

Work-Life-Service

Frequently asked questions about parental leave (*Elternzeit*) and parental allowance (*Elterngeld*)

What is the difference between parental allowance and parental leave?

Parental leave is the legal entitlement to a temporary release from work obligations.

Parental allowance is a state-funded benefit that replaces a certain percentage of the income lost after the birth.

You do not necessarily have to take parental leave to receive parental allowance. However, you may not work more than 30 hours per week as long as you receive parental allowance.

Parental leave

Who is entitled to parental leave?

Employees who are biological parents, foster parents, adoptive parents or grandparents, who care for and raise their child/grandchild themselves, and who live together in the same household are entitled to parental leave.

In cases of hardship, such as serious illness, disability or death of the parents, other close relatives (siblings, aunts and uncles) can also apply for parental leave.

How much parental leave can one take and when?

Each parent/caregiver is entitled to 36 months per child up to the age of 8.

Up to 24 months of unused parental leave can be taken between the 3rd birthday and the completion of the 8th year of life.

In the case of a multiple birth, you are entitled to 36 months of parental leave for each child.

How do I announce my parental leave?

You announce your parental leave to your employer. His/her consent is not required for parental leave you take before your child's 3rd birthday.

Register your parental leave in writing and on time on a signed piece of paper - see "What deadlines must be met?".

The employer is required to confirm your parental leave in writing. This confirmation should include the information about the timeframe in which you want to take parental leave and when you gave notice of the parental leave.

The best notice of parental leave is as detailed as possible, so that your employer can also adjust and prepare for it.

Parental leave can be divided into up to 3 phases, each additional phase is only possible with the employer's consent. If the third phase falls entirely between the 3rd birthday and the completion of the 8th year of life, it can be rejected for urgent operational reasons.

Subsequent changes during parental leave are only possible in consultation with the employer - he/she must accept up to 2 changes.

Note: For the mother of the child, parental leave starts at the earliest after the end of the maternity protection period. Fathers can take parental leave from the day of the child's birth.

What deadlines must be met?

Before the 3rd birthday, you must register the parental leave no later than 7 weeks before its start.

After the 3rd birthday until the day before the 8th birthday, you must register parental leave no later than 13 weeks before it begins.

With these parental leave calculators you will never miss a deadline:

[Parental leave calculator for mothers](#)

[Parental leave calculator for fathers](#)

When does the protection against dismissal apply?

Protection against dismissal begins as soon as you register your parental leave, but no earlier than one week before the start of the registration period of 7 or 13 weeks. During parental leave, your employer can only terminate your employment in exceptional cases. If there are multiple phases, the protection against dismissal applies during these phases, but not in between.

Employees, on the other hand, can quit to the end of parental leave. The regular notice period applies.

What do I have to consider when wanting to work/continuing my education during parental leave?

An employment is generally possible for up to 30 hours per week in consultation with your employer.

Under the following conditions, you have a legal right to a reduction in working hours with your employer:

- You have been working for him/her for more than 6 months without interruption.
- There are more than 15 employees (excluding trainees and other persons in vocational training measures).
- You would like to work for at least 2 months, for a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 30 hours per week.
- There are no urgent operational reasons that speak against part-time work. An example of an urgent operational reason would be, your workplace is not suitable as a part-time position.

Employment, projects, minijobs, etc. with other companies require a notification/agreement with the employer. Further training, seminars, workshops are excluded.

Note: For parental leave applications for children born after the 1st of September 2021, a possible working week of 32 hours is granted.

Parental allowance

Who can receive parental allowance?

Entitlement to parental allowance is granted to anyone who

- has a place of residence or habitual abode in Germany,
- lives in a household with his or her child,
- cares for and raises this child himself/herself, and
- does not work or does not work full time while receiving parental allowance.

The entitlement to parental allowance is in principle independent of income – for example, there does not even have to be an employment relationship. Only top earners are exempt: Couples who have a joint taxable income of more than € 500,000 and single parents who have more than a € 250,000 taxable income do not receive parental allowance.

How long can one receive parental allowance?

In principle, parental allowance can be claimed for between a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 28 months per child, depending on whether only one or both parents are claiming parental allowance and which payment option is chosen.

The parental allowance entitlement is calculated for months of the child's life, not for calendar months. For example, if your child is born on February 15, the first month of life will last until March 14. To avoid financial disadvantages, the months of life for which parental allowance is requested should lie entirely within the parental leave period.

Note: The first two months of life of your child during maternity leave are counted as *Basiselterngeld* - see "What allowance options are available? - *Basiselterngeld*".

How is the parental allowance calculated?

The aim of parental allowance is to replace the income lost due to caring for the child. As a rule, it amounts to between 65 and 67 percent of the loss of income after the birth - in the case of low income, it can be up to 100 percent. A maximum of € 2,770 of net prenatal income is taken into account in the calculation.

The assessment period for employees generally comprises the last 12 calendar months before the birth of the child. In the case of partial self-employment/self-employment, the following applies: If income from self-employment was earned in the previous calendar year before the year of birth of the child, then the income of the previous calendar year counts as the basis for assessment.

Can you work while receiving parental allowance?

It is possible to work part-time up to 30 hours per week. If you work more than 30 hours, your entitlement to parental allowance is forfeited.

The earned income is offset against the parental allowance, but part-time work with the *ElterngeldPlus* option can still be worth it, especially if your part-time income does not exceed 50 percent of your prenatal income - see "When is it advisable to receive *Basiselterngeld* and when *ElterngeldPlus*?".

Note: For parental allowance applications for children born after the 1st of September 2021, a possible weekly working time of 32 hours is granted.

What allowance options are available?

Parental allowance is available in two options: *Basiselterngeld* and *ElterngeldPlus*. These options can be combined with each other. Parents can receive parental allowance consecutively, alternately or simultaneously.

Under certain circumstances, additional parental allowance months are possible in the form of *Partnermonate* or the *Partnerschaftsbonus*.

An additional contribution is paid for multiple births. If there are already other children living in the household, a sibling bonus is granted (*Geschwisterbonus*), depending on age. For children born after the 1st of September 2021, there is also separate financial support for premature babies.

Basiselterngeld

The *Basiselterngeld* can range from a minimum of € 300 to a maximum of € 1,800 per month.

In principle, one parent can receive parental allowance for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 12 months. Parental couples can together claim a maximum of 14 months and divide it between them.

Single parents can also receive it for 14 months. The *Basiselterngeld* can be received until the child's 14th month of life.

For mothers, the two maternity months (8 weeks) after the birth for which maternity benefits are received are automatically treated as *Basiselterngeld* months. You therefore already use up these months as *Basiselterngeld* months.

ElterngeldPlus

The *ElterngeldPlus* amounts to half of the *Basiselterngeld* when no additional income is achieved – i.e. between € 150 and € 900 per month – but can be received for twice as long: One month of *Basiselterngeld* results in two months of *ElterngeldPlus*. *ElterngeldPlus* always amounts to a maximum of half of the *Basiselterngeld* or less if there is additional income.

ElterngeldPlus can be received beyond the child's 14th month of life, but from the 15th month of life it must be received without interruptions. If there is a month after that in which no parental allowance is received, then the entitlement is forfeited - even if there would have been parental allowance months still left.

Partnermonate

If both parents apply for parental allowance, they receive two additional months of basic parental allowance (*Partnermonate*). They can also convert these into *ElterngeldPlus* months. The requirement for the *Partnermonate* is that both parents apply for at least two months of parental allowance and that at least one parent worked before the birth and has less income after the birth than before.

Partnerschaftsbonus

If both parents work an average of 25 to 30 hours per week for 4 months at a time, each parent will receive 4 additional months of *ElterngeldPlus*.

The *Partnerschaftsbonus* months can be received both in the first 14 months of the child's life and beyond.

Note: For parental allowance applications for children born after the 1st of September 2021, 24 to 32 hours of work per week apply. In addition, a corresponding bonus - in this case 2 additional *ElterngeldPlus* months - is already granted from 2 months of simultaneous employment.

Mehrlingszuschlag

An additional contribution is paid for multiple births. Parents receive regular parental allowance for the first child and an additional € 300 for each additional child. This means an additional € 300 for twins and an additional € 600 for triplets. *ElterngeldPlus* increases by € 150 for the second and each additional child. This also applies in the case of adoption/adoptive care, if several children are taken into the household at the same time.

Geschwisterbonus

If there are other children living in the household, a sibling bonus (*Geschwisterbonus*) is granted: For an additional child under the age of 3 or 2 additional children under the age of 6, the parental allowance increases by 10 percent - with a minimum of € 75 in *Basiselterngeld* months and € 37.50 in *ElterngeldPlus* months. The maximum amount of € 1800 in *Basiselterngeld* or € 900 in *ElterngeldPlus* months can be exceeded with the sibling bonus. Entitlement to the sibling bonus ends at the end of the month in which one of the eligibility requirements ceases to apply.

Frühchenschlag

For children born after the 1st of September 2021, the following applies: if a child is born at least six weeks before the calculated date of birth (preemie), parents are entitled to an additional *Basiselterngeld* month or two additional *ElterngeldPlus* months.

When is it advisable to receive Basiselterngeld and when ElterngeldPlus?

If you could utilize your parental allowance entitlement completely as *Basiselterngeld* before you start working again, it is recommended to apply for *Basiselterngeld*.

If you work while receiving parental allowance, *ElterngeldPlus* is recommended. Under certain circumstances, the *ElterngeldPlus* can be just as high as the monthly *Basiselterngeld* with income - yet, you can receive *ElterngeldPlus* for twice as long. It can be utilized ideally if the part-time income does not exceed 50 percent of the prenatal income.

Comparative example of Basiselterngeld and ElterngeldPlus in part-time work:

<p>Your net prenatal income is € 2,000.</p> <p>The parental allowance entitlement without part-time income is calculated as 2,000 € x 65 %.</p> <p>This results in <i>Basiselterngeld</i>: € 1,300 € per month = € 15,600 for 12 months or <i>ElterngeldPlus</i>: € 650 € per month = € 15,600 for 24 months.</p>
<p>Your part-time income is less than 50% of your prenatal income.</p> <p>Net income from part-time work: € 800 €</p> <p>Eliminated income: € 1,200 (€ 2,000 - € 800)</p> <p>Calculation of parental allowance: € 1,200 € x 65 % = € 780</p> <p>This results in <i>Basiselterngeld</i>: € 780 x 12 months = € 9,360 or <i>ElterngeldPlus</i>: 650 €* x 24 months = € 15,600</p> <p>*<i>ElterngeldPlus</i> can only amount to a maximum of half of the basic parental allowance</p>
<p>Your part-time income is 50% of your prenatal income.</p> <p>Net income from part-time work: € 1,000</p>

Eliminated income: 1,000 € (2,000 € - 1,000 €)

Calculation of parental allowance: € 1,000 x 65 % = € 650

This results in **Basiselterngeld**: € 650 x 12 months = € 7,800

or **ElterngeldPlus**: € 650 x 24 months = € 15,600

Your **part-time income is more than 50% of prenatal income.**

Net income from part-time work: € 1,200

Eliminated income: € 800 (€ 2,000 - € 1,200)

Calculation of parental allowance: € 800 x 65 % = € 520

This results in **Basiselterngeld**: € 520 x 12 months = € 6,240

or **ElterngeldPlus**: € 520 x 24 months = € 12,480

With the [Elterngeldrechner mit Planer](#) you have the opportunity to plan through various scenarios and roughly calculate the amount of parental allowance (available only in German).

Is the parental allowance taxed?

The parental allowance itself is not taxed. It is added to taxable income and the tax rate is determined from this. The parental allowance is then deducted from income and the remaining income is taxed at the higher tax rate.

Do foreign parents also receive parental benefits?

Foreign parents may also be entitled to German parental allowance.

If you come from another country of the European Union (EU), Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland, you can generally receive parental allowance in Germany if you live and/or work here.

For so-called cross-border commuters who live in one country and work in another, the following applies: You receive family benefits such as parental allowance primarily from the country in which you work. The other country may also pay something - namely if the family benefit would be higher there. In such a case, the other country will pay the difference.

You can apply for family benefits in any EU country where you or the other parent is eligible. The authority in the country of application will forward your application to the other competent countries. Please note the country-specific deadlines in this case.

If the parents come from other countries, the decisive factor is whether they are allowed to be gainfully employed in Germany and/or have the right to remain in Germany.

Are students and apprentices also entitled to parental allowance?

Students and apprentices are also entitled to parental allowance.

If you had no income before the birth of your child, you will receive parental allowance at the minimum amount (€ 300 per month *Basiselterngeld* / € 150 per month *ElterngeldPlus*). If your net income before the birth was less than € 1000, the parental allowance can be up to 100 % of the pre-birth income.

In addition to their studies, students can work up to 30 hours per week, just like employed persons.

If students receive *BAföG*, the parental allowance in the amount of € 300 *Basiselterngeld* / € 150 *ElterngeldPlus* is not offset against the educational support.

How to apply for parental allowance?

The parental allowance application can be submitted at the earliest from the birth of the child. The parental allowance is only paid retroactively for a maximum of three months, so the parental allowance application should be submitted in the first three months of life in order to avoid financial losses.

An application for parental allowance must be submitted in writing to the responsible parental allowance office (Jugendamt) in the city.

Each parent can apply for parental allowance only once per child. The application can also be made as a couple. If the other parent is also eligible for parental allowance, the application must be signed by both of them.

If you subsequently want to change your parental allowance application, this can only be done for future months of life. One exception applies to *ElterngeldPlus*: For months of life for which you have already received *ElterngeldPlus*, you can receive *Basiselterngeld* retroactively. Past months of life can generally only be changed in cases of hardship.

On the following page, we have compiled a checklist with the most important documents for the parental allowance application.

Checklist application for parental allowance

The following documents are required in addition to the application for parental allowance signed by both parents:

- ✓ Birth certificate of the child from the registry office or birth certificate from hospital/midwife
- ✓ For children born outside the European Union: a certified German translation of the birth certificate
- ✓ For each parent applying for parental allowance, proof of income and/or the last available income tax assessment for the last twelve months prior to the maternity leave or birth
- ✓ The certificate of the statutory health insurance company about the granting (or refusal) of maternity benefit (*Mutterschaftsgeld*) before and after childbirth
- ✓ The certificate from the employer about the maternity allowance (*Zuschuss zum Mutterschaftsgeld*) after the birth
- ✓ If you wish to work part-time while receiving parental allowance, a confirmation of working hours from your employer or, in the case of self-employed persons, a declaration of the intended working hours
- ✓ Copy of identity card of both parents
- ✓ For recipients of *Arbeitslosengeld I* and child allowances (*Kinderzuschlägen*), all notifications of approval from the previous year
- ✓ In case of entitlement to sibling bonus for older siblings, the existing parental allowance certificates

In individual cases, further documents may also be required.

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If you have any further questions, simply contact us at

0800 387 78 36 or beratung@fuerstenberg-institut.de .