

Planning Parental Leave and Return: Tips for Mothers and Fathers

Congratulations! You are expecting a child and considering how to combine career and family. Knowing your resources and making a plan are important steps. The tips below can help.

Institutional information and resources

It is important to get familiar with the policies and options at your institution regarding parental leave. Your most important resources for this are the equal opportunity and family offices at your institution (see links below). They will provide information on a range of topics, including:

- maternity protection and parental leave, including timelines and guidelines
- financial support during parental leave (“Elterngeld”)
- studying or PhD and family
- re-entry scholarships
- childcare

Talking with your supervisor

When talking with your supervisor about parental leave, it helps to be prepared to discuss:

- when you intend to return, and whether full- or part-time
- how your projects will continue and how you can have input during your absence
- how and to what extent to keep in touch with the lab while you are away (incl. virtual options)
- potential authorship issues

Extensions and re-entry scholarships

If you will take time off during a qualification or evaluation phase, or while working on a third-party funded project, you may be eligible for an extension. Ask your supervisor or the applicable funding organization.

In addition, your institution may offer re-entry scholarships for women returning to work after parental leave, or other stipends supporting the scientific career development of women with children. Ask your equal opportunity or family office for information.

Parental leave on CVs

Consider putting the dates of your parental leave on your CV. This will make it possible for potential employers or during evaluations to calculate your “academic age”, which represents your years of active research, taking into account breaks for childcare. This applies to both mothers and fathers. (See also [link](#))

Childcare

A key condition for returning to work is having childcare. Below are some options:

- **Public childcare** in Berlin includes daycare centers (“Kitas”) and childminders (“Kindertagespflege /Tagesmutter/Tagesvater”). Waiting lists at these facilities can be long, so consider beginning the childcare search soon after your child is born. Below are some important resources:
 - **Search:** For information from the Berlin Senate on forms of childcare and available places, see [link](#). For additional Kita options by neighborhood see [link](#).
 - **Voucher:** All public Kitas and Kindertagespflegen require a voucher (“Gutschein”) from the youth welfare office (“Jugendamt”) in your residential district. See [link](#). (Note: Begin the Kita search early, but apply for a voucher earliest nine months before the desired Kita start date.)
- **Campus childcare:** Some of our partner institutions have on-site facilities, such as parent-child rooms and Kitas (may require voucher). Ask your equal opportunity or family office for options.
- **Self-organized childcare:** If you are unable to find a Kita or childminder, the Jugendamt in some districts offers financing for self-organized childcare (see e.g. “Selbstorganisierte Betreuung”). An example of self-organized childcare is a co-working space with childcare, see [link](#). Contact [Kim Mason](#) for more information.

In addition, the following options may be available outside regular childcare hours:

- **Emergency childcare** (e.g. [KidsMobil](#)) – ask your supervisor or family office
- **Childcare at conferences, meetings, events** – ask event organizers or family office
- **Activities during school holidays** – Apart from the many ideas you can find in the internet, some of our partner institutions offer summer schools, workshops, and other activities during the holidays. Ask your equal opportunity or family office and see links below.

Resources

Charité

[Equal opportunity](#)
[Family office](#)
[Parental leave](#)
[Re-entry scholarships](#)
[School holiday program](#)

FU

[Equal opportunity](#)
[Family office](#)
[Parental leave](#) (menu tab “working parents”)

HU

[Equal opportunity](#)
[Family office](#)
[Parental leave](#)
[Re-entry scholarships](#)
[School holiday program](#)

DZNE

For all topics, contact the Berlin [site coordinator](#),
Doreen.Ditzen@dzne.de

FMP

[Equal opportunity](#)
[Family office](#)
[Parental leave](#)
[Scholarships for women with children](#)

MDC

[Equal opportunity](#)
[Family office](#)
[School holiday program](#)

MPUSP (Max Planck Society)

[Equal opportunity](#)
[Family office](#)
[Scholarships](#)

If you have any questions or would like an individual consultation, contact [Kim Mason](#).