

# Early Career Researchers with Family\*

## Information for PhD candidates and postdocs

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## Foreword by the President

At Goethe University Frankfurt, early career researchers can feel that they are in good hands. Over a fifth of our doctoral candidates have at least one child<sup>1</sup>, and many of our postdocs are also already parents. At the present time, about 50% of all postdocs nationwide are parents<sup>2</sup>. Supporting these parents and continuously improving the compatibility of academic career and family life\*<sup>3</sup> has long been one of our university's top priorities. We have already been certified four times as a family-friendly university, and as a member of the Best Practice Club "Familie in der Hochschule" (Family Life and Academia) we have been sharing our experiences with other universities and at the same time learning from them since 2014. In 2018, together with 37 other universities (today there are 134 member institutions), we founded the association with the same name in Frankfurt.

Although early career researchers' satisfaction with their work-life balance is high overall<sup>4</sup> and despite our various efforts and offers, the compatibility of family life\* and academic career still poses particular challenges. Even before the coronavirus pandemic, studies corroborated a distinct discrepancy between academics' wish to have children and this wish coming to fruition. Due to increasing social challenges, this discrepancy will continue to widen in the future. And this is not the only indicator and clear sign that there is still a lot to do in this area.<sup>5</sup>

By helping academics in the early stage of their careers with their (future) parental responsibilities, we are also responding to one of the main social issues of the future: demographic change. Like greater internationality, customized offers for (expectant) parents and for staff caring for close relatives are indispensable for an open society – and Goethe University Frankfurt sees itself as part of that society. The better doctoral candidates and postdocs can combine their family plans with their professional ambitions at a university, the more this factor will encourage outstanding young academics to choose Goethe University Frankfurt, and as a result this will consolidate our university's future viability. I am firmly convinced that the openness of our university community towards integrating a diversity of lifestyles not only holds potential for the career paths of its staff but also for research performance in Frankfurt. That is why it is very important to us to create the best conditions for an everyday life between research and family\* at Goethe University Frankfurt that is as friction-free as possible.

The Family Service at the Equal Opportunities Office at Goethe University Frankfurt has already achieved a lot with its service offers and remains your central contact point at the university for all your questions about parenthood and care responsibilities. In cooperation with GRADE, a comprehensive information service has now been established for early career researchers with parental responsibilities in the doctoral or postdoctoral phase.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you and your family\* and wish you all the best along your journey at Goethe University Frankfurt and in the global academic community.

**Professor Enrico Schleiff, President of Goethe University Frankfurt**

<sup>1</sup> GRADE (2020): Job, Familie, Forschung: Wie geht es den Promovierenden der Goethe-Universität? [GOETHE-UNI online – Latest news from science, teaching and society](#) [🔗](#) (in German only).

<sup>2</sup> Neufeld, J./Johann, D. (2018): Wissenschaftlerbefragung 2016. Methoden- und Datenbericht, cited in: [Bundesbericht wissenschaftlicher Nachwuchs](#) [🔗](#) (BUWIN) 2021, p. 166 (in German only).

<sup>3</sup> By using family\* with an asterisk, we indicate that the term "family" goes beyond the (biological) nuclear family to encompass all forms of social relationships in which a person or persons assume care responsibilities in a household for children or for others in need of care.

<sup>4</sup> [BUWIN 2021](#) [🔗](#), p. 169 f (in German only).

<sup>5</sup> [Family Today. Data, Facts, Trends – Family Report 2020](#) [🔗](#), p. 85 ff.

## Foreword by the Equal Opportunities Office and GRADE

Dear doctoral candidates and postdocs, dear (expectant) parents,

The continuous improvement of the research and working conditions of doctoral candidates and postdocs with family or care responsibilities is one of the shared goals of the central facilities at the Equal Opportunities Office and the Goethe Research Academy for Early Career Researchers (GRADE). In our daily work, that is, advising (expectant) mothers and fathers who are at the beginning of their academic careers at Goethe University Frankfurt, we frequently experience how difficult it can be to apply the formal regulations regarding parenthood to one's own professional and private situation. Here, your personal situation at the interface between family life\* and academia, in which you find yourself before or after your child's birth or when caring for relatives, is often anything but clear.

With its information and counseling services, the Family Service is an important port of call for the very practical questions that you encounter in your everyday life as a young academic with family responsibilities. In addition, the GRADE training program offers regular workshops and information sessions on parenthood and the compatibility of family life\* and academic career. Apart from information about existing offers at Goethe University Frankfurt, decision-making for individual career paths has proven to be an important topic.

That is why our service facilities endeavor all the more to meet both requirements: your questions about the general framework for parents at Goethe University Frankfurt and your need for guidance in the academic system. These both pose particular challenges for you during taxing phases that you might experience at transitions in your life as well as when personal and professional demands are high.

This brochure aims to give you an initial overview of the current legal provisions related to parenthood and care. It brings together information on what the city has to offer for parents and on the infrastructure for doctoral candidates and postdocs on the campuses of Goethe University Frankfurt. Also included is advice on parental leave, parental allowance and child benefit, which can differ substantially depending on the type of finance, as well as a roadmap intended to help you keep track of the many requirements before and after pregnancy.

The Equal Opportunities Office and GRADE remain your first ports of call for your individual queries about parenthood and care responsibilities. Your questions are important for us because they help us to continuously improve our information services and training measures. We are happy to take your suggestions on board and would be happy to further develop our services in an ongoing dialogue with you. In this spirit, we hope that you will find reading this brochure worthwhile and wish you all the best along your path to a successful balance between academic career and family life\* at Goethe University Frankfurt.

**Dr. Anja Wolde, Equal Opportunities Officer and Head of the Equal Opportunities Office**

**Dr. Sybille Küster, Managing Director, GRADE**

! The chapters follow the structure of the brochure on the compatibility of doctoral studies and family life, *How to balance a Doctorate and Family Life (2018)*, published by the [Humboldt Graduate School](#). Some of the contents have been reproduced verbatim or analogously, some have been adjusted to the regulations at Goethe University Frankfurt and supplemented by the target group of postdocs and by regional offers. The editorial team would like to thank the colleagues at the Humboldt Graduate School for their cooperation!

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# **Formal framework for (expectant) parents**

# Formal framework for (expectant) parents

## 1.1 Maternity protection

Maternity protection (Mutterschutz) is special protection for staff or enrolled doctoral candidates who are pregnant or breastfeeding. Both the mother and the child are protected, both before and after the birth. Maternity protection includes:

- Health protection in the workplace
- Special protection against dismissal
- Ban on working in the weeks prior to (optional) and after (mandatory) the birth
- Secured income during the period when working is prohibited

The maternity protection provisions apply equally for doctoral candidates and postdocs with German nationality as well as for doctoral candidates and postdocs from another EU country or non-EU country.

### Maternity protection period

Expectant mothers are not allowed to work during the last six weeks prior to the birth. However, if the expectant mother expressly declares her willingness to work, she is allowed to work longer; she can revoke this declaration at any time. After the birth, mothers are not allowed to work until eight weeks have elapsed, in the event of a premature or multiple birth until twelve weeks have elapsed. A certificate from the gynecologist or midwife is used to calculate this period before and after the birth (Mutterschutzfrist). This certificate specifies the estimated due date, which in turn then determines the beginning and the end of the maternity protection period. In order to register for maternity protection at Goethe University Frankfurt, you must submit a medical certificate confirming your pregnancy to the HR administrator responsible for you.

You can also find detailed information about maternity protection on the website of the [Staff Services Department of Goethe University Frankfurt](#) (in German only; should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the HR administrator responsible for you directly) and the [Family Portal of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth \(BMFSFJ\)](#).

In the case of premature births and other early deliveries, the maternity protection period after the birth is extended by the number of days that could not be taken before it. Likewise, the maternity protection period is extended if the child is born after the due date so that maternity protection in any case lasts for eight weeks after the birth.

If, within these eight weeks, the child is diagnosed with a disability, it is possible to apply for an extension of the protection period to twelve weeks.

**!** Please note that the following statements can be subject to legal changes. They are intended here solely as information and for further reference. No legal guarantee can be given for this information. Legal and financial regulations may differ significantly depending on your nationality. Some measures may be accessible to EU citizens but not to third-country nationals. For non-EU citizens, applying for financial assistance can lead to considerable problems with their residence permit. Please contact the respective advisory services and consult the Federal Government's websites linked in the corresponding section of this brochure for the current amounts and the regulations applicable in each case.

## Ban on working

Outside the normal protection period, the Maternity Protection Act provides for a general ban on working (Beschäftigungsverbot, e.g. working overtime, on Sundays or at night) and individual bans on working based on a medical certificate in order to protect the expectant mother and her child.

An individual ban on working is decided by the doctor, and a certificate is issued for the employer. In principle, it is possible to certify a total ban on working (all tasks are prohibited) or a partial one (only certain tasks or times). Examples of a partial ban on working are limiting worktime to a certain number of hours per day or week or limiting the tasks performed in the respective job.

## Maternity benefit

The **Maternity Protection Act** [↗](#) (Mutterschutzgesetz or MuSchG) provides for various types of benefit designed to protect (expectant) mothers from financial disadvantages during and after pregnancy. These include maternity benefit (Mutterschaftsgeld), which is paid to employees during the protection period before and after the birth. Employees with statutory health insurance receive their maternity benefit from their health insurance fund, while those with private health insurance must apply to the **Federal Office for Social Security (BAS)** [↗](#).

You can find all the information about benefits before and after childbirth in Chapter 4 of the **Guide to Maternity Protection of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)** [↗](#), where you can also find an overview of the amount of maternity benefit paid by the statutory health insurance fund and how it is calculated.

Employees who are not themselves members of a statutory health insurance fund (e.g. women with private health insurance or family health insurance within statutory health insurance) currently receive a maximum maternity benefit of €210 if they are not paid wages due to the maternity protection period. **The Maternity Benefit Office** [↗](#) at the Federal Office for Social Security (BAS) is responsible for this.

## Maternity pay

Maternity pay (Mutterschutzlohn) is another type of maternity benefit. It is paid if (expectant) mothers are not allowed to work before the start and after the end of the **maternity protection period** due to a **ban on working**, for example because of a ban on working issued by a physician. All further information on the amount of maternity pay and how to apply for it can be found on the **website of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)** [↗](#).

## Protection against dismissal

With a few exceptions, termination of the employment relationship is not permitted from the beginning of the pregnancy until four months after the birth.

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Dismissal can only be declared permissible by the supreme state authority in exceptional cases if there are (operational or conduct-related) reasons that have nothing to do with the pregnancy.

You can find important and detailed information about protection against dismissal (Kündigungsschutz) and possible legal recourse on the [website of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth \(BMFSFJ\)](#) [↗](#), where you can also find the special provisions for miscarriages, stillbirths and abortions.

### **Holiday entitlement**

Holiday entitlement (Urlaubsanspruch) also accrues during periods of absence due to a ban on working under [maternity protection law](#) (thus also during the maternity protection period). A reduction of holiday leave due to bans on working under maternity protection law is not permissible.

### **Notifying Goethe University Frankfurt of your pregnancy**

#### **For staff**

You should notify your employer of your pregnancy and the due date as soon as you know about it.

To do this, please submit a medical certificate with the due date to the HR administrator in the [Staff Services Department](#) [↗](#) responsible for you (in German only; should you have any questions or concerns, please contact the HR administrator responsible for you directly). The cost of the certificate will be reimbursed upon request and presentation of a receipt. Having notified the university of your pregnancy, you will receive a letter from your HR administrator indicating when the [maternity protection period](#) starts and ends and what you otherwise need to note.

#### **For enrolled doctoral candidates**

The Maternity Protection Act also applies to pregnant and breastfeeding students. Availing yourself of the corresponding provisions is conditional on you notifying the university of your pregnancy. However, you are under no legal obligation to do this. If you are an enrolled doctoral candidate, you can clarify via your faculty whether these regulations also apply to you. For doctoral candidates in an employment relationship, the provisions for employees apply.

You can find detailed information about the procedure and the contact persons at the faculty who are responsible for this in the [Maternity Protection Portal](#) [↗](#) of Goethe University Frankfurt.



## 1.2 Parental leave and parental allowance

Parental leave (Elternzeit) is an unpaid break from work for mothers and fathers who care for and raise their child themselves. All employees have a legal right to parental leave. During parental leave, employers must give parents in their employment up to three years' unpaid leave from work per child. Employees can apply for **parental allowance** for this period as an income replacement benefit. The statutory provisions on parental leave and parental allowance are governed by the **Federal Parental Allowance and Parental Leave Act (BEEG)** [↗](#).

### Parental leave

Each parent is entitled to parental leave (Elternzeit) to care for and raise their child until it is three years of age. The employer's consent is not necessary.

The total duration of parental leave per child can be up to 36 months and it can be divided into several periods. If they do not take all the parental leave during the first three years of the child's life, mothers and fathers can defer 24 months of it to the period between the child's third and eighth birthday. The employer can refuse such a deferred period of parental leave if there are pressing work-related reasons. Distributing parental leave over more than three periods is generally only possible with the employer's consent. The exact regulations and models for parental leave can be found in the **English-language brochure of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)** [↗](#).

If you want to claim parental leave, you must proceed as follows:

- For the period up to the child's third birthday: Please submit an informal application in writing to your employer no later than seven weeks before the start of parental leave. Please contact the HR administrator responsible for you.
- For the period between the child's third and eighth birthday: Please submit an informal application in writing to your employer no later than 13 weeks before the start of parental leave.

In your application for parental leave, you must at the same time declare for which periods within two years you are planning to take parental leave.

### Protection against dismissal

During parental leave, employees are protected from dismissal in a special way. This special protection against dismissal (Kündigungsschutz) starts when they register parental leave, but no earlier than eight weeks before the start of parental leave taken before the child's third birthday. If they take parental leave during the period between the child's third and eighth birthday, protection against dismissal begins no earlier than 14 weeks before the start.

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Special protection against dismissal also applies to parents who work part-time during parental leave. Even if they do not take parental leave, special protection against dismissal also applies to employees who continue their part-time work unchanged after the birth.

However, this only applies within the first 14 months of the child's life during which parental allowance is drawn. As soon as the child is 15 months old, protection against dismissal no longer applies, regardless of whether or not parental allowance is still drawn.

Dismissal during parental leave is only possible in exceptional cases. In this case, the employer must apply to the respective supervisory authority for occupational health and safety for dismissal to be permitted.

You can find detailed information about parental leave and parental allowance in the [English-language brochure of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth \(BMFSFJ\)](#) [↗](#).

#### **Employment contracts in accordance with the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act**

In agreement with the member of staff, the respective duration of a fixed-term employment contract in accordance with Section 2 (1) of the [Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act \(WissZeitVG\)](#) is extended by the length of time claimed for maternity protection/parental leave (extension periods). This does not apply for fixed-term employment contracts in accordance with Section 2 (2) of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act for employment within [third-party projects](#).

#### **Part-time work during parental leave**


The extension period of maternity protection/parental leave is reduced by the time in which gainful employment (including part-time employment) was pursued during parental leave.

#### **No extension periods for contracts financed from third-party funds**

[Posts financed from third-party funds](#) are extended by the length of time claimed for maternity protection/parental leave, provided that the fixed-term employment contract financed from a third-party project is intended to further the person's academic training. As a general rule, the extension should enable the person concerned to complete their academic training, e.g. a doctoral degree, despite parental leave. In the case of posts financed from third-party funds, however, the focus is often not on a person's individual training but on the third-party project. An important exception to this is the Research Training Groups of the German Research Foundation (DFG). In practice, some third-party funding organizations introduce the possibility for contract extensions, others do not. Apart from the legal provisions, budget issues and the university policy guidelines of the respective state are always deciding factors. For more information, please contact the third-party funding organization directly that is financing your project. We have compiled further information on this in [Box III](#).

## Parental allowance

Parental allowance compensates single parents or parental couples if they have less income due to working less hours or not at all for a temporary period after the child's birth. The aim of parental allowance is therefore to contribute to a secure financial livelihood for families.

Nationals of EU member states, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland are entitled to parental allowance (Elterngeld) in the same way as German nationals if they live or work in Germany. For other foreign nationals, the entitlement depends on the residence title. People with a settlement permit (Niederlassungserlaubnis) are entitled to receive parental allowance. You can also receive parental allowance if you have an EU long-term residence permit. Those who have a residence permit (Aufenthaltserlaubnis) are only entitled to parental allowance if they are also entitled to work in Germany or have already legally worked here. You can find further information in the [brochure "Welcome to Germany"](#)  of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).

Entitled to parental allowance are:


- Single parents and natural parents if they live with their child in the same household, care for and raise their child themselves and are not in gainful employment or not in full employment (Section 1 (1) Federal Parental Allowance and Parental Leave Act (BEEG)).
- The spouse or domestic partner if the child lives in the same household and is cared for and raised by them and they are at the same time not in gainful employment or not in full employment. This also applies to the period before the adoption of a stepchild (Section 1 (1) No. 2 in conjunction with (3) No. 2 Federal Parental Allowance and Parental Leave Act (BEEG)).
- The legal father who has acknowledged paternity if he lives with his child in a household, cares for and raises this child himself and is not in gainful employment or not in full employment.

In accordance with Section 1 (3) No. 1 of the Federal Parental Allowance and Parental Leave Act, married couples and domestic partners are also entitled to parental allowance and [parental leave](#) if they live in a household with a child whom they have taken in with the aim of accepting it as their own. Instead of the child's date of birth, the time when it joined the household is then the deciding factor.

There are three types of parental allowance, which can be combined:




- [Basic parental allowance \(Basiselterngeld\)](#)
- [Parental allowance plus \(ElterngeldPlus\)](#)
- [Partnership bonus \(Partnerschaftsbonus\)](#)


The amount of parental allowance is based on the monthly disposable net income that the parent caring for the child or the single parent had before the child's birth and that they no longer have after it. It is calculated on the basis of the adjusted average salary in the 12 months prior to the birth (meaning that bonuses and special payments are not taken into account). Parents with a higher income

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receive 65%, parents with a lower income up to 100% of this previous income. Parental allowance currently amounts to a minimum of €300 and a maximum of €1,800 per month. The exact amount and the duration of payment depend on the type of allowance chosen. It is important to note that although parental allowance is paid monthly, its duration is not based on calendar months but on the months of the child's life. For example, if the child is born on 14 April, the payment for the first month of its life refers to the period between 14 April and 13 May.

Detailed information about how parental allowance is calculated is available on the following websites:

- [Hessian Office for Welfare and Social Affairs \(in German only\)](#) 
- [Family Portal of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth \(BMFSFJ\)](#) 
- [Parental Allowance Calculator of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth \(BMFSFJ\)](#)   
(in German only)

In the State of Hesse, applications are submitted via the Hessian Office for Welfare and Social Affairs (see above), but they can also be sent via the [Parental Allowance Online Portal](#) , which is unfortunately only available in German.

### **Basic parental allowance**

Basic parental allowance (Basiselterngeld) can be paid to one parent for up to 12 months. It can even be extended by a further two months if the other parent also makes use of parental allowance for at least two months. The intention here is to compensate for the possible loss of both incomes during this period. The two additional months of basic parental allowance are called “partner months”. Single parents who take care of their child after the birth are also entitled to the “partner months” and thus also receive 14 months of basic parental allowance.

Parents can divide the months of parental allowance between themselves, i.e. they can apply for parental allowance at the same time or alternately. In each month in which both parents receive parental allowance at the same time, they together use up two months of parental allowance.

It is possible to draw parental allowance in one go, or it can be interrupted and continued later in order to alternate with the partner.

### **Parental allowance plus**

Parental allowance plus (ElterngeldPlus) supports parents who want to work part-time. A maximum of half the basic parental allowance is paid, but for twice as long. In this way, one month of parental allowance becomes two months of parental allowance plus.

If parents do not work after the birth, parental allowance plus is only half the basic parental allowance. However, if the parents work part-time after the birth, the monthly parental allowance plus can be just as high as the monthly basic parental allowance with income. Since it is paid for twice as long, this means that the total amount calculated over the entire period during which parental allowance is drawn can be higher overall.


### Partnership bonus

Both parents can each receive two additional months of parental allowance plus if they both work part-time at the same time. This total of four additional months of parental allowance plus is known as the “partnership bonus” (Partnerschaftsbonus). However, the partnership bonus can only be claimed if parents work between 24 and 32 hours per week at the same time during this period. This rule also applies to separated parents who are both raising their child and working part-time at the same time. Single parents are also entitled to the full partnership bonus.


### Information for international doctoral candidates and postdocs

Anyone with a settlement permit generally meets the requirements for drawing parental allowance. However, those with a temporary residence permit can only meet these eligibility requirements if they are also entitled to work in Germany and have already worked here.

If international doctoral candidates and postdocs have a temporary residence permit, for the purpose of training, for example, or in connection with a work permit for a defined period of time, they do not receive parental allowance. Likewise, persons who have a temporary residence permit as an asylum seeker or who only have exceptional leave to remain in Germany are not entitled to parental allowance. This also applies even if they are gainfully employed.

You can find a detailed list of application rights by residence title in the brochure [“Rights of residence for researchers from non-EU countries in Germany”](#)  of the German Rectors’ Conference.

## 1.3 Child benefit, child allowance and supplementary child allowance

Child benefit (Kindergeld) is paid to all immediate carers of children up to 18 years of age. Child allowance (Kinderzulage) is a benefit that state employees in Hesse can receive upon application and also provided for in the current Collective Wage Agreement of Goethe University Frankfurt. By contrast, you can apply for supplementary child allowance (Kinderzuschlag) in addition to child benefit at the [Family Benefits Office of the Federal Employment Agency](#)  if your income is not sufficient to secure your family’s livelihood. You can check whether you are eligible for supplementary child allowance on the Family Benefits Office’s website.

## Child benefit

Child benefit (Kindergeld) safeguards basic care for a child from birth until at least its 18th birthday. It is intended for all those who directly care for children. This includes adoptive parents. Under certain conditions, stepparents, foster parents as well as siblings and grandparents can also receive child benefit. You can read more about entitlement to child benefit in the [leaflet published by the Family Benefits Office of the Federal Employment Agency](#) <sup>12</sup>. However, only one person can receive child benefit per child.

The amount of child benefit is staggered according to the number of children. The current amounts can also be found in the leaflet mentioned above.

If parents receive child benefit during the calendar year, the tax office will check as part of the annual income tax assessment which is more advantageous for them from a tax perspective: the allowances for children or the child benefit actually paid out. This check is carried out automatically; you do not have to request it.

To receive child benefit, you must submit a written application using the [form provided by the Family Benefits Office](#) <sup>12</sup>. Please complete and submit the application form online.

**Note:** In the past, the Hessian universities' Payroll Office in Kassel was responsible for setting the amount and paying out child benefit for employees at Goethe University Frankfurt, but the Family Benefits Office of the Federal Employment Agency is meanwhile responsible for them too.

## Child allowance for salaried employees of Goethe University Frankfurt

The Collective Wage Agreement for Goethe University Frankfurt grants all employed parents a child allowance (Kinderzulage), which is currently €100 per child. This increases from the third child onwards by €53.05 (based on a full-time post; as of May 2023). Please apply for the child allowance by notifying your HR administrator of the birth. To receive the child allowance, employees must complete a corresponding declaration and either submit it directly to the Payroll Office in Kassel or have it forwarded via the Staff Services Department (Personalservices) at Goethe University Frankfurt.

The amount paid out is governed by the Collective Wage Agreement and can be adjusted.

The current amount of the allowance is specified in Section 23a of the [Collective Wage Agreement for Goethe University Frankfurt](#) <sup>12</sup> (in German only).

**Note:** Only one parent in the civil service is entitled to receive this allowance at any one time. The payment is also made relative to the respective full-time equivalent. This means that for a 60% FTE, the child allowance for one child is €60.

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## Supplementary child allowance

Supplementary child allowance (Kinderzuschlag) can be granted if your income and [child benefit](#) cover your own but not all your family's needs. The family's total needs are made up of the standard support requirements of parents and children, any possible additional needs, and the family's housing costs. In general, persons entitled to [housing benefit](#) [↗](#) can also receive supplementary child allowance. However, please be sure to note the important information at the end of this paragraph.

You are entitled to supplementary child allowance if:

- The child lives in the same household, is under 25 years of age and is not married and does not have a domestic partner
- You draw child benefit for the child
- Your monthly income reaches what is called the "minimum income threshold" (currently €900 for parental couples, €600 for single parents)
- Income is available and the family's needs can be covered together with child benefit, supplementary child allowance and any entitlement to housing benefit
- The income that counts towards the supplementary child allowance is not so high that it reduces it to nil

To be able to claim supplementary child allowance in addition to child benefit, you must submit a separate application in writing to the Family Benefits Office responsible for you.

With the help of the [employment agency's guide on supplementary child allowance](#) [↗](#) ("KiZ-Lotse"; in German only), you can check whether you are entitled to this allowance. You can find the corresponding online application form and details of the office responsible for you on the [website of the Federal Employment Agency](#) [↗](#).

**Important:** Please note that supplementary child allowance is a social benefit for families on a low income. Depending on your residence status, applying for such benefits can result in the revocation of your residence title. Please make sure that you seek advice on this before communicating with the authorities!

## BOX I | How do I talk to my boss or doctoral supervisor about my pregnancy?

### The “boss” scenario

As an expectant mother, it is up to you to decide when to notify your employer of your pregnancy. Many women wait until the first twelve weeks have elapsed because after that the risk of a miscarriage drops significantly. However, if you work with hazardous substances or suffer from health issues in the first trimester of your pregnancy, it is in your own interest to talk to your boss as soon as possible.

In general, informing your boss early on is recommended because the trust between you might otherwise suffer. However, there is no compulsory obligation to notify your employer of your pregnancy. The corresponding passage in Section 15 of the [Maternity Protection Act](#) is an optional provision and allows for a margin of discretion.

It makes sense to arrange an appointment for a personal meeting and to find out in more detail beforehand about the legal framework. When you inform your boss of your pregnancy, you do not yet have to present a detailed plan for parental leave and your return to work. However, in preparation for the meeting it is advisable to discuss with your partner how you envisage parental leave or working part-time, if necessary, and to have initial plans in mind. You can agree on the exact modalities regarding parental leave and your return to work in a further meeting. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) recommends that you discuss your pregnancy as early as possible before the start of the maternity protection period because you and/or your unborn child might be at risk even in the early phase.

After the meeting with your boss, it is advisable to inform your colleagues – especially if you work in a small team or a small working group and the maternity protection period will have a direct impact on them.

### The “doctoral supervisor” scenario

If you are financing your doctoral degree via a scholarship or in a way other than a budget-financed post or one financed from third-party funds, you are not in a financially dependent relationship with your doctoral supervisor. Ideally, the relationship between you is built on trust from both sides.

The following also applies to the meeting with your doctoral supervisor: as an expectant mother, it is up to you to decide when to announce your pregnancy, but you are not obliged to do so. If, however, as a scholarship holder you are working with hazardous substances, radiation, fumes, etc. in the laboratory, for example, you should endeavor to talk to your supervisor as early as possible and also arrange an appointment with [the Occupational Health and Safety Department](#) [↗](#) (Referat Arbeitsschutz) (website in German only, but members of staff speak English).

To inform your supervisor about your pregnancy, you can arrange an appointment for a personal meeting. Alternatively, you could inform your doctoral supervisor about your pregnancy first of all by email and then have a longer conversation in person later on, also to discuss the further course of your doctoral project.

If you are enrolled as a doctoral candidate at Goethe University Frankfurt, there is a formal procedure for notifying the university of your pregnancy. You can find all the relevant information about this on the central [Maternity Protection Portal of Goethe University Frankfurt](#) [↗](#).

In the event that conflicts should unexpectedly arise, the [Family Service](#) is your first port of call. If necessary, you can also involve a person of trust from the faculty, the [GRADE ombudspersons](#) [↗](#) or an [ombudsperson of Goethe University Frankfurt](#) [↗](#). This offer applies for all doctoral candidates and supervisors at Goethe University Frankfurt.



# 2

**Financing and  
labor law  
particularities**

## Financing and labor law particularities

Doctoral candidates and postdocs can choose from various models to finance their living expenses during the qualification phase. The most important ones are presented briefly in the following sections. Insofar as no special conditions are specified, the respective information from the previous chapter applies with regard to the rules on [maternity protection](#), [parental leave](#) and [parental allowance](#). Regarding the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act, particular regulations apply, depending on the type of financing. You can find an overview of each of these in boxes II – IV. Please note that some of the regulations might apply for EU citizens only.

### 2.1 Budget-financed posts

Doctoral candidates and postdocs with a budget-financed post (haushaltsfinanzierte Stelle), who are employed at the university in accordance with Section 2 (1) of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act, have a right to [maternity protection](#), including maternity benefit, as well as [parental leave](#), [parental allowance](#), [child benefit](#) and, where applicable, also [supplementary child allowance](#). In addition, employees of Goethe University Frankfurt are entitled to the [child allowance](#) for salaried employees paid in accordance with the Collective Wage Agreement for Goethe University Frankfurt.

Maternity protection regulations apply regardless of whether a post is for a fixed term or of the weekly working hours. The [Maternity Protection Act](#) [↗](#) for all (expectant) mothers who are in an employment or training relationship, i.e. also for doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers who have, for example, a 50% or 65% post.

So that the employer can comply with the maternity protection regulations, women should notify them of their pregnancy as soon as they know about it. This is, however, only an optional provision and not a compulsory obligation (see [Box I](#)). The employer is not permitted to disclose this information to third parties without the expectant mother's permission.

**!** Please note that the following statements can be subject to legal changes. They are intended here solely as information and for further reference. No legal guarantee can be given for this information. Legal and financial regulations may differ significantly depending on your nationality. Some measures may be accessible to EU citizens but not to third-country nationals. For non-EU citizens, applying for financial assistance can lead to considerable problems with their residence permit. Please contact the respective advisory services and consult the Federal Government's websites linked in the corresponding section of this brochure for the current amounts and the regulations applicable in each case.

## BOX II | Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act

For the doctoral and postdoctoral qualification phase, the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act (WissZeitVG) applies, which regulates fixed-term employment contracts in academia and allows for fixed-term contracts beyond the scope of the Part-Time and Fixed-Term Employment Act.

The most important points:

- Academic and artistic staff without a doctoral degree can be employed on a fixed-term basis for up to six years. After completion of the doctoral degree, further fixed-term employment is permissible for up to six years, in medicine for up to nine years.
- Please note that this maximum fixed-term period does not have to correspond to the actual duration of your employment contract. At Goethe University Frankfurt, employment contracts for new recruitments during the doctoral degree phase are generally concluded according to the rule of 3+2 years if they are financed by the State of Hesse, insofar as no other qualification goal is apparent. Accordingly, the first employment contract should be concluded for a fixed term of 3 years. Subsequently, depending on the status of the doctoral degree, the follow-up contract is to be concluded for a limited period of either two or three years. An extension for 3+2+1 years is also possible if unforeseen delays in the doctoral procedure occurred during the first extension to the contract. A deviating, shorter contract extension than for the duration of two years is only possible in exceptional cases if the doctoral procedure can actually be completed within the shorter extension period. In principle, the length of the extension period after the first three years always depends on the status of the doctoral degree and the qualification goal.
- In the postdoctoral phase, the 3+3-year rule applies to posts financed by the State of Hesse, plus bonus periods carried over from the first phase that were not claimed.
- The Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act applies nationwide, i.e. it also applies in the event of a change of university and/or employment relationship.
- By contrast, periods of academic training that do not take place in an (academic) employment relationship, for example a doctoral degree funded via a scholarship where there is no employment contract, are not included in the maximum fixed-term period. They might, however, have an influence on possible “bonus periods”. This means that if you receive a scholarship for 3 years during your doctoral degree and then complete it over the next 4 years in a “budget-financed” post according to Section 2 (1) of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act, you cannot claim any “bonus periods” and only the regular 6 years are at your disposal after your doctoral degree. However, if you complete your doctoral degree in 4 years in a “budget-financed” post, then you can have the “saved bonus time” of 2 years transferred to the postdoctoral phase, that is, you can have 6+2 years at your disposal.
- The German Education Union (GEW) is of the opinion that the “maximum fixed-term periods of six years before the doctoral degree and a further six (in medicine nine) years after the doctoral degree in principle apply independently of each other. There is the possibility to extend the second six-year period. This “bonus period” occurs if the time for the doctoral degree and the duration of fixed-term employment prior to the doctoral degree together amounted to less than six years: in this case, the maximum fixed-term period after the doctoral degree is extended accordingly.” Please note that when calculating the time to degree, periods without employment can also be included (i.e. doctoral studies with or without a scholarship or while still studying, also abroad).

- Only those fixed-term employment relationships that fall within the scope of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act, that is, which are typically characterized by academic activities, count towards the maximum fixed-term period. Contracts for scientific support staff in administrative, technical and management posts are not included. You can find further information on how the legal text is interpreted in the [guide on the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act](#) published by the German Education Union (GEW).
- Times prior to completion of studies, such as employment as a student assistant, do not count.
- The duration of the fixed-term period (in accordance with Section 2 (1) of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act) can be extended in certain cases, such as leave of absence or reduction of working hours (Section 2 (5) Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act), among others for:
  - Care of children under 18 years of age (including stepchildren and foster children living in the same household) or other relatives in need of care
  - Periods when an (expectant) mother is not allowed to work (in accordance with Sections 3, 4, 6 and 8 of the Maternity Protection Act), to the extent to which no gainful employment was pursued
  - Periods of maternity protection and parental leave

What is known as the “family policy component” also represents a possibility to extend the fixed-term period. If the family policy component is applied, an employment contract directly following a fixed-term qualification period can be extended for a maximum of two years per child beyond the otherwise applicable maximum fixed-term period. This is conditional on the employee having care responsibilities for one or more children under 18 years of age living in the same household.

For reasons of quality assurance, there is a general recommendation at Goethe University Frankfurt that the family policy component is granted. It is important that the family policy component is applied to the extent to which the intended qualification goal has been delayed due to childcare. Here, there is no general extension of 2 years, but instead the university examines by when the qualification goal can be achieved.

However, as this is a discretionary arrangement, the decision also depends, among other things, on the budgetary resources available at the respective faculty.

You can find all the currently applicable provisions in the legal text of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act (a translation is available online on the [website of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research](#)).

You can obtain information about the special conditions at Goethe University Frankfurt and the respective contact persons on the [Family Service’s website](#), from the [Staff Services Department](#) (in German only), and from the [HR administrator responsible](#) (in German only) for you.

**Note:** While we were compiling this brochure, a nationwide evaluation of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act took place. A first draft of the reform of the act has been announced for the autumn/winter of 2023. You should please therefore always consult the website of the [Federal Ministry of Education and Research \(BMBF\)](#) regarding the rules currently applicable and possible amendments.

## 2.2 Posts financed from third-party funds

A post financed from third-party funds (drittmittelfinanzierte Stelle) means that the employee's salary is financed from funds that are not part of a university's budget (basic funding). The funds for the post then come from contributions by third parties (e.g. foundations, public funding or industry). The most important third-party funding organizations in the German higher education landscape include:

- The German Research Foundation (DFG), with its Research Units, Research Centers, Research Training Groups and Graduate Schools as well as Collaborative Research Centers
- Funding programs of federal state or European Union institutions (such as the [Federal Ministry of Education and Research \(BMBF\)](#) [↗](#))

Foundations financed from private or public funds, such as the [Volkswagen Foundation](#) [↗](#), the [Fritz Thyssen Foundation](#) [↗](#) or the [Alexander von Humboldt Foundation](#) [↗](#). The [German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\)](#) [↗](#) also belongs to this group.

- Corporate entities and other private sponsors
- The Excellence Initiative financed by the German federal and state governments and the subsequent Excellence Strategy (Clusters of Excellence and Universities of Excellence)

For doctoral candidates and postdocs whose post is financed from third-party funds, the same rules apply regarding [maternity protection](#), [parental leave](#), [parental allowance](#), [child benefit](#) and [supplementary child allowance](#) as for employees in posts financed from the university's basic funding. Doctoral candidates and postdocs with a post financed from third-party funds who are employed at the university in accordance with the Collective Wage Agreement for Goethe University Frankfurt are also entitled to the [child allowance](#) in accordance with the agreement.

In general, employees whose post is financed from third-party funds have a fixed-term employment contract. The provisions of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act are particularly relevant here.

### **BOX III | Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act and Third-Party Funded Projects**

With regard to employment in third-party funded projects, the deciding factor is according to which subsection of Section 2 of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act (WissZeitVG) the employment contract was concluded.

If the contract is concluded in accordance with Section 2 (1) of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act, the agreed duration of the contract is automatically extended by the periods of maternity protection and/or parental leave claimed. If the contract is concluded in accordance with Section 2 (2) of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act, the employment contract is not extended by periods of maternity protection and/or parental leave.

*The relevant regulations of the [Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act](#)  in detail:*

*“(1) The use of fixed-term employment contracts for staff defined in Section 1 (1) Sentence 1 without doctoral degrees is permissible for a period of up to six years if the fixed-term employment is intended to further the academic or artistic training of the staff so employed. After completion of a doctoral degree, a fixed-term contract for a duration of up to six years – in the field of medicine for a duration of up to nine years – is permissible if the fixed-term employment is intended to further the academic or artistic training of the staff so employed; the permissible duration of the fixed-term employment increases by the extent to which fixed-term employment as defined in Sentence 1 and the length of time studying for a doctorate without employment as defined in Sentence 1 have together amounted to less than six years. The agreed duration of a fixed-term contract must be appropriate for the academic training sought. The overall duration of fixed-term employment permissible on the basis of Sentences 1 and 2 increases by two years per child where one or more children under the age of 18 are looked after. Sentence 4 applies also if the child-related prerequisites set out in Section 15 (1) Sentence 1 of the Parental Allowance and Parental Leave Act (BEEG) are fulfilled. The overall duration of fixed-term employment permissible on the basis of Sentences 1 and 2 increases by two years where there is a disability as defined in Section 2 (1) of Book 9 of the Social Code (SGB) or serious chronic medical condition. Extensions to a fixed-term employment contract are also possible within the permissible duration.*

*(2) The use of fixed-term employment contracts for staff referred to in Section 1 (1) Sentence 1 is also permissible if the employment is predominantly financed from third-party funds, the funding is approved for a certain task and duration and the employee is employed predominantly in accordance with the purpose of this funding; the agreed duration of the fixed term must normally correspond to the approved project period.*

*[...]*

*(5) The duration of a fixed-term employment contract as set out in Subsection (1) is extended, in agreement with the employee, by*

*1.*

*periods of leave of absence or of a reduction in working hours by at least one fifth of the regular working time which have been granted to look after or care for one or more children under the age of 18 years, including if the child-related prerequisites set out in Section 15 (1) Sentence 1 of the Parental Allowance and Parental Leave Act (BEEG) are fulfilled, or other dependents requiring long-term care,*

[...]

3.

*periods of parental leave taken in accordance with the Parental Allowance and Parental Leave Act (BEEG) and periods when work is not allowed as set out in Sections 3 to 6, 10 (3), 13 (1) No. 3 and Section 16 of the Act on the Protection of Working Mothers (MuSchG),*

[...]"

Under certain circumstances, employers can choose the subsection they prefer. It can be useful to ask which rule applies before concluding the employment contract and to point out that Subsection 2 can in practice have a negative effect on an extension of the post.

- With an employment contract concluded in accordance with Section 2 (1) of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act, the provisions in that act as specified in the [previous chapter](#) also apply to fixed-term employment in third-party funded projects.
- Fixed-term contracts financed from third-party funds count towards the respective 6-year time limit. However, such contracts concluded in accordance with Section 2 (2) are themselves not subject to the 6-year maximum term. This means that if their term is fixed "for a specific purpose", any number of fixed-term contracts financed from third-party funds can be concluded in succession.
- The German Education Union (GEW) points out that only employment relationships typically characterized by academic activities can count towards the maximum fixed-term period: "The amendments to the Act which came into force in 2016 removed non-academic staff from the scope of § 2 paragraph 2. Fixed-term contracts with non-academic staff working on third-party projects can now only be concluded on the basis of the Part-Time and Fixed-Term Employment Act (see Chapter 13) – which had been the position before 2007." You can find further information on how the legal text is interpreted in the [guide on the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act](#) [↗](#) published by the German Education Union (GEW).
- The family policy component, according to which an existing employment contract directly following a fixed-term qualification period can be extended for up to two years per child, usually only applies for employees whose post is financed from third-party funds if they have a fixed-term contract in accordance with Section 2 (1). This is conditional on the employee having care responsibilities for one or more children under 18 years of age living in the same household. In general, the family policy component in accordance with Section 2 (1) of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act is a "discretionary arrangement". It is recommended that the faculties also apply this component for staff in externally funded projects, but in practice this can usually only be done for contracts under Section 2 (1). You can obtain further information about this from the HR administrator responsible for you in the [Staff Services Department](#) [↗](#) (in German only).

While we were compiling this brochure, a nationwide evaluation of the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act took place. A first draft of the reform of the act has been announced for the autumn/winter of 2023. You should please therefore always consult the website of the [Federal Ministry of Education and Research \(BMBF\)](#) [↗](#) regarding the rules currently applicable and possible amendments.

### Parental leave and fixed-term contracts

If your post at Goethe University Frankfurt is financed from third-party funds and difficulties arise due to the parental leave you have taken, e.g. because the research project is coming to an end, you should consult with the project leader. The following options are available to them:

- Check with the third-party funding organization whether further funding for your post is possible.
- If this is not possible, the project leader at your institute can ask whether you can work there.
- If this is not possible either, the project leader might be able to suggest alternative externally funded projects in which you could work.

If none of these options leads to a solution, please contact the research officer responsible for your externally funded project.

Help for research project leaders in such cases is also available from the [Family Service](#) or the HR administrator responsible for you in the [Staff Services Department](#) (in German only).

## 2.3 Scholarships

A scholarship is a performance-related grant that does not have to be paid back. The scholarship does not constitute an employment relationship, is usually tax-free and does not fall within the scope of social insurance (which includes, for example, health, long-term care or pension insurance).

This means that the status of scholarship holder does not, in itself, entitle the holder to maternity benefit. Legal regulations, such as parental leave, do not apply.

Expectant mothers are under no obligation to notify their scholarship provider of their pregnancy, but it is generally wise to do so because many scholarship providers allow for maternity protection, an extension to the duration of the scholarship and a family allowance per child. For example, the Federal Government's Scholarship Foundations for the support of gifted students (Begabtenförderungswerke) grant a family supplement of currently €255 and €50 for each additional child. It therefore usually makes sense for expectant mothers to notify their funding institution of their pregnancy in order to be able to claim the corresponding benefits. You can find an overview of current funding alternatives for doctoral candidates in the [brochure published by GRADE](#). It also contains information on financial support for scholarship holders with children. However, you should always ask the scholarship provider directly about the currently applicable regulations and for more detailed information.

**!** Please note that the following statements may be subject to legal changes. Moreover, not all measures are equally available to everyone. Please therefore ensure that you follow the [general instructions at the beginning of this chapter](#).



### Maternity benefit for scholarship holders

Scholarship holders, whether they have German nationality or are from EU or non-EU countries, are not entitled to **maternity benefit**. Some scholarships, however, provide for continued payment for the duration of the maternity protection period. Scholarship holders should enquire about this directly with the funding institution.

Scholarship holders with a part-time job or a mini-job alongside their doctoral degree can apply to their health insurance fund for **maternity benefit**, irrespective of whether they have voluntary or compulsory statutory health insurance. (See **mini-job**)


Further information can be found on the [website of the Federal Office for Social Security \(BAS\)](#) .


### Parental allowance, parental allowance plus and parental leave for scholarship holders

Since a scholarship does not count as income for tax and social insurance purposes, scholarship holders are only eligible for the **minimum parental allowance (Basiselterngeld)**, insofar as they have no other income. Persons with a residence permit can only meet the eligibility requirements for parental allowance if they are also entitled to work in Germany and have already worked here.

For details on the application requirements for parental allowance, please see [Chapter 1.2 - Parental Allowance](#).

**Parental allowance plus (ElterngeldPlus)** is an option, for example, if parents share childcare responsibilities after the birth and work part-time (up to 30 or 32 hours per week) while drawing parental allowance. Depending on the partner's income, scholarship holders might also be able to claim parental allowance plus. In this case, the period during which parental allowance is drawn can be extended to after the child reaches 14 months of age.

Scholarship holders cannot apply for **parental leave (Elternzeit)**, as they are not in an employment relationship. However, some scholarship providers, e.g. the [Scholarship Foundations for the support of gifted students \(Begabtenförderungswerke\) of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research \(BMBF\)](#)  (in German only), finance a fourth year of funding. In addition, it is possible in most cases to apply to the scholarship provider for deferment of payment or to work part-time and to add the scholarship onto the end of the overall funding period. In this case, however, payments cease entirely or are reduced by half. It is therefore essential that you clarify before interrupting your scholarship how you can cover your living costs if you only have parental allowance and child benefit at your disposal.

 Please note that the following statements may be subject to legal changes. Moreover, not all measures are equally available to everyone. Please therefore ensure that you follow the [general instructions at the beginning of this chapter](#).

## BOX IV | Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act and Scholarships

Even if the Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act (WissZeitVG) does not affect scholarship holders directly, the time to degree is relevant because this can also be a period without employment and can be a criterion for employment after the doctoral degree and for the postdoctoral phase (see Box II). In general, the date of enrolling as a doctoral candidate or the date of admission to the doctoral procedure counts as the start of the doctoral degree. Further information on this can be found in the guide “Fixed-Term Contracts in Higher Education and Research” [🔗](#) published by the German Education Union (GEW).

### Unemployment benefit for scholarship holders

Scholarship holders are not entitled to apply for unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld, ALG) because they do not pay contributions to unemployment insurance during the scholarship. Later entitlement to unemployment benefit from previous employment might also be lost if a scholarship lasts several years and the scholarship holder does not pursue any employment during the scholarship that is liable for social security contributions.

**Note:** If you were employed for at least 360 calendar days during the previous two years and paid social security contributions and have now been awarded a scholarship, you can prevent losing your entitlement to unemployment benefit by registering as a job-seeker and drawing unemployment benefit for a short period before the start of the scholarship. Your entitlement will then remain valid for up to four years after your first application.

Should you have any questions about your entitlement to social benefits, you can find further information on the [website of the Federal Employment Agency](#) [🔗](#). For personal advice, you can make an appointment at the [job center responsible for you](#) [🔗](#) (in German only).

### Health insurance for scholarship holders

Most scholarship holders do not fulfil the requirements (less than 14 subject-related semesters and under 30 years of age) for student health insurance and are obliged to take out voluntary insurance with a statutory health insurance fund. The contribution to statutory health insurance (with sickness benefit) is currently 14.6% of the income liable for contributions or 14% without sickness benefit. In addition, there is the supplementary contribution raised by the respective health insurance fund and the contribution to statutory long-term care insurance.

For persons with voluntary insurance in a statutory health insurance fund, there is a minimum threshold that is used to calculate their contribution. The current amount can be found on the website of the [Federal Ministry of Health \(BMG\)](#) [🔗](#) (in German only). Even

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if, strictly speaking, a scholarship is not considered as income, scholarship holders are classified by health insurance funds as if they were receiving the currently applicable minimum amount each month, insofar as this is below the threshold.

Depending on their partner's employment, a married scholarship holder is entitled to family insurance.

Please contact your health insurance fund directly to check the current conditions regarding contributions and insurance.

### Child benefit for scholarship holders

**Child benefit (Kindergeld)** is a state benefit that is paid irrespective of income. All legal guardians can claim child benefit for all children from birth until they reach (at least) 18 years of age.

Entitled to child benefit are:

- Scholarship holders from Germany, EU and EEA states as well as Switzerland; the parent in whose household the child lives can claim child benefit
- Parents whose children have their place of residence or habitual abode in Germany, an EU or EEA state, regardless of their nationality.

Not entitled to child benefit are scholarship holders from non-EU countries with a residence title in accordance with Section 16 of the Residence Act (i.e. for the purpose of studying).

**Note:** Please allow sufficient time for the Family Benefits Office to process your application for child benefit. In general, a processing time of four to six weeks can be expected; child benefit can only be paid retroactively for six months before the application was submitted.

### Scholarship holders from non-EU countries

If a doctoral candidate or postdoc from a non-EU country receives a scholarship, this counts as income that is not liable for tax and social security contributions. They are not entitled to **parental allowance** or to **parental allowance plus**. However, if they have worked or are working in Germany in the twelve months prior to the child's birth or in the last full calendar year and before or during the period in which the scholarship is drawn, they can claim parental allowance or parental allowance plus.

**Note:** If you have a settlement permit, you fulfil the conditions for applying for parental allowance. If you have a temporary residence permit, you can only apply for parental allowance if you are also entitled to work in Germany or have already worked in Germany. You can find further information about this on the [website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees \(BAMF\)](#) [↗](#), the website of the [Goethe Welcome Center at the Global Office](#) [↗](#) and in the brochure ["Rights of residence for researchers from non-EU countries in Germany"](#) [↗](#) of the German Rectors' Conference.

**!** Please note that the following statements may be subject to legal changes. Moreover, not all measures are equally available to everyone. Please therefore ensure that you follow the [general instructions at the beginning of this chapter](#).

## 2.4 Other types of financing

Ideally, doctoral candidates finance themselves from the beginning of their doctoral degree to the end either via a scholarship or a job or have mixed financing, e.g. first a job and then a scholarship to complete their doctoral degree. Especially toward the end of the doctoral degree, however, it is frequently the case that all possible financing options have been exhausted and doctoral candidates are obliged to finance themselves in other ways. For parents, special conditions partly apply to these various possibilities.

Should you have any questions about your entitlement to social benefits, you can find further information on the [website of the Federal Employment Agency](#) [↗](#). For personal advice, you can make an appointment at the [job center responsible for you](#) [↗](#) (in German only).

### Unemployment benefit

Unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld, ALG) is an insurance benefit. If, before becoming unemployed, you were liable for social security contributions, part of your gross salary was deducted for unemployment insurance each month. To receive unemployment benefit, an employee must have paid unemployment insurance contributions for at least twelve months within two years. The amount of unemployment benefit equates to 60% of the previous net income and is independent of assets, i.e. any savings you might have do not reduce the amount of unemployment benefit. In addition to this replacement income, your health, long-term care and pension insurance contributions are paid. The length of time for which you can draw unemployment benefit depends on how long you have paid in and is between 6 and 24 months, depending on age, with 12 months being the general rule.

### Maternity benefit


During the maternity protection period, recipients of unemployment benefit are entitled to [maternity benefit \(Mutterschaftsgeld\)](#). This equates to the amount of unemployment benefit paid until then (i.e. it is not an additional payment). Applications for maternity benefit are submitted to the health insurance fund.

### Child benefit

[Child benefit \(Kindergeld\)](#) Child benefit is independent of employment status and also paid to recipients of unemployment benefit.

### Parental allowance

Parental allowance (Elterngeld) is calculated on the basis of a person's income in the previous year. Because unemployment benefit itself is considered as an income replacement benefit, no entitlement to parental allowance ensues.

 Please note that the following statements may be subject to legal changes. Moreover, not all measures are equally available to everyone. Please therefore ensure that you follow the [general instructions at the beginning of this chapter](#).

**Note:** If you are drawing unemployment benefit and wish to apply for parental allowance, there are two possibilities:

- You pause your entitlement to unemployment benefit and draw only parental allowance as an income replacement benefit. To do this, you must register your claim for unemployment benefit before drawing parental allowance and receive unemployment benefit for a short period. This is very important for non-contributory insurance in the health insurance fund to continue while you are drawing parental allowance, otherwise you must take out voluntary insurance and pay the health insurance contributions yourself. When you draw parental allowance, your entitlement to unemployment benefit is then added onto the end of your entitlement to parental allowance. If you choose this option, the months before drawing parental allowance in which you drew unemployment benefit are included in the calculation of parental allowance as €0. For example, if you worked for seven months and then drew unemployment benefit for five months before your child was born, your income for the last seven months will be included in the calculation. However, if you were registered as unemployed for twelve months before the birth of your child, you are only entitled to the minimum amount of currently €300 per month. This option therefore makes sense if you have worked and had an income in the last twelve months before your child was born.
- You draw parental allowance and unemployment benefit at the same time. In this case, an allowance of currently €300 applies for unemployment benefit (= minimum amount of parental allowance). The remaining parental allowance is offset against unemployment benefit, i.e. the income from unemployment benefit is reduced. Caution: With this option, at least fathers must be at the disposal of the labor market for at least 30 hours per week. This option makes sense if you have been drawing unemployment benefit for twelve months or longer because in this way you will receive the minimum parental allowance of €300 in addition to unemployment benefit.

You can enter your personal situation in the [Parental Allowance Calculator](#) (in German only) and in this way calculate how much you are entitled to. You can find further information in English on the [website of the BMFSFJ](#). You should in any case also discuss the rules and options that apply for you with your local employment agency.

### Parental leave

Recipients of unemployment benefit are also entitled to a break from work that corresponds to parental leave (Elternzeit). During this time, they are not at the disposal of the labor market, but they do not have to submit a formal application for parental leave. Notifying the employment agency of the planned duration is sufficient.

### Citizen's benefit

In contrast to unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld, ALG), citizen's benefit (Bürgergeld) is not an insurance benefit but a basic state welfare benefit for all jobseekers who receive no or only minimal unemployment benefit.

Only persons with inadequate means can draw this state benefit. To determine whether this is the case, first of all the total income and assets of the community of need (i.e. also those of the person's spouse and children) are assessed. This information is important because your savings as well as the total assets of your household will be taken into account if you want to receive citizen's benefit. These can also include, for example, any income your partner might have. However, since January 2023 substantially higher tax-free allowances apply before a person's assets or those of a community of need are taken into account.

The amount of citizen's benefit is based on fixed standard rates that are regularly adjusted. You can find the current amount of the standard rates as well as the allowances for your assets at the time of application on the [website of the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs \(BMAS\)](#) [↗](#).

When drawing citizen's benefit, you automatically have statutory health insurance via the employment agency or job center.

Should you have any questions about drawing citizen's benefit, you can find further information on eligibility and benefits on the [website of the Federal Employment Agency](#) [↗](#). For personal advice, you can make an appointment at the [job center responsible for you](#) [↗](#).

### Maternity benefit

Drawing citizen's benefit does not constitute any entitlement to maternity benefit (Mutterschaftsgeld). If you are working in addition to drawing citizen's benefit, you will also receive maternity benefit during the maternity protection period. Maternity benefit (applications should be submitted to the health insurance fund) is not offset against citizen's benefit and can be drawn in addition.

### Child benefit

Child benefit (Kindergeld) is independent of employment status and also paid to recipients of unemployment benefit. However, child benefit is offset as income against it (= deducted).

### Parental allowance

When drawing citizen's benefit, parental allowance (Elterngeld) is offset in full (= deducted); this also applies for the minimum amount of €300. There is a special case if one or both parents were gainfully employed before the child's birth. In this case, there is an allowance on the parental allowance that is not offset, in addition to the citizen's benefit. This allowance equates to the income before the child's birth, but the maximum is €300.

**Note:** You can apply for a subsidy for maternity clothing or baby equipment at your job center. In general, your benefits officer is responsible for this.

**!** Please note that the following statements may be subject to legal changes. Moreover, not all measures are equally available to everyone. Please therefore ensure that you follow the [general instructions at the beginning of this chapter](#).

### Parental leave

Unemployed persons are also entitled to a break from work that corresponds to parental leave (Elternzeit). This means that recipients of citizen's benefit cannot be forced to work or participate in a training measure while on full benefits. However, this only applies as long as the child is not cared for by someone else. As soon as the child attends a childcare facility, the job center can insist that the parents start work or participate in a training measure.

### Mini-jobs

Mini-jobs are marginal employment with approx. 10 working hours per week. Depending on the statutory minimum wage, the result is an earnings threshold up to which no social security contributions are due. Since October 2022, the threshold is €520 per month.

**Note:** If you do not apply for exemption from compulsory pension insurance, you must pay part of your monthly salary into the pension insurance fund (and your employer also pays in). These payments have the following advantages for you:

- They increase your pension entitlement later on: the period of employment in a mini-job liable for compulsory insurance counts toward the qualifying period for your old-age pension as well as for a reduced earning capacity pension. With monthly earnings of €450, the monthly pension currently increases by an average of €4.50 after one year in a mini-job.
- By making full compulsory contributions, you secure the full range of benefits offered by the statutory pension insurance fund.

**Note:** With a mini-job, you do not automatically have health insurance. Only if your monthly earnings exceed the dynamic threshold of currently €520 do you pay health insurance contributions and are registered with a health insurance fund by your employer, if you are not already a member. Since health insurance is compulsory in Germany, you must take care of your own health insurance if you have a mini-job and earn below the current earnings threshold.

### Maternity protection and maternity benefit

(Expectant) mothers with a mini-job are also entitled to **maternity protection (Mutterschutz)**. If a mother with a mini-job has statutory health insurance with sickness benefit, the health insurance fund pays up to €13 in **maternity benefit (Mutterschaftsgeld)** per day. If the average net salary from the mini-job exceeds €13 per calendar day, the difference is paid by the employer as an employer's contribution.

### Child benefit

Parents with a mini-job are entitled to **child benefit (Kindergeld)** because this is not linked to income or employment status.

### Parental allowance

Parents with a mini-job are also entitled to **parental allowance (Elterngeld)**. Employees who earn less than €1,000/month are considered low earners. Their salary is then taken into special consideration with regard to parental allowance so that up to 100%

of their previous income is possible. For example, a person who earned €340 before the child's birth would be entitled to 100% of this income as parental allowance; a person who earned €500 before the child's birth would still receive 92% of their original income.

#### Parental leave

Persons with a mini-job can also apply for [parental leave \(Elternzeit\)](#).

#### Financial support from your partner

Doctoral candidates and postdocs do not have to register as unemployed if their financial situation does not necessitate it. This is the case, for example, if their partner supports them financially.

**Note:** You can take out family insurance with a health insurance fund through your partner if you are a spouse or civil partner. You can, however, also take out your own voluntary or private health insurance.

#### Maternity benefit

Without gainful employment, you cannot apply for maternity benefit (Mutterschaftsgeld).

#### Parental allowance


Parental allowance (Elterngeld) is based on the partner's income and employment.

#### Child benefit

You are entitled to child benefit (Kindergeld) because this is not linked to income or employment status.

## 2.5 Other information on financial support

#### Financial support for ECRs with children

With resources from the Franz Adickes Endowment Fund, GRADE regularly supports up to 30 doctoral candidates, postdoctoral researchers and scholars in the professorial qualification phase at Goethe University Frankfurt who have care responsibilities toward family members. Financial support in the shape of a scholarship is available for persons in marginal employment. For persons already employed on a greater scale, support is available in the shape of funds to pay for assistants who can assume routine tasks and thus give scholars more flexibility. Further information on application requirements and current calls can be found on the [GRADE website](#) .



## Pension entitlement

Times spent raising children are taken into account in your pension. Even if you have never been employed and never paid into the pension insurance fund, you might be able to claim a pension on this basis (Rentenanspruch). You can normally claim 36 months as child-raising periods (for children born after 1992).


More information is available from [German Pension Insurance](#) , the institution responsible for this.

## Housing benefit

To ensure adequate and family-friendly accommodation, it is possible to apply for housing benefit (Wohngeld). This is designed as a subsidy towards living expenses for households above the subsistence level and is intended to ensure that households entitled to housing benefit are able to pay their rent. Whether housing benefit is granted depends on the following factors:


- Income
- Rent
- Number of other people in the household and their income

If you are drawing citizen's benefit (Bürgergeld), you cannot apply for housing benefit. However, a combination of housing benefit and citizen's benefit within a community of need is possible under certain circumstances.

**Note:** You can find out whether you are in principle eligible for housing benefit with the [Housing Benefit Calculator](#)  (in German only).


You can find further information about housing benefit on the [website of the City of Frankfurt](#) .

## Federal Foundation "Mother and Child"

The Federal Foundation "[Mother and Child – Protection of Unborn Life](#)"  helps pregnant women in emergency situations. They receive supplementary financial assistance in an unbureaucratic way, which is intended to make it easier for them to decide in favor of the child's life and the continuation of the pregnancy. Applications are conditional on the expectant mother having her place of residence or habitual abode in the Federal Republic of Germany.

## Advance maintenance payments for single parents

A child is eligible for advance maintenance payments (Unterhaltsvorschuss) if it lives in Germany with a single parent and does not receive maintenance (or orphan's allowance) from the other parent, or only partially or irregularly, to the amount of statutory minimum

 Please note that the following statements may be subject to legal changes. Moreover, not all measures are equally available to everyone. Please therefore ensure that you follow the [general instructions at the beginning of this chapter](#).

maintenance (Section 1612a (1) Civil Code) and if it has not yet reached 18 years of age. This is regulated by the Advance Maintenance Payments Act (UnVorschG). For a child between 12 and 18 years of age there are additional conditions, which you can find on the website of the [Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth \(BMFSFJ\)](#) [↗](#).

Considered as single parents are parents who are unmarried, widowed, divorced or permanently separated from their spouse or partner. Unmarried parents are not considered as single parents if they live together with the child and the other parent like a family (Section 1 (3) Advance Maintenance Payments Act). Parents who are married to a new partner or have a civil partner are not considered as single parents unless they have since separated from the new partner.

Nationals from EU member states as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland are entitled to advance maintenance payments if they live in Germany. Advance maintenance payments are also made to other children if their stay in Germany is likely to be permanent. Anyone who, for example, has a settlement permit or an EU residence permit meets these requirements. Anyone who has a temporary residence permit or discretionary leave to stay for the purpose of employment can also receive advance maintenance payments under certain conditions. Migrants with a temporary residence permit during an asylum procedure or what is known as “exceptional leave to remain” are not eligible for advance maintenance payments.

The higher financial burden is tax-deductible for single parents. Important: For scholarship holders, this is only relevant if they have other taxable income in addition to the scholarship that is not offset against the scholarship.

You can find all you need to know about advance maintenance on the website of the [Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth \(BMFSFJ\)](#) [↗](#).

### **Advice on mixed financing models**

If you commence with a scholarship after being employed, registering as unemployed for the period between the two types of funding is recommended so that, if applicable, you can claim unemployment benefit after the end of the scholarship.

Parental allowance is always paid for the last twelve months in which you drew income from employment, even if this employment has already ended. However, if you drew income both as an employee as well as from self-employment (this is known as “mixed income”) before drawing parental allowance, all income from the last full calendar year counts.

3

**Childcare and  
family-conscious infrastructure**

## Childcare and family-conscious infrastructure

### The German Childcare and School System

Compared to other countries, the German childcare system has several particularities.

For example, childcare is organized at the local level, while the school system is regulated at the federal state level. Before deciding on a particular form of childcare and the corresponding nursery/pre-school or school, early career researchers should familiarize themselves with the various options. In the following sections, we go into more detail about what Goethe University Frankfurt has to offer and what is available in the City of Frankfurt.

You can find a detailed explanation of the German childcare system on the [website make-it-in-germany.com](https://www.make-it-in-germany.com) [↗](#), the Federal Government's website for foreign nationals

The website [find-it-in-frm.de](https://find-it-in-frm.de) [↗](#) provides a list of bilingual and multilingual childcare facilities in Frankfurt.

You can find useful information about schools in the region on the [website of Goethe Welcome Center](#) [↗](#).

### 3.1 Regular childcare in Frankfurt

Before deciding on a particular form of childcare and the corresponding nursery/pre-school or school, doctoral candidates and post-docs should familiarize themselves with the various options and their educational concepts. You can find a good overview of all the relevant information regarding municipal childcare offers on the city's website [kindernetfrankfurt](https://www.kindernetfrankfurt.de) [↗](#). Unfortunately, the website is only available in German, but you can [download short instructions and flyers in several languages](#) [↗](#). If you get stuck in some areas nonetheless, multilingual translation tools such as [DeepL](#) [↗](#) might help.

kindernetfrankfurt is also the central platform for the allocation of nursery/pre-school places and for childminders in Frankfurt. Please note that only parents domiciled in Frankfurt can register for places in Frankfurt's childcare facilities. Those who are registered in another city or town must consult the central information and registration website of their respective place of residence.

However, please do not wait to register until you have actually arrived in Frankfurt. It can sometimes take quite a while before the right place becomes available for your child. It is important that your place of residence is in the City of Frankfurt at the time you sign the contract with the nursery/pre-school.

In addition, please do not hesitate too long with accepting or rejecting a place: if you are offered a place, you will no longer be visible in the system for other facilities. This means that there is no point in delaying your acceptance because you are waiting for acceptance from another nursery/pre-school that you prefer.

## Childcare models in Frankfurt

### Crèches (Krabbelstube/ [Kinder-]Krippe)

#### For children aged between eight weeks and three years

- Maximum of five children per supervisor; maximum of twelve children per group
- Opening times: from Monday to Friday from approx. 07.00 to 17.00 (depending on the facility)
- Cost depends on the number of hours

#### Nurseries/pre-schools (Kindergarten/Kindertagesstätte [Kita])





- For children from three years of age until they start school
- Maximum of 21 children per group
- Opening times: from Monday to Friday from approx. 07.30 to 17.00 (depending on the facility)
- Cost depends on the number of hours
- Corporate and workplace childcare facilities
- Facilities run by companies or organizations for their employees' children
- Places for children of employees not working for the company/organization are only available if the facility is subsidized by the City of Frankfurt

#### Private sector childcare facilities

- Are not subsidized by the City of Frankfurt
- Have their own rules on fees and admissions
- Further information can be obtained from the respective providers

## Schools

### International schools and childcare

- The website of the FrankfurtRheinMain International Office includes lists of all bilingual and multilingual schools and childcare facilities in the whole region.
  - [Schools](#) 
  - [Childcare](#) 
- Introductions to the German childcare and school system
  - [Schools](#) 
  - [Childcare](#) 

**After-school facilities**

- For schoolchildren between six and twelve years of age
- Pre-registration for childcare possible up to 18 months before the planned start of school
- Childcare after school until about 17.00 (depending on the facility)
- Cost depends on the number of hours

**Childcare at schools and extended school care**

- Schoolchildren at the respective school
- Group size dependent on the childcare provider
- Childcare from about 11.30 to 17.00 (depending on the childcare provider)
- Childcare on the school's premises
- Includes holiday childcare (except for 25 days per year when facilities are closed)

**Costs**

All the most important information about childcare costs in the city's childcare facilities can be found on [kindernetfrankfurt](#) (in German only), the central platform of the City of Frankfurt.

**Registering at childcare facilities**

All childcare places provided by the City of Frankfurt that are available to the general public are organized via the central online allocation system [kindernetfrankfurt](#) (in German only).

**Note:** You should please in any case register with the city's online allocation system, even if a place at one of Goethe University Frankfurt's nurseries/pre-schools would be your first choice. Unfortunately, it is not possible to guarantee that you will be allocated a place at one of the childcare facilities on campus.

**3.2 Regular childcare at Goethe University Frankfurt**

Goethe University Frankfurt has regular childcare facilities on all its campuses for the children of staff and students.

Those on Westend Campus (Campus Kita Nursery and Pre-School) and on Riedberg Campus (Kita Kairos Nursery and Pre-School and Kita Zauberberg Nursery and Pre-School) are workplace childcare facilities. Accordingly, 75% of the places are for children of university staff and 25% of the places are for local children, whereby at Goethe University Frankfurt students' children count as local children and will be prioritized.

The Uni-Kita childcare facility in Bockenheim is run by a private provider and is independent of Goethe University Frankfurt.

## Westend Campus

### Campus Kita Nursery and Pre-School

75 places for children between 1 and 7 years of age

Opening times: 07.45 – 17.15

Registration for staff: [Family Service](#) [↗](#)

Registration for students: [kindernetfrankfurt](#) [↗](#) (in German only)

Gisèle-Freund-Platz 1

60323 Frankfurt am Main

Tel.: +49 (0)69 798 17262

Email: [campus-kita@bvz-frankfurt.de](mailto:campus-kita@bvz-frankfurt.de)

[Website](#) [↗](#) (in German only)

Head: Andrea Nordheimer

## Riedberg Campus

### Kairos Nursery and Pre-School

135 places in 9 mixed-age groups for children between 3 months and 7 years of age

Opening times: 07.30 – 17.00 or 08.30 – 18.00

Registration for staff: [Family Service](#) [↗](#)

Registration for students: [kindernetfrankfurt](#) [↗](#) (in German only)

Max-von-Laue-Str. 20

60439 Frankfurt am Main

Tel.: +49 (0)69 363 96 31 00

Email: [kita-kairos@bvz-frankfurt.de](mailto:kita-kairos@bvz-frankfurt.de)

[Website](#) [↗](#)

Head: Jost Kara

## Zauberberg Nursery and Pre-School

30 places for children between 1 and 7 years of age

Opening times: 07.30 – 18.00

Registration for staff: [Family Service](#) [↗](#)

Registration for students: [kindernetfrankfurt](#) [↗](#) (in German only)

Altenhöferallee 1b

60438 Frankfurt am Main

Tel.: +49 (0)69 57 6089 69

Email: [zauberberg@bvz-frankfurt.de](mailto:zauberberg@bvz-frankfurt.de)

[Website](#) [↗](#)

Head: Melanie Hardwiger

### Niederrad Campus, University Hospital

#### Uni-Strolche Nursery and Pre-School

For children of University Hospital staff only

130 places for children between 1 and 7 years of age

**Opening times:** Regular opening hours: 06.30 – 17.30;  
shift hours: 05.45 – 17.30

**Registration for University Hospital staff:**

**Family Service of University Hospital** [🔗](#) (in German only)

**Email:** [familienervice@kgu.de](mailto:familienervice@kgu.de)

**Tel.:** +49 (0)69 6301 83863

Theodor-Stern-Kai 7

Häuser 17 und 18

60596 Frankfurt am Main

**Tel.:** +49 (0)69 6301 5206

**Email:** [unistrolche@bvz-frankfurt.de](mailto:unistrolche@bvz-frankfurt.de)

**Website** [🔗](#)

**Head:** Bianca von Waldenburg

### Bockenheim Campus

#### Uni-Kita Nursery and Pre-School

Uni-Kita Nursery and Pre-School is located in Student House (Studierendenhaus) on Bockenheim Campus and is independent of Goethe University Frankfurt.

45 places for children between 1 and 7 years of age

**Opening times:** 07.30 – 17.00

**Registration:** [kindernetfrankfurt](#) [🔗](#)

Mertonstr. 26-28

60325 Frankfurt am Main

**Tel.:** +49 (0)69 979 81396

**Email:** [info@uni-kita.de](mailto:info@uni-kita.de)

**Website** [🔗](#)



## Costs

Childcare costs at all the facilities listed above are based on the [fees set by the City of Frankfurt](#) (in German only). Only the cost for meals varies.

## Registering at nurseries and pre-schools of Goethe University Frankfurt

Staff of Goethe University Frankfurt can register their child for the university's childcare facilities at the Family Service immediately after its birth. At least one parent must be employed at Goethe University Frankfurt. Here, international postdoctoral scholarship holders, visiting scholars and employees of the Students' Union are also considered as staff of Goethe University Frankfurt.

Registration for the nurseries/pre-schools on campus is tied to a specific location, i.e. parents can only register their child for the campus where they themselves are employed. If both parents work on different campuses, they must decide on one when registering their child.

[The registration form is available on the Family Service's website](#).

The Nursery and Pre-School Advisory Board for Campus Kita Westend decides in February and June on the allocation of free places; the advisory board for Kita Kairos and Kita Zauberberg (Riedberg Campus) in February, June and October.

### Registration deadline for staff:

- Campus Kita Westend (Westend Campus): 31 January and 15 May
- Kita Kairos and Kita Zauberberg (Riedberg Campus): 31 January, 15 May and 30 September

**Important:** There is no guarantee that you will be allocated a place in one of the nurseries/pre-schools of Goethe University Frankfurt. We therefore strongly recommend that you also register your child with the city's childcare facilities. Residents of the City of Frankfurt should register via the central online portal [kindernetfrankfurt](#).

Registration for the Uni-Strolche Nursery and Pre-School on Niederrad Campus is done via the [Family Service of University Hospital](#) (in German only) and is only possible for children of University Hospital staff.

Note for doctoral candidates: Doctoral candidates without an employment contract should please always register for all nurseries and pre-schools via the central online allocation system [kindernetfrankfurt](#).

It is essential that applicants indicate in the free text field of the application form that they are pursuing a doctoral degree at Goethe University Frankfurt.

Answers to the most frequent questions related to registering for childcare at Goethe University Frankfurt can be found in the [FAQs on the Registration Procedure for Children of Staff Members](#).

### 3.3 Holiday childcare

#### Holiday Games Program at Goethe University Frankfurt

In the summer and autumn vacations, the Family Service runs a Holiday Games Program for the children of staff and students. The wide and varied program is designed for children between six and twelve years of age and includes games, fun activities, excursions and workshops, in which the children can also get to know what the university has to offer (e.g. Pupille Campus Cinema, Science Garden, Campus Radio, tours of the canteen, and much more). The Holiday Games Program is organized and run in cooperation with [Kaleidoskop e. V.](#) (in German only), an association working in child and youth education.

#### Holiday schemes in the City of Frankfurt

There is a wide range of childcare options in Frankfurt during the holidays. On the website [Frankfurt is on Holiday \(Frankfurt macht Ferien\)](#) (in German only) you can search systematically by organizer, topic, target group and specific needs. Please contact the organizers if you are unsure whether children can participate without speaking German. Most people should be proficient in English; otherwise, a multilingual translation tool such as [DeepL](#) can help.

Other holiday schemes in Frankfurt:

- [Ferienkarussell Frankfurt](#) (Frankfurt Holiday Carousel, in German only)
- [hin und weg – youth travel organized by the Protestant Church](#) (in German only)

### 3.4 Flexible childcare

#### Supervised Children's Room (Betreutes Kinderzimmer, Westend Campus)

The [Supervised Children's Room](#) on Westend Campus is a flexible type of childcare. Here, after an initial meeting and some time spent settling in, children are supervised by qualified teaching staff on an hourly basis. A maximum of ten hours per week is possible. No more than five children can be supervised at the same time. The cost of this flexible childcare is currently €2.50 per hour for students and €5.00 per hour for employees.

#### Contact

Betreutes Kinderzimmer

c/o Campus Kita (Westend Campus)

Tel.: +49 (0) 151 18656089

Email: [kinderzimmer-westend@uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:kinderzimmer-westend@uni-frankfurt.de)

Contact: Balkisse Karuti

### **FlexiKids – Fund for flexible childcare during off-peak times**

The FlexiKids fund is a pilot project and intended for staff and enrolled doctoral candidates of Goethe University Frankfurt with children aged 0 to 14 years (children with special needs aged 0-25 years). The purpose of the fund is to give parents the possibility to make flexible use of childcare at off-peak times when regular childcare is not available during essential work-related commitments, e.g. laboratory work in the evening or events at the weekend. The parents themselves organize the childcare (babysitters, child-minders, emergency care by private providers). This service only applies for official matters that take place outside the regular childcare hours of the nursery/pre-school, school, crèche, etc. as defined here.

You can find [further information about the fund on the Family Service's website](#) .

### **Childminders in Frankfurt (Tagesmutter/-vater/-familie)**

“Tagespflege” (family daycare) is the term used to describe childcare provided by childminders. In general, family daycare is available for children under three years of age; however, there are also options for older children, usually of nursery/pre-school age (3 - 6 years). In family daycare, each childminder is allowed to supervise a maximum of five children.

Childcare hours can be arranged individually and flexibly with the childminder, between 10 and 55 hours per week are usual. Some childminders also offer the option of fewer hours so that these can supplement regular childcare, for example.

To qualify, the childminders attend special courses and they have a childcare permit from the Youth Welfare Office, which is regularly checked and monitored.

You can find further information on childminders (hours, costs, contacts) on the [kindernetfrankfurt online portal](#) (in German only) and on the website [Tagesfamilien Frankfurt \(“Childminders in Frankfurt”](#) , in German only).

## **3.5 Childcare during congresses and conferences**

The Family Service helps faculties, institutes and other central institutions of Goethe University Frankfurt to organize childcare during events (conferences, congresses, symposia, workshops). For this purpose, there is long-standing cooperation with [Kaleidoskop e.V.](#) (in German only), an organization working in child and youth education. Organizers must submit their childcare requests to the Family Service of the Equal Opportunities Office at least six weeks before the event. You can find further information on the [Family Service's website](#) .

### 3.6 Back-up childcare

#### pme familienservice

The private provider pme familienservice offers back-up childcare for children between 0 and 12 years of age, which can also be arranged at short notice by telephone for the following day.

Opening times are tailored to long working days, meaning there is no need to organize any other childcare, e.g. in the evening. The back-up facilities of pme familienservice are also open on Saturdays, public holidays and during school holidays. Working parents can familiarize themselves with the respective back-up facility on taster days together with their children and without obligation. Further information about the services on offer and how to register can be found on the [pme familienservice website](#) [↗](#) (in German only).

#### Emergency childcare: Notmütterdienst and Humanitas Pflegeservice

In emergencies, for example in the event of illness or non-availability of the regular care option due to illness, holidays, closing times, etc., you often need to find an alternative as quickly as possible.

Notmütterdienst and Humanitas Pflegeservice offer short-term childcare options for such eventualities. They arrange babysitters, carers, pick-up services, help with homework, household help, etc. according to your personal situation, both on an hourly basis as well as for longer periods.

- [Notmütterdienst](#) [↗](#) (in German only) /
- [Humanitas Pflegeservice](#) [↗](#) (emergency care, household help; in German only)

#### Babysitter exchange

On the “jobruf.de” online portal, students offer various services at individually negotiable conditions. Parents can also submit requests as employers for one-off or regular childcare. If they find a student who would like to work as a babysitter under the respective conditions, contact is established and childcare can be arranged individually.

- [Babysitter Frankfurt \(private childcare on the JOBRUF portal\)](#) [↗](#); in German only)

### 3.7 On campus with children – family-conscious infrastructure

#### Parent-child rooms and breastfeeding facilities

Parent-child rooms and breastfeeding facilities are small oases in everyday university life for parents and their children. Here, they can take a break for nappy-changing, breastfeeding or to rest. The Family Service is working to ensure that these facilities will soon be available on all the university’s campuses.

You can find an overview of these rooms and facilities on the respective campuses on the [Family Service's website](#) [↗](#).

You can find a full list of all the university's baby changing facilities on the [website of Goethe University Frankfurt](#) [↗](#).

### **MobiKiZ mobile playroom**

MobiKiZ is an unconventional response to the lack of dedicated rooms at Goethe University Frankfurt. The basic equipment comprises a play rug, wooden toys, books, paper and crayons, and a portable DVD player with a program suitable for children. MobiKiZ is intended for short periods when parents have things to do on campus despite having to look after their children.

MobiKiZ is available in two versions: as handy pilot cases on wheels or as stable baby changing units, also on wheels, for locations where changing facilities are inadequate.

You can find further information about MobiKiZ on the [Family Service's website](#) [↗](#).

You can also find there an [overview of other infrastructure on campus for parents](#) [↗](#).

4

## Care responsibilities

## Care responsibilities

### 4.1 Caring for relatives

If someone close to you requires care, there are several possibilities for you to take time off and compensate for loss of income. In Germany, there are three basic types of caregiver leave:


- Short-term care (maximum 10 days)
- Caregiver leave (up to 6 months)
- Family caregiver leave (up to 24 months)


During these times, the carer is protected against dismissal. Under certain conditions, the long-term care insurance fund pays their social security contributions for the duration of the care.

Here are some examples of the conditions that must be met in order for the insurance fund to pay your contributions:

- A care grade (level of care required) has been established.
- Care takes place in a home environment.
- Weekly care takes up at least ten hours per week and more than two months in the calendar year.
- Care is provided on a voluntary basis (care allowance is not excluded).
- Gainful employment does not exceed 30 hours per week.

For all social benefits, you must submit an application to the long-term care insurance fund.


**Note:** If you, as a doctoral candidate or postdoc at Goethe University Frankfurt, have to care for a relative, please contact the [Carers' Support Center](#)  (Pflegestützpunkt) for further information (in German only).

Unfortunately, most information on this topic is so far only available in German. The [flyer published by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth \(BMFSFJ\)](#)  provides an overview in English.

#### **Short-term care – short-term absence from work in accordance with the Care Leave Act**

If an unforeseeable care situation arises at short notice in their immediate family, employees may take up to ten days off work without prior notice. However, they are obliged to notify their employer without delay of their absence and its expected duration.

For this leave of absence, they can also apply for income replacement benefit – care support allowance – to the long-term care insurance fund or the private long-term care insurance company of the person requiring care. A medical certificate must be presented. It

 Please note that the following statements can be subject to legal changes. They are intended here solely as information and for further reference. No legal guarantee can be given for this information. Legal and financial regulations may differ significantly depending on your nationality. Some measures may be accessible to EU citizens but not to third-country nationals. For non-EU citizens, applying for financial assistance can lead to considerable problems with their residence permit. Please contact the respective advisory services and consult the Federal Government's websites linked in the corresponding section of this brochure for the current amounts and the regulations applicable in each case.

is not necessary for a care grade to have already been established in order to claim short-term leave of absence, but there must be a need for care that corresponds at least to care grade 1.

You do not have to take the ten days off in one go, but they can only be claimed once per case.

### **Caregiver leave**

Caregiver leave means that employees can take up to six months off work, either in full or partially, if they are caring in a home environment for a close relative in need of care with at least care grade 1. For this period of care, it is possible to apply for an interest-free loan from the [Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions \(BAFzA\)](#) [↗](#) (in German only). The loan cushions loss of earnings.

### **End-of-life care**

Employees of Goethe University Frankfurt can take up to three months off work, either in full or partially, to accompany a close relative in need of care at the end of their life. Partial or full leave of absence is possible for this purpose. Here, end-of-life care can take place either at home or in another environment, e.g. a hospice.

### **Family caregiver leave**

If six months of regular caregiver leave are not enough, you can apply for up to 24 months of family caregiver leave to care for your relative in a home environment. This corresponds to a partial leave of absence with a minimum worktime of 15 hours per week.

The period of notice for family caregiver leave is eight weeks. If you claim the 24 months of family caregiver leave immediately after the 6 months of caregiver leave, you must give at least three months' notice. During this time, you are not entitled to any income replacement benefit, but you can apply for an interest-free loan to the [Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions \(BAFzA\)](#) [↗](#) (in German only) to cushion loss of earnings.






Important: In the case of minors in need of care who are cared for at home or alternately at home and in specialized facilities, you can also apply for the above-mentioned partial or full leave of absence (6 months) or partial leave of absence (24 months).

## **4.2 Caring for relatives by scholarship holders**

The provisions described above only apply for employees, i.e. for doctoral candidates and postdocs in an employment relationship with Goethe University Frankfurt. Scholarship holders who have to care for a close relative should contact their foundation or scholarship provider directly in order to come to a suitable arrangement, e.g. an extension of the scholarship by the length of the care period.



### Important contact points and links:



- [Staff Services Department](#)  (in German only)
- [Family Service of Goethe University Frankfurt](#) 
- [Carers' Support Center](#)  (in German only)
- [Flyer published by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth \(BMFSFJ\) "Better reconciliation of family, care and work"](#) 
- [Website of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research \(BMBF\) with information and advice on caring for relatives](#)  (in German only)


## 4.3 Caring for a sick child

### Leave of absence for employees caring for a sick child

Almost all working parents are familiar with the situation: your child suddenly falls ill and cannot attend regular childcare, and you have to care for it at home.

So that they can fulfil their duty of care, employees with children are entitled to leave of absence if their child is ill in accordance with the following regulations:

- For employees with statutory health insurance: [Section 45 of the German Social Code, Book V \(English version on the website of the International Labour Organization\)](#) 
- For employees with private health insurance: [Section 616 of the German Civil Code](#) 


To take time off work to care for a sick child, you must present a medical certificate to your employer confirming that you are caring for it. This certificate must be sent to the health insurance fund, which then pays your sickness benefit. Please also send a copy to the [HR administrator responsible for you](#)  (in German only).

In addition, leave of absence to care for a sick child is conditional on the following:

- The child is under 12 years of age (exceptions apply in the event of a disability or severe illness).
- The child has statutory health insurance via one of its parents.
- It is not possible for another person living in the same household to care for the child.

### Duration of leave of absence

Employees with statutory health insurance may take leave of absence to care for their sick child for a maximum of ten days per child per calendar year (single parents: 20 days).

 Please note that the following statements may be subject to legal changes. Moreover, not all measures are equally available to everyone. Please therefore ensure that you follow the [general instructions at the beginning of this chapter](#).

Please check the current rules on the website of Goethe University Frankfurt and ask the Staff Services Department. If both parents are working, leave of absence applies per parent and child. It is also possible for one working parent to transfer their share to the other parent for professional or personal reasons – but this requires the employer's consent.

Employees with private health insurance are entitled to leave of absence in accordance with Section 616 of the German Civil Code. This rules that employees can take leave of absence for a short period of time and that employers must continue to remunerate them. In general, this paid leave of absence is only for a few days and ought to be commensurate.

### **Sickness benefit**

Employees with statutory health insurance are entitled to sickness benefit if they take leave of absence to care for a sick child.


Section 45 of the German Social Code, Book V, governs the amount of sickness benefit to which employees with statutory health insurance are entitled. In general, the health insurance fund pays 90% of the net lost earnings.

Employees with private health insurance can take leave of absence for a short period of time in accordance with Section 616 of the German Civil Code, and employers must continue to remunerate them during this time. This paid leave of absence is mostly only for a few days and must be commensurate.

In addition, employees with private health insurance have a legal right to take unpaid leave of absence in accordance with Section 45 (5) of the German Social Code (SGB). The duration of this entitlement is in turn based on the duration of the entitlement to sickness benefit of persons with statutory health insurance in accordance with Section 45 (3) and (4) of the German Social Code, Book V.

**Note:** If your child is ill for longer than the periods mentioned above, then in accordance with Section 28 of the Collective Wage Agreement for Goethe University Frankfurt there is the possibility for leave of absence without continued remuneration (special leave), provided that this leave of absence does not conflict with work-related matters.

Please ask the Staff Services Department about the current rules in the Collective Wage Agreement and any special provisions.

You can find an overview of the rules at Goethe University Frankfurt that apply for parents of sick children on the [website of the Staff Services Department](#)  (in German only).


**Note:** For scholarship holders with family responsibilities, there is generally no formal possibility for time off or leave of absence if their child falls ill. In the event of a long-term or serious illness, you should consult with your scholarship provider. If necessary, special arrangements can be agreed, e.g. interruption of the scholarship or part-time options.

# 5

**Pregnancy and birth roadmap –  
Overview of organizational aspects**

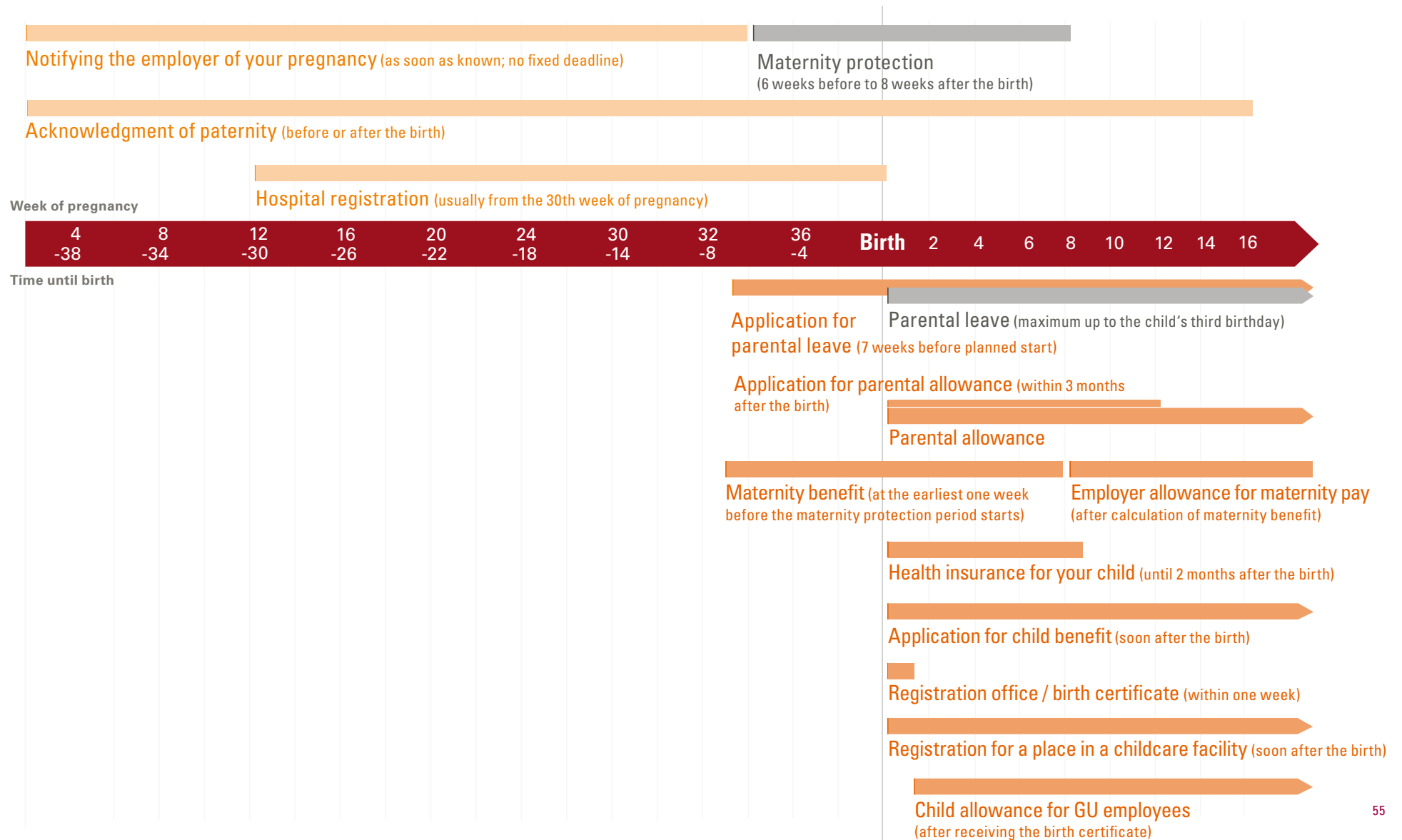
## Pregnancy and birth roadmap – Overview of organizational aspects

What?	Where?	Required documents	(By) when?	Link
First antenatal appointment	Gynecologist (who will issue your maternity record book (Mutterpass))	—	After establishing that you are pregnant	
Find a midwife	Ask the midwife directly	✓ Maternity record book (Mutterpass), if you already have one	As early as possible	<a href="#">List of midwives of the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Funds</a> <a href="#">↗</a> (German search mask)
<a href="#">Notifying the university of your pregnancy</a>	Employer (generally not compulsory, but helpful for risk assessment and compensation for disadvantages)	✓ Confirmation of pregnancy from your doctor	Soon after the maternity record book (Mutterpass) has been issued	<a href="#">Maternity Protection Portal of Goethe University Frankfurt</a> <a href="#">↗</a>
Acknowledgment of paternity and declaration of custody (unmarried couples only)	Registry Office, Youth Welfare Office, Social Services Department or a notary public	✓ ID card/passport ✓ Birth certificate	Before the birth	<a href="#">Registry Office of the City of Frankfurt</a> <a href="#">↗</a>
Register at a hospital	Hospital	✓ Usually your maternity record book (Mutterpass)	Varies depending on the hospital, generally from the 30th week of pregnancy onwards	
<a href="#">Maternity benefit (Mutterschaftsgeld)</a> (paid 6 weeks before and 8 weeks after the birth)	Health insurance fund	✓ Application form from your health insurance fund ✓ Confirmation of pregnancy from your doctor	At the earliest one week before the start of the maternity protection period	<a href="#">Chapter 4 of the Guide to Maternity Protection</a> <a href="#">↗</a>
Employer's contribution to maternity benefit	Payroll Office in Kassel via Staff Services Department	✓ Certificate stating the amount of maternity benefit paid	After the amount of maternity benefit has been set by the health insurance fund	<a href="#">Chapter 4 of the Guide to Maternity Protection</a> <a href="#">↗</a>

What?	Where?	Required documents	(By) when?	Link
Birth certificate	Registry Office (registration at the Residents' Registration Office is then automatic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ ID card/passport or copy of the valid ID card/passport of both parents</li> <li>✓ Declaration on the child's name (if not on the birth notification)</li> <li>✓ Birth notification (if it was not sent directly by the hospital or midwifery unit/birth center)</li> <li>✓ If unmarried: Acknowledgment of paternity and declaration of custody</li> <li>✓ Informal declaration by the parents on the child's first and last names</li> </ul>	Up to 7 days after the birth	<a href="#">Registry Office of the City of Frankfurt</a> 
<b>Child benefit</b> (Kindergeld)	Apply online via the Family Benefits Office (Employment Agency)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Tax ID numbers of the parents and the child (this will be sent to you automatically about 2 weeks after you have registered the birth)</li> </ul>	Soon after the birth (this is paid retroactively for a maximum of 6 months)	<a href="#">Family Portal of the Federal Government</a>   <a href="#">Application tool of the Family Benefits Office</a>  (in German only)
Health insurance for your child	Mother's or father's health insurance fund (If one of the parents has private health insurance and the other statutory health insurance, please ask the statutory health insurance fund.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Birth certificate</li> </ul>	Soon after the birth	
Notifying your employer of the birth	Employer, Staff Services Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Informal notification (written or verbal) to establish the maternity protection period. You can submit the birth certificate later. (-&gt; Child allowance (Kinderzulage))</li> </ul>	Soon after the birth	<a href="#">Staff Services Department</a>  (in German only)

What?	Where?	Required documents	(By) when?	Link
<b>Child allowance</b> (Kinderzulage) in accordance with Section 23a of the university's Collective Wage Agreement	Employer, Staff Services Department	✓ Birth certificate	After receipt of the birth certificate	<a href="#">Family Service</a> ↗
<b>Registering for a nursery/pre-school place</b>	For municipal nurseries/pre-schools online via kindernetfrankfurt	—	Soon after the birth	<a href="#">kindernetfrankfurt</a> ↗
	For university nurseries/pre-schools: Family Service	✓ Registration form	Soon after the birth	<a href="#">Family Service</a> ↗
<b>Parental leave</b> (Elternzeit)	Employer	✓ Informal application in writing with details of the intended duration of parental leave	At the latest 7 weeks before the end of the maternity protection period (mother) or the start of parental leave or the estimated due date	<a href="#">Family Service</a> ↗
<b>Parental allowance</b> (Elterngeld)	Apply to the Hessian Office for Welfare and Social Affairs or online to the Parental Allowance Office of the State of Hesse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Birth certificate or birth confirmation from the hospital or midwife</li> <li>✓ Maternity benefit certificate from the health insurance fund</li> <li>✓ Certificate of employer's contribution to maternity benefit</li> <li>✓ Proof of previous income, pay slips from the last 12 months before the start of the maternity protection period (for the father 12 months before the start of parental leave)</li> <li>✓ If applicable, proof of income while drawing parental allowance</li> <li>✓ Tax declaration</li> </ul>	You can complete the form online up to 6 months before the birth. Please apply within the first 3 months after the birth.	<a href="#">Online application for parental allowance in Hessen</a> ↗ (in German only)

# Pregnancy and birth roadmap – Overview of organizational aspects



6

**Useful links**



## 6. Useful links

### 6.1 Services of the Equal Opportunities Office

- Equal Opportunities Officer: Dr. Anja Wolde [↗](#)
- Family Service [↗](#)
- Dual Career Service [↗](#)

### 6.2 Other services at Goethe University Frankfurt

- Goethe Research Academy for Early Career Researchers (GRADE) [↗](#)
- Goethe Welcome Center (GWC) [↗](#)
- List of the Faculty Equal Opportunities Officers [↗](#) (in German only)

### 6.3 Childcare

- Childcare at Goethe University Frankfurt [↗](#)
- Central platform for childcare places of the City of Frankfurt [↗](#)  
(in German only)
- Overview of the German childcare system [↗](#)
- List of international childcare services in Frankfurt [↗](#)

### 6.4 Find a scholarship

- Scholarship Foundations (Begabtenförderungswerke) for the support of gifted students of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) [↗](#)  
(in German only)
- Funding opportunities for international PhD candidates [↗](#)
- Funding opportunities for international postdocs [↗](#)
- Funding opportunities of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for PhD candidates and postdocs [↗](#)
- Electronic Research Funding Information System (ELFI) [↗](#)

### 6.5 Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act

- Academic Fixed-Term Contract Act [↗](#)
- GEW brochure “Fixed-Term Contracts in Higher Education and Research” [↗](#)
- Website of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research [↗](#)

### 6.6 Families

- Information tool of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) on rights to family benefits and assistance for families [↗](#) (in German only)
- Information portal of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) on all measures related to family policy [↗](#)

**Equal Opportunities Office  
Family Service**

Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main  
Rostocker Str. 2  
60323 Frankfurt am Main  
[www.familie.uni-frankfurt.de](http://www.familie.uni-frankfurt.de)

**Goethe Research Academy for  
Early Career Researchers (GRADE)**

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