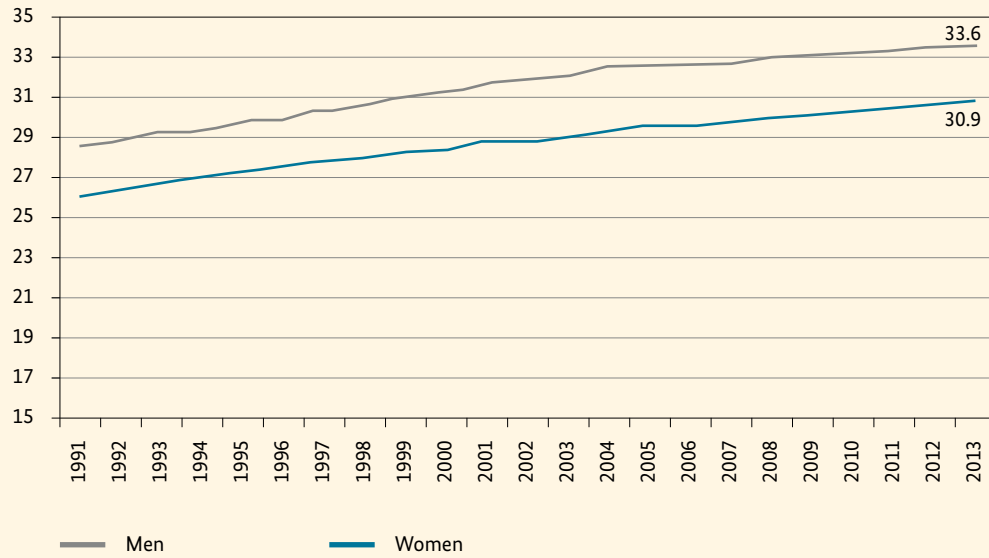


Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): *Statistik der Eheschließungen*

In 2013, two-thirds of marriages were first marriages and 16 percent were second or successive marriages. In the same year, the age of couples entering into their first marriage in Germany was 33.6 for men and 30.9 for women (Fig. 31).<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): *Statistik der Eheschließungen*.

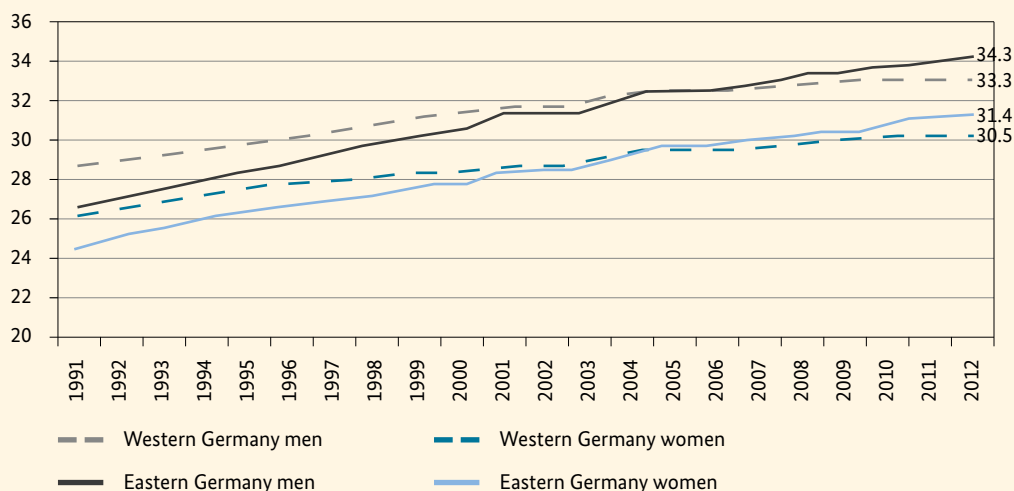
Figure 31: Average age at first marriage in Germany in 2013



Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Statistik der Eheschließungen

Ages at the time of a first marriage have gradually levelled out between eastern and western Germany. Especially for women and men from eastern Germany, their age when marrying for the first time is steadily increasing. Thus, when entering into their first marriage, newly married couples from eastern Germany are slightly older than those in western Germany (Fig. 32).

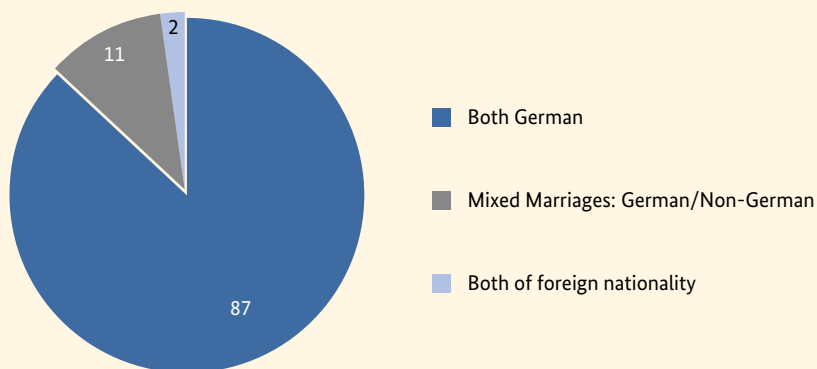
Figure 32: Average age at first marriage in eastern and western Germany between 1991 and 2012



Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Statistik der Eheschließungen

In some 87 percent of marriages that took place in 2012, both partners held German citizenship (Fig. 38). Among 11 percent, at least one of the partners was of foreign nationality (binational or mixed marriage) and in two percent of marriages both partners were of foreign nationality. Thus, when compared with 2011, binational marriages have remained constant (12 percent).

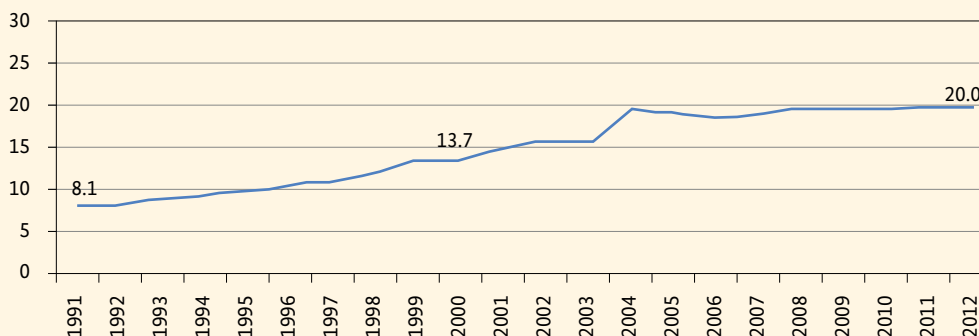
Figure 33: Marriages by partners' nationality in 2012



Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014. Calculations: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung

In 20 percent of marriages entered into in 2012, children had been born prior to the marriage. This is more than double the figure for 1991 (Fig. 34). The number in western Germany was 17 percent and in eastern Germany more than one in three newly married couples already had children (34 percent).

Figure 34: Children born prior to parents' marriage in 2012 (in %)



Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014

## 2.10 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>54</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>55</sup> And expectations on marriage are rising. If these are not fulfilled, as can be seen in the divorce rates, people tend to opt for divorce far faster than they did ten or twenty years ago.<sup>56</sup>

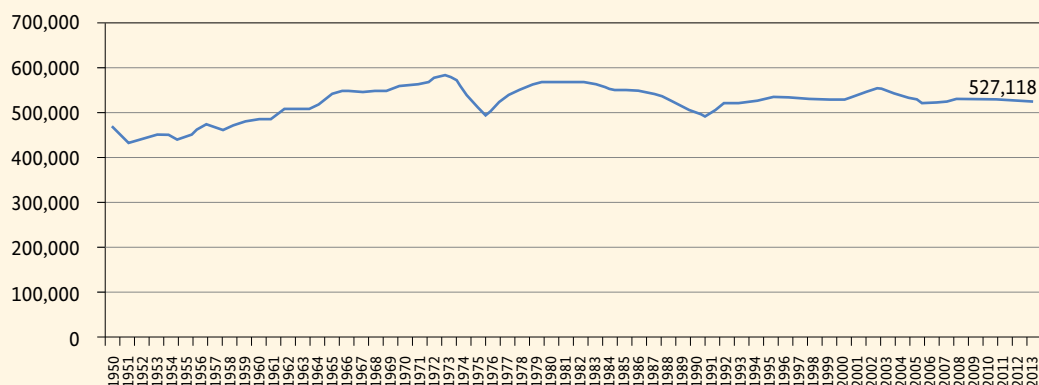
Some 527,118 marriages were dissolved in 2013 (Fig. 35). As in the past, this was mostly due to the death of a spouse. In 2012, this was the reason behind 68 percent of cases, while 169,833 marriages ended in legal divorce. This represents about one third of all marriages dissolved. In 2013, 5.2 percent fewer marriages ended in divorce when compared with 2012.

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

55 Ibid., p. 7

56 Ibid.,

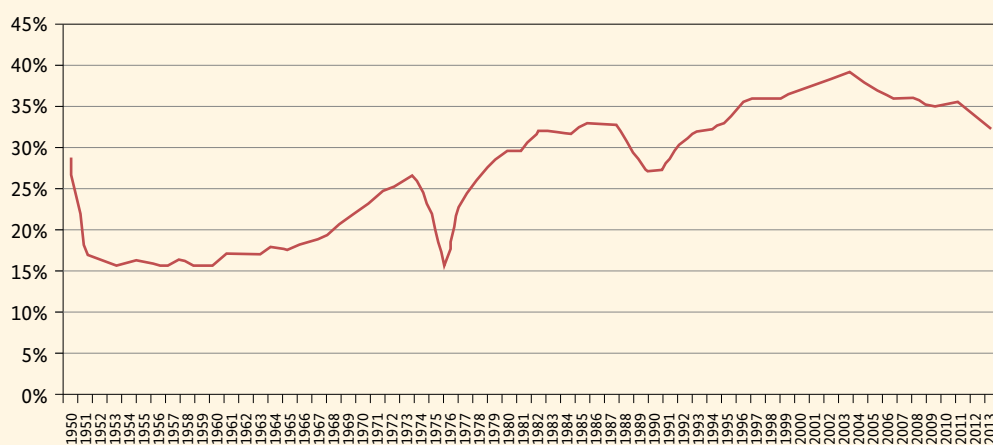
Figure 35: Marriage dissolutions 1950–2013



Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2015): Statistik der Ehescheidungen

Thus legal divorces made up 32 percent of all marriage dissolutions (Fig. 36). Of the approximately 18 million marriages that existed in 2012, one percent ended in legal divorce and three percent were dissolved in that same year.

Figure 36: Legal divorces among total marriage dissolutions (in %)

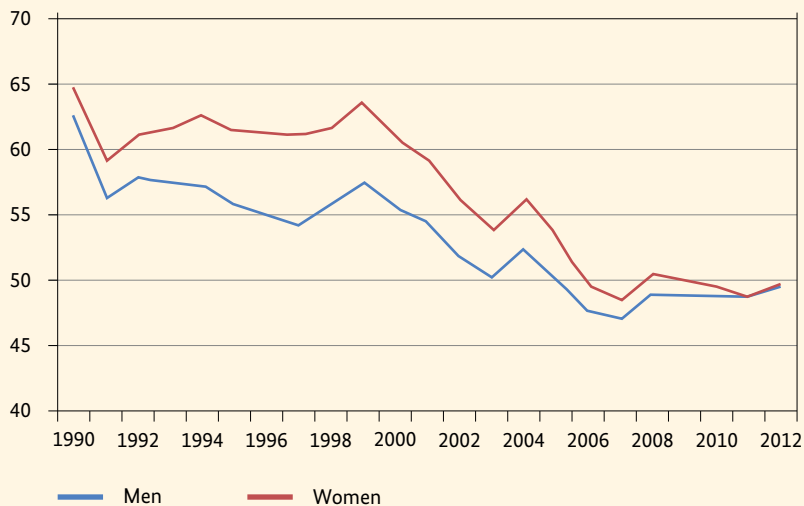


Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2015): Statistik der Ehescheidungen

In 2013, marriages that ended in divorce lasted an average 14 years and eight months, indicating that the trend towards longer marriages continues. This compares with 20 years ago, when marriages lasted an average 11.7 years. According to current divorce rates, around 36 percent of marriages entered into in a given year will end in divorce within the following 25 years. The highest number of divorces occur 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 2013, men were on average 45.7 years old at the time of divorce and women 42.8 years old. Ten years previously,

the average age at the time of divorce was 36.3 for women and 39.2 for men.<sup>57</sup> Almost half of divorced women and men in Germany remarry. The rate of remarriage is slightly higher among women than among men (Fig. 37).

**Figure 37: Combined figures for remarriage among divorcees\* in Germany for the period 1990–2012**



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.

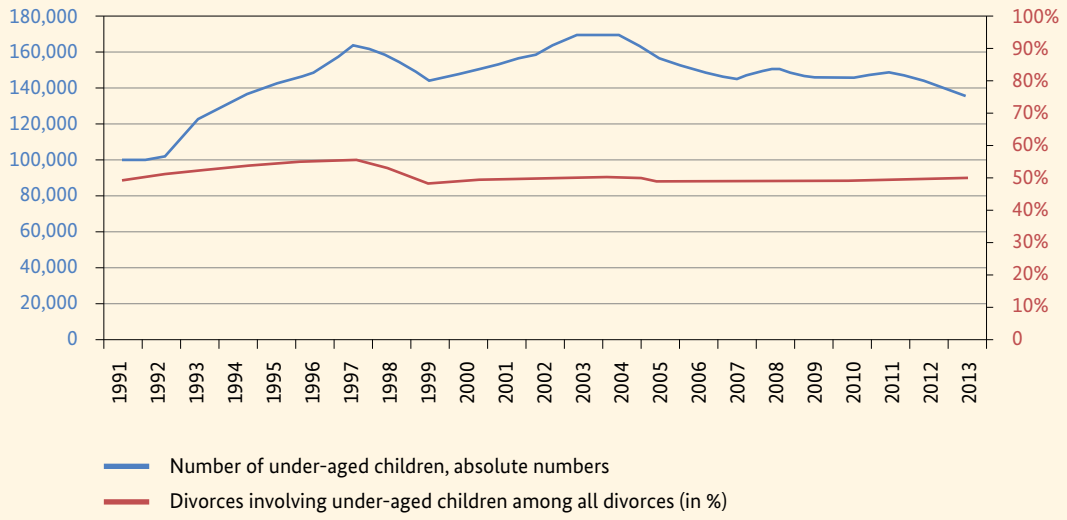
In about half of all divorces, the couple had common under-aged children (Fig. 38). In 2013, a total of 88,863 divorces involving common under-aged children took place, representing 50 percent of divorces (Fig. 38, right axis). This means a total of 136,064 under-aged children were affected by divorce in 2013 (Fig. 38, left axis). Compared with the previous year, this meant 7,000 fewer children whose parents divorced.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Ehescheidungen.

<sup>58</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2014): Ehescheidungen.



**Figure 38: Common under-age children involved in divorces (in %) and divorces (in thousands) between 1991 and 2013**



Data source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2015): Statistik der Ehescheidungen

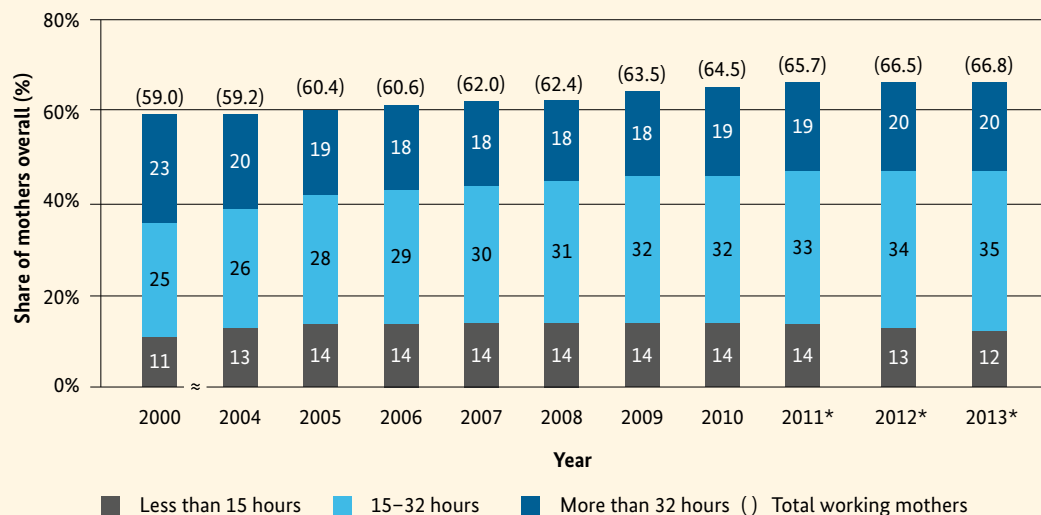
# III.

## New Approach to Reconciling Family and Working Life: Equal Division of Responsibility

### 3.1 Emerging trends: More mothers working

It is not only attitudes to family life and partnerships that have changed. Women with children have also changed their attitudes to going out to work. While 59 percent of mothers were employed in 2000, that figure had risen to 67 percent by 2013 (Fig. 39). This rise in employment is largely the result of an increase in part-time jobs involving between 15 and 32 hours a week. In comparison, the number of people in marginal or full-time employment remained stable. In Germany, working mothers work an average 25 hours a week and there are clear differences between east and west: while mothers in western Germany work an average 24 hours per week, the average working week for those in eastern Germany in 34 hours.

Figure 39: Employment rate (paid employment) for working mothers by working week, number of mothers overall in Germany for the period 2000 – 2013 (in %)



\* Extrapolated based on population projection 2011 Census

Source: Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung s14225. Calculations: Prognos AG. The total hours worked is the number of hours usually worked in a week including regular overtime hours.

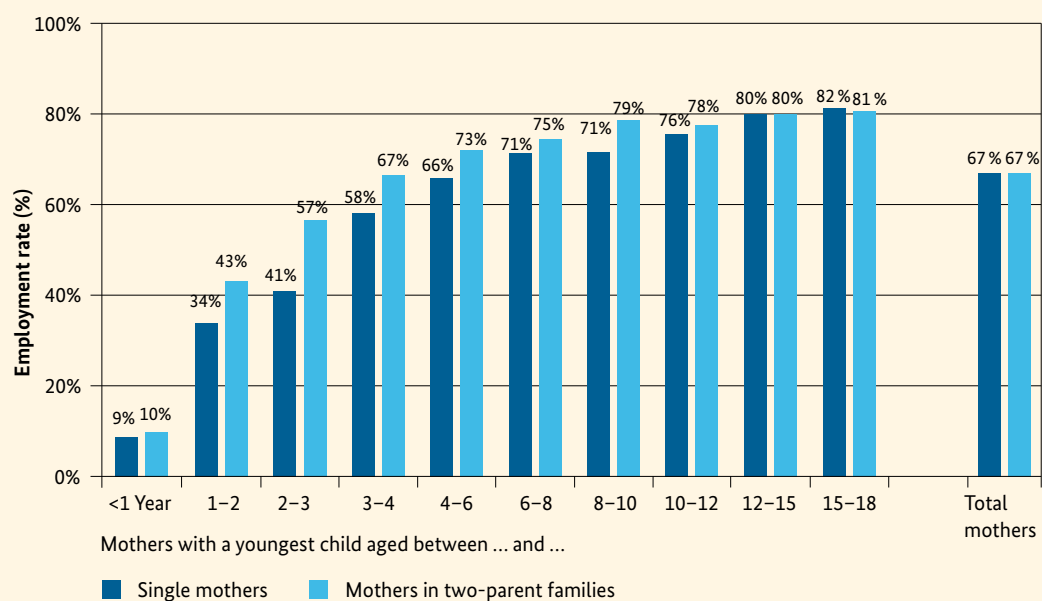
Since 2006, there has been a large increase in employment across all family constellations. A familiar pattern remains nonetheless: well qualified mothers tend to work more. Compared with those in the west, more mothers in eastern Germany have jobs and more of them work fulltime. The higher the number of children in the home and the younger they are, the less

likely their mothers are to go out to work. But the number of working mothers with three or more children and also that of single mothers who go out to work have increased in recent years.

### Spotlight: Single mothers

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 41 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. Finally, more than 71 percent of single mothers with children of school age (six and over) have a job (Fig. 40).

Figure 40: Employment rate (paid employment) for mothers by family type and age of youngest child in 2013



Source: Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung s14225, Darstellung Prognos AG

Of the single mothers who work, 42 percent work full-time and 47 percent work part-time, while 11 percent are marginally employed and work 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>59</sup> and more want to go to work than actually do. Some 61 percent of single mothers without a job say they fully intend to go (back) to work in the future.<sup>60</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.

Irrespective of their wishes and interests, most single mothers still experience difficulties in

59 Data source: Sozio-oekonomisches Panel (SOEP), „Familien in Deutschland“, FiDv1.2. Calculations: Sinus Sociovision.

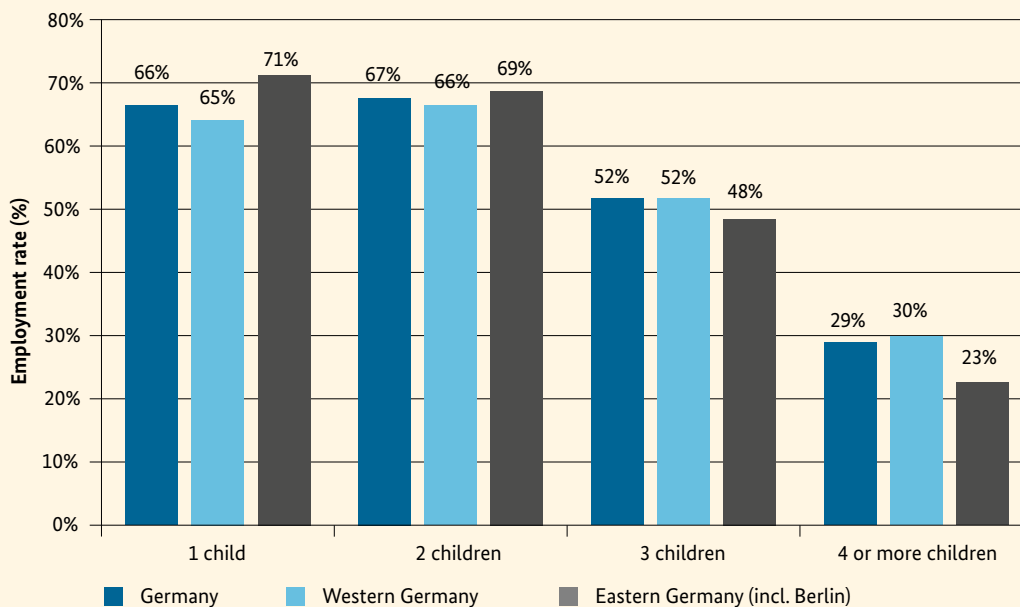
60 Ibid.

finding a suitable job. This is largely due not to the actually 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 childcare 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>61</sup>

### Spotlight: Large families

In one in two families with three children, the mother goes to work. And one in three mothers in families with four or more children have a job (Fig. 41).<sup>62</sup>

Figure 41: Employment rate (paid employment) for mothers with a youngest child aged under 15 by number of under-age children in 2012 (in %)



Source: BMFSFJ (2013): Dossier Müttererwerbstätigkeit. Erwerbstätigkeit, Erwerbsumfang und Erwerbsvolumen 2012, p. 28

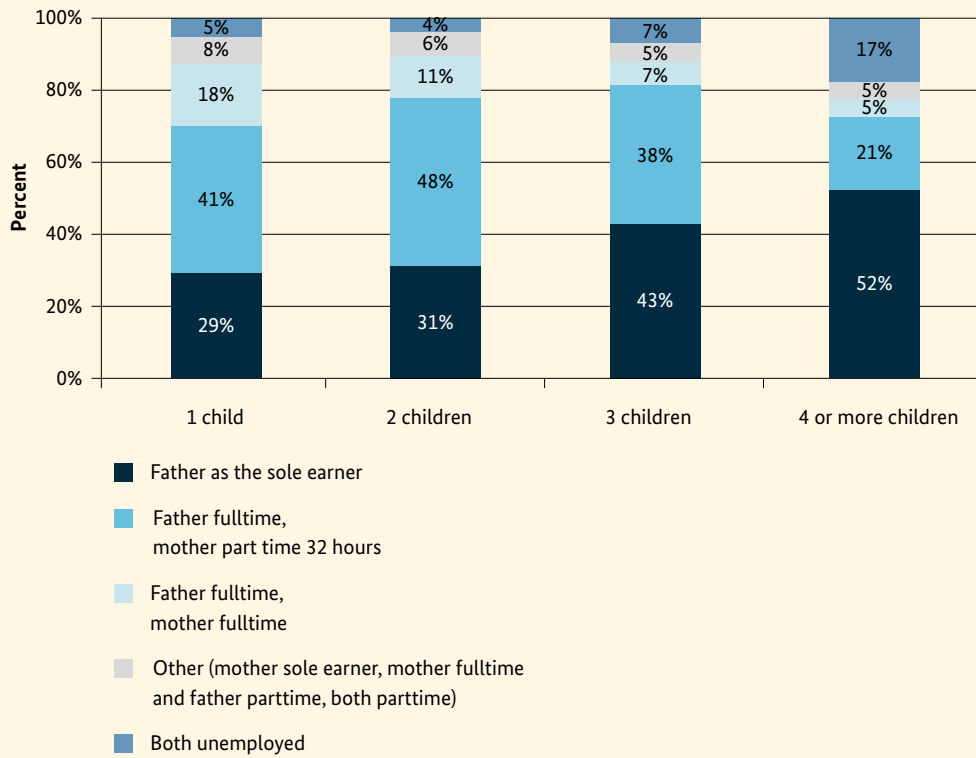
The employment rate for mothers with three or more children rises relative to the age of their youngest child. As soon as the youngest child is ten or older, more than two-thirds of mothers go out to work (almost eight out of ten mothers with one or two children). For fathers, the number of children has only marginal influence on their employment. Irrespective of the number of children they have, nine out of ten fathers with three children are employed and

61 Data source: Sozio-oekonomisches Panel (SOEP), „Familien in Deutschland“, FiDv1.2. Calculations: Sinus Sociovision.

62 BMFSFJ (2013): Dossier Müttererwerbstätigkeit 2012.

eight out of ten fathers with four or more children go to work.<sup>63</sup> In 43 percent of families with three children and in one in two families with four or more children, the father is the sole earner (Fig. 42). This partly reflects the fact that large families often include very young children.

**Figure 42: Employment arrangements for couples with a youngest child under 15 by number of under age children in 2011**



Source: BMFSFJ (2014): *Mehrkindfamilien in Deutschland. Dossier*; Datenbasis: *Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung s13045*. Calculations: *Prognos*

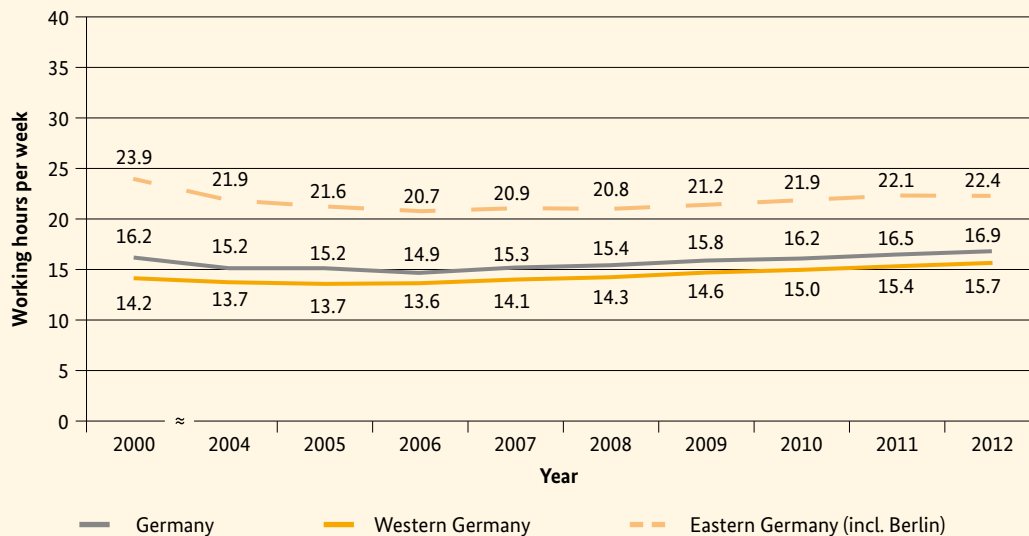
Significantly fewer large families see the sole earner model as ideal compared with those to whom it actually applies. Only a third of large families in which the father is the sole earner actually want this kind of arrangement. Against this backdrop, it is becoming more important for large families to be able to opt for a more equal division of responsibilities.

63 BMFSFJ (Ed.) (2014): *Mehrkindfamilien in Deutschland. Dossier*.

### More mothers in work harbours great economic potential

The employment of mothers harbours great economic potential. Apart from the rise in their employment since 2006, and following a period in which it declined, the number of hours they work has again increased. Total hours worked is the employment rate times the number of hours worked by each individual. For many years, total hours worked were 'redistributed' between working mothers: although there were more mothers employed, there was also an increase in part-time jobs with an ever-decreasing number of hours in the working week. However, this trend appears to be broken with a slow but steady increase in total hours worked in both western and eastern Germany (Fig. 43).

Figure 43: Trend in average total hours worked by mothers in Germany, western Germany and eastern Germany 2000–2012



Source: BMFSFJ (2013): *Dossier Müttererwerbstätigkeit. Erwerbstätigkeit, Erwerbsumfang und Erwerbsvolumen 2012*, p. 43.

Data: Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung s13129. Calculations Prognos AG. Total hours worked is the number of hours usually worked in a week, including regular overtime hours.

The rise in total hours worked by mothers between 2006 and 2012 led to an overall increase in gross domestic product (GDP) of €4.7 billion. Added to this come long-term income increases for mothers who take shorter breaks from work, thus improving their income opportunities, career development options and old-age provision.

More than three-quarters of unemployed mothers with a child under 16 would like to go to work and over half are registered as unemployed or intend to find a job within the next year. This applies to 1.2 million mothers overall. In addition, a large proportion of mothers would like to increase their working hours. Some mothers are unable to work at present or can only work a limited number of hours because they are unable to find adequate childcare. For 22 per cent of unemployed mothers with children under 12, childcare provision poses an obstacle to employment. This applies to seven per cent of employed mothers with children under 12 who would like to increase their working hours but are unable to do so because there is no-one to look after the children. If they were all able to work to the extent they would like to, almost 700,000 mothers could either take a job or work longer hours in the job they have. This would

result in an additional employment rate of approximately 350,000 full-time equivalents;<sup>64 65</sup> – a not insignificant number given the current skills shortage.

Apart from childcare provision and company policies to foster reconciliation of family and working life, greater support by partners can give mothers broader employment opportunities. It is evident that the increase in the number of working mothers is not matched by an increase in the number of fathers who share the responsibility for childcare. However, in cases where fathers claim parental allowance, their partners go back to work earlier. The effect is greater again where fathers claim parental allowance for longer than the two standard ‘partner months’. Almost 60 percent of their partners return to work in the third quarter following the birth and this rises to as many as 80 percent in the fourth quarter.<sup>66</sup>

## 3.2 Parental allowance: A success story

Parental allowance has many positive impacts on the lives of mothers and fathers, and on the amount of time they have available for the family. Taking the form of income replacement assistance and combined with the additional two partner months of parental leave, it offers fathers in particular more opportunity to play a greater role in looking after their children or to assume that responsibility in full. Fathers are thus able to form a closer bond with their child and demonstrably foster its development, while mothers can return to work earlier, have better career opportunities and take more responsibility for earning the family income. The family enjoys greater financial security when both parents have a job, while the burden on fathers as the sole provider is somewhat eased.

If a parent reduces their working hours for family-related reasons, this need not necessarily mean the end of their career. This applies both to women and to men. Experience gained with parental allowance and the partner months of parental leave has exceeded expectations: studies show that two-thirds of fathers have suffered no work-related disadvantages when taking parental leave.<sup>67</sup> An early return to work for mothers means that they retain their skills, thus improving their income opportunities and boosting their old-age security. Employers also benefit by fostering loyalty among skilled and experienced employees.

### 3.2.1 Mothers returning to work earlier

Mothers now return to work earlier after having a child. Between 2008 and 2010, mothers returned to work an average 19 months after the birth of a child and worked a 24-hour week. More mothers returned to work full-time immediately after their entitlement to parental allowance expired. Mothers in full-time positions, highly qualified women, self-employed women and women with low household incomes all took shorter breaks from work. Parental

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64 Full-time equivalent: number of working hours equivalent to a full-time employee.

65 Zukunftsrat Familie (2014): Sonderauswertung „Erwerbspotenzial“ mit dem Datensatz „Familie in Deutschland“ 2012.

66 SowiTra (2013): Der Beitrag der Väter zum beruflichen Wiedereinstieg ihrer Partnerinnen. Vortrag auf der WSI Gleichstellungstagung Berlin, 26.09.2013.

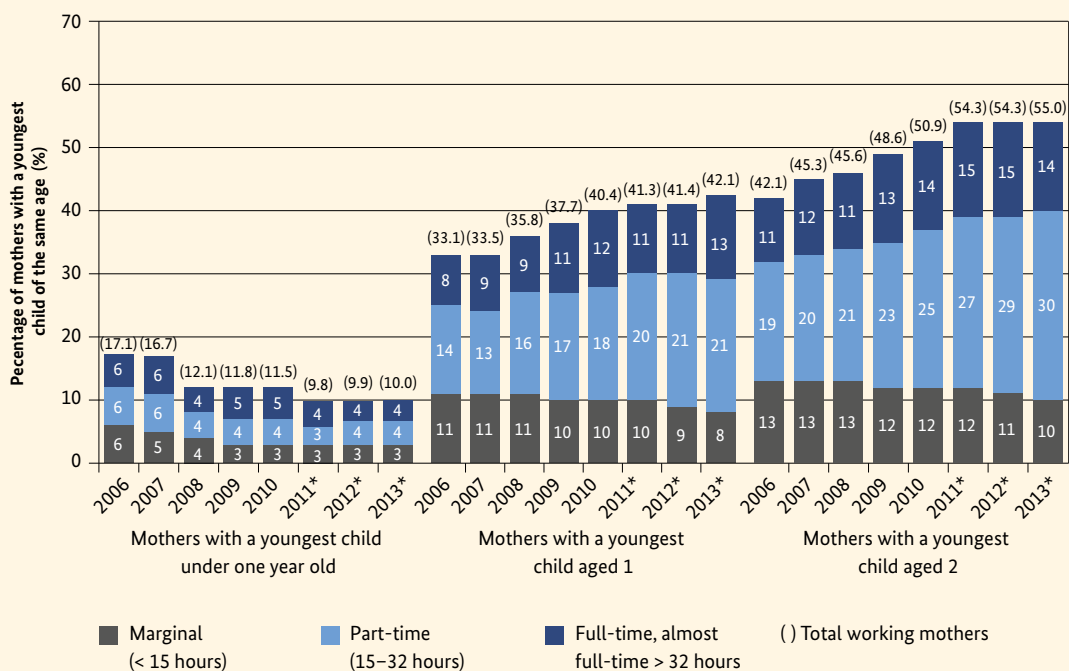
67 Väter gGmbH (2013): Trendstudie – moderne Väter, Hamburg.

allowance also helps women who are less closely integrated into the labour market.<sup>68</sup> According to formal evaluation, this growth in the number of working mothers is partly due to the introduction of parental allowance and greater availability of childcare.<sup>69</sup>

More than half of mothers would like to have returned to work earlier or to have increased their hours if they had been able to arrange adequate childcare or more flexible working hours, or had received support from their partners.<sup>70</sup> Almost nine percent of mothers would have returned to work earlier if they had been able to redistribute the share of responsibilities between themselves and their partner or if their partner had claimed parental allowance.

The fact that mothers are returning to work early indicates a huge shift in employment patterns. Following the introduction of parental allowance in 2007, the number of working mothers with children under three rose significantly between 2006 and 2013: 10 percent more mothers went to work in the second year after the birth and 13 percent more in the third year (Fig. 44).

**Figure 44: Employment trends (paid employment) and working patterns for mothers with children under three 2006–2013 (in %)**



\* Extrapolated based on population forecast from the 2011 census

Source: Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung s13129. Calculations: Prognos AG. Total hours worked is the number of hours usually worked in a week including regular overtime hours.

68 See Kluwe/Schmitz (2014): Mittelfristige Effekte der Elterngeldreform in Ost- und Westdeutschland. Vierteljahreshefte zur Wirtschaftsforschung, DIW Berlin, pp. 163–181

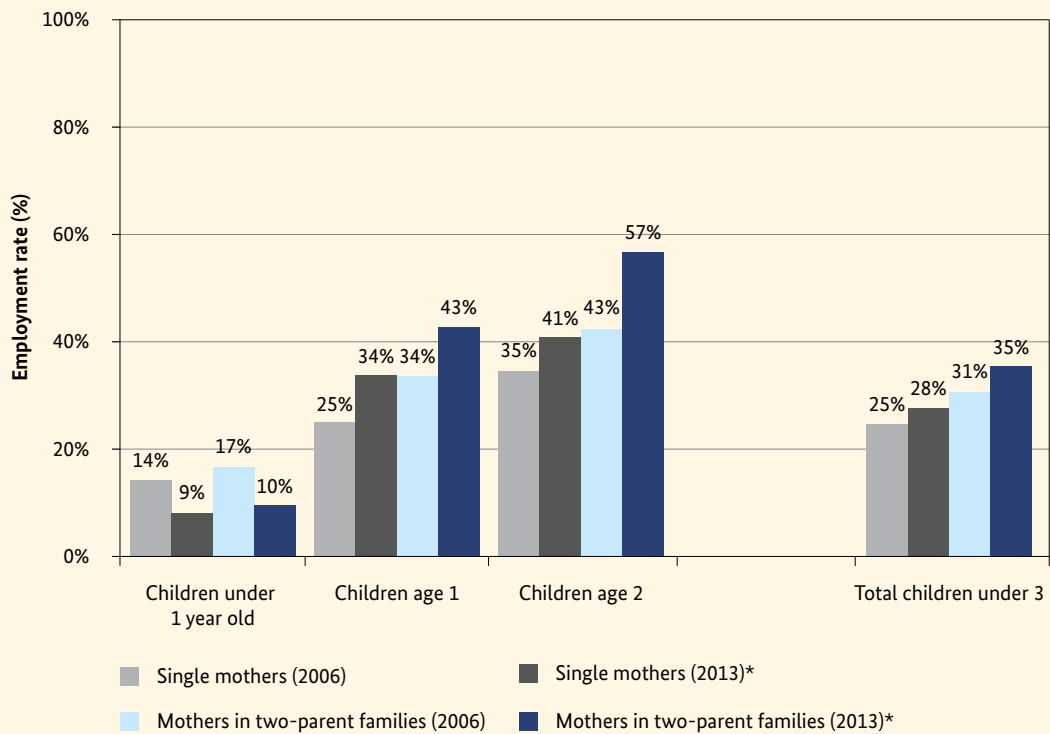
69 BMFSFJ (2012): Elterngeld-Monitor. Berlin; see DIW (2013): Endbericht des Moduls „Förderung und Wohlergehen von Kindern“, Berlin.

70 See IGES (2014): Einfluss ehe- und familienbezogener Maßnahmen und Leistungen auf die Erwerbsbeteiligung von Müttern.



These trends are not linked to particular family constellations. The number of single mothers with small children who go to work has been on the increase since 2006. In 2006, 25 percent of single mothers with children under three went to work and this had risen to 35 percent in 2013 (Fig. 45). Also, significantly more single mothers with children aged two went to work in 2013 than in 2006 (41 percent versus 35 percent).

**Figure 45: Employment trends (paid employment) for mothers with children under three by family type 2006–2013**

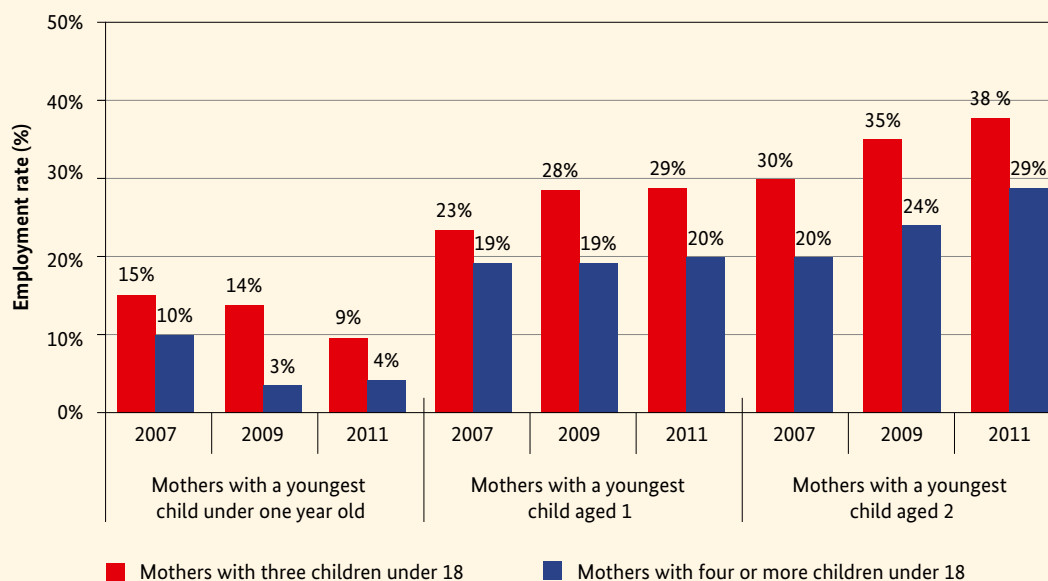


\* Based on population forecast from 2001 census

Data based on: Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung s14225. Calculations: Prognos AG

Since the introduction of parental allowance in 2007, there has also been a significant increase in the number of working mothers with large families (Fig. 46). While in 2007, 30 percent of mothers with three children and one in five mothers with four or more children went to work, by 2011 these figures had risen to 35 percent of mothers with three children and almost one in three mothers with four children or more.

Figure 46: Employment trends (paid employment) for mothers with three or more under-age children 2007–2011



Data source: Mikrozensus-Sonderauswertung s13083, Calculations: Prognos AG

When compared with mothers who received childrearing allowance, it was evident that mothers on low incomes tend to increase their working hours in the second year after the birth.<sup>71</sup> Parental allowance also has a more positive effect than childrearing allowance three to five years after the birth, with more mothers in jobs – most of them working part-time. In western Germany, more mothers with one child go to work full-time. The rise in employment can largely be apportioned to better-qualified mothers with mid-level incomes.

There has been a significant rise in the number of mothers who continue their employment. Mothers are working longer for one and the same employer. According to a study, this could lead to a long-term reduction in the income gap between women and men.<sup>72</sup>

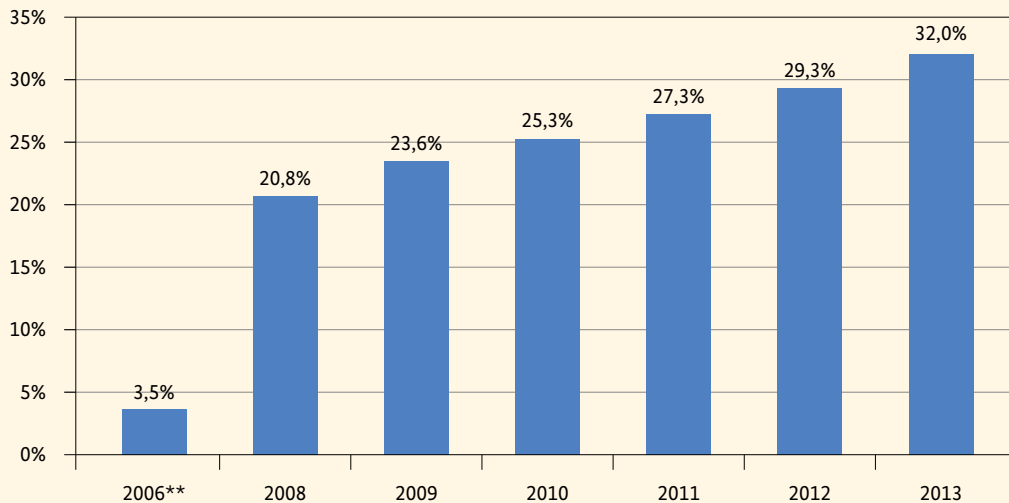
71 DIW (2012): Monitoring Elterngeld.

72 See Kluge/Schmitz (2014): Mittelfristige Effekte der Elterngeldreform in Ost- und Westdeutschland. Vierteljahreshefte zur Wirtschaftsforschung, DIW Berlin, pp. 163–181

### 3.2.2 Fathers play a greater role in the family

Since the introduction of parental allowance, there has been an unbroken trend in more and more fathers claiming parental allowance and taking time out to look after the family. This currently applies to 32 percent of fathers in Germany (Fig. 47).

Figure 47: Trends in fathers claiming parental allowance



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

\*\* Number of men receiving benefit

Data based on: Statistisches Bundesamt (2009–2015): Statistiken zum Elterngeld. Gemeldete beendete Leistungsbezüge, Wiesbaden

Of the fathers who have claimed parental allowance, 78 percent claimed it for two months and 21.8 percent for more than two months. On average, fathers claimed parental allowance for 3.2 months. Fathers who claimed parental allowance tend to be slightly better qualified and have higher-ranking positions than those who do not claim benefit. More fathers claim parental allowance in eastern Germany than in western Germany. Fathers who have taken parental leave are more in favour of modern family arrangements than those who have not claimed parental allowance.<sup>73</sup>

There are many reasons why fathers claim parental allowance, but there is one that they doubtless all have in common: they want to spend more time with their child. Currently, 54 percent of fathers with under-aged children say they are not able to spend enough time with them.<sup>74</sup> Most fathers who have received parental allowance describe the parental leave that goes with it as valuable and enriching. They know that the first two years of a child's life are important in forming a bond and that those years cannot be repeated.

73 DIW (2014): Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie von Paaren mit nicht schulpflichtigen Kindern – unter spezifischer Berücksichtigung der Erwerbskonstellationen der Partner, Berlin.

74 Forsa (2013): Meinungen und Einstellungen der Väter in Deutschland, Berlin.

The growing engagement shown by fathers fosters father-child bonds and makes it easier for mothers to return to work. When both parents are employed, especially if the mother works full-time or earns a high income, the father is more likely to claim parental allowance. This suggests that fathers who claim parental allowance are more likely to come from families with a secure income and that the family is able to do without a portion of the father's income or that the father is in a good position to negotiate with their employer and is better able to 'afford' to take parental leave. But there are also fathers who want to support their partner's return to work. This explains why men claim parental leave when their partners have a limited-term employment contract, are self-employed or have not yet completed their vocational education and training or academic studies.

One important reason why some fathers choose not to take parental leave is that they fear it will harm their career. This is despite the fact that employers' acceptance of parental leave appears to have grown. Some 40 percent of fathers in Germany do not believe that parental leave has a negative impact on men's career opportunities and 10 percent think it has a positive effect. As many as 58 percent of fathers who have already taken parental leave say it had no affect on their careers.<sup>75</sup> The reaction of co-workers to colleagues who take parental leave is also largely positive. In a survey, 57 percent of fathers who had taken parental leave said that their colleagues had responded positively, while only 15 percent reported negative reactions.<sup>76</sup>

#### **Most fathers make use of the two partner months when claiming parental allowance**

Around two-thirds of fathers who claim parental allowance take only two partner months of parental leave. This represents about 24 percent of fathers overall. Six percent of fathers claim parental allowance for more than two months. The number of fathers who claim parental allowance for longer periods has remained more or less constant since 2009 and has actually slightly increased when looked at in absolute figures. Because the number of fathers who 'only' take two partner months has risen continually, the figures on the average length of parental leave taken by fathers have dropped. This does not, however, mean that fathers are taking shorter and shorter periods of parental leave. What it actually means is that more and more fathers are taking short periods of parental leave.

So why do most fathers only take two months' parental leave? In an online survey, 63 percent of fathers said that their wife or partner wanted to use the full twelve months' entitlement herself. Around a third of men were not aware that they could take more than two months of parental leave (claiming parental allowance for longer) or were unsure whether they could.<sup>77</sup> Also, there is evidence that many employers have accepted the two partner months as a new kind of norm. This puts fathers in a better position to negotiate with their employers because they can explain that the benefit would be forfeited if it goes unclaimed.

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75 Forsa (2013): Meinungen und Einstellungen der Väter in Deutschland, Berlin.

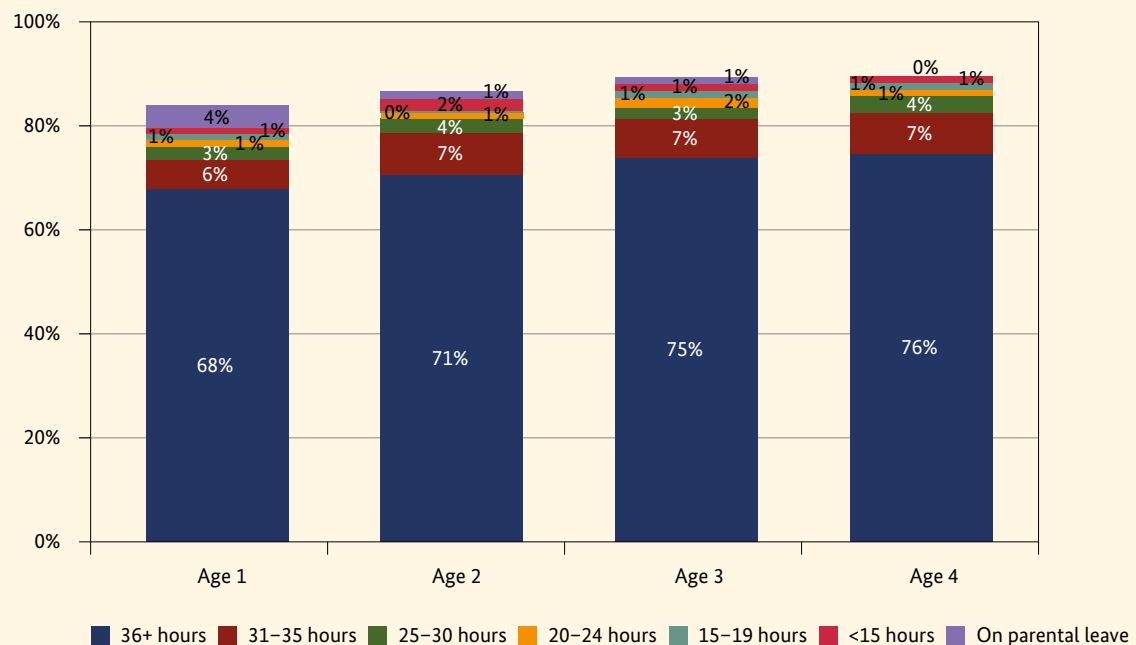
76 Väter gGmbH (2013): Trendstudie – moderne Väter, Hamburg, p. 70

77 Väter gGmbH (2013): Trendstudie – moderne Väter, Hamburg, p. 46

### Altered employment patterns among fathers

The findings show that fathers' employment patterns shift following the birth of a child. A little less than 80 percent of fathers are now employed in the first year following the birth of a child and only two-thirds work full-time. This compares with fathers with children aged four to six, where 90 percent go to work and three-quarters work full-time. Also, at the time of the survey, four percent of fathers were on parental leave and were not working at all. In the first year after the birth, nine percent of fathers work part-time, working between 25 and 35 hours a week. In subsequent years, one in ten fathers works part-time with a longer working week. Around three percent of fathers are in part-time employment with a 25-hour working week<sup>78</sup> (Fig. 48).

Figure 48: Fathers' working week by age of youngest child (in %)



Note: Parental Leave - currently on parental leave with 0 working hours

Source: DIW (2014): Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie von Paaren mit nicht schulpflichtigen Kindern – unter spezifischer Berücksichtigung der Erwerbskonstellationen der Partner, Berlin, p. 16

Data source: Familien in Deutschland (FiD), v4.0, Wellen 2010–2013

The intensive time spent with their child appears to have a lasting effect on the father-child relationship. A recent study shows that fathers who have taken parental leave spend about an hour a day longer with their children after returning to work and often choose to work part-time in order to do so.<sup>79</sup> Of the fathers who have taken parental leave, 14 percent work part-time with a working week of between 25 and 35 hours when their child is aged between two and three. Only eight percent of fathers who have never taken parental leave choose to do the

78 DIW (2014): Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie von Paaren mit nicht schulpflichtigen Kindern – unter spezifischer Berücksichtigung der Erwerbskonstellationen der Partner, Berlin. Data source: „Familien in Deutschland“ (FiD), v4.0, Wellen 2010–2013.

79 WZB (2014): „Mehr väterlicher Familiensinn“, press release dated 22 July 2014

same. However, three-quarters of fathers who have taken parental leave subsequently work full-time, working more than 36 hours a week. For most fathers, returning to work after a period of parental leave means a return to more or less traditional working hours.

### 3.2.3 More time for the children and family

On the whole, around two-thirds of couples claim parental allowance either in parallel or partly in parallel, while a third claim parental allowance consecutively.<sup>80</sup> Around 40 percent of couples use the father's parental leave as dedicated 'family time' in which both parents stay at home and have lots of time for the family. This can be especially helpful where older siblings are involved. Fathers who claim parental allowance tend not to go to work during this time, with only 30 percent working in parallel to taking parental leave. Some 60 percent of mothers go to work while their partners are on parental leave, with 40 percent working more than 25 hours a week. For mothers, their partner's parental leave often provides the support they need to help them return to work. Many fathers say they take parental leave to enable their partners to go back to work. In 60 percent of families, the mother uses the father's parental leave as a way to return to work. During the period in which the father claims parental allowance, he spends an average eight hours looking after the child or children on a normal working day.<sup>81</sup>

A father's active participation in bringing up a child has a positive effect on the child's development. Fathers say they form a more intensive bond with their child.<sup>82</sup> International studies show that greater involvement of fathers has a positive influence on a child's cognitive development, problem-solving ability, speech and school performance. Such positive effects of fathers' engagement can be seen in school performance in Germany. If their father plays an active role in their upbringing, children also have better social skills and are emotionally more stable.

The more the father is involved, the more positive the effect, too, on the mother and on the couple's relationship. Mothers are more satisfied with their family life when fathers play an active role in looking after the children. Mothers are calmer and more patient if fathers share childrearing responsibilities. This improves the quality of mother-child interactions. Mothers and fathers are generally more satisfied with their own relationship if the father is more involved with the family as this strengthens their relationship and provides more stability.<sup>83</sup>

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80 See Bundestagsdrucksache 17/1594: Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Jörn Wunderlich, Diana Golze, Herbert Behrens, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion DIE LINKE: Entwicklung beim Elterngeld, p. 4

81 DIW (2014): Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie von Paaren mit nicht schulpflichtigen Kindern – unter spezifischer Berücksichtigung der Erwerbskonstellationen der Partner, Berlin. Data source: „Familien in Deutschland“ (FiD), v4.0, Wellen 2010–2013.

82 Possinger (2013): Vaterschaft im Spannungsfeld von Erwerbs- und Familienleben, Wiesbaden.

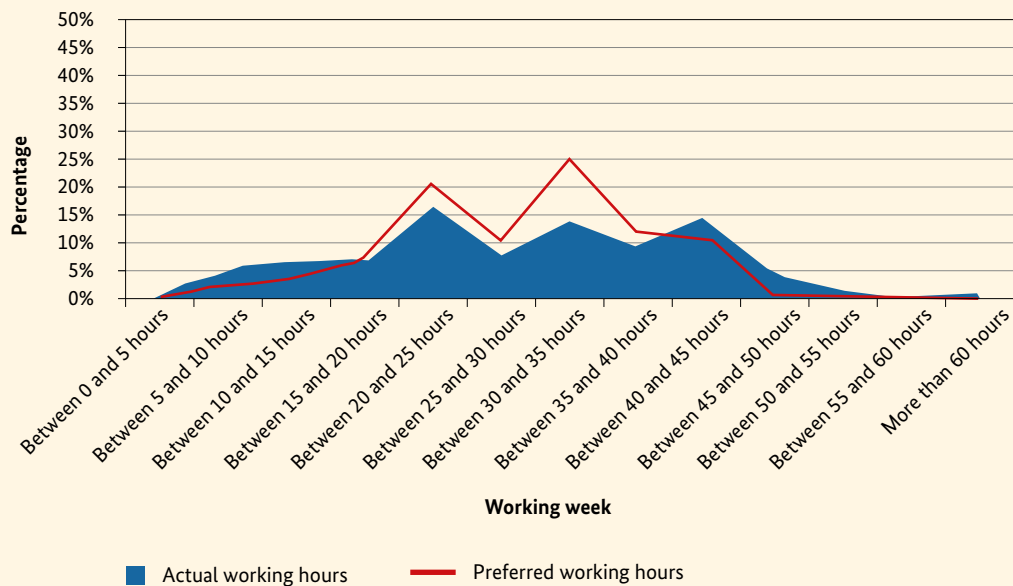
83 Allen, S. M./Daly, K. J. (2007): The effects of father involvement: An updated research summary of the evidence. Centre for Families, Work & Well-Being, University of Guelph; Agache, Alexandru/Leyendecker, Birgit/Schäfermeier, Esther/Schölmerich, Axel (2014): Paternal involvement elevates trajectories of life satisfaction during transition to parenthood, *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 11:2, pp. 259–257

Of course, fathers also benefit from greater involvement in bringing up their child. They are able to establish more intensive contact and a better relationship with the child, and are happier overall. For these men, their level of satisfaction grows after the birth of a child compared with men who play a lesser family role.<sup>84</sup> Fathers with children aged two to three are also happier if they can spend more time with the children.<sup>85</sup> On the whole, it can be said that the longer a father takes parental leave, the greater their involvement in bringing up the child or children in subsequent years.<sup>86</sup> Even if the parents separate, fathers who are more involved have more contact with their children over time.

### 3.2.4 Emerging trend: Parents' preferred working hours

Many studies show that parents today want a more balanced working week (Figs. 49 and 50). Mothers tend to prefer a working week of between 25 and 35 hours. Those who work fewer than 20 hours a week would often like to work longer, while those who work more than 35 hours a week would often like to reduce their working hours slightly. Of the fathers who mainly work full-time or overtime, the vast majority would like to reduce the number of hours they work. Some fathers would like to work between 25 and 35 hours a week or would at least like to reduce the amount of overtime they work.

Figure 49: Preferred and actual working week of working mothers with at least one child under 18 living at home in 2012



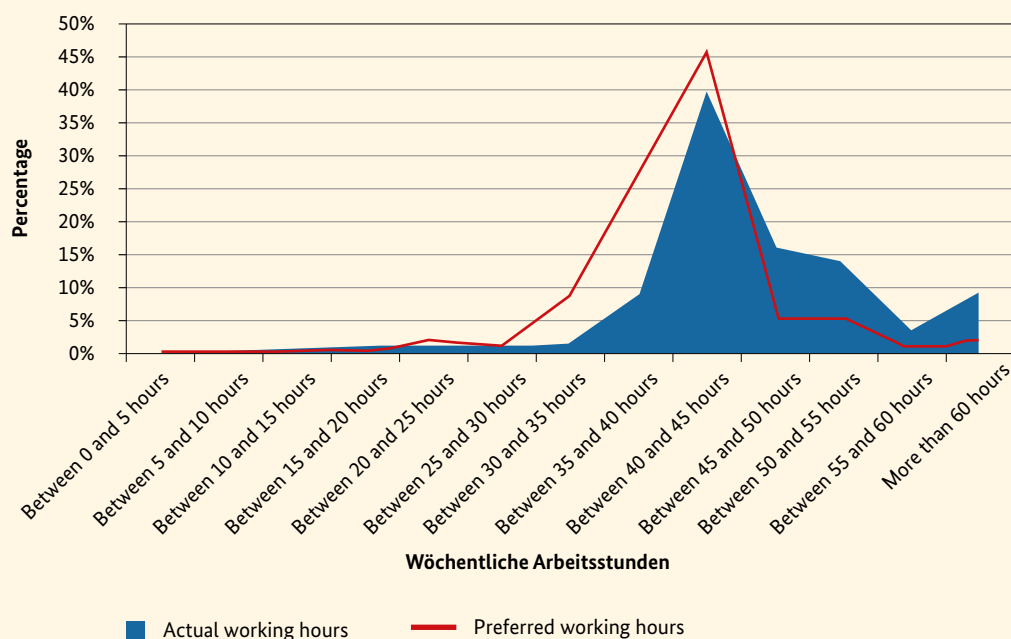
Source: SOEP v29, Calculations: Prognos AG, 2014.

84 See *ibid.*, Possinger (2013): *Vaterschaft im Spannungsfeld von Erwerbs- und Familienleben*, Wiesbaden.

85 DIW (2014): *Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie von Paaren mit nicht schulpflichtigen Kindern – unter spezifischer Berücksichtigung der Erwerbskonstellationen der Partner*, Berlin. Data source: „Familien in Deutschland“ (FiD), v4.0, Wellen 2010–2013.

86 Duvander/Jans (2009): *Consequences of fathers' parental leave use: evidence from Sweden*. *Finnish Yearbook of Population Research*, pp. 51–62

Figure 50: Preferred and actual working week of working fathers with at least one child under 18



Source: SOEP v29. Calculations: Prognos AG, 2014

The better the mother's qualifications, the more likely it will be that both parents work full-time. If both parents have a university degree or if the mother is a well-qualified white-collar worker, the more likely the couple will choose a dual part-time arrangement. Equally shared employment arrangements are also more frequent among mothers with more egalitarian attitudes and in families in eastern Germany.<sup>87</sup>

One in three couples with children under three would currently prefer for both parents to work part-time (working about 30 hours a week) and share family responsibilities and housework.<sup>88</sup> In a survey of fathers with under-aged children, about a third said they would like to work part-time (Fig. 51).<sup>89</sup>

87 DIW (2014): Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie von Paaren mit nicht schulpflichtigen Kindern – unter spezifischer Berücksichtigung der Erwerbskonstellationen der Partner, Berlin, p. 56 f

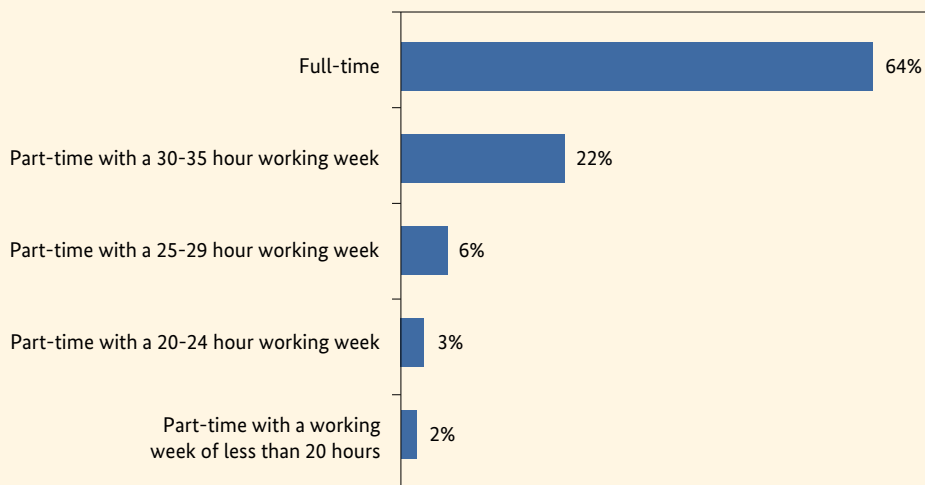
88 IfD Allensbach 2014, Allensbacher Archiv.

89 Forsa (2013): Meinungen und Einstellungen der Väter in Deutschland, Berlin.



**Figure 51: Fathers' preferences for part-time work**

"Which working model would you most prefer?"



Source: *ELTERN-Studie „Väter in Deutschland“, 2014*

Based on: Fathers who are currently employed or were employed before starting parental leave as white-collar workers/civil servants/blue-collar workers/trainees (n = 864)

Even when fathers are asked to take account of the fact that their income would change if they altered their working hours, one in five fathers with children of pre-school age would still like to reduce the number of hours they work. This applies in particular to couples where the father has a full-time job and the mother also goes out to work.<sup>90</sup>

### **Family-work reconciliation and families with migrant backgrounds**

Employment patterns also reflect life planning choices in families with migrant backgrounds. Some 25 percent of unemployed mothers had never worked prior to starting a family. This should not be seen as a lack of focus on employment, but rather the result of starting a family at an early age, either prior to or during vocational training and education. The older the youngest child, the more likely the mothers are to go out to work.

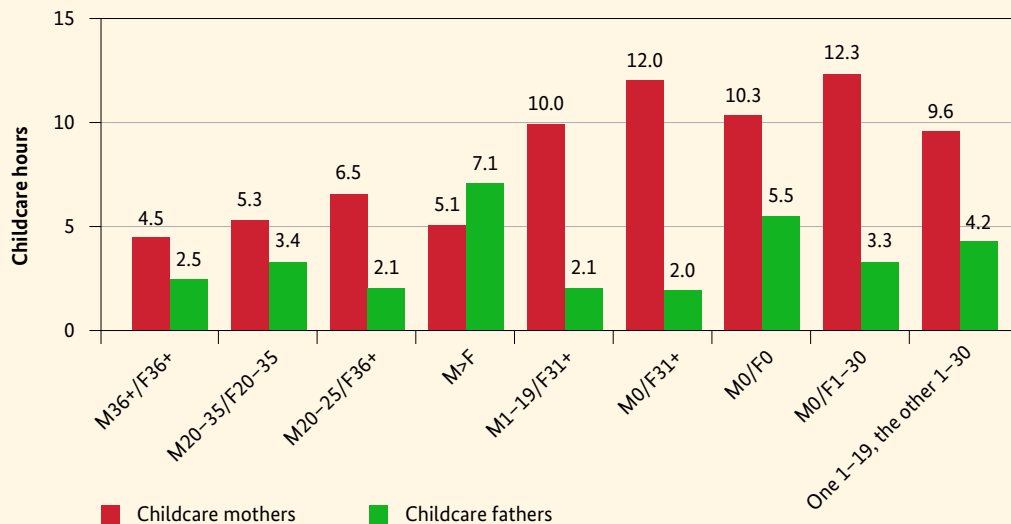
Like parents with no migrant background, most parents with a migrant background would prefer shorter working hours – mothers to the same extent (46 percent versus 45 percent) and fathers less so (75 percent versus 62 percent). And like many parents in Germany, parents with a migrant background prefer a full-time/part-time combination where the man works full-time. By way of contrast, mothers with a migrant background tend to perceive significantly greater problems in reconciling family and working life than fathers (60 percent versus 47 percent). On the whole, parents with migrant backgrounds perceive fewer family-work reconciliation problems than parents with no migrant background. About half of mothers with a migrant background would like their partners to help them more in the household and with bringing up the children (74 percent versus 31 percent of mothers with no migrant background).

<sup>90</sup> DIW (2014): Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie von Paaren mit nicht schulpflichtigen Kindern – unter spezifischer Berücksichtigung der Erwerbskonstellationen der Partner, Berlin, p, 56 f

### Increased employment of mothers raises expectations for equally shared division of work

The increase in the number of working mothers is not only associated with a change in mothers' and fathers' preferred working hours, but also with growing expectations for equally shared division of work (Fig. 52).

Figure 52: Childcare hours assumed by mothers and fathers by equally shared employment arrangements where the youngest child is aged between 2 and 3



Note: M – working hours mother, F – working hours father

Source: DIW (2014): Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie von Paaren mit nicht schulpflichtigen Kindern – unter spezifischer Berücksichtigung der Erwerbskonstellationen der Partner, Berlin, p. 590 ff.

Data source: „Familien in Deutschland“ (FiD), v4.0, Wellen 2010–2013

Looking at the number of childcare hours overall, it is evident that mothers still assume the greatest share. There is marked variation among fathers, however. Parents with equitable employment arrangements have a more balanced share of childcare hours. If both parents work full-time or if both work part-time but with a large number of hours in their working week, they have the most equitable share of childcare hours when the child is aged between one and two. With this arrangement, the mother assumes 'only' 1.5 times as many childcare hours as the father. These employment and childcare arrangements are only practiced by around 10 percent of parents with children of this age. In 'pin money' arrangements (the father working full-time and the mother part-time), the mother spends three times as much time looking after the children as the father – even if she works between 20 and 25 hours a week. Only where the mother works more than the father does the father assume more childcare hours.

There are a number of explanations for the number of childcare hours assumed by the father. Firstly, well-qualified fathers are more likely to take parental leave. Given their higher qualifications, these couples are also more likely to have egalitarian employment arrangements. Fathers who have taken parental leave subsequently take more time for their children. But it is also the case that, on average, fathers with high-level positions spend less time looking after the children than fathers with less-sophisticated jobs. These fathers say there is a strong dis-

crepancy between their desire for more time with the children and high work-related expectations (regarding time) which do not afford them that time.

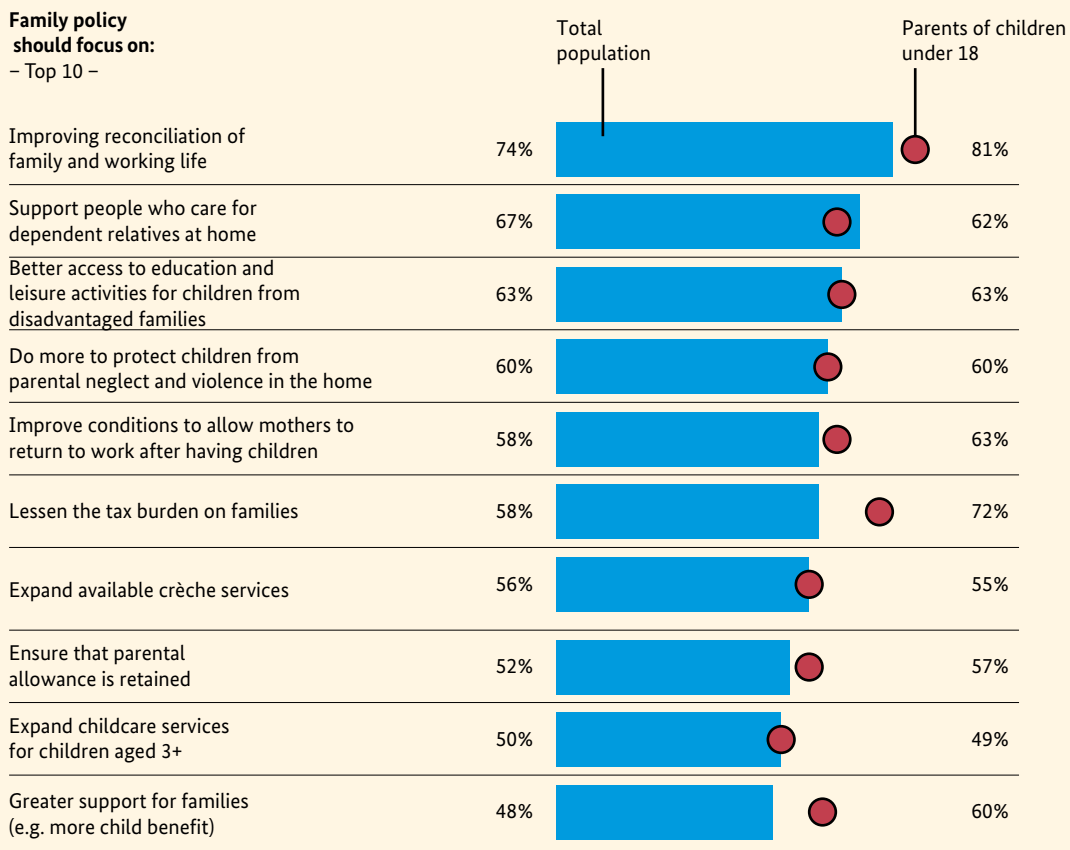
In a recent survey, three-quarters of men aged between 25 and 55 rejected the sole provider model.<sup>91</sup> Up to now, only few couples have been able to achieve their goal of equitable employment arrangements. These are mostly couples with good financial resources or better jobs, which perhaps put them in a better bargaining position with regard to employers. For most families, it has so far been difficult for the parents to share the responsibility for family and work equally. Neither society nor industry supports this type of arrangement to any great extent.

### 3.3 Reconciliation of work and family life most important family policy task

For most people in Germany and certainly for most parents, better reconciliation of family and working life is seen as the main task of modern family policy (Fig. 53).

Figure 53: What people expect from family policy

#### Reconciliation of family and working life remains most important family policy task



Source: IfD Allensbach (2013): Monitor Familienleben 2013. Based on Federal Republic of Germany, population 16 and over

91 A.T. Kearney (2014): Nur Mut! Männer. Väter. Representative survey of employed men. Online survey of 1,771 employees aged 25–55.

Parents want more time to spend with the family and care for each other. They also want more flexibility in their everyday routine and in their lives in general – both in terms of available time and structure. A surprisingly large number of young people want to share work and family commitments: 91 percent of people aged 20 to 39 believe that both parents should take responsibility for looking after the children. And 81 percent say that both partners should be responsible for earning the family income. Some 60 percent of young parents prefer living arrangements in which both parents work the same number of hours and assume an equal share of responsibility for the family and work.<sup>92</sup> In addition to these ideals, one in three couples with children under three would prefer for both parents to work either part-time with a working week of about 30 hours (30 percent) or full-time (seven percent) and share responsibility for looking after the family and home.<sup>93</sup> Only nine percent are actually able to share responsibilities in this way.<sup>94</sup>

The desire to have more time with the family often clashes with wanting to go to work and develop a career and wanting both partners to earn a secure and adequate income. In many cases, reconciling work and family life remains an issue solely for mothers. Mothers often work part-time so they can manage both sides of life. Compared with fathers, they take the biggest share of parental leave and – irrespective of the job they do – perform more housework and spend more time looking after the children. This is because conditions in Germany currently provide little scope for equally shared responsibilities. Only 14 percent of parents with children aged between one and three work the same number of hours, meaning both working part-time or both full-time. This applies primarily to better-qualified individuals and also to families in eastern Germany. In many cases, attempts to live this way fail due to the inequity in the couple's incomes. Fathers are unable to reduce their working hours because they earn more and their families cannot afford to forfeit part of their income. Nonetheless, most parents would prefer for both to work part-time, but with a working week that is close to full-time.

### 3.4 Time for the family: Family working time

The family working time (*Familienarbeitszeit*) model put forward by German Federal Minister for Family Affairs Manuela Schwesig is designed to allow parents to divide their working hours in a more equally shared arrangement. Conditions need to be created to enable parents to align their respective working hours, with each working 30, 32 or 35 hours a week. Fathers would work slightly less and mothers slightly more, giving both adequate time for their jobs and more time for the family.

Family working time model is designed to support mothers and fathers in the early years after a child is born by allowing them both to work almost full-time and share work and family commitments. This fosters family cohesion and meets today's need for independent livelihoods. It also complies with the requirement set out in the Germany's constitutional law (*Grundgesetz*) for the legislature to counteract the traditional assignment of roles between mothers and fathers, thus benefiting families, the economy and society.

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<sup>92</sup> Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung (2013): Familienleitbilder. Vorstellungen, Meinungen, Erwartungen. Wiesbaden; DIW (2013): Wochenbericht Nr. 46/2013, p. 4

<sup>93</sup> IfD Allensbach 2014, Allensbacher Archiv.

<sup>94</sup> IfD Allensbach 2014, Allensbacher Archiv.

### 3.5 Parental allowance plus and partnership bonus: A new option to allow equal sharing of responsibility

Parental allowance plus is an initial step towards achieving family working time. Combined with the partnership bonus, it provides a new form of parental allowance. Parental allowance plus was introduced on 1 January 2015 as a new and independent variation of the existing parental allowance option and applies for children born on or after 1 July 2015.

Parental allowance plus can be claimed by all parents who are entitled to claim basic parental allowance. However, it is primarily designed to support parents who want to claim parental allowance and work part-time after the birth of a child. These parents have been disadvantaged to date because they lose a portion of their parental allowance entitlement when their part-time income is taken into account. Parental allowance plus compensates for this by allowing a longer period of entitlement: one month of basic parental allowance equals two months of parental allowance plus.

Parental allowance plus is supplemented by a partnership bonus. If both parents work at least four months in parallel for 25 to 30 hours a week, they each receive a further four months' parental allowance plus. To ease into an arrangement of equally shared responsibilities and improved reconciliation of family and working life, parents can make use of this option in the early years of a child's life and for a period that they determine themselves.

#### **Single parents also benefit from parental allowance plus**

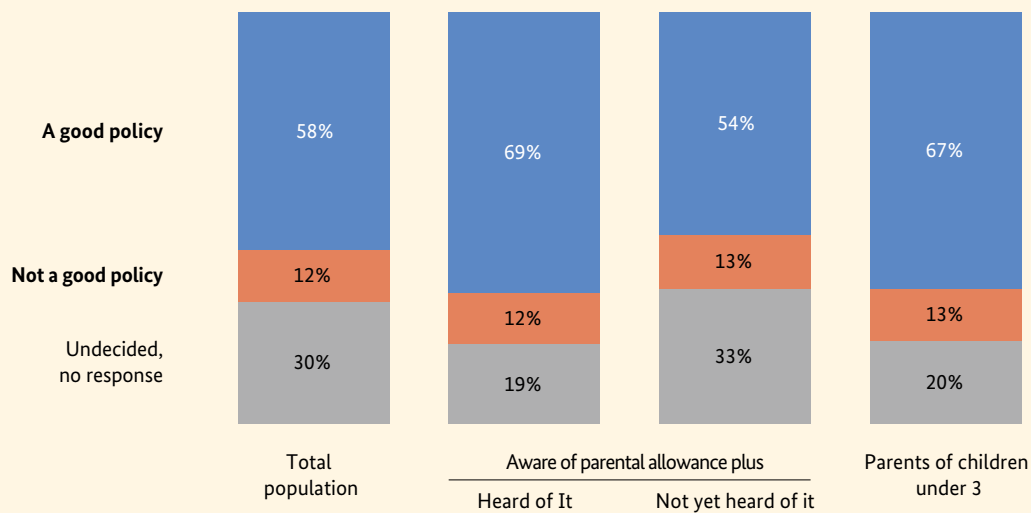
Parents who are separated can each claim the new benefit to an equal extent if their child lives in both households, thus giving them the same opportunities for flexibility as parents who live together in meeting the challenges involved in balancing work and family life. Parents with sole custody of a child can claim parental allowance in the form of parental allowance plus for a longer period, including the two partner months, meaning beyond the time their child is 14 months old.

The partnership bonus can also be claimed by single parents who must assume full responsibility for the family because they have no partner to support them. If they work part-time for 25 to 30 hours a week for at least four months, they receive a further four months' parental allowance plus with the partnership bonus. This gives single parents a similar bonus to parents who live together so they can have time for their child and remain in their jobs.

Parents who did not work prior to the birth can also claim parental allowance plus as the minimum amount of parental allowance, giving them half the minimum amount for twice the number of months.

Even prior to its introduction, the idea of parental allowance plus was largely well received (Fig. 54).

Figure 54: Attitudes to parental allowance plus in 2014



Basis: Federal Republic of Germany, population aged 16 and over

Source: IfD Allensbach 2014, Allensbacher Archiv.

### 3.6 More flexible parental leave rules

In addition to parental allowance plus and the partnership bonus, the new rules on parental leave are designed to give parents more flexibility in returning to work. In future, parents will be able to take up to 24 months of previously unclaimed parental leave at any point from the time their child is three until it is eight years old. Their employer's approval is no longer needed. This should prevent the situation where, due to rigid rules, parents have refrained from going back to work to avoid forfeiting their parental leave entitlements. The new rules make it easier for parents to return to work earlier, giving them more or less the same opportunities as parents who take their full parental leave entitlement immediately after the birth.

Another new aspect of parental leave is that the deadline for requesting to take parental leave in the period between a child's third and eighth year has been extended to 13 weeks, as has the deadline for registering to work part-time in this same period. The protection against dismissal period has been adjusted accordingly. This gives employees greater security and greater flexibility and allows employers more time to prepare for an employee's absence during a subsequent period of parental leave. There are no changes regarding the deadline for claiming parental leave and for registering to work part-time work during parental leave taken from the time of the child is born until it is three years old.

## IV.

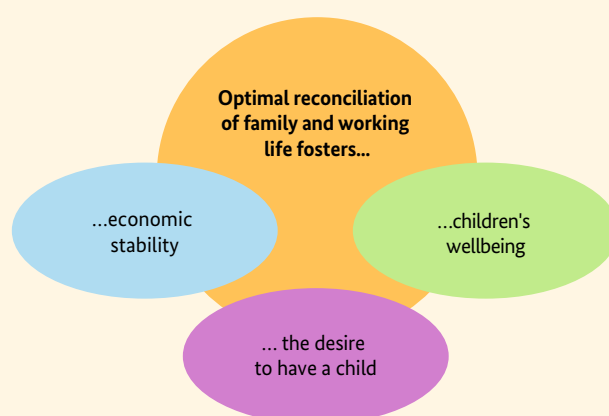
### Family-related Benefits and their Impacts: Key Outcomes of the Overall Evaluation of Marriage-related and Family-related Benefits

#### 4.1 Optimal reconciliation of family and working life of major importance, both for families and for effective family-related benefits

Reconciliation of family and working life is of key importance for families. Some 74 percent of people in Germany and 81 percent of parents say that improving opportunities for better reconciliation of family and working life is one of the main tasks of modern family policy.<sup>95</sup> For young families, better reconciliation means that both partners share responsibility for earning the family income. They would also like to share reconciliation of work and family life equally.

Reconciliation of working and family life is also a major factor in the effectiveness of family-related benefits.<sup>96</sup> This is the core finding from the overall evaluation of marriage-related and family-related benefits.<sup>97</sup> The evaluation shows that achieving optimal reconciliation helps in reaching other goals: benefits which help to improve reconciliation of family and working life also help secure the situation of families in economic terms and ensure that children are well provided for. It also helps couples fulfil their desire to have a child (Fig. 55).

Figure 55: Optimal reconciliation of family and working life as a driver for all other family policy goals



95 IfD Allensbach (2013): Monitor Familienleben 2013.

96 Prognos AG (2014): Gesamtevaluation der ehe- und familienbezogenen Leistungen und IfD Allensbach (2014), Allensbacher Archiv.

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

### **Overall evaluation of marriage-related and family-related benefits**

Jointly commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs and the German Federal Ministry of Finance, and the first of its kind worldwide, the evaluation project was conducted in the form of twelve research modules during the period 2009 to 2014. What makes it unique is that all the benefits covered by the study were measured for four cross-cutting policy goals: economic stability, reconciliation of family and working life, children's promotion and wellbeing, and the question of how and to what extent family-related benefits help couples fulfil their desire to have a child.

The evaluation has further enhanced family research in Germany as a whole. For the first time, children's wellbeing was analysed based on their age and the impact of state benefits received by their parents. The Families in Germany survey significantly improved available data on the status of families in Germany and numerous scientists and researchers are already using the new data it supplied. Specially developed calculation models provided a new basis on which to answer questions regarding the effects of revised and restructured benefits. The results flow into considerations as to how family-related benefits can be further enhanced in order to serve the needs and the personal circumstances of families today.

### **Better reconciliation of family and working life**

When it comes to achieving better reconciliation of family and working life, parental allowance and state-subsidised childcare are two of the benefits that have the greatest impact as they allow parents to share responsibilities equally. Combined with the partner months, parental allowance enables fathers to fulfil their wish to spend more time with their children. It also enables mothers to return to work earlier. This all fosters the trend towards more mothers with jobs – one which has increased apace since the introduction of parental allowance in 2007 (see Section III 3.2.1, Fig. 44).

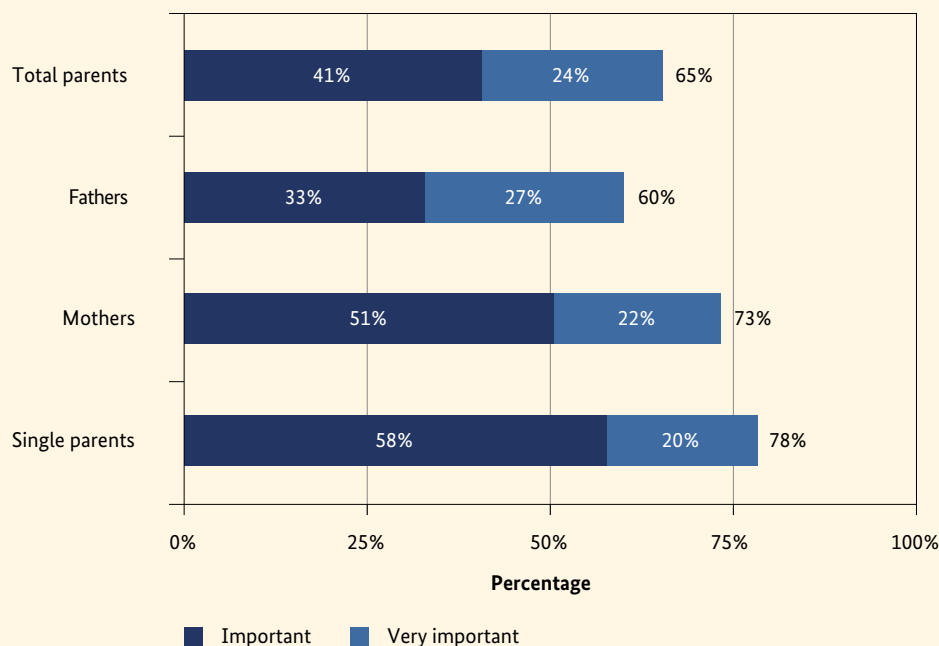
The overall evaluation also showed that family-related benefits are particularly helpful in making it easier for single mothers to go to work. In many cases, single mothers extend the number of hours they already work or are able to use child benefit and other forms of benefit to end their dependence on basic security benefits.

### **Reliable childcare services of huge importance**

Subsidised childcare has a particularly positive effect (Fig. 56): it helps mothers to go to work and earn their own income and fosters child development – especially when the child is placed in childcare at an early age. Without subsidised childcare, some 100,000 mothers with children under three would be unemployed.



Figure 56: The role of childcare in employment as viewed by parents with children under 16 who use childcare services



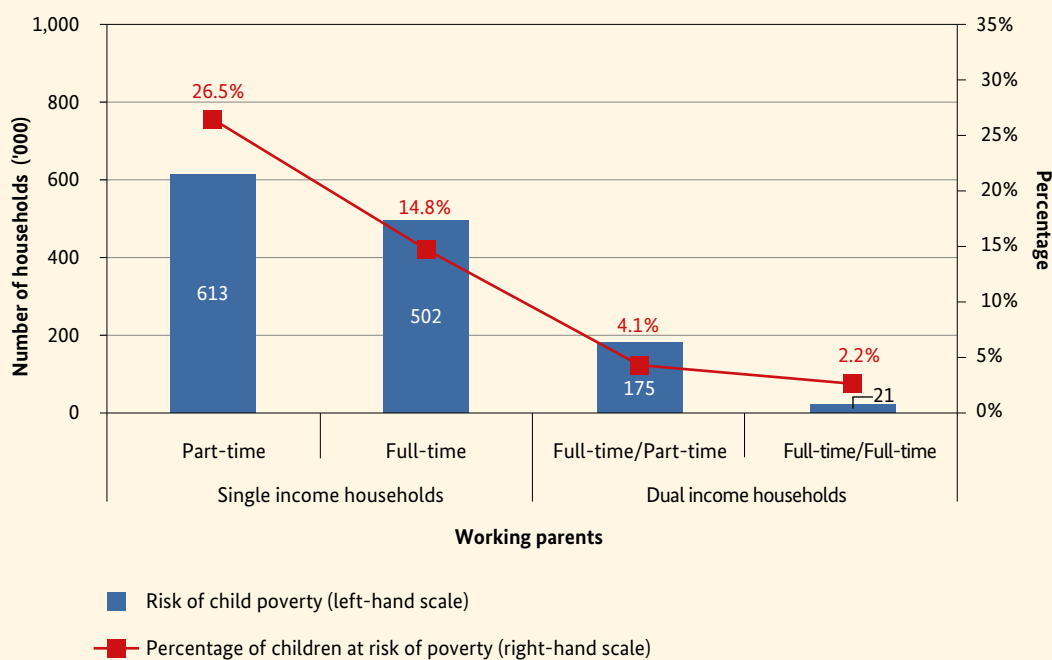
Source: Compiled by Prognos AG after IfD Allensbach (2012: 228, 295).

## 4.2 Family-related benefits stabilise the economic situation of families

Family benefits play a significant role in reducing families' risk of poverty. Without the provision of family benefit, the risk of child poverty would be twice as high as it is at present. Nonetheless, the best form of protection against poverty is for both parents to go to work. If parents share the responsibility for looking after the family and going to work, this stabilises the economic situation of families in the short and longer term. Unemployment or marginal employment is the most frequent reason why families face poverty, are dependent on benefits and live in precarious circumstances. Some 63 percent of families in which neither parent is employed face poverty. If at least one parent works part-time, this risk drops to 26.5 percent. If both parents work, their risk of poverty lies below five percent.

By way of contrast, depending on the number of hours worked, dual-income households face a particularly low poverty risk of 4.1 percent (full-time/part-time) or 2.2 percent (both parents full-time) (Fig. 57). Unemployment is thus the most important factor in overcoming poverty. This applies both to families' immediate income situation and securing their long-term economic situation.

Figure 57: Parents' employment as a risk factor for child poverty in 2012



Source: Compiled by Prognos AG after SOEP v30, Erhebungsjahr 2013, Einkommen aus dem Jahr 2012

Overall, the number of children at risk of poverty is approximately halved by the provision of benefits and transfers.<sup>98</sup> Child supplement, subsidised childcare and maintenance advance are particularly effective in reducing the risk of poverty for families. Child supplement reduces the risk of poverty in recipient households by some 15 percent.

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. Maintenance advance reduces the risk of poverty in recipient households by 5.8 percent.<sup>99</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 1.26 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 and prevents 95,000 families from having to live on basic security benefits. In addition, the provision of subsidised childcare reduces the risk of poverty by some seven percentage points in families with children up to the age of 12.

98 Data taken from Eurostat: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/>

99 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

Looking at all the benefits mentioned, it is evident that they effect an immediate increase in family incomes in recipient households. However, in the longer term, free statutory health insurance for family members and taxation ‘splitting’ for married couples can result in lower family incomes because these provisions entice married mothers to limit the scope of their employment. In the overall evaluation, therefore, it is recommended that the effects of state benefits on parental employment be taken into account. A range of legislative options are available to help find the right balance between providing support and providing incentive.<sup>100</sup>

### **Child benefit of most importance for large families**

Child benefit is the most important form of assistance for large families. It is graduated according to the number of children in the family and increases from the third child onwards. Child benefit gives some 360,000 large families an income that makes them independent from basic security benefits. Large families with low incomes also benefit significantly from child supplement, because it improves their employment options. Without child supplement, four percent fewer mothers and around two percent fewer fathers with large families would have a job.

### **Targeted benefits highly effective**

Benefits are especially effective when they are tailored to a family’s specific circumstances and needs. It is thus evident that child supplement helps families with low incomes and large families with young children, and that the tax concession fosters employment among single parents. These benefits are particularly effective when compared with the costs involved. Maintenance advance saves single parents from having to claim basic security benefits under Book II of the Social Code, significantly reducing their risk of poverty.

### **Child supplement aids low-income families**

Child supplement has proven to be an effective way of supporting low-income families. It especially targets families where the parents’ income is high enough to cover their own basic needs, but not those of their children. Child supplement adds to the parents’ income and is particularly effective in combination with other benefits such as child benefit and housing benefit. At up to € 140 per child per month, child supplement helps stabilise the economic situation of low-income families. It reduces the risk of poverty for recipient families and lowers the number of households that are dependent of receiving basic security benefits under Book II of the Social Code. Since its introduction on 1 January 2005, child supplement has helped parents wanting to escape income-related poverty and dependence on such benefits.

Some 105,000 families with a combined total of 279,000 children received child supplement in 2013. This was covered by a federal budget allocation of €352 million. Child supplement is most frequently claimed by two-parent families in which only one of the parents is employed. In most cases, the father works full-time and the mother stays at home.

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<sup>100</sup> 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, Section 8

While child supplement provides a positive incentive for taking up employment at the minimum income limit for the supplement, it tends to create negative incentives when it comes to taking work at pay levels approaching the maximum income limits. The maximum income limits mean that as gross pay before deductions rises, the supplement at first levels out until the maximum income limit is reached, at which point there is a sudden drop in available income – often by as much as €70 per child (known as the fall-off point). If one of the parents takes a job or extends the number of hours they work, this can result in child supplement and the associated education and integration benefits being withdrawn. Additional income thus worsens the family's financial situation because they end up with less available income. This not only contradicts the principle that work must pay, but also counters the goal of achieving equally shared responsibility for family and work to ensure long-term financial security (especially for mothers) and improve children's wellbeing.

### **Improved family-related benefits**

The German government has introduced an across the board package to improve family-related benefits with an act to increase the basic tax allowance, the child allowance, child benefit and child supplement.

The legislation was introduced in response to the constitutionally necessary increase in tax-free allowances for children. These rose in 2015 to €7,152 per year and will rise again in 2016 to €7,248. Because families with low and mid-level incomes benefit hardly at all from these tax-free allowances, child benefit has been increased: in 2015 by €4 per month and by €2 per month and per child in 2016. The increase in child benefit and in the tax-free allowances will ease the burden on parents overall. The legislation also provides additional support for families with special needs: the tax-free allowance for single parents increases by almost 50 percent (retroactively from 1 January 2015), from €1,308 to €1,908 per year. A graded allowance which goes into effect with the birth of a second child will be introduced in an amount of €240 per additional child. This gives single parents more available income. Low-income families will continue to receive greater support: as of 1 July 2016, the child supplement will rise from €140 to €160 per month per child.

By introducing this package, the Federal Government has responded to the findings of the overall evaluation of marriage-related and family-related benefits, which showed that child supplement in particular and also the tax-free allowance are particularly effective in providing families with tailored support. The investment involved is one that is well worth making.

## **4.3 Marriage-related and family-related benefits help couples fulfil their desire to have a child**

In helping couples fulfil their wish to have a child, marriage-related and family-related benefits can provide the right conditions and also have a symbolic effect. In particular, benefits that foster better reconciliation of family and working life have a positive effect on couples' desire to have a child. These include subsidised childcare and, to a lesser extent, tax-deductible childcare.

State-provided benefits that give parents a reliable source of income can also help them fulfil their desire to have a child. These include child benefit, which is paid over many years, and parental allowance, which is paid after the birth to replace parents' loss of income. When compared with childrearing benefit, parental allowance has a greater, more positive impact on the birth rate. This is especially the case regarding the father months that can be claimed in conjunction with parental allowance: experience gained by other countries shows that the provision of parental allowance months which can be claimed exclusively by fathers have a positive effect on both women's and men's desire to have a child.<sup>101</sup> This more equal approach improves mothers' family-work reconciliation options, while fathers see the additional time with their child or children as valuable and enriching.<sup>102</sup> All other types of benefit, such as tax 'splitting' for married couples and free statutory health insurance for family members, have either little or no impact on the birth rate.

#### 4.4 Tableau of family-related benefits

In addition to the state governments (Länder) and municipal administrations, the Federal Government offers families a wide range of state benefits. These are either stand-alone benefits for families or those which, as components of more general state benefits, take account of an entitled person's family circumstances. Benefits which are family-related components of other benefits are the most frequent form.

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, working with the other federal ministries responsible for the various forms of financial assistance, compiles an overview of the different marriage-related and family-related benefits and provisions in place. The resulting tableau of available benefits contains only those rules and provisions which are based on federal legislation. It largely follows the structure of the reference legislation and, where possible, indicates the fiscal expenditure for each benefit. Adhering to the structure of the reference legislation provides a basis for a more thematically-focused overview of benefits. One of the key distinctions is between family-related benefits, which are fundamentally linked to the existence of a child or children, and marriage-related provisions, which are linked to the existence of a legal marriage or registered life partnership irrespective of whether the couple has a child or children.

By incorporating individual benefit components and the reference legislation, the tableau of benefits provides a very detailed overview of family-related benefits. It also sheds light on a large number of family-related benefits – many more than people are perhaps aware of.

For 2012, the tableau of benefits contained some 150 family-related benefits or legislative references relating to a total value of € 128.9 billion. Listing the benefits and the reference legislation is of such great importance because in some cases benefits that are distinguishable in nature may be contained in one and the same piece of legislation and in others benefits that are identical in nature may be contained in different pieces of legislation. An example of the

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101 ZEW et al. (2014): Evaluation der Wirkung ehe- und familienbezogener Leistungen auf die Erfüllung von Kinderwünschen, p. 202

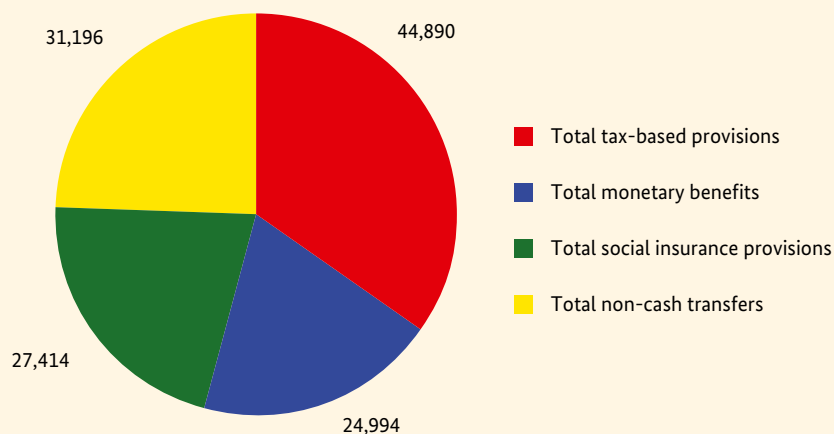
102 ZEW et al. (2014): Evaluation der Wirkung ehe- und familienbezogener Leistungen auf die Erfüllung von Kinderwünschen, p. 202

first kind – distinguishable benefits based on one and the same piece of legislation – is the tax-free allowance for the subsistence needs of a child and the tax-free allowance for childcare, childrearing or vocational training and education, both of which are contained in section 32 (6) of the German Income Tax Act. An example of the second kind – benefits that are identical in nature but are contained in different pieces of legislation – is the education and integration package that children receive as a component of basic security benefits under Book II of the Social Code, as a component of social assistance under Book XII of the Social Code and as a component of child supplement or housing benefit under the Federal Child Benefit Act.

Family-related benefits and provisions arising from German legislation can be divided into four main groups: tax-based benefits and provisions, social insurance-based benefits, financial benefits, and benefits in kind and services (non-cash benefits) (Fig. 58).

**Figure 58: Financial tableau of marriage-related and family-related benefits 2012**

**Financial tableau of family-related benefits 2012**  
Total €128,494 million



Source: Compiled by BMFSFJ

In addition to listing family-related benefits, the review of available benefits also lists marriage-related benefits and provisions. These involved expenditure of €73.6 billion in 2012, with the vast proportion going to widows' and widowers' pensions (€38.5 billion), followed by tax 'splitting' for married couples (€20.4 billion) and free statutory health insurance for non-employed spouses (€10 billion).

# V.

## Family Wellbeing: Opportunities for Parents and Children

### 5.1 Modern family policy focuses on family wellbeing

Discourse on family policy aims and the shift towards sustainable family policy based on the three pillars of money, time and infrastructure has given greater weight in family policy to the issue of family wellbeing. Sustainable family policy is designed to stabilise the economic situation of families, help mothers and fathers achieve better reconciliation of family and working life, foster couples' desire to have a child and improve children's development opportunities. In other words, family policy aims to enhance family wellbeing.

Thus, in addition to looking at how family-related benefits affect both the stability of families' economic situation and their success in reconciling family and working life, the overall evaluation also focused on children's wellbeing and development. For the children's wellbeing module, new models were designed for use in surveying and measuring this aspect of family life. This focus on children's wellbeing enhances both the existing rationale behind and the aims of German family policy.

In recent years, the various aspects of personal and societal wellbeing have grown considerably in importance, both in German policymaking and in international debate. When measuring wellbeing, prosperity and growth, policymakers and researchers increasingly stress the need to look beyond purely material indicators like gross domestic product (GDP).

In the worlds of science, research and government, concepts of wellbeing are often difficult to separate from other concepts such as comfort, happiness, welfare, prosperity, quality of life and life satisfaction. These are often compounded or used synonymously as a result. Wellbeing is therefore measured against a range of criteria. Key elements include material wellbeing/prosperity, non-material wellbeing (such as education and health) and subjective personal wellbeing (such as happiness and contentment).

Just like the notion of wellbeing, the notion of quality of life comprises objective factors which describe the living conditions and circumstances of a given society. While one of the key factors is material wellbeing, others such as health, education and social status are also important. These objective factors can be measured using statistical data illustrating the societal average and are placed in relation to directly surveyed data on personal happiness and contentment. Quality of life approaches were thus developed as a model to measure social policy trends and successes in the welfare state. Quality of life is therefore a multidimensional concept that takes in material and non-material aspects as well as objectively and subjectively measurable factors. All these characteristics are addressed in relation to models for wellbeing. There are thus close overlaps between the two concepts and in some cases they are seen as identical and synonymous with one another.<sup>103</sup>

Quality of life and wellbeing can thus be seen as approaches which go beyond the traditional models that focus on material wealth and take in other dimensions. In a new report on Family Wellbeing (*Wohlergehen von Familien*), the status of available research is set out and a new basis created on which to observe the wishes and needs of mothers, fathers and children all at the same time.<sup>104</sup>

## 5.2 Parental wellbeing and quality of life

One of the dimensions of wellbeing is life satisfaction. This in turn has many influencing factors. While employment, income and savings are all important, the way parents divide responsibilities for family and work and ensuring that children are afforded good development opportunities are equally so. Mothers who work full-time have lower life satisfaction than those who work part-time or not at all. The main reason would appear to be that they feel they are not sufficiently supported by their partner in looking after the children, resulting in higher stress levels and less satisfaction with family life.<sup>105</sup>

In the UK and the US, greater participation by the father in looking after the children gives a partnership more stability and reduces the rate of divorce. In Sweden, couples tend not to have another child if there is a discrepancy between their attitudes to and actual division of responsibility for childcare and housework.<sup>106</sup> Proactive participation by the father can help the mother better fulfil her parental role. Consequently, when it comes to childcare, mothers who are actively supported by their children's father are more patient, more flexible, more accessible emotionally and more sensitive to their children's needs. This tends to enhance the quality of the mother-child relationship and has a positive influence on the child's cognitive and emotional development. A high degree of engagement on the part of the father in looking after

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103 Synonyms taken from the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi-Kommission Well-Being and Quality of Life publications. Also, the Enquete-Kommission „Wachstum, Wohlstand, Lebensqualität“ makes no clear delineation between the two terms.

104 BMFSFJ (2015): Dossier „Wohlergehen von Familien“.

105 DIW (2014): Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie von Paaren mit nicht schulpflichtigen Kindern – unter spezifischer Berücksichtigung der Erwerbskonstellationen beider Partner. Politikberatung kompakt, Berlin.

106 Schober (2014): Gender Equality and Outsourcing of Domestic Work, Childbearing and Relationship Stability among British Couples. *Journal of Family Issues* 34, pp. 25–52



the children also gives the marriage more stability and makes parents more satisfied with their relationship.<sup>107</sup>

The employment of mothers and fathers also influences families' wellbeing. It is not simply a matter of whether the parents go to work, but under what conditions. Whether employment has a positive or negative effect on life satisfaction depends on personal and family-related factors, and also on the constellation in which the parents work.<sup>108</sup>

Some 81 percent of parents say their quality of living is good or very good and most have a clear idea of how families' quality of life can be improved. For 68 percent of mothers and 54 percent of fathers, finding a good balance in reconciling family and working life is a key prerequisite for good quality of life.<sup>109</sup>

For many parents, this includes provisions such as flexible working and childcare hours, and also childcare options before and after school, in off-peak hours and during school holidays (Fig. 59). Compared with 2013, greater importance is given to the availability of flexible childcare hours as a key prerequisite for a good standard of living. In 2014, 71 percent of parents said that flexible childcare arrangements added to their quality of life – this compares with only 62 percent in 2013.<sup>110</sup>

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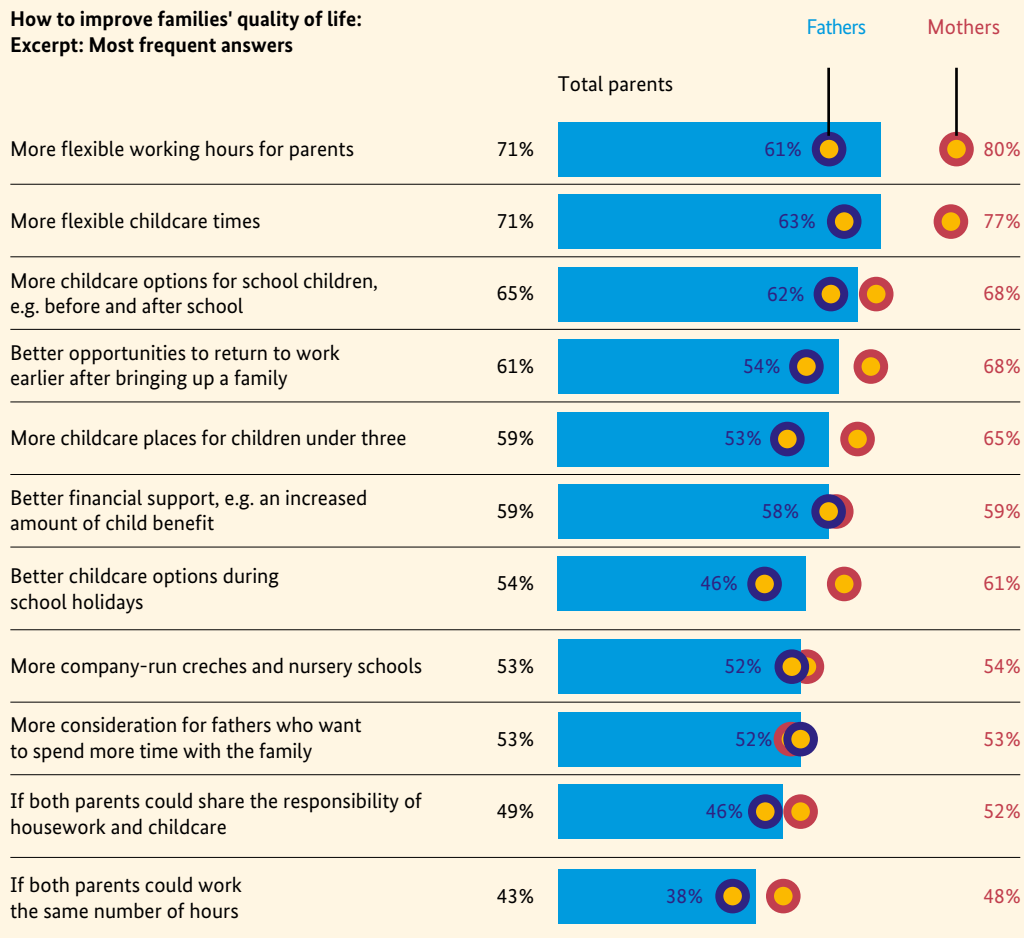
107 Allen, S. M./Daly, K. J. (2007): The effects of father involvement: An updated research summary of the evidence. Centre for Families, Work & Well-Being, University of Guelph.

108 E. g. Lauber, Verena et al. (2014): Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie von Paaren mit nicht schulpflichtigen Kindern – unter spezifischer Berücksichtigung der Erwerbskonstellationen beider Partner. Ausgewählte Ergebnisse auf Basis der FiD-Daten („Familien in Deutschland“); DIW Berlin: Politikberatung kompakt 88, pp. 1–2, 73–82. Available online at: [http://diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw\\_01.c.487738.de/diwkompakt\\_2014-088.pdf](http://diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw_01.c.487738.de/diwkompakt_2014-088.pdf) and Heineck, Guido/Wunder, Christoph (2013): Working time preferences, hours mismatch and well-being of couples: Are there spillovers? *Labour Economics* 24, October 2013 issue, pp. 244–252

109 IfD Allensbach 2014, Allensbacher Archiv.

110 See IfD Allensbach (2013): Monitor Familienleben 2013.

Figure 59: Improving families' quality of life 2014



Based on: Federal Republic of Germany, parents with children under 18

Source: IfD Allensbach, Allensbacher Archiv

### 5.3 Children's wellbeing

As part of the overall evaluation of marriage-related and family-related benefits, two studies were conducted on children's development in Germany and how benefits affect their wellbeing.<sup>111</sup> In these first-of-their-kind studies, the impact of family background and the use of childcare services and other family-related benefits were looked at in relation to their impact on a child's wellbeing. For the purpose of the studies, children's wellbeing is defined as positive development. This is measured using development-psychological scales which both the Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) and its supplementary Families in Germany study applied to children up to the age of ten. The studies analysed various aspects of children's development and identified relevant influencing factors.

111 Sources: DIW (Ed.) (2013): Evaluationsmodul: Förderung und Wohlergehen von Kindern. Politikberatung kompakt Nr. 73, Berlin; Schölmerich, Axel/Agache, Alexandru/Leyendecker, Birgit/Ott, Notburga/Werding, Martin (2013): Endbericht des Moduls „Wohlergehen von Kindern“, Bochum, p. 131 f, available online at: <http://aktuell.rub.de/mam/content/studie-wohlergehen.pdf>.

### **Parental resources more important than family type**

The overall evaluation showed that children's wellbeing is influenced by the level of their parent's education, their satisfaction with the family home and the mother's life satisfaction. The family's health also plays an important role. While the amount of available income has no significant influence on children's wellbeing, the wellbeing of children is significantly lower in families at risk of poverty when compared with families who are financially better off.

If these factors are taken into account, the family constellation in which children grow up (with single parents or with parents with a migrant background) has only a marginal influence on children's wellbeing.<sup>112</sup> This means that children of single parents or from families with migrant backgrounds develop equally as well as children from two-parent families or from families with no migrant background if the parents have the necessary material and educational resources.

Family-related benefits which reduce the risk of poverty have an indirect, positive impact on children's wellbeing. These largely include child benefit, benefits for low-income families (basic security benefits under Book II of the Social Code, housing benefit and child supplement) and parental allowance in the child's first year. Parental allowance positively influences children's wellbeing in many ways. It fosters fathers' participation in childrearing, resulting in the associated effects on child development described earlier. And compared with children whose parents received childrearing allowance, children in families receiving parental allowance have better everyday skills when aged between two and three.

### **Childcare has a positive effect on wellbeing**

If children are placed in a daycare centre, it has a positive effect on their development and their 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: negative effects on a child's wellbeing can be reduced or completely prevented if the child attends a daycare centre. Thus, marriage-related and 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 allowance for single parents.

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. Recent studies show that childcare allowance increases this effect. The percentage of

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<sup>112</sup> RUB (2013): Endbericht des Moduls „Wohlergehen von Kindern“ für die Geschäftsstelle Gesamtevaluation der ehe- und familienbezogenen Leistungen in Deutschland, Bochum.

parents who refrain from using public childcare services because they prefer to receive childcare allowance is higher among poorly educated parents and families with migrant backgrounds when compared with the average population.<sup>113</sup> 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.

There is also evidence of a link between children's and teenagers' health and their parents' social status.<sup>114</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 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.

### **Differences in children's subjective life satisfaction**

One aspect that could not be investigated in the wellbeing studies mentioned above is children's subjective life satisfaction. Some studies clearly show that, like many other aspects of wellbeing, life satisfaction among children in Germany differs according to families' social status. The World Vision Children Study 2013,<sup>115</sup> which surveyed children aged six to eleven, showed that 71 percent of children in upper class families are very happy with their lives, but only 30 percent in the lower class say the same. Some 61 percent of children in middle-class families are very happy with their lives (Fig. 60).

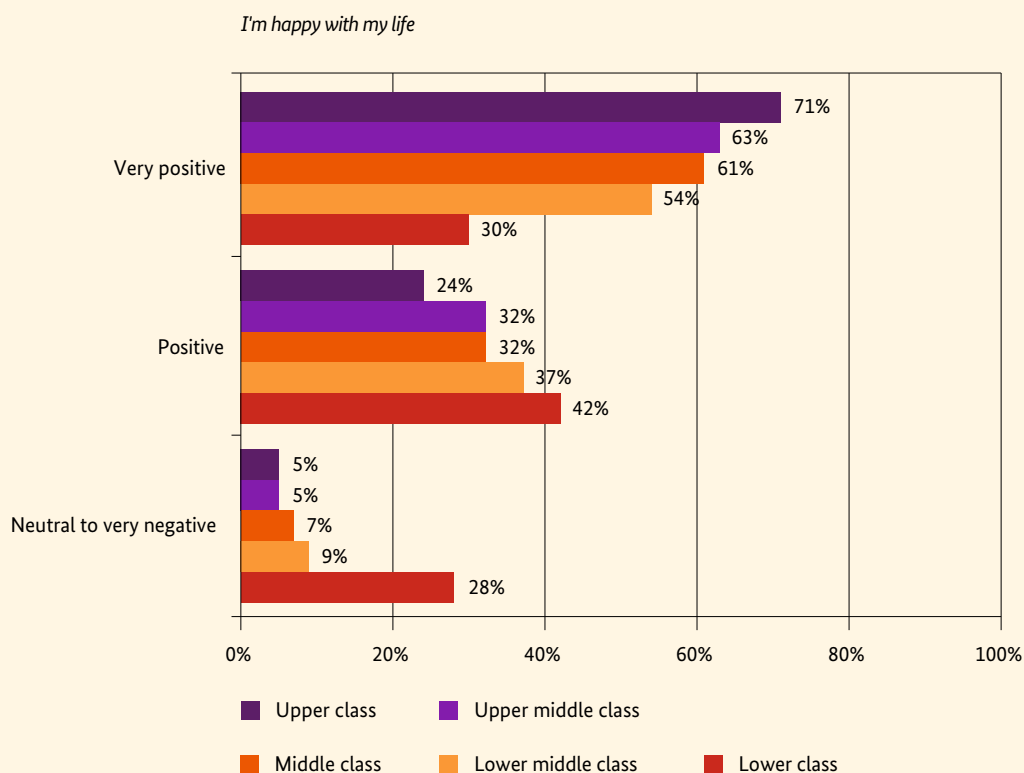
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113 DJI/TU Dortmund (2014): Kommunale Bedarfserhebungen. Der regionalspezifische Betreuungsbedarf U3 und seine Bedingungsfaktoren.

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

115 World Vision e. V. (2013): Kinder in Deutschland 2013, Weinheim.

**Figure 60: Not all children are happy to the same extent (in %)**



Based on: Children aged 6–11 in Germany

Source: World Vision Children Study 2013

Children are sensitive to social imbalance. Some 42 percent of children say that ‘poor people’ in Germany are not fairly treated. This is the most frequent answer across all groups surveyed. One in five girls and one in five children with a migrant background feel that they themselves are disadvantaged. Some 24 percent of children are aware that their family is restricted financially, while 69 percent say their family suffers no financial constraints. This percentage reflecting ‘adequately provided for’ children increased between 2010 and 2013.

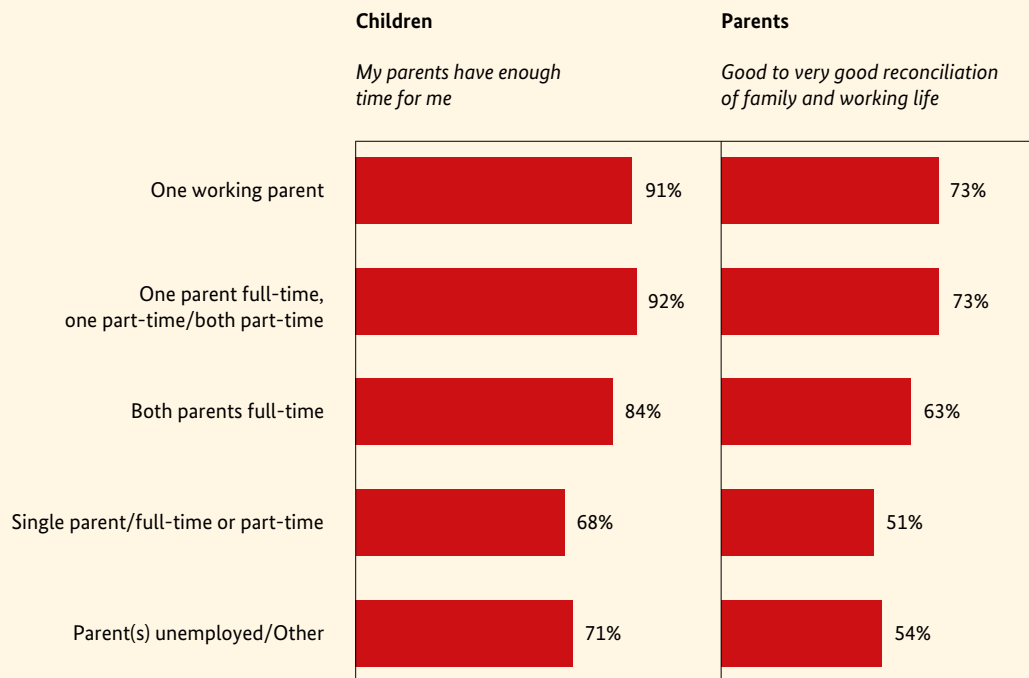
**Parental employment an indicator for children’s happiness**

On the whole, it is evident that the financial constraints perceived by children are strongly linked to whether their parents are employed. If only one parent works, 18 percent of children report that money is tight. If both parents work, this figure drops to 10 percent. In the case of children living with a single parent, 30 percent report material constraints even if their parent works. And over half of all children in families where both parents are unemployed perceive financial constraints.

Children are generally happy with the amount of time that their parents have for them (Fig. 51). The level of happiness varies relative to whether their parents work. But even if both parents go to work, children believe that they have adequate time for them. This is no different to children with only one working parent. Children who live with a single parent who works tend to be less happy with the amount of time spent with their parent. The same applies to

almost as many children whose parents are unemployed. Nonetheless, most children in these groups, too, say their parents have enough time for them (68 and 71 percent, respectively).

**Figure 61: Parental employment allows enough time for the family, say children and parents (in %)**



*Basis: Children aged 6–11 in Germany and their parents*

*Source: World Vision Children Study 2013*

### Children develop best in happy families

Children’s wellbeing is significantly influenced by their mother’s life satisfaction. Pro-active fathers who assume responsibility for childcare also help boost mothers’ life satisfaction and foster child development.

Fathers who play an active role in bringing up their children, for example in caring and nurturing activities or by building an intensive father-child relationship, have a positive effect on many aspects of child development. This has been shown in areas such as cognitive<sup>116</sup> and language<sup>117</sup> development, school performance,<sup>118</sup> and social and emotional skills.<sup>119</sup>

116 See also: Huerta, M. et al. (2013): Fathers’ Leave, Fathers’ Involvement and Child Development: Are They Related? Evidence from four OECD Countries. OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No. 140, OECD Publishing.

117 See also: Tamis-LeMonda, C.S./Cabrera, N.J./Baumwell, L. (2013): Fathers’ role in children’s language development, in: Cabrera, Natasha J./Tamis-LeMonda, Catherine S.: Handbook of Father Involvement: multidisciplinary perspectives, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

118 Coley, Rebekah Levine/Lewin-Bizan, Selva/Carrano, Jennifer (2011): Does Early Paternal Parenting Promote Low-Income Children’s Long-Term Cognitive Skills? in: Journal of Family Issues, Volume: 32, Issue: 11.

119 Snarey, J. R. (1993): How fathers care for the next generation: A four-decade study. Harvard University Press.

## 5.4 Home and family as the primary learning environment

Apart from the provision of material resources in the home, children's wellbeing is influenced by the social and personal opportunities for participation open to them and which they are able to take up. Education and learning is a key aspect of participation.<sup>120</sup>

To enable education processes to develop positively, family-based socialisation and education policy provisions must interact effectively. Alongside family education services, childcare facilities and school, the family home is the focal point of children's development, care and education. Research findings show that children are especially shaped by early childhood family experiences.<sup>121</sup> Parents are the first people with whom their children interact, they provide a supportive space for learning and they introduce their children to the outside world.<sup>122</sup> With the home and family acting as a child's primary learning environment, the foundations for children's intellectual and socio-emotional development are laid long before a child goes to school.<sup>123</sup> Families and public education centres and services thus complement one another and make a valuable contribution to the future of upcoming generations.<sup>124</sup>

### **Children's origins still govern access to participation and integration**

A large number of studies show a close link between a child's social origin and their chances of education, vocational education and training, and social participation.<sup>125</sup> Families in difficult socio-economic circumstances or with poorly educated parents thus find it difficult to foster their children's development in an age-appropriate way and to provide an adequate learning environment.

Public education institutes can compensate to an extent, but services and options are needed at an earlier juncture which reach families directly and expand development and education opportunities for people who are disadvantaged because of their background. With professional educational support and advice, parents can be encouraged and made to feel more competent in playing a proactive role in their child's early development. Findings from educational sociology, education and economics research indicate that early parental guidance from a person of trust can lead to lasting improvement in children's social participation and integration. Apart from providing better access to education<sup>126</sup> and focusing on early childhood as a

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120 See BMAS (2013): Der Vierte Armuts- und Reichtumsbericht der Bundesregierung, Berlin.

121 Die erste nationale Untersuchung zur Qualität der Bildung, Betreuung und Erziehung in der frühen Kindheit (NUBBEK 2012) bestätigt im Vergleich mit außerfamiliärer Betreuung den prägenden Einfluss der Familie auf den Bildungs- und Entwicklungsstand von Kindern, [www.nubbek.de](http://www.nubbek.de)

122 See Schneewind, Klaus A. (2008): Sozialisation in der Familie, in: Hurrelmann/Grundmann/Walper (Eds.): Handbuch Sozialisationsforschung, Weinheim, pp. 256–273

123 See also Viernickel, Susanne/Simoni, Heidi (2008): Frühkindliche Erziehung und Bildung, in: Eidg. Koordinationskommission für Familienfragen (EKFF) (Eds.): Familien – Erziehung – Bildung, Bern, pp. 22–32

124 See Wissenschaftlicher Beirat für Familienfragen (2010): Familie als Ort von Bildung, Erziehung und Betreuung, in: BMFSFJ (Ed.): Familie – Wissenschaft – Politik. Ein Kompendium der Familienpolitik, Berlin, p. 140

125 See BMFSFJ (2012): Bildungsbegleitung in der Eltern- und Familienbildung, Berlin, [www.elternchance.de](http://www.elternchance.de)

126 See also Allmendinger, Jutta (2012): Schulaufgaben. Wie wir das Bildungssystem verändern müssen, um unseren Kindern gerecht zu werden, München, Büchner, Peter (2013): Familie, soziales Milieu und Bildungsverläufe von Kindern, in: Correll/Lepperhoff (Eds.): Frühe Bildung in der Familie. Perspektiven der Familienbildung, Weinheim und Basel, pp. 46–57

key educational phase,<sup>127</sup> the positive cost-benefit ratio of early education measures is also a proven factor.<sup>128</sup>

#### 5.4.1 Federal programme *Elternchance ist Kinderchance*: Opportunities for Parents Mean Opportunities for Children

The Federal programme *Elternchance ist Kinderchance* (Opportunities for Parents mean Opportunities for Children) focuses on the strong links between family-based and institutional learning with the aim of giving families the skills they need to provide their children with an environment that promotes learning and fosters their education and interests. Family circumstances are not viewed with regard to educational disadvantage. Instead, the family and the home are seen as an enabling environment. This is in line with a broad-based definition of education: families can improve conditions for formal education and education-related decisions, and can foster the educational process in everyday life. International studies show that the quality of the home learning environment plays an important role in a child's performance at school.<sup>129</sup>

The phases of transition as a child moves from learning within the family to attending the first form of childcare outside the home and then going on to primary school are phases in which families have a particular need for guidance.

Also, with the switch from the working society to the knowledge society, parents become aware that formal certificates as proof of education and as a prerequisite for employment are no longer enough. Social, emotional and motivational skills are increasingly important for social participation and integration. Parents thus have an indirect influence on the importance placed on education, thirst for knowledge and motivation, and act as role models from early childhood on. A parent's knowledge of the importance of early education and how it is structured thus plays a key role in deciding their child's educational future.

#### **More than 5,000 specialists trained as parental advisors**

In a highly successful nation-wide programme, *Elternchance ist Kinderchance* (Opportunities for Parents mean Opportunities for Children), the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs focuses on the preventive impact of parental and family education and extends it to the provision of education-related support for families. From 2011 to 2014, more than 5,000 family education counsellors received further training to qualify as parental advisors.

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127 See also Stamm, Margrit (2010): *Frühkindliche Bildung, Betreuung und Erziehung*, Bern, etc.

128 See Meier-Gräwe, Uta (2011): *Kosten-Nutzen früher Hilfen*, Köln; Allmendinger, Jutta/Gieseke, Johannes/Oberschachtsiek, Dirk (2011): *Unzureichende Bildung. Folgekosten für die öffentlichen Haushalte*, Gütersloh.

129 See Melhuish, Edward (2013): *Die frühkindliche Umgebung: Langfristige Wirkungen frühkindlicher Bildung und Erziehung*, in: Correll/Lepperhoff (Eds.): *Frühe Bildung in der Familie. Perspektiven der Familienbildung*, Weinheim und Basel, p. 214



These advisors support mothers and fathers in matters of education and are available both as a point of contact and as a person of trust. This is particularly helpful for parents with a great need for guidance because the parental advisors are easily accessible and are present in many areas of everyday life – on playgrounds, via the ‘neighbourhood mothers’ project, in the families centre at local daycare institutes, at parent-child cafés and other low-threshold meeting places.

Feedback from parental advisors confirms the great need among educational counsellors for this type of training, the practical relevance of further training in dealing with parents and the high level of expertise attained in the training seminars. It shows that working with parents to enhance children’s educational paths is seen as hugely important, both by family education counsellors and increasingly by daycare centre staff.

### **Systematic impact and process evaluation: A first of its kind in family education**

The German Youth Institute (DJI) and the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg evaluated the Federal Government’s programme up to the end of 2014. In a parallel study, the research team looked at how family education influences the interrelations between childrearing, education and social participation in families. This provided broad-based knowledge on the structures of family education, the work performed by the specialists involved and the everyday circumstances of families reached.<sup>130</sup> Systematic impact and process evaluation has so far been rare in Germany’s family education landscape:<sup>131</sup> there are hardly any longitudinal findings available and most evaluations tend to look at fixed-structure services such as childrearing courses.<sup>132</sup>

The knowledge gleaned on how improved advice on family education impacts educational biographies can be used to improve opportunities for participation and integration and thus further improve children’s wellbeing in Germany. The evaluation thus contributes to evidence-based family education and early education policy.

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130 Walper, Sabine/Stemmler, Mark (2013): Eltern als Bildungsvermittler für ihre Kinder stärken. Das Bundesprogramm „Elternchance ist Kinderchance“ und seine Evaluation, in: Correll/Lepperhoff (Eds): Frühe Bildung in der Familie. Perspektiven der Familienbildung, Weinheim und Basel.

131 See Lösel, Friedrich (2006): Bestandsaufnahme und Evaluation von Angeboten im Elternbildungsbereich. Abschlussbericht, Berlin.

132 Lösel, Friedrich/Runkel, Daniela (2013): Prävention von kindlichen Verhaltensproblemen in Familien, in: Correll/Lepperhoff (Eds.): Frühe Bildung in der Familie. Perspektiven der Familienbildung, Weinheim und Basel, p. 225

# VI.

## New Economic Potential: Equal Sharing of Responsibilities in Work and Family Life

To enable them to achieve better reconciliation of family and working life and share responsibility for work and the family equally, parents need employers who afford them flexibility to arrange their working hours to suit their needs. This calls for a new employment culture as strict full-time and part-time models are often not the way. Herein lies new economic potential. The German employment market is in flux due to demographic change, the altering work-related demands of upcoming generations and increasing digitisation of workplace processes. Terms like the skills shortage, the war for talent<sup>133</sup> and Generation Y<sup>134</sup> highlight the employment-related challenges that industry, policymakers and society face. The question of how companies will structure work processes and jobs in the future and the kind of employee development and retention measures they will use to secure both skills and loyalty has less to do with soft factors and more to do with the crucial factors that will decide and drive the innovative power, competitiveness and the future viability of their business. Employer-provided options for better reconciliation of family and working life thus play a major role.

### **Women harbour most immediately accessible potential in securing skills**

The current shortage of skills only affects certain sectors, occupations and regions. But due to demographic change and the overall reduction in employment potential, that shortage will become more widespread in the coming years. The question of how policymakers and industry can secure skills in the longer term is thus of huge importance. Under the Federal Government's skills policy to secure an adequate supply of skilled labour, women are seen to harbour the most immediately accessible potential because on average they are well educated and trained and in many cases may have either given up their jobs or significantly reduced their hours in order to cope with the family. Although the employment rate among mothers in Germany has increased in recent years, rising from 59 percent in 2000 to 66.8 percent in 2013,<sup>135</sup> they tend to work fewer hours (including when compared with mothers elsewhere). More than 70 percent of mothers work part-time, with one in five in marginal employment and working less than 15 hours per week. Shorter working weeks are also prevalent among mothers with older children.<sup>136</sup>

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133 The increasingly competitive landscape for recruiting and retaining skilled and talented employees

134 Those born between 1980 and 1994

135 Prognos AG for BMFSFJ: special analysis of microcensus, 2014

136 BMAS (2014): Fortschrittsbericht 2013 zum Fachkräftekonzept der Bundesregierung.

To increase the number of hours worked by mothers, utilise their skills and meet their career development needs, qualitatively and quantitatively adequate childcare services are needed along with flexible working models, family-friendly human resources policy and more fathers assuming responsibility for the family and the home.

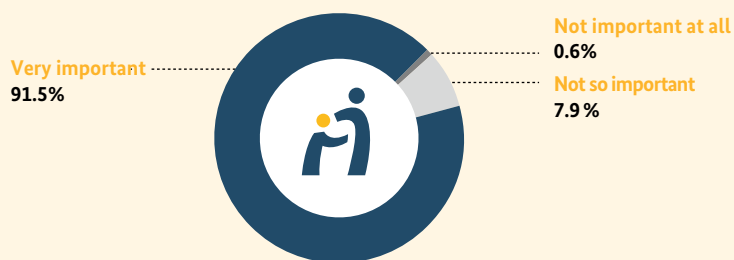
## 6.1 Employer-provided options for engaged fathers

The expectations and wishes of men with family responsibilities have changed in recent years and most fathers now want to share work and family commitments with their wives and partners. As explained earlier, a growing number achieve this by claiming parental allowance and taking parental leave. After taking parental leave, many fathers would like to reduce their working hours in favour of their children and they would prefer not to work overtime. More than half of fathers feel they have too little time for their children.<sup>137</sup> Three-quarters of fathers with children under 18 would like to work less.<sup>138</sup>

Figure 62: Fathers say having time for the family is important

"How important are the following for you?"

*"Time for the family, including during the week"*



Source: Väter gGmbH (2012): Trendstudie „Moderne Väter“, N = 1000

### If mothers are to work more, fathers need better options

Fathers want to further their careers and have time for the family, but many feel their employers are not providing the support they need. Some 68.2 percent of fathers say their company is not father-friendly or is only so to an extent. And 85.5 percent say that family-work reconciliation provisions focus far too much or too much on women.<sup>139</sup> A disproportionate number of fathers in the 'rush hour of life' – the phase between 25 and 40 in which important career decisions are made – fear that if they make use of family-friendly provisions they will receive a negative assessment regarding their performance (40 percent), be given less-attractive responsibilities

137 Eltern/Forsa (2013): Meinungen und Einstellungen der Väter in Deutschland.

138 Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2012): Monitor Familienleben 2012.

139 Väter gGmbH (2012): Trendstudie „Moderne Väter“.

(24 percent) and run into problems with colleagues (29 percent).<sup>140</sup> But there is evidence that these fears are unjustified: almost 57 percent of fathers say that their decision to take parental leave met with a positive response from most co-workers.<sup>141</sup> Some 27 percent of men aged 25 to 55 are unhappy with available options to work part-time and 70 percent who have worked part-time say that men should take more responsibility for looking after the children than currently do.<sup>142</sup>

Although employer-provided options tend to place too great a focus on the needs of mothers, most human resources managers are aware of the new role being adopted by fathers and want to do more to encourage it. More than 80 percent see a rise in the number of fathers looking for employer-provided options to foster reconciliation of family and working life and just as many expect that number to rise further.<sup>143</sup>

## 6.2 Family-friendly policies as a competitive factor in recruitment

For Generation Y and thus the upcoming generation of skilled workers and junior managers, a good balance between work and family life is of huge importance. In an online survey conducted by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs,<sup>144</sup> 97 percent of respondents said that being able to reconcile work and family responsibilities was necessary in achieving a good standard of living. This is equally important for women and men. They believe that equal division of responsibilities is the key: 83 percent said that sharing the burden of work and family was important or very important. And many said that part-time employment was a good option. More than half (59 percent) are in favour of both partners working part-time so they can share the responsibilities of going out to work and staying at home to look after the family. The younger generation also has clear ideas about the role played by fathers: almost all respondents (98 percent) said it should be a matter of course for fathers to play a greater role in caring for the family.

Family-friendly policies are already a decisive factor in choosing an employer. For 90 percent of employees with children, a family-friendly workplace is equally as important as or perhaps even more important than pay when choosing where to work. Almost one-third (31 percent) of young parents have resigned a position to move to a more family-friendly employer.<sup>145</sup> And for students, the issue is almost as important as job security and good pay. For 57 percent of students, reconciliation of family and working life is far more important than upward mobility and promotion (34 percent) or being allowed to work independently (31 percent).<sup>146</sup>

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140 A. T. Kearney (2014): Nur Mut! Wie familienfreundliche Unternehmen zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf beitragen.

141 Väter gGmbH (2012): Trendstudie „Moderne Väter“.

142 A. T. Kearney (2014): Nur Mut! Männer. Väter. Representative survey of employed men, online survey of 1,771 employees aged between 25 and 55

143 Bundesverband der Personalmanager in Kooperation mit BMFSFJ (2014): Einschätzung der Personalverantwortlichen zur Väterorientierung in deutschen Unternehmen.

144 BMFSFJ (2014): Generation Y-Check.

145 GfK Nürnberg i. A. BMFSFJ (2012): Personalmarketingstudie.

146 Ernst & Young: Studentenstudie 2014.

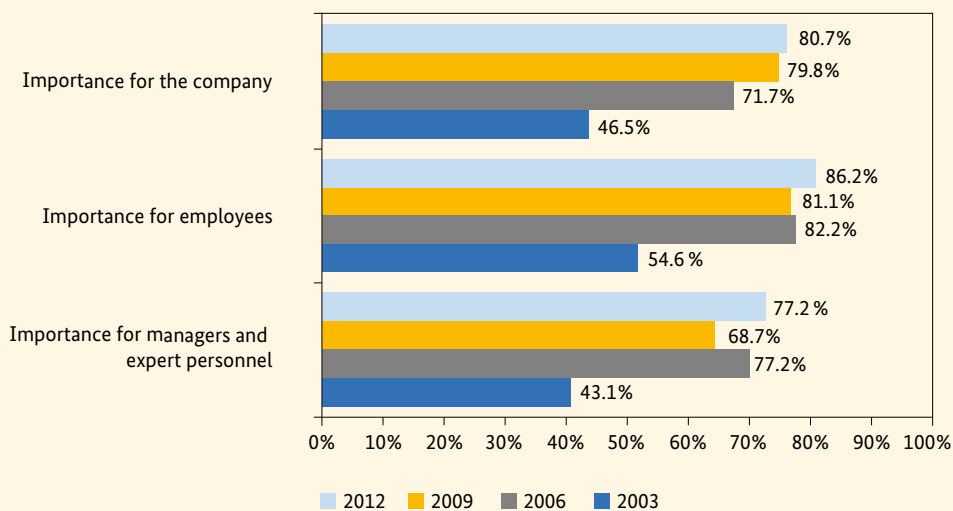
### Family friendliness in German industry: Employers are already doing a lot

The message that employees find family-friendly working conditions increasingly important has been heard by German industry. Given the shortage of skilled workers, a situation further exacerbated by demographic change, most employers have understood the importance of family-friendly policies and provisions in recruiting and retaining qualified personnel.

According to a representative survey conducted by the Cologne Institute for Economic Research (IWK) on Family Friendliness in German Business in 2013, a large number of companies operate family-friendly policies. Some 81 percent of company managers now say that family-friendliness is important. This is significantly more than in 2006 (72 percent) and almost twice that in 2003 (47 percent). Company policies focus on providing flexible working models and giving general consideration to the needs of employees with family commitments – be it caring for dependent relatives or looking after children (Fig. 63).

**Figure 63: The importance of family friendliness for companies, employees and managers**

Companies where family friendliness is important/quite important (in %)

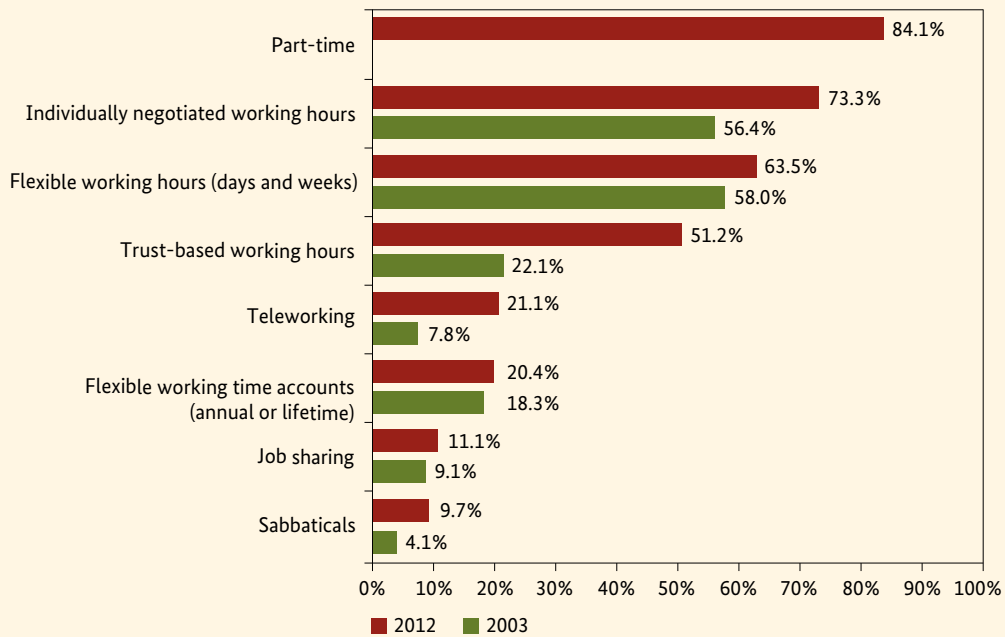


Source: Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln

Most companies place their main focus on flexible working models to accommodate the needs of employees with children or elderly parents in need of care. In three-quarters of companies, employees are able to negotiate their working hours individually and in one in two companies, they are trusted to manage their own working hours as they see fit. While company requirements dictate the framework within which employees must work, in two out of three companies, they are given broad or relatively broad joint decision-making opportunities in deciding when and for how long they work (Fig. 64).

**Figure 64: Flexibilisation of working hours and place of work**

Companies offering family-friendly provisions (in %)



Multiple choice

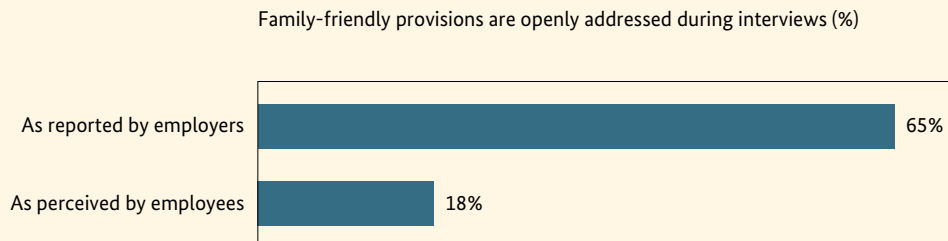
Source: BMFSFJ (2013): Unternehmensmonitor 2013

### Take up of family-friendly provisions is slow

Despite this level of company engagement, there is still a discrepancy between employees' personal needs and employer-provided provisions. In many cases, employees are not aware of the company policy or it does not suit an employee's particular situation. Although many employers say they actively communicate their family-friendly policies, only few employees are actually reached. Around two-thirds of human resources managers say they openly address family-friendly provisions during interviews, but only 18 percent of employees say this is the case (Fig. 65). On the whole, employees (both women and men) tend to shy away from enquiring about family-friendly provisions during the recruitment process because they believe it would lessen their chances of being offered a job.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>147</sup> GfK Nürnberg for BMFSFJ: Personalmarketingstudie 2012.

Figure 65: Family-friendly provisions as seen by employers and employees in 2012



Source: Personalmarketingstudie 2012, GfK Nürnberg for BMFSFJ

The gap between employee expectations and employer offerings is especially wide when it comes to the provision of flexible working models. Flexible does not necessarily mean family-friendly. Employees with family responsibilities must be able to rely on their working hours being not only flexible, but plannable and reliable. Regular working hours are thus of great importance for employees as this allows them to plan and organise their private lives (78 percent). This is especially the case for those who work shifts (94 percent).

Nonetheless, a large number of employees would like to be able to adapt their working hours on a temporary basis to accommodate private needs such as childcare and caring for dependent relatives. This includes being able to reduce working hours overall: 86 percent of working parents would like to be able to reduce their working hours temporarily to have more time for their children.<sup>148</sup> If properly structured, flexible working arrangements can give employees greater autonomy in managing the hours they work.

### 6.3 Corporate culture key to reconciliation of family and working life

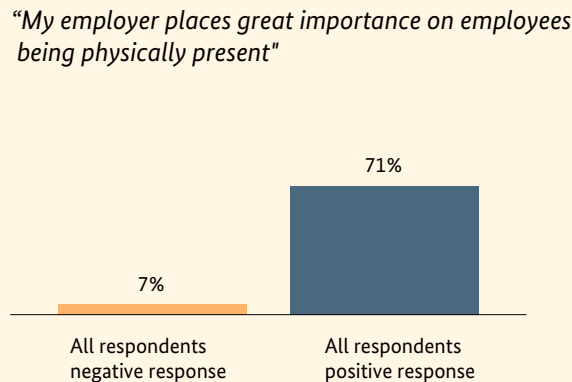
Whether a company's family-friendly policy remains a mere list of measures on paper or is actually implemented in the workplace is largely a matter of corporate culture. Only 38 percent of employees believe that reconciliation of family and working life is part of the norm where they work. Some 46 percent believe that their employer places great importance on the company's image as an employee-friendly enterprise, but only 27 percent say that the actual corporate culture is especially family friendly.

One reason is that many companies still operate a strong presence culture. Just over seven out of ten employees (women, men, those with children and those without, part-time and full-time, with and without management responsibilities) say that their employer places great importance on them being physically present at work (Fig. 66).<sup>149</sup>

148 IG Metall (2013): Employee Survey

149 A. T. Kearney (2014): Nur Mut! Wie familienfreundliche Unternehmen zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf beitragen.

Figure 66: Requirement for physical presence in 2014 (in %)



Source: A. T. Kearney (2014): *Nur Mut! Wie familienfreundliche Unternehmen zur Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Beruf beitragen*

Presence culture means that individual working hour arrangements are still seen with scepticism and can often act as a career barrier even though in many sectors, the quality of the work results is not reliant on long working hours and increasing digitisation makes mobile working options a growing part of everyday life.

Supervisors and managers play a vital role in establishing a family-friendly corporate culture. Only when they support and live out the idea of reconciling family and working life (and are required to do so by upper management) can family friendliness become an integral and robust component of corporate culture. At the same time, regular assessments must be made as to whether existing policy actually meets employees' needs, whether employees feel that internal communications address the whole workforce – not just mothers, but also fathers and employees with relatives in need of care – and if there is a need to add other provisions that they feel are important.

#### 6.4 Government and industry as partners in promoting a family-friendly working world: Success Factor Family programme

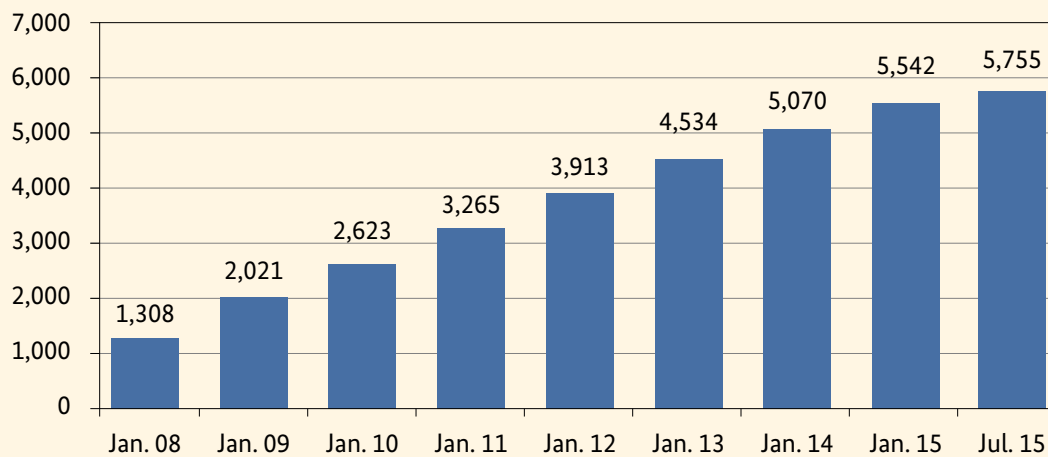
To sensitise companies to the importance of family friendliness and familiarise them with the opportunities to be had from more family-conscious human resources policy, the Federal Government in close cooperation with industry associations and trade unions initiated the Success Factor Family programme for business and industry in 2006. 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 working models and reconciling work with caring for dependent relatives. 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.



### Increasing number of companies in the Success Factor Family network

The Success Factor Family network jointly launched in 2006 by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Woman and Youth 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 5,700 and rising (Fig. 67), the network offers them and other interested parties free information on matters relating to family-friendly human resources policy. This includes things like family-friendly working arrangements, employer-subsidised child-care, 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 100 workshops, seminars and presentations every year to communicate strategies for use in implementing family-friendly provisions.

Figure 67: Success Factor Family corporate network membership



Source: Success Factor Family office

With these offerings, the Success Factor Family network reached almost 15,000 business and industry stakeholders in 2013 and 2014. Special publications issued in cooperation with industry associations, for example for hospitals, 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.

### **Equal division of responsibility for family and working life: A focal point of the Success Factor Family programme**

Activities currently being conducted under the programme largely focus on family-conscious working hours and company provisions for engaged fathers. In a regularly updated database containing best-practice examples, some 150 employees and company managers demonstrate the innovative working hour models they have already introduced to promote reconciliation of family and working life. And by engaging in dialogue forums with industry, the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs has worked directly with companies to identify innovative measures and solutions for flexible working arrangements and the promotion of fathers' interests. The main focus of these activities involved the challenges companies face in everyday operations – family-friendly provisions connected with shift work, presence culture and part-time work for managers.

The Success Factor Family office holds regular informational events in conjunction with regional chambers of industry and commerce and with other regional partners to whom interested companies can turn for information about family-friendly working models and how to implement them. In addition to ministry-led activities, joint industry-union events focus on issues such as implementing family-friendly policies under works agreements, collective bargaining agreements and as part of a working-life working hours account, and developing practice-focused guidelines.

## VII. The Digital Society

The digitisation of society is changing the way families lead their lives. As this far-reaching trend continues, it will bring both opportunity and challenge.

For 54 percent of people aged 30 to 59, the personal benefits of digitisation and the changes it brings outweigh the disadvantages involved. Some 36 percent of people in this age group who use the internet cannot imagine life without being able to go online, while 41 percent say they would find it difficult to cope without internet access. When it comes to digitisation and its effects on working life, however, there was variation between responses across the same age group. Only 13 percent of respondents from lower social strata say that digital media have changed the way they work. This compares with 58 percent of respondents from higher social strata (Fig. 68).<sup>150</sup>

**Figure 68: How digital media has changed my life, by social strata, 2014**

Question: What effect have digital media had on your life?	Socio-economic status		
	Low %	Middle %	High %
How I inform myself about products and companies	50	70	79
How I stay in contact with family, friends and acquaintances	43	56	62
That I'm always available	41	49	59
How I look for holidays, flights and hotels	21	53	66
How I do my banking	27	51	63
How I keep up with what's happening in the world	34	47	57
How I communicate with my colleagues and business partners	16	43	64
How and where I do my shopping	34	43	45
How I do my work	13	38	58
How often I have contact with friends	27	34	37
How I watch films and television	23	27	29
How I establish new contacts and meet new people	20	16	17

Based on: German population aged 30 to 59

Source: Allensbacher Archiv, IfD-Umfrage 6290

150 All data taken from: IfD Allensbach (2014): Die Generation Mitte, IfD-Umfrage 6290, respondents aged 30 to 59

### **Ambivalent effects of the digital shift**

Information and communication technology (ICT) has now arrived in almost all areas of life. It shapes not only today's working world, but also everyday life, social engagement and social interaction. The effects on family life are many and varied. Those who are familiar with digital media and know how to make the best of them can gain in prosperity, standard of living, social participation and personal skills and ability. But not everyone has the same access and opportunity to make use of digital media. Education, age and social status are influencing factors which can result in ambivalent effects. On the one hand, digitisation can help overcome the social divide by offering low-threshold access to knowledge and social participation. On the other, it can widen the social divide by leaving people further and further behind. In a digital society, a digital divide means a social divide. Thus, rather than it being self-sustaining, the digital shift must be policy driven.

### **Germany's Digital Agenda 2014–2017**

If the opportunities of digitisation are to be open to all educational, age and social groups, then social policies must be realigned and legislation reviewed. Germany's Digital Agenda 2014 – 2017 sets out the policy goals and priorities designed to manage and shape the digital shift. The German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs is primarily responsible for the social-policy dimension. The aim is to use the planned measures to enable people to structure their digital worlds positively and equally and reconcile them with those of others.

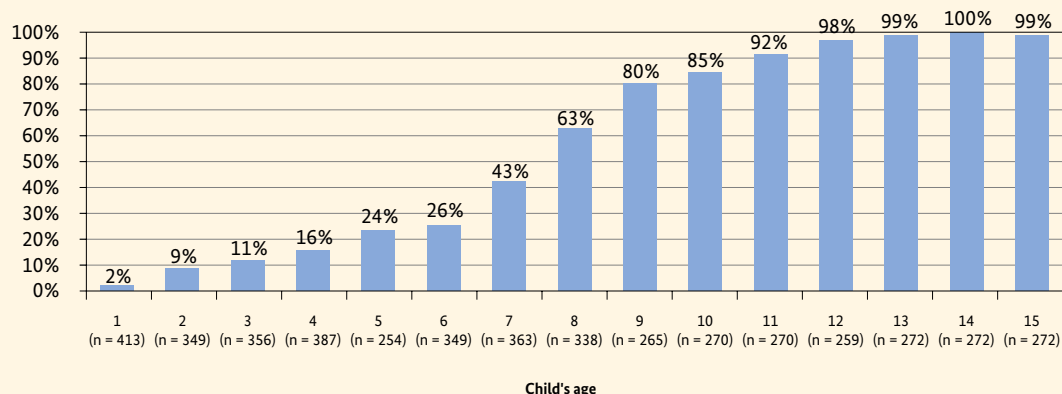
Families especially can use digitisation to enhance their lifestyles. Structuring the digital society is thus an important component of modern, future-focused family policy. Digitisation can help achieve existing family policy goals, while family policy can help shape the digital age.

## **7.1 Families and digitisation**

### **Digitisation plays an important role in everyday family life**

Digitisation is now an integral part of family life – it is not some futuristic idea. The internet plays a role in most homes, for teenagers, adults and children (Fig. 69). One quarter of five to six year-olds, 43 percent of seven year-olds and almost all those aged twelve use the internet. For parents and children it is the most natural thing in the world to use smartphones, tablets, phablets and digital TV to go online to search for information, communicate with others and do their work or schoolwork.

Figure 69: Children online: Internet use among children by age



Source: *Digitale Medien: Beratungs-, Handlungs- und Regulierungsbedarf aus Elternperspektive*, Deutsches Jugendinstitut e. V., analyses from AID:A II, BMFSFJ (2015): *netchildren 2020*, <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/kinder-und-jugend,did=215068.html>

Basis: All, mothers' responses

Forms of communication and sources of information are increasingly more widely accessible and are no longer bound to set locations. The borders between the virtual and the real worlds are becoming blurred. For many teenagers and adults, and also for children, the ability to go online is a normal part of everyday life. The almost constant availability of the internet and interaction via social media are changing social relations: being 'on' helps people join in and belong.

This situation is reflected in the rising number of mobile devices like laptops, smartphones and tablets. While only 25 percent of 13 to 19 year-olds had a smartphone in 2011, that figure had risen to 72 percent in 2013. Affordable, any time, anywhere access to the internet fosters online behaviour. In 2010, only 13 percent of 12 to 19 year-olds went online via a mobile device.<sup>151</sup> This compares with 72 percent in 2015.<sup>152</sup> No later than the time they reach secondary school, children use their own devices to access the internet, mostly via a smartphone, thus moving away from the realm of parental influence.<sup>153</sup>

For families, the digital shift brings both opportunities and challenges. These range from simple use of the internet to managing family logistics, impacting the balance between work and school and also social interaction between family members. Fostering friendships, searching for the current cinema programme, looking for holiday offers, working from home and shopping online – digital devices and services are now an integral part of family life in Germany. Life without information and communications technology is unthinkable for most parents

151 <http://www.hans-bredow-institut.de/de/forschung/mobile-internetnutzung-im-alltag-von-kindern-jugendlichen>,

152 *Digitale Medien: Beratungs-, Handlungs- und Regulierungsbedarf aus Elternperspektive*, Deutsches Jugendinstitut e. V., analyses from AID:A II, BMFSFJ (2015): *netchildren 2020*, <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/kinder-und-jugend,did=215068.html>

153 *Ibid.*

and children today. Families themselves must decide the extent to which they allow digital assistants to influence their lives and how they use them to make their everyday arrangements more manageable.

### **Importance of parental skills and rules in negotiating the digital world**

Those decisions are not easy to make. There are no established rules on how and when to use digital devices and media. It is up to parents to act as the role model they would wish for their children.<sup>154</sup> But given their own online behaviour, they are often unsure about the rules they should and could enforce for their children. What is harmful, what is beneficial, what makes life easier and what detracts from family life? What are the really new challenges that parents face in assuming their parental responsibilities? What kind of questions do they need answers to? In using electronic media, these often include the technical skills (knowledge of how to operate devices), media skills (self-responsible, risk-aware use and understanding) and research skills (searching and targeted selection) that all family members should ideally possess to ensure safe, secure and confident use of the internet and social media.

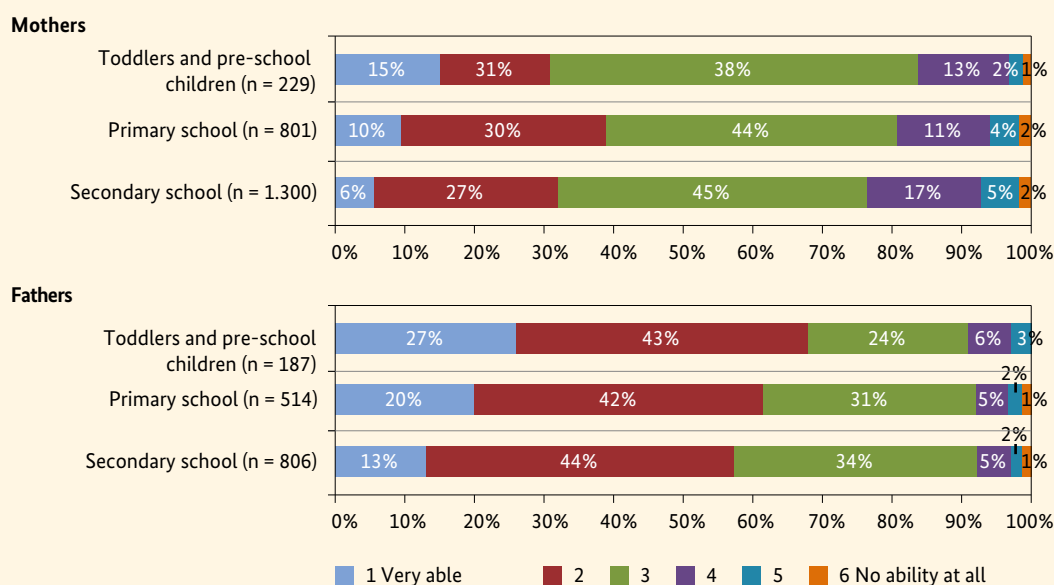
Many parents feel they are sufficiently media-savvy to be able to teach and guide their children in use of the internet. Some 50 percent of fathers say they are more competent than mothers (one third), although all parents are less likely to ascribe themselves competence the older their children become (see Fig. 70).

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154 IfD Allensbach (2015): Was Eltern wollen. Informations- und Unterstützungswünsche zu Bildung und Erziehung. Eltern von Schulkindern.

**Figure 70: Parents' media skills**

Question: "How do you rate your abilities when it comes to teaching your child/children to use the internet?"



Basis: Children's use of the internet according to age groups

Source: Digitale Medien: Beratungs-, Handlungs- und Regulierungsbedarf aus Elternperspektive, Deutsches Jugendinstitut e. V., analyses from AID:A II, BMFSFJ (2015): netchildren 2020, <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/kinder-und-jugend,did=215068.html>

The younger the children, the more often they are taught to use the internet by their parents. Pre-school children are almost never online without supervision, while 91 percent of six year-olds are 'always' or 'often' supervised by their mother and 76 percent by their father. At the age of 11, the figure drops to half by mothers and one third by fathers. Good online services for children, a safe and attractive online world, and age labelling of websites and apps are seen by most parents as helpful in assuming their parental responsibilities regarding online media use.<sup>155</sup> Online and offline offerings about digital media use can also be of assistance. Almost 90 percent of parents with school-age children want to be better informed about the risks involved with internet use. With its Net Children 2020 initiative, and in close collaboration with the state (Länder) governments, municipal administrations and German business and industry, the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs is developing new information and advisory services for parents.

When bringing up their children, parents want to be good parents. In wanting to promote and support their children, they draw on a wide range of informational and supportive measures concerning childrearing and child education. Most parents with school-age children still prefer to discuss their issues in person, seeking either a meeting with the child's teacher

<sup>155</sup> Digitale Medien: Beratungs-, Handlungs- und Regulierungsbedarf aus Elternperspektive, Deutsches Jugendinstitut e. V., analyses from AID:A II, BMFSFJ (2015): netchildren 2020, <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/kinder-und-jugend,did=215068.html>

(70 percent) or talking the matter over with other parents (69 percent). Apart from in a one-to-one talk, parents also obtain information from the media. This largely involves reading self-help books and brochures (45 percent of parents), followed by the use of online search engines (28 percent of parents). Only 14 percent of parents turn to online forums and blogs, and only three percent use social media.<sup>156</sup>

Differences in levels of media competence and media use are evident relative to social strata-specific usage and communication patterns. One of the goals is thus to support mothers and fathers in organising family life in the digital age, encourage them to use the opportunities provided by the internet and take a confident approach to the digital world.

## 7.2 Equal division of responsibility for family and work in the digital working world

In achieving better reconciliation of work and family life, with parents sharing responsibilities equally, the digital working world offers new opportunities in the form of:

- Flexible working models regarding working hours and working locations
- New forms of work division and cooperation
- New employee and employer expectations, particularly regarding supervisors/managers and their staff.

When it comes to structuring and enriching both work and family life, the opportunities digitisation offers must be shaped (in the context of redefined policies and a new culture with regard to work and working hours) in such a way as to enable mothers and fathers to better divide family and work commitments between them in equal partnership (see Section III). This calls for further expansion of digital media-supported, flexible working arrangements in companies and for these to be made equally available to mothers and fathers to make it easier for them to return to work after a period of parental leave. Such flexible working arrangements are intended to enable mothers to extend the number of hours they work.

In its joint Digital Agenda, the Federal Government thus states that:

*“We want to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by digitally supported, working models based on flexible working hours and locations to help people reconcile family and working life on a partnership basis. To this end, we will perform a thorough review of the current situation in conjunction with the scientific community and social partners to evaluate if the political framework currently in place is suited to helping more families achieve a better balance between family and working life and to establish if further research and action is required.”*

The German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs has assumed this responsibility and has placed these issues on the agenda for the Federal Government’s IT summit.

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<sup>156</sup> IfD Allensbach (2015): Was Eltern wollen. Informations- und Unterstützungswünsche zu Bildung und Erziehung. Eltern von Schulkindern.



### **Securing equal opportunities for families in the digital world**

Digitisation of the workplace brings challenges that must be overcome to ensure families are afforded equal opportunities as part of the new digital world. But not all occupations and sectors allow use of digitisation to promote better reconciliation of working and family life. Thus, for employees in jobs requiring their physical presence, employers and unions are thus called upon to develop alternative models for work-family life reconciliation to prevent a social divide from opening up between the various employee groups.

The increasing adoption of flexible working models (involving both working hours and work location) and the spread of digital devices can create a situation where employees remain available for work-related purposes during private and family time. The effects of constant availability on family and everyday organisation can be both positive and negative. The vast majority of companies have no structured agreements on the question of availability or non-availability. Almost 29 percent of businesses have no requirement for their employees to be available outside of working hours and another 28 percent limit availability to just a few exceptional circumstances. However, 19 percent of companies want their employees to be available during the evening on weekdays and a good 17 percent want this at the weekend as well. One in six companies would like to see round-the-clock availability.

There are significant age and gender-related differences in employees' willingness to be available during their private and family time. Almost one third of employees say that they are not willing to be available to their employer outside of working hours, or only in exceptional circumstances. By way of contrast, an almost equal number (30 percent) say that they are available at any time – women by almost seven percentage points more frequently than men. Among older employees aged 60-plus, willingness to be permanently available is significantly lower than among younger employees, while their willingness to be available in exceptional circumstances is significantly higher than respondents overall (24 percent versus just under 16 percent, respectively).<sup>157</sup>

In shaping the digital shift to allow more flexibility and a better balance between family and working life, account must therefore also be given to the limitations of such flexibility. It is thus necessary to discuss the expectations employees place, or ought to be placing, on contemporary working models to promote better reconciliation of family and working life. At the same time, thought must be given to the adaptation of existing occupational health and safety legislation and company policies. An important aspect is to determine what modified expectations can and must be placed on employees in terms of self-management and autonomy.

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<sup>157</sup> BITKOM, Arbeit 3.0 – Arbeiten in der digitalen Welt.

### 7.3 Online support services ease the burden of everyday family life

In organising their day, families can be helped by the provision of professional, external services. The digital world offers new opportunities in this regard. Despite the acknowledged need for help in the home, the demand for household-related services is relatively low. Only about 12 percent of households actually make use of legal household-related services.<sup>158</sup> And compared with their share of the overall population, families with children hire domestic help far less frequently than older people aged 60 plus who live alone.

The black market, by way of contrast, is thriving. A large number of private households use illegal household-related services. The reasons given include not wanting to pay high prices and a lack of knowledge regarding the requirements for legally hiring domestic help. In addition, a lack of market transparency and a lack of trust in domestic service providers hinder development in this market segment. To overcome existing barriers, online access to legal household-related services and to comprehensive information on this issue must be improved.

Digitisation of family-related public infrastructure can also help ease the burden on everyday family life. And as shown by the EU Digital Economy and Society Index, Germany has some catching up to do when compared with elsewhere.

### 7.4 Social engagement online

Social and community engagement is increasingly organised online and in many cases, traditional voluntary work is often supported by online services. Online engagement can take many forms, from e-mail distribution lists to a secure web-based platform for the provision of online advice.

In its Digital Agenda, the German government has set itself the task of serving the “great need for social engagement in the digital space, for example in the areas of youth protection or providing assistance to the elderly.” Online options for civic education and fostering interest in politics and social engagement are to be used to greater advantage. Cross-generational voluntary work to improve skills in the use of the internet and other new media will be promoted in the form of a new Digital Voluntary Social Service Year (FSJ Digital), which will supplement other social service year options. Young people can sign up for FSJ Digital and use their digital media skills to assist in online projects and to foster those skills in others.

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<sup>158</sup> IFOK GmbH (2013): Machbarkeitsstudie zur Konzeption einer Internetplattform für Dienstleistungsunternehmen. Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs.

The digital environment broadens the reach of non-profit organisations and promotes voluntary work by attracting more volunteers. It also simplifies and accelerates associated organisational processes. Online services can use communications and information technology to flexibilise more traditional forms of voluntary work and ease access to options for social engagement. This can also help the many parents who want to perform voluntary work in addition to their jobs and family life – perhaps as part of a parents’ initiative, in their children’s school, or by becoming involved in music or sports.

## VIII.

### Adequate Provision of High-quality Childcare: A Prerequisite for Equal Division of Responsibility for Family and Working Life

As of 1 March 2014, there were some 660,750 children under three who, in addition to being brought up and cared for by their parents, attended a daycare centre or were looked after by a childminder. This represents an increase of almost 64,500 children compared with March 2013 (Fig. 71).

Figure 71: Children under three in daycare centres or with state-subsidised childminders\* on 1 March 2013 and 1 March 2014 by federal states (Länder)

	Children under three in daycare 2013	Children under three in daycare 2014
State	Absolute number	Absolute number
Baden-Württemberg	67,948	76,295
Bayern	79,714	88,700
Berlin	43,890	46,984
Brandenburg	30,960	33,164
Bremen	3,776	4,447
Hamburg	19,337	21,939
Hessen	40,134	45,078
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	21,251	21,562
Niedersachsen	46,134	52,830
Nordrhein-Westfalen	87,185	104,781
Rheinland-Pfalz	27,039	29,617
Saarland	5,181	5,646
Sachsen	49,527	52,297
Sachsen-Anhalt	29,577	29,677
Schleswig-Holstein	17,700	20,290
Thüringen	26,936	27,443
Germany overall	596,289	660,750

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt: Statistiken der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe. Kinder und tätige Personen in Tageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege 2014 (as of 1 March)

\* The figures for childminders cover only those children who did not attend a daycare centre as well (i. e. no double counting)

As of 1 March 2014, some 32.3 percent of children attended daycare. This represents an increase of three percentage points over the same date in 2013. The number of children under three in daycare only gives an approximate indication as to the number of available places for children in this age group in the following year. Children who reach their third birthday during the current daycare year (2015) are not included in the figures for under-threes in daycare. Therefore, the number of actual places available for this age group is higher.

## 8.1 Parental needs for daycare in Germany

In 2014, some 41.5 percent of parents in Germany wanted a daycare place for a child under three years of age. The percentage wanting daycare for a child under three varies significantly by age group, increasing with the age of the child. While more than half of parents with children aged between one and two would like a daycare place, this rises to over 70 percent among parents with children aged between two and three.

The need for daycare varies according to parents' educational level, family constellation and employment status. Looking at school leaving qualifications, mothers with lower-secondary qualifications have the least need for daycare services (35.2 percent), while mothers with 'Abitur' (university entrance qualification) or mothers with no school-leaving qualifications have the greatest need (47.2 percent respectively).

### **Mothers' working hours influence their need for daycare**

At 84.5 percent, mothers who work full-time have the greatest need for daycare services, while unemployed mothers who do not plan to return to work have the least need (18.6 percent). Mothers who work a short week (15–24 hours) are most likely to want a half-day daycare place with up to 25 hours a week (26.5 percent), while mothers who work full-time most frequently want a full-day place (62.3 percent).

Almost three-quarters of parents surveyed who wanted a daycare place would like to place a child aged between one and three in a daycare centre. Some 12.7 percent would prefer to have their child looked after by a childminder, while 8.2 percent would accept either and 4.2 percent would like to use a mix of both.

Most parents (42.4 percent) seeking daycare for children aged between one and three would prefer a full-day place with more than 35 hours a week. This compares with only 26 percent of parents wanting a half-day place with fewer than 25 hours per week. The need for daycare among parents with migrant backgrounds (43.8 percent) differs hardly at all from that of parents with no migrant background (42.6 percent). The same applies for their respective wishes regarding the number of hours of daycare needed per week.

At almost 58 percent, single parents with children under three likewise have a great need for daycare. For them, reliable daycare is especially important in achieving a better balance between family and working life. One quarter of single parents would thus like a full-day place with more than 35 hours a week (Fig. 72).

**Figure 72: Daycare needs among single parents with children under three 2013**

	Childcare Needs
<b>Number of hours</b>	in%
<b>Not needed</b>	41.7
<b>Half-day place: up to 25 hours per week</b>	16.8
<b>Extended half-day place: 26 to 35 hours per week</b>	11
<b>Full-day place: more than 35 hours per week</b>	24.9
<b>Needs unknown</b>	5.5

Source: Deutsches Jugendinstitut: Findings of a representative regional survey on parents' needs for daycare places for children under three, 2013

## 8.2 Daycare for children under three: Trends and current status

The number of children under three who attended daycare rose in all age groups between 2008 and 2014 (Fig. 73).

**Figure 73: Number of children\* under three in daycare centres and with state-subsidised childminders\*\* from 2008 to 2014 by age**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Increase 2008-2014
<b>Age</b>	in %							<b>in percent age points</b>
<b>Under 1</b>	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.8	0.4
<b>Between 1 and 2</b>	16.4	20.4	22.7	25.9	28.4	30.8	34.6	18.2
<b>Between 2 and 3</b>	34.4	38.6	43.5	47.2	51.1	53.9	59.7	25.3
<b>Total 0-3</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>20.2</b>	<b>23.0</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>14.7</b>

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt: Statistiken der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe. Kinder und tätige Personen in Tageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege 2008-2014 (as of 1 March)

\* Number of children in daycare among all children in this age group. The population figures used are based on the results of the population projection for 31 December 2013 based on the 1987 Census (for eastern Germany, the projection is based on the GDR Central Population Register, October 1990). Final projection figures for 31 December 2013 based on the 1987 Census or the 2011 Census were not available at the time of publication.

\*\* The figures for childminders cover only those children who did not attend a daycare centre as well (i. e. no double counting)

### **Daycare quota for children from migrant backgrounds remains low**

In 2013, some 17 percent of children under three from migrant backgrounds attended a daycare centre or were looked after by a state-subsidised childminder. This is only about half the number of children under three with no migrant background.

Families with migrant backgrounds have a great need for support. Some 47 percent would like to see more daycare options for school-age children – third place among responses after 63 percent who would like more financial assistance and 65 percent who would like more affordable housing. Parents with no migrant background place slightly more importance on daycare options for school-age children and also on the availability of daycare centres. When asked about daycare options, 76 percent of migrants surveyed refer to at least one type of service (full-day schools, daycare centres, etc.), with options for children under three playing only a subordinate role. Some 67 percent of parents with migrant backgrounds expressed a preference for children under three to be looked after within the family. This is based on a more negative attitude on the part of husbands and partners to mothers with children under three going out to work and greater scepticism towards external childcare, especially for children under three.

For many families with migrant backgrounds, good daycare options are important in achieving an equal division of responsibility for family and working life. Particularly for working mothers, services such as all-day schools make life easier and are highly favoured. Some 33 percent of mothers with migrant backgrounds feel especially pressured when it comes to helping children with homework. This compares with only 21 percent of other mothers. According to 55 percent of parents with migrant backgrounds, existing school-based services to promote and support children do not go far enough. Some of these parents feel they are unable to provide the level of support their children need. Thus, some children from migrant backgrounds receive privately organised help with homework or attend private lessons (13 percent and 11 percent, respectively). This constitutes a significant financial burden for their parents.

## **8.3 Quality of daycare services**

The foundations for a child's socio-emotional and cognitive development are laid in its early years and shape the child for the rest of its life. Early learning, childcare and upbringing all play a key role because they can strongly influence a child's development in its first years. Researchers point to the many positive effects of quality daycare: enhanced child wellbeing, the experience of learning success as a basis for life-long learning, reduced old-age poverty, greater participation by women in the jobs market, higher birth rates and better social and economic development in society as a whole. Children with special needs thus benefit in particular from quality daycare.

However, recent studies highlight great differences in the quality of care provided, both in daycare centres and by childminders, and indicate that these services are less than adequate in precisely those cases where higher-quality care is needed – for example in groups with a large number of children with migrant backgrounds. The Federal Government is thus committed to providing all children with equal development and education opportunities regardless of their origins and backgrounds.

### **Joint quality standards**

Thus, at a conference on early education held on 6 November 2014, the Federal Government and the Länder governments agreed joint daycare quality goals. The quality enhancement process is based on a communiqué signed by the German Federal Minister for Family Affairs and the Chair of the Standing Conference of Ministers for Youth and Family Affairs and involves close cooperation with local authority associations along with dialogue with the responsible childcare sector associations and organisations. The communiqué sets out the key areas for which quality assurance goals are to be agreed. These take in staffing, working time spent on education-related supporting tasks and on management tasks, issues regarding staff training and qualifications, and health promotion.

Regular federal-Länder conferences with the participation of local authority associations, the establishment of a working group and the presentation of a preliminary status report by the end of 2016 were all agreed as steps in the process. Comprising representatives from the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, eight Länder and local authority associations, an early education working group was formed in 2014 to develop recommendations for joint goals and objectives and how to fund them.

### **Quality enhancement process supported by federal programmes**

The entire quality enhancement process is supported by the *Drittes Investitionsprogramm „Kinderbetreuungsfinanzierung“* (third national childcare financing investment programme), a new language education programme, *Bundesprogramm „Kindertagespflege“* (national programme on child daycare) and *Bundesprogramm zu Betreuungszeiten* (national programme on daycare opening hours).

Building on the experience gained with the 2011-2015 *Bundesprogramm „Schwerpunkt-Kitas: Sprache & Integration“* (national programme on priority childcare facilities focusing on language and integration), the new *Bundesprogramm zur sprachlichen Bildung* (national programme on language education) will continue this approach starting in 2016. The aim of the language education programme is to make language lessons an integral part of everyday life in daycare centres with an above-average number of children from families with migrant backgrounds and/or from socially disadvantaged families. The deployment of additional, specialist staff in designated positions in these daycare centres has proven beneficial and will be continued under the new programme. With ongoing support and advice from external consultants, the centres will also receive additional help in developing this aspect of their operations.

The aim of the national programme on daycare opening hours is to create childcare options for parents and children with special needs. It primarily targets single parents, parents who work shifts and parents whose working hours do not coincide with daycare opening times.



The national programme on child daycare is designed to improve conditions in this sector and to professionalise child daycare services. Its main focus lies in developing and introducing a skills-based training manual.

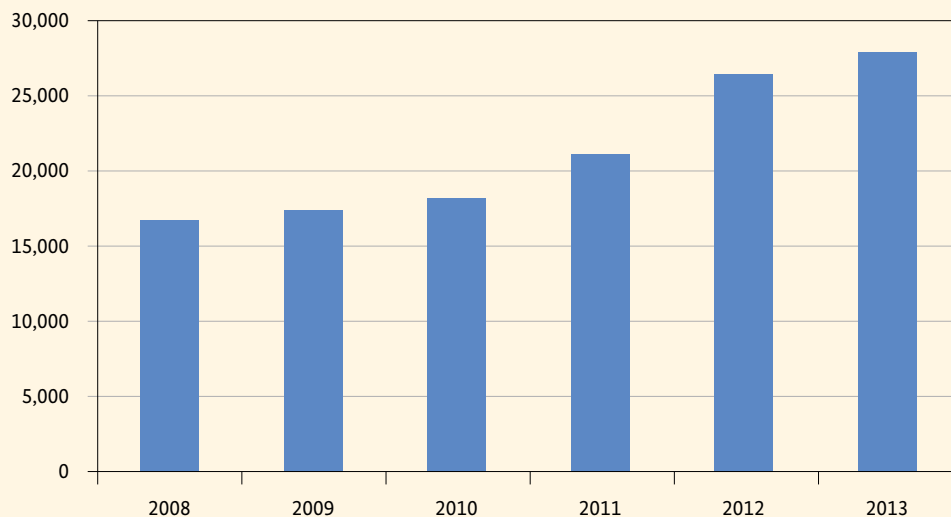
With 50 regional-level conferences coordinated with the respective Länder ministries, stakeholders (parents, teaching staff, companies, etc.) are to be integrated into the quality enhancement process.

## 8.4 Employer-provided daycare

Employer-provided and employer-subsidised daycare options can supplement government efforts to expand needs-based daycare. Many companies already offer a range of options to help their employees arrange the daycare they need. Some set up in-house daycare centres, either individually or in conjunction with other companies, while others secure places in existing daycare centres and support parent-led initiatives. In this way, employers make a significant contribution to improving family-working life reconciliation options for their employees.

There is an increasing trend towards greater provision of employer-provided daycare in Germany. According to official statistics on children's and teenager's welfare (as of 1 March 2014), some 29,748 children attended one of 668 daycare centres for children of employees in 2014 (Fig. 74).

**Figure 74: Children in daycare centres for children of employees (no segregation by age)**



Source: Statistiken der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe, Statistisches Bundesamt, 2013

To support employers in establishing daycare places for their employees, the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs launched the Betriebliche Kinderbetreuung (BeKiB) (employer-provided daycare) programme back in 2012. Employers of all shapes and sizes and from all business sectors can join the programme and receive financial incentives to create new company-provided daycare places for children under three. The programme has been seen to provide lasting impetus in practice.

## 8.5 From daycare and after-school clubs to reliable all-day schools

**Guest contribution by Eric Schweitzer, President of the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce: “Good all-day daycare is vital if parents are to share the responsibility for family and working life equally”**

*Even today, balancing work and family life poses a huge challenge for many families. This is why Germany has begun to expand available daycare services, and rightly so. These activities must continue in the coming years. More and more mothers want to work or extend the hours they already work. Providing tailored daycare options that meet parents’ needs would enable up to 1.2 million mothers to take a job or work more hours in their existing part-time positions. Looking at the current skills shortage, this potential must be exploited.*

*But it is not just a matter of increasing the number of available daycare places. If a daycare centre closes at lunch time or closes for weeks in a row during school holidays, that poses a problem not just for parents, but for employers as well. In a recent study, more than two-thirds of companies reported that employees have to reduce the number of hours they work because the opening hours of the daycare centre they use are inadequate. In some cases, employers have to do without their employees altogether as a result. And when parents only work mornings, employers soon run into the problem of trying to man the telephone in the afternoons or have a sales person behind the counter in the evenings.*

*Thus, from an employer’s perspective, longer and more flexible daycare hours are of enormous importance. This is, of course, only possible if daycare centres have the right level of staffing to ensure that the flexibility afforded does not detract from the quality of care provided. Parents will only make use of daycare provision if they know their child is in good hands.*

*Once the child is old enough to go to school, the question of daycare often comes up again. If school finishes at lunch time, working parents still have several hours to go before they can finish and go home. Without reliable after-school options, it is left to parents to make the necessary arrangements, even if this means reducing their hours to fill in the gap. Whereas 70 percent of parents want an all-day school place for their child, only about one child in three goes to an all-day school. This is why investing in places in after-school clubs and all-day schools should be a top priority on the policy agenda.*

*But it is not only a matter for policymakers. Employers are also called upon to consider family needs when looking for qualified staff. Many companies have seen the signs and are doing what they can to improve conditions. The most important aspect in all of this is to make the workplace family-friendly. Almost nine out of ten companies offer flexible working models and in more than half, employees are allowed to work from home if need be. Many employers also support their employees in the search for childcare services: this starts with a parent-child office and help in finding suitable daycare options, to financial assistance and dedicated places in existing daycare centres, to in-house, company-sponsored full-day childcare provision. But these provisions can only be truly effective if they are flanked by flexible all-day daycare arrangements.*

*Quality all-day daycare for children right through to school age is indispensable, both for parents and for employers. Companies aiming to win the war for talent must offer on-site provisions that attract the people they want. Reconciling family and working life has become a crucial factor when choosing where to work. This is an area in which industry and policymakers must cooperate.*

## 8.6 Local Alliances for Families Initiative: Support for parents with school-age children

When a child starts school, working parents often face the challenge of finding reliable, quality daycare arrangements to cover lunch-times, afternoons and school holidays. The lack of afternoon arrangements and inflexible daycare opening times can often pose a barrier to parents working their desired number of hours and also hinder career development, especially for mothers. Employees' problems regarding school holidays and limited daycare options for school-age children also pose a challenge for employers.

Apart from promoting reliable institutional daycare options such as all-day schools and after-school clubs, community-organised support during off-peak hours, in emergencies and during school holidays help parents with school-age children share responsibilities more equally and enable mothers to remain at work.

### **Daycare options for school children a focal point of the Local Alliances for Families Initiative**

For the past ten years, Local Alliances for Families have offered a wide range of solutions in the form of community-based, practical help. More than half of the approximately 670 local alliances provide supervision for school children and, through diverse projects, support parents (especially single parents) of school-age children in reconciling family and working life. The alliances base their activities on local needs, looking at the options already available and what parents require in addition.

The Support Networks for Parents with Schoolchildren programme, a development partnership initiated by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs at the beginning of 2011, raised awareness to the issue by developing and further enhancing systematic options to afford parents with school-age children seamless daycare provision during school hours, school holidays and off-peak hours. These offerings are coordinated as regards opening times and availability, location and organisation to ensure continuous, reliable, high-quality daycare for children. This includes supervision and care in the afternoons and during school holidays, and an emergency childcare service that kicks in, for example, if school lessons are cancelled or if a school suddenly has to close.

In many places, solutions are developed in close cooperation with local authorities, local job centres and local businesses. Companies show increasing openness to collaboration of this kind because they feel the effects of poor daycare services in their everyday operations. According to a survey conducted by the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce,<sup>159</sup> more than two-thirds (68 percent) of companies surveyed said that they had employees who had to reduce their working hours because they were unable to make suitable daycare arrangements. In the same survey, more than nine out of ten companies said they had put provisions in place to help employees with children reconcile work and family life.

#### **Best-practice examples for reliable daycare for school-age children**

■ **After-school clubs in all primary schools in Ansbach:** in the Bavarian district of Ansbach, the Local Alliance for Families has expedited the establishment of district-wide afternoon supervision services, including lunch, for all children in the area. Parents who are unable to bear the costs of the fee-based after-school club receive support from a special alliance fund which is fed by donations and sponsors such as local businesses. Afternoon supervision takes in leisure and cultural activities, help with homework and language courses for children from migrant backgrounds. These are all provided by qualified staff employed by the local administration in Ansbach.

■ **Afternoon, school holiday and emergency daycare in Dienheim:** in Dienheim in Rhineland-Palatinate, working parents of school-age children are supported by a broad-based daycare service which includes afternoon and all-day supervision in schools and daycare during school holidays. Under the umbrella of the local TV Dienheim 08 e.V. sports club, a number of local clubs and associations have joined forces to provide an almost seamless daycare service. As independent partners, they cover the equivalent of some 250 school lesson units per week, providing both afternoon and all-day supervision. They also stand by in case of emergencies if, for example, lessons are cancelled or the school has to close unexpectedly. And during school holidays, the Local Alliance Dienheim provides children in the Nierstein-Oppenheim area a 'school's out' programme, with supervised activities from 8 am to 4 pm on every day of the year that the school is closed.

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<sup>159</sup> Das IHK-Unternehmensbarometer zur Kinderbetreuung 2014: Am Ball bleiben – Kinderbetreuung flexibilisieren und ausbauen.

- **Hanau Fun Week:** in Hanau in the state of Hesse, a local alliance provides regular daycare options for school children in the school holidays. These include activities for girls in the Easter holidays, the Hanau Summer Camp and an adventure day at the local wild life park. In partnership with the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB), the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK), the Federal Employment Agency (BfA), local daycare institutes and various private initiatives, the Local Alliance for Families in Hanau has developed an autumn holidays programme, offering activities organised by private and public partners for children of employees who work for participating companies. Children can take part in all the activities offered under the programme for a basic fee of €50. This fee also includes the cost of transportation, food and beverages. Overall coordination and administration is performed by the Local Alliance for Families in Hanau.
- **Educational Holidays for Schoolchildren in Eckernförde:** in the Eck-Town-City project conducted by the Local Alliance for Families Eckernförde (Schleswig-Holstein) and Verkehrswacht Eckernförde e. V. (a local traffic watch and accident prevention association), young girls and boys get to design their own 'kid's town'. During the week-long holiday programme, children learn through play about the processes and structures needed to enable a large number of people to live together in one place. In association with the local job centre, children of school age are assigned jobs and can try out a different occupation every day. The programme runs from 8.30 am to 4 pm each day and children can arrive as early as 7.30 am if need be. This full-day service supports parents of school children in reconciling work and family life during the summer holidays.

## 8.7 Childcare allowance

Childcare allowance was introduced on 1 August 2013 and is available to parents with a child born on or after 1 August 2012 for which they do not claim benefits under paragraph 24 (2) of Book VIII of the German Social Code (covering early education and care in a daycare centre or with a childminder). It is provided under the Federal Act on Parental Allowance and Parental Leave (*Bundeseltern-geld- und Elternzeitgesetz*) and is available to all parents, both employed and unemployed. The maximum period of entitlement of 22 months begins immediately following the 14-month period of entitlement for parental allowance. Entitlement to childcare allowance begins on the first day of a child's fifteen month and ends at the latest when the child is 36 months old. In the first year following its introduction, meaning from 1 August 2013, childcare allowance amounted to €100 per month. It was increased to €150 per month on 1 August 2014. While childcare allowance is paid as a tax-free monetary allowance, it is also classed as a primary benefit and is taken into account when calculating unemployment benefit II, social assistance and child supplement.

The Federal Statistical Office publishes quarterly figures on childcare allowance, most recently for the first quarter of 2015. In that quarter, some 455,321 individuals received childcare allowance, of which 18 percent did not hold German citizenship. Almost half of the children (49 percent) for whom childcare allowance was claimed in the first quarter of 2015 were the only child in the household. In about one-third of cases (34 percent), the child had a sibling, while 17 percent lived with two or more siblings.<sup>160</sup> No data is available regarding the income levels of parents claiming and receiving childcare allowance. In accordance with the provisions set out in Section 25 of the Federal Act on Parental Allowance and Parental Leave, the Federal Government is to submit a report on the impact of childcare allowance to the German Bundestag by 31 December 2015.

On 21 July 2015, Germany's Federal Constitutional Court announced a ruling on childcare allowance, declaring the Federal Act on Parental Allowance and Parental Leave unconstitutional due to a lack of legislative authority on the part of the Federal Government. After legal review and interdepartmental consultation, the German Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth has come to the conclusion that no-one who has received childcare allowance should be expected to pay it back. For families whose childcare allowance claim has already been approved, payments will continue for the duration of their confirmed period of entitlement. Childcare allowance approval documents will no longer be issued because, in line with the Constitutional Court's ruling, the legal basis for doing so no longer exists.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt (2015), Statistik zum Betreuungsgeld Leistungsbezüge, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2015

<sup>161</sup> Further information on childcare allowance is available at <http://www.bmfsfj.de>

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