

Germany¹

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N.B. Germany is a federal state.

For comparisons with other countries in this review on leave provision and early childhood education and care services, please see the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review (also available individually on the Leave Network website). To contact authors of country notes, see the [members page](#) on the Leave Network website.

1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

Note on terminology: German legislation (*Bundeselternzeit- und Elterngeldgesetz (BEEG)*) differentiates two dimensions of Parental leave: 'Elternzeit' refers to job protection rights and the right to work part-time; 'Elterngeld' and 'ElterngeldPlus' refer to Parental leave benefits

a. Maternity leave (*Mutterschutz*) (responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 14 weeks: six weeks before the birth and eight weeks following the birth. It is obligatory to take the eight weeks' leave after the birth.
- From week twelve of pregnancy until four months after the birth of a child (including stillbirths), mothers are protected from job dismissal.

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- Beyond the Maternity leave period, pregnant women are also protected from dismissal, workplace hazards and – in the case of asylum seekers – from deportation.

Payment and funding

- 100 per cent of earnings (of the mean income in the three months before Maternity leave), with no upper limit on payments.
- Maternity leave benefits (*Mutterschaftsgeld*) are usually paid by the mother's health insurance (€13 per day)² and the mother's employer, who – if applicable – covers the difference between the money provided by the health insurance and the mother's previous earnings. The benefits are paid direct to the mother by the employer, who can apply for reimbursement at the responsible health insurance institution.
- Benefits for mothers with an income below €390 per month are paid by the mother's health insurance alone and match their prior income.
- Mothers receiving unemployment benefits are also eligible to paid Maternity leave benefits by their health insurer, which match their unemployment benefit.
- Self-employed and non-employed women receive no Maternity leave benefit if they have no public health insurance. However, they may apply for up to €210 per month paid for by state social security.

Flexibility in use

- Women may continue with paid work or education until the birth of a child, if they explicitly declare that it is their personal decision to do so. During the period of Maternity leave after the birth, however, in general, no paid work is allowed for reasons of health protection. Only women who have had a stillbirth may continue after two weeks if it is their personal decision and if there are no medical concerns.

Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)

- The following are eligible (after meeting the requirement of residency or an employment contract in Germany):
 - All female employees, including those employed part-time and those working below the statutory social insurance threshold (i.e. earning below €450 per month)

² Since 2006, employers have had to pay a contribution to the mother's health insurance, amounting to approximately 0.2 per cent (the particular amount is assigned by the health insurance) of the gross pay of their female workers (*Umlageverfahren 2*).

- Students and pupils
- Female voluntary workers (voluntary social/ecological year)
- Self-employed women
- Asylum seekers
- Students, pupils, women in voluntary work, self-employed women, and asylum seekers receive (only when secured by family or private insurance) a minimum Maternity leave benefit overall of at most €210.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the mother

- In the case of multiple births, premature births and children born with disabilities, the length of leave increases to 12 weeks after birth, plus Maternity leave days that could not be taken before birth in the case of a premature birth.
- In certain circumstances (e.g. death or chronic illness of the parent), other relatives living with the new-born child may receive the benefit.
- Asylum seekers may not be deported during pregnancy and Maternity leave.

b. Paternity leave

No statutory entitlement.³

c. Parental leave (responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)

Length of leave (Elternzeit)

- Up to three years after childbirth for each parent, of which 24 months can be taken up until the child's eighth birthday. This is an individual entitlement and non-transferable. It provides parents with employment protection rights during this period.

Payment and funding (Basiselterngeld/ElterngeldPlus)

- An income-related benefit is paid if a parent takes full-time or part-time leave. Parents can choose between (or successively combine) two types of leave benefit payments: *Basiselterngeld* and *ElterngeldPlus*.

³ However, many German fathers use some of their Parental leave entitlements directly after birth, in a manner similar to Paternity leave.

Basiselterngeld

- Replaces a proportion of former income, if parents take leave to care for their child/ren.
- Parents who are not working before birth are eligible to receive the minimum rate of €300 per month.
- Paid for a period of 12 (plus two) months after the child is born.
- 'Partner months' (*Partnermonate*): two bonus months are paid if both parents take at least two months of leave or for single parents.
- Income replacement rate: paid at a level of 65 per cent⁴ of the preceding year's net earnings,⁵ with a minimum of €300 per month and a maximum of €1,800 per month.
- Flexibility in use: parents can choose to work part-time (up to 30 hours per week).
- Maternity leave benefits paid during the eight weeks of obligatory Maternity leave following childbirth are deducted, effectively reducing the actual *Basiselterngeld* benefit period available to employed mothers to 10 months.

ElterngeldPlus

- Replaces a proportion of the loss in income if parents reduce their working hours to care for their child/ren.
- Duration: paid for a period of 24 (plus four) months and may be used in the first two years after childbirth.
- Partnership bonus (*Partnerschaftsbonus*): four bonus months are paid if both parents work part-time at least four subsequent months, for 25 to 30 hours per week.
- Income replacement rate: paid at a level of 65 per cent (see footnote 4) of last year's net earnings (see footnote 5) for the lost earnings due to part-time hours – at most, 50 per cent of *Elterngeld* payments, i.e. between a range of €150 and €900.

⁴ Parents with a previous net income between €1,000 and €1,240 per month receive benefits at a rate of 67 per cent and parents with a previous income of €1,240 and higher receive benefits at a 65 per cent rate, up to the limit of €1,800 per month for the parental benefit (*Elterngeld*) payment. Parents with a net income of less than €1,000 per month receive an increased benefit: for every €2 that their monthly earnings are below €1,000, their parental benefit increases by 0.1 per cent. For parents with monthly incomes above €1,240, on the other hand, the income replacement rate is reduced: for every €2 their monthly earnings exceed this sum, their parental benefit decreases by 0.1 per cent, to a minimum rate of 65 per cent. For parents on leave who work part-time during the leave, the income replacement rate is 65 per cent of the difference between the previous year's net earnings before birth and the current earnings after the birth.

⁵ The net earnings are estimated with fixed social security reduction rates, calculated on the individual's former gross earnings.

- Maternity leave benefits paid during the eight weeks of obligatory Maternity leave following childbirth are deducted, effectively reducing the actual *ElterngeldPlus* benefit period available to employed mothers to 22 months.
- Parental leave entitlements are individual entitlements and both parents can receive their Parental leave benefits at the same time.
- Parents who are not working before birth are eligible to receive the minimum rate of €150 (*ElterngeldPlus*) / €300 (*Basiselterngeld*) per month. For social assistance recipients, the amount is offset against benefits, unless the person was working before the birth of the child.
- There is a supplementary payment for parents with more than one young child (*Geschwisterbonus*): if there are two children under three years of age, or three or more children under six years of age, or two children of which at least one is disabled and under 14 years of age in the household, the parental benefit is increased by 10 per cent (at least €75 per child for *Basiselterngeld* or €37.50 for *ElterngeldPlus*).
- For parents with multiple births, a supplementary payment of either €300 (*Basiselterngeld*) or €150 (*ElterngeldPlus*) per month is paid per additional child.
- The *Basiselterngeld* and *ElterngeldPlus* are funded by the federal government, through general taxation.
- Mothers or fathers (if they are the main caregiver) receive pension credits for child-rearing time (*Kindererziehungszeit*) even if they do not make use of Parental leave (parents may decide how pension credits are to be divided). For each child born after 1 January 1992, three years of child-rearing (two years for children born beforehand) are recognised in the pension system. Each year of recognised child-rearing time entails a monthly pension increase of €33.05 in Western Germany and €31.89 in Eastern Germany. Pension credits for child-rearing are currently paid through Germany's contribution-based pension system.

Flexibility in use

- Parents can choose between *Elterngeld* and *ElterngeldPlus* or combine both types of leave.
- Recipients of *Elterngeld* and *ElterngeldPlus* may work up to 30 hours per week. Then, however, they only receive parental benefit for the lost income: i.e., if a parent worked, for example, 40 hours per week before taking Parental leave, and continues working 30 hours per week thereafter, they receive 65 per cent of the margin between the present and the former income, in addition to their employment income.
- Both parents are entitled to take leave at the same time and Parental leave can be separated into max. three leave intervals

(more intervals are subject to employer approval). However, once the child is over 14 months old and both parents completed their parental benefits, they cannot apply for a new period of parental benefit receipt even if they have not exhausted the maximum length.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- Parental leave legislation is federal. However, two federal states (Bavaria and Saxony) pay a means-tested parental benefit (*Landeserziehungsgeld*) extended to the third year of Parental leave, ranging from €150 to €300 per month and per child. For more information, see 1d) below.

Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)

- Parental leave (*Elternzeit*): all parents gainfully employed at the date of birth. During the Parental leave, parents must not be employed more than 30 hours per week.
- Parental benefit (*Basiselterngeld & ElterngeldPlus*):
 - all parents not employed more than 30 hours per week
 - parents must live in the same household with the child (this includes separated parents with joint custody)
 - other people who take over the care, when parents are ill, disabled, or dead
 - adoptive parents and foster parents
 - self-employed parents
 - same-sex couples
 - parents with a net income equal to or less than €500,000 or a single parent with equal or less than €250,000 income
 - citizens of the EU, EWR, and Switzerland if they are employed in Germany or live in Germany (according to EU legislation)
 - citizens of other countries with a permanent residence permit or with a working contract in Germany; asylum seekers are eligible after having lived in Germany for at least three years

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the parents

- Grandparents are entitled to Parental leave if their child, i.e. the parent of their grandchild is younger than 18 years of age or if the parent is still in education or vocational training.

Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- Many collective and individual company agreements allow parents to utilise their Parental leave entitlement within 12 years or, in the public sector, within 18 years after childbirth.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

Until July 2015, a cash-for-care benefit (*Betreuungsgeld*) of €150 per month was paid to parents who care for their one-year-old and two-year-old at home and/or do not make use of public childcare facilities. However, the German Constitutional Court declared the *Betreuungsgeld* legislation was incompatible with federal law. However, in two federal states, Bavaria and Saxony, cash-for-care allowances (*Landeserziehungsgeld/Familiengeld*) are still granted, available from the 13th month after childbirth and until the child's third birthday. The benefits are paid in addition to other social benefits. In Bavaria, parents get an income-related payment of €250 per month for the first and for the second child, and €300 per month for the third and further children ~~(for up to 12 months)~~. They are paid under the condition that parents do not use state-subsidized child care institutions and provide beneficial infant care, e.g. including taking their children to health check-ups. Since January 2020, parents of children aged between one and three years old who attend a state-subsidized childcare centre or family day-care are entitled to a childcare benefit (*Krippengeld*) of up to €100 per child and month. This is capped at €34,000 net household income (€31,000 for single parents, increasing for each additional child by €4,440). In Saxony, parents receive *Landeserziehungsgeld* if they declare they will not use childcare facilities during the second and/or third year after the child's birth under the condition that the recipient does not work more than 30 hours per week during the time the payments are received. Parents get income-related payment of up to €150 per month for the first child, up to €200 for the second, and up to €300 for each additional child. Beginning at a net household income of €24,600 (€21,600 for single parents), payments are successively reduced. This threshold rises per additional child by €3,140.

e. Other employment-related measures

Time off for the care of dependants

- In case of the sickness of a child (below 12 years of age), working parents with statutory health insurance (not parents with private health insurance) may each take up to ten days of leave per child (20 days for a single parent). Parents receive 70 per cent of their gross salary during the period of leave, but no more than 90 per

cent of their net salary. The maximum annual leave period per working parent is 25 (50) days per year, even in case of three or more children.

- A relative of a care-dependent person is entitled to ten days of short-term leave if that person has an unexpected illness, as well as six months of long-term care leave. Both entitlements are unpaid.
- *Pflegezeit* (caring time) entitles employees with care-dependent relatives to apply for up to ten days of paid leave (over a care-dependent's lifetime) at 90 per cent of their income; a medical certification of care-dependency is required, and the wage replacement is financed by public long-term care insurance. Moreover, employees with care-dependent relatives are entitled to take up to six months of full or partial unpaid caring time. During this period, employees have the legal right to receive an interest-free loan from the Federal Office for the Family and Civil Engagement, in order to compensate for their lost income. *Pflegezeit* does not require the consent of employers.
- *Familienpflegezeit* (family caring time) permits employees, for a period of up to two years, to reduce their working time to a minimum of 15 hours per week, if they need to care for a dependent relative. During this period, the lower income of employees can be compensated by receiving an interest-free loan from the Federal Office for the Family and Civil Engagement. The loans have to be paid back within 48 months after the start of the leave of absence. The compulsory long-term care insurance covers additional pension contributions during the caring time, if care is given for at least 14 hours per week and employment is limited to a maximum of 30 hours per week. Since January 2015, *Familienpflegezeit* is a legal entitlement for employees, if they continue to work for at least 15 hours per week.

Employment protection

- During pregnancy and Parental leave, mothers are protected by law against dismissal. Fathers are protected against dismissal during Parental leave, plus eight weeks before their leave period starts.

Flexible working

- Working mothers have a right of 60 to 90 minutes for breastfeeding per day. This time must be fully paid. Mothers who work from home have to be paid the average hourly wage for breastfeeding time.
- Part time leave taking is possible as described above in section 1c.

2. Relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy

The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Germany is three years, but most of this is unpaid; leave paid at a high rate runs for 12 months, plus two more months if at least two months' leave is taken by each parent. Since August 2013, there has been a legal entitlement to ECEC for all children from the age of one year (before then, the entitlement for all children, i.e. independent of their parents' employment, only began at three years of age). Thus, there is no gap between the end of well-paid leave and an ECEC entitlement. The entitlement, however, does not specify hours per day or per week; many services in Western Germany still do not offer opening hours that allow for the full-time employment (of both parents), while full-time opening has remained the norm in Eastern Germany.

Levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years of age are at about the average rate for the countries included in this review and OECD countries; but well above the average for children over the age of three years. For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

In March 2019, nearly 818,500 children under the age of three were in day care.⁶ 34.3 per cent of children up to three years of age were in day care. 1.9 per cent of children up to one year of age were in day care; 37.1 per cent of children between one and two years of age; and 63.2 per cent of children between two and three years old. There is still a considerable gap between East Germany and West Germany: in East Germany 52.1 per cent of children between the ages of one and two were in day care facilities, while the percentage in West Germany was 30.3 per cent.

3.Changes in policy since April 2019 (including proposals currently under discussion)

From 2021, the government is planning a number of changes, namely:

- Tightening of eligibility criteria for the Parental leave benefit, with parents earning over €300,000 p.a. not being eligible anymore;
- Increase of allowed working hours during Parental leave, to up to 32 hours per week;

⁶ Reference date March 2020
(<https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Soziales/Kindertagesbetreuung/Tabellen/betreuungsquote-2018.html>)

- Extension of working time regulations for the partner bonus to 24-32 hours per week;
- Introduction of an additional month of parental leave benefit for preterm births.

Policy response to the Covid-19 pandemic up to end June 2020

Childcare and schools

- In Germany, responsibility for education policy, including ECEC, lies with the federal states. Most federal states (12 out of 16) decided on Friday 13 March 2020 to close childcare, primary and secondary schools (as well as universities) as of the upcoming Monday 16 March; the other four federal states followed shortly afterwards. The closures were initially decided to be kept in place until “after the Easter holidays” (i.e. around 18 April, again with only small differences between the federal states).
- ‘Emergency childcare’ was kept open in childcare centres and primary schools from mid-March, but in almost all federal states this was restricted to children of “key workers” (in German called “occupations of systemic relevance” or “critical infrastructure”). In the first closure stage until mid-April, this remained a rather small, and more strictly defined group. For instance, in the (most populous) state of North Rhine-Westphalia, from 16 March to 22 April the (comparatively encompassing) list included employees in the sectors: energy, water, and food supply; IT and telecommunications; health; financial sector; transportation; media; some public sectors (e.g. police); as well as employees in emergency childcare themselves. At first, *both* parents were required to work in one of those sectors; later this was relaxed to only one of the parents. Entitled parents were, however, asked to only make use of the emergency childcare if they could find no other (private) solution.
- By 15 April 2020, it was decided at a summit of central government and federal states to step-wise start re-opening schools as of 4 May 2020, but beginning with graduating years (i.e. the last year of primary school, and graduating years of secondary schools), and only a few hours per week⁷. It was also decided to keep childcare centres closed for the time being. At the same time, it was agreed that “emergency childcare” would be extended (e.g. defining additional groups of “key workers”, or giving access to children of employed single parents). Again, details were regulated by the federal states; it proved increasingly

⁷ <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/themen/coronavirus/fahrplan-corona-pandemie-1744202> (19 June 2020)

difficult to agree on a common line, and the childcare/school re-opening paths of the *Länder* diverged.

- By end-April, the family ministers of the central state and federal states agreed on a four-step re-opening process for **childcare** centres (1. emergency childcare; 2. extended emergency childcare; 3. restricted regular mode; 4. regular mode), but concrete timing and implementation guidelines were set on the federal state level. Again giving the example of North Rhine-Westphalia, this meant that *all* children came back in a “restricted regular mode” – under the impression of decreased Covid-19 infection numbers – from 8 June 2020. This “restricted regular mode” mainly meant shortened opening hours and avoiding any contact between different groups of children in the facility. Other federal states chose later re-opening dates; and often different entry-dates were set for different groups of children (e.g. allowing children of families who receive social assistance, or children in their final pre-school year to come back earlier). Moreover, after the more general re-opening trends, regional “lockdowns” and childcare closures occurred regularly from June 2020 (e.g. in mid-June after a major outbreak in the meat industry in Gütersloh).
- In June 2020, **schools** continued teaching in a combination of presence- and distance-teaching, with children only attending school for a few hours per week. However, at the time of writing this supplement, the federal states’ education ministers envisaged to start in “regular mode” for all school children after the summer holidays. Baden-Wuerttemberg was the first state to re-open all childcare centres and primary schools in regular mode already on 29 June.

Parental leave

- If the general eligibility conditions are met, parents could also take up regular Parental leave during the childcare/school closures. However, this was not actively supported and only applies to a very small number of parents affected by the closures.
- On 7 May 2020, a law passed the Bundestag (and the Bundesrat as second chamber on 15 May) adapted the Parental leave benefit for the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. This contained three measures: 1) Parents working in ‘critical infrastructure’ (key workers) are allowed to postpone the take-up of parental-leave benefit, and exceptionally receive it after the child has reached 14 months of age (but until June 2021 at the latest). 2) If parents have to work more/less hours due to the Covid-19 pandemic, they do not have to pay back the *Partnerschaftsbonus* (see above), which usually requires them to both work a certain amount of part-time hours in parallel. 3) Months with income losses (e.g. due to short-time work) can be exempt from calculating the Parental leave benefit for expecting parents; also, income

replacement measures (such as the short-time work benefit) do not reduce the Parental leave benefit level for current receivers.⁸

Other measures for parents and other carers

- After the childcare/school closures, there was at first no existing or immediately installed measure to support parents in coping with the resulting work-family conflicts; which of course – as elsewhere – differed in severity (e.g. amount of hours worked by both parents, being more/less flexible in working from home/choosing work time etc.). It is also important to note that about 7.3 million employees were working short-time (*Kurzarbeit*) in May 2020, compared to the previous peak value of 1.44 million short-term workers in May 2009.⁹ As a side-effect the short-time work attenuated care needs for a certain period for some.
- A special benefit was introduced on 23 March 2020 via the *German Protection against Infection Act (Infektionsschutzgesetz; IfSG)*. It offers an income replacement until the end of 2020, if employed persons are unable to work due to a closure of childcare centres, schools, or facilities people with disabilities. It applies for parents of children up to 12 years, or older children with disabilities. The income replacement does *not* apply during the time of regular school holidays. Replaced are 67 per cent of the lost earnings, up to a maximum amount of €2,016 per month. The payment is made by the employer, who can then apply for reimbursement at a federal state agency. On 20 May 2020 – with childcare and school remaining to be closed – the measure was prolonged: The maximum take-up duration are ten weeks for each employed person; or 20 weeks for employed single parents.¹⁰
- The decision whether employees are asked to work short-time or and the degree of flexibility depends strongly on the employer. However, some adjustments are made on the social security side. For example, the entitlement to parental allowance does not lapse in the event of reduced working hours due to the pandemic. Continued wage payments are guaranteed for a few days, childcare contributions can be refunded and short-time working allowance and access to basic security is simplified. Employers are also encouraged to allow flexitime, flexible shift models, flex days,

⁸ <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/aktuelles/alle-meldungen/elterngeld-wird-kurzfristig-angepasst/154564> (19 June 2020)

⁹ <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/2603/umfrage/entwicklung-des-bestands-an-kurzarbeitern/> (19 June 2020)

¹⁰

<https://www.bmas.de/DE/Presse/Meldungen/2020/entschaedigungsanspruch-verlaengert.html;jsessionid=270EAF9FAB8CABFE8046DBCD057DED12> (19 April 2020)

reduction of overtime, annual work accounts and flexible changes in the volume of hours worked by employees.

- Until 30 September 2020, persons with care shortages due to the pandemic are entitled to a care support allowance. The entitlement period has been increased from 10 working days to 20 working days.
- In addition, family care time and care time entitlements can be taken up more flexibly with the employer's consent. The application period is reduced from eight weeks in advance to 10 days. Furthermore, loss of income due to the pandemic will not be taken into account when applying for loans after the family care period.¹¹
- A *Notfall-Kinderzuschlag* (emergency child supplement) was installed with the 'Corona protective shield' (*Corona-Schutzschirm*) on 23 March 2020 for families with lower income. It amended the conditions for regular *Kinderzuschlag*, which amounts to €185 per month and child (paid additionally to the regular child benefit) and is tested for income, family size and housing costs. Between April and September 2020, the income test does not (as regularly) take the last six months' income into account, but only that of the previous month. This was meant as a response to short-term income losses in the Corona crisis.¹²
- As a part of the economic stimulus package agreed upon by the government on 3 June 2020, a *Familienbonus* was introduced, amounting to €300 per child. For single parents, the tax allowance for children is doubled. The "family bonus" is paid out to all parents, without income-testing, and – unlike other measures – it is not calculated against social assistance payments. However, as it is calculated against the tax allowances for children, higher-income families have no additional profit after taxes.
- Also as part of the *Corona-Schutzschirm* agreed upon on 23 March 2020, it was decided that landlords may not evict tenants if they cannot pay their rent between April and June 2020 due to Corona-related income losses.¹³ For the same reasons and time span, if payments for telephone, electricity, or gas are delayed, the delivery of those services must not be cut.

¹¹ <https://www.wege-zur-pflege.de/service/corona.html>, <https://www.wege-zur-pflege.de/familienpflegezeit.html> (6 July 2020)

¹²

<https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/familie/familienleistungen/kinderzuschlag/notfall-kiz> (19 June 2020)

¹³

https://www.bmjv.de/DE/Themen/FokusThemen/Corona/Miete/Corona_Miete_node.html

4. Uptake of leave

a. Maternity leave

There is a 100 per cent uptake as it is prohibited to work for eight weeks after birth.

b. Paternity leave

No statutory leave entitlement.

c. Parental leave and parental benefit

In 2018, 24.5 per cent of mothers with children below the age of six years were on Parental leave (*Elternzeit*), compared to 1.6 per cent for fathers. The proportion of parents on Parental leave is higher when the youngest child is below the age of three: 42.1 per cent of mothers, and 2.7 per cent of fathers.¹⁴

Parents with children born after 1 July 2015 are entitled to choose between *Elterngeld* and *ElterngeldPlus*. Among all Parental leave applications in 2018, 87.4 per cent concerned *Elterngeld* and 12.6 per cent *ElterngeldPlus* (1.8 per cent were paid as part of the *Partnerschaftsbonus* regulation).

Among all monthly Parental leave benefit payments in 2018, 77 per cent were calculated on former earnings through gainful employment.

76.5 per cent of the parents of children born in 2016 who took Parental leave (*Elternzeit*) were employed. 92 per cent of fathers with Parental leave benefits were employed and 70.5 per cent of the mothers.¹⁵

The 2007 Parental benefit reform had the explicit aim to raise fathers' uptake of leave, and recently published data by the Federal Statistics

¹⁴ Destatis (2020) *Personen in Elternzeit [Persons in Parental leave]*. Available at: <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Arbeit/Arbeitsmarkt/Qualitaet-Arbeit/Dimension-3/elternzeit.html>

¹⁵ Statistisches Bundesamt [Federal Statistical Office] (2020) *Statistik zum Elterngeld. Beendete Leistungsbezüge für im Jahr 2016 geborene Kinder nach Geschlecht, Erwerbseinkommen vor der Geburt, Bezugsdauer und Ländern*. Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt. Available at: https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Soziales/Elterngeld/Publikationen/Downloads-Elterngeld/elterngeld-geburten-j-5229201169004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

Office¹⁶ show that the proportion of fathers taking parental benefit has risen significantly and steadily since its introduction in that year. For births in 2016, parental benefit was taken up by 38.8 per cent of fathers (compared to 3.5 per cent of fathers in 2006, before the new legislation); however, there were substantial regional variations amongst the federal states, from only 28.5 per cent in Saarland to 49.1 per cent in Saxony.¹⁷ The 2016 mean duration of Parental leave benefit used by fathers who took any leave benefits was 3.4 months (compared to the mothers' mean leave of 13.4 months). The parental benefit reform therefore has been successful in raising the uptake of leave by fathers, although 75 per cent took no more than their individual two-month entitlement (compared to 0.8 per cent of mothers). By contrast, during this period, only 6.4 per cent of fathers took 10 to 12 months of Parental leave benefits (compared with 72.7 per cent of mothers). The fathers' overall share of Parental leave benefit months (incl. *ElterngeldPlus*) for children born in 2016 was 12.4 per cent.¹⁸ On average, fathers received parental leave benefits for 3.4 months.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

In the second quarter of 2017, there were 36,181 recipients of the cash-for-care benefit, *Betreuungsgeld*; 95.2 per cent of the monthly benefit was paid to mothers.

¹⁶ Statistisches Bundesamt [Federal Statistical Office] (2020) *Statistik zum Elterngeld. Beendete Leistungsbezüge für im Jahr 2016 geborene Kinder nach Geschlecht, Erwerbseinkommen vor der Geburt, Bezugsdauer und Ländern*. Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt. Available at:

https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Soziales/Elterngeld/Publikationen/Downloads-Elterngeld/elterngeld-geburten-j-5229201169004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

¹⁷ Statistisches Bundesamt [Federal Statistical Office] (2020) *Statistik zum Elterngeld. Beendete Leistungsbezüge für im Jahr 2016 geborene Kinder nach Geschlecht, Erwerbseinkommen vor der Geburt, Bezugsdauer und Ländern*. Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt. Available at:

https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Soziales/Elterngeld/Publikationen/Downloads-Elterngeld/elterngeld-geburten-j-5229201169004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

¹⁸ Destatis (2017) own calculations, Data available at: <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Publikationen/Thematisch/Soziales/Elterngeld/ElterngeldGeburtenVj.html>