

Before the Birth

The "Stiftung Hilfe für die Familie" Family Support Group

Where applicable, this group provides financial support for pregnant women with financial problems so that they can purchase maternity clothes and baby essentials. This funding does not affect the support provided by the Job Centre or Social Welfare Office (*Sozialamt*).

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 4

Midwife Services

A **midwife (*Hebamme*)** provides you with advice and support both before and after your child is born. She visits you at home. Midwife costs are covered by your health insurance company.

You can also choose to use the services of a **health visitor (*Familienhebamme*)**, who will come to your home to show you how to care for your baby and help you with (nearly) all other questions you may have during the first year of your child's life.

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 6

After the Birth

Securing Your Livelihood

If you are unable to secure your livelihood with earnings or assets, you can apply for unemployment benefits (*ALG II*, also known as "*Hartz IV*") at the Job Centre. You can also apply for one-off funding (see point 2 on page 4 of the Guide for New Parents).

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 15, advice - page 34

Parental Allowance

The parental allowance (*Elterngeld*) is paid as replacement income to parents who were employed before the birth of their child. Parents who did not have their own income from employment before the birth receive the minimum amount of €300, which is deducted in the case of ALG II ("*Hartz IV*"), social benefits (*Sozialhilfe*) and the child allowance (*Kinderzuschlag*). If you were employed before your child was born, the €300 is not factored into the funding listed above.

In the case of multiple births, you will receive the parental allowance for 1 child and €300 for each further child born at the same time. A sibling bonus (*Geschwisterbonus*) of €75 is also available in the case of young siblings where applicable.

New variants are the basic parental allowance (*Basis-Elterngeld*) and parental allowance plus (*ElterngeldPlus*), as well as the possibility of a partnership bonus (*Partnerschaftsbonus*), which is also available to single parents. There are many options for combining the different parental allowance variants, for example by working part-time whilst raising your children.

Please request detailed advice on the different options available!

It may be worthwhile to change your income tax class in good time before the birth of your child in order to receive a higher parental allowance.

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - pages 11 and 34

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Housing Allowance

If you have a low income, you can apply for the housing allowance (*Wohngeld*). The allowance amount depends on your family income, the number of family members and your rent amount. You are not entitled to receive the housing allowance if you already receive ALG II ("*Hartz IV*") or the German student loan (*Bafög*). Family members of recipients of Bafög or ALGII can, however, receive the housing allowance.

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 13, advice - page 34

Child Benefits / Child Allowance

If you live with your child, you can receive **child benefits (*Kindergeld*)**. Non-German parents (from outside the EU) must present their residence permit (passport) and registration to the registration authorities. Parents who already receive funding in accordance with the German Asylum Seekers' Benefit Act (*Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz*) are not entitled to receive child benefits. Applications for child benefits must be submitted within 6 months after the birth of your child. Parents with low incomes who are not entitled to receive ALG II ("*Hartz IV*") may be entitled to receive the **child allowance (*Kinderzuschlag*)** where applicable.

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 12

Education and Participation Grants

Families that receive ALG II ("*Hartz IV*"), social allowance (*Sozialgeld*), social benefits, child allowance, housing allowance or funding in accordance with the German Asylum Seekers' Benefit act can apply for additional funding to support their children. Applications should be submitted to the authority or office that provides the funding in question. You can receive a grant for expenses such as PEKiP courses, school or nursery school trips, school or nursery school lunches, learning support, school transport, school essentials, and cultural, leisure and sports activities. The "berlinpass-BuT" is proof of your entitlement to receive these grants.

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 16

Day Care (nursery school or childminder)

Your child is legally entitled to a place at a day-care facility after his/her 1st birthday. You can, however, already be awarded a place before then if you can provide evidence that childcare is required. **It is essential that you start to look for a place at a very early stage (at least 1.5 to 2 years before the required start of day care)!** Register with a large number of nursery schools and ask them whether they can provide you with a place on a regular basis! You should then submit an application (*Kita-Antrag*) to the town hall 9 months before the start of day care at the earliest and 2 months before at the latest. You should also submit this application if you have not yet been awarded a place at a day-care facility. The cost of day care depends on your income and the number of hours (childcare duration) required. No fees are charged for the last three years at nursery school before your child starts school. During these three years, you will only need to pay €23 per month for food.

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 29

Contact Points and Information Centres for Families

These educational and family information centres can help you with all questions concerning:

- education, upbringing, mental health and behaviour problems
- anxiety, aggressiveness and puberty problems
- separation and divorce conflicts and many more

Addresses: Page 32

After the Birth

Crying Baby Drop-In Clinic

Are you worried that your baby is crying too much or are you exhausted and irritable because your baby just keeps on crying? If so, you can visit a crying baby drop-in clinic (*Schrei-Baby-Ambulanz*) for help. Your midwife, your child's doctor or the Children and Young People's Health Service (*Kinder- und Jugendgesundheitsdienst*) can also provide advice and support.
Addresses: Guide for New Parents - pages 6, 21 and 36

District Mothers

Mothers and grandmothers from different cultures can train to become district mothers (*Stadtteilmütter*). They can then visit other families and pass on their knowledge to their local neighbours or help them with tasks such as finding a doctor for their child. Other topics covered by district mothers include nursery schools and schools, health promotion, child development, a healthy diet, etc. If you would like to request support from a district mother or become a district mother yourself, please call +49 30 90239-4185 or visit <http://www.diakonie-integrationshilfe.de/sis-leistungen/stadtteilmuetter/projektbeschreibung.html>.
Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 31

Youth Welfare

You can contact the Youth Welfare Office (*Jugendamt*) if you:

- need support and advice with regard to your child's upbringing
- have questions in critical life situations
- cannot come to agreement on custody and arrangements when separating from your partner
- need help in matters concerning the German Child and Youth Services Act (KJHG)

A number of different teams are available to help you depending on where you live. You can also find out who is responsible for your area by contacting the Children and Young People's Health Service.
Addresses: Pages 30 + 36

Your Child's Immune System

It is normal for children to frequently get ill. You can support your child's immune system by:

- not smoking at home or in the car
- airing your home on a regular basis
- looking out for any mould infestation
- trying to keep rooms at a sleeping temperature of 18°C where possible
- getting fresh air outdoors for at least 30-60 minutes every day
- offering a healthy and varied diet
- giving your child vitamin D until he/she is 2

The most important preventive measures that you should take are vaccinations (see page 25 of the Guide for New Parents). Contact your midwife, your child's doctor or the Children and Young People's Health Service to find out more.

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - pages 21, 24 and 36

Preventive Medical Check-Ups (U1 - U9 and J1)

These medical examinations offer you the opportunity to identify and treat any problems or abnormal developments in your child's health at what is normally an early stage. The medical check-ups are covered by your health insurance company. If you do not have any health insurance, you can request that the Children and Young People's Health Service carry out the preventive examinations for free.

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 23

After the Birth

Dental Care

It is important to make sure that your child's teeth remain healthy right from the start. **Tips:**

- Do not put your child's dummy in your own mouth
- Start brushing your child's teeth the moment his/her first tooth breaks through (e.g. with a cotton bud)
- Give your child fluoride and use a toothpaste suitable for children
- Ensure that your child's diet is good for his/her teeth (e.g. no teas containing sugar or other sweetened drinks)
- Visit your dentist on a regular basis using the free children's tooth pass (*Kinderzahnpass*), which you can obtain from services such as the Children and Young People's Health Service.

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 24

Safe Sleep for Babies

A baby's sleeping environment is important in order to ensure that he/she has a healthy and good night's sleep. These tips will help your baby to sleep safely and well in his/her first year:

- Babies should sleep on their back in a sleeping bag without anything on their head in their own bed in their parent's bedroom
- They should sleep on a firm mattress without any blankets, duvets or cuddly toys in their bed
- Clothing and dummies should not have any bands, cords or straps
- Babies should sleep in a smoke-free environment at a temperature of around 18°C

Sleep-Wake Cycle

Every child is different. Babies need to develop their own rhythm in the first few months of their life. It is normal for babies to wake up frequently. Sometimes all that they need is for their parents to calm them down. It is important that you develop regular procedures and rituals (songs, bedtime stories, etc.). Avoid any exciting activities with your child before they go to sleep. For more information, please contact your midwife, your child's doctor or the Children and Young People's Health Service.

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 21

Television, Computer, Tablet, Mobile Phone, etc.

Do not sit your baby in front of the television, even if you think that he/she likes watching TV. Babies may pay attention to the screen, stay quiet and barely move, which can provide some peace and quiet for stressed parents. Nevertheless, watching television **reduces your baby's heart rate**. Babies need to be paid **direct personal attention**. They like music, toys and objects that they can examine.

It is important that babies recognise their parents and their friendly smile and voice, especially in the first year of their life. This helps to support the develop of a stable and protective relationship between a child and his/her parents, which is very important for a child's development.

It is recommend that children aged **under 3 do not watch any television** and that children aged between **3 and 5 years old watch a maximum of 30 minutes**.

You can also find recommendations online at:

<http://www.bmfsfj.de/RedaktionBMFSFJ/Broschuerenstelle/Pdf-Anlagen/Geflimmer-im-Zimmer,property=pdf,bereich=bmfsfj,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf>

<http://www.familien-wegweiser.de/wegweiser/stichwortverzeichnis,did=120696.html>

Addresses: Guide for New Parents - page 19