

Country report on the situation of single-parents in Germany

- **Data: population and percentage of single-parents-families, gender balance**

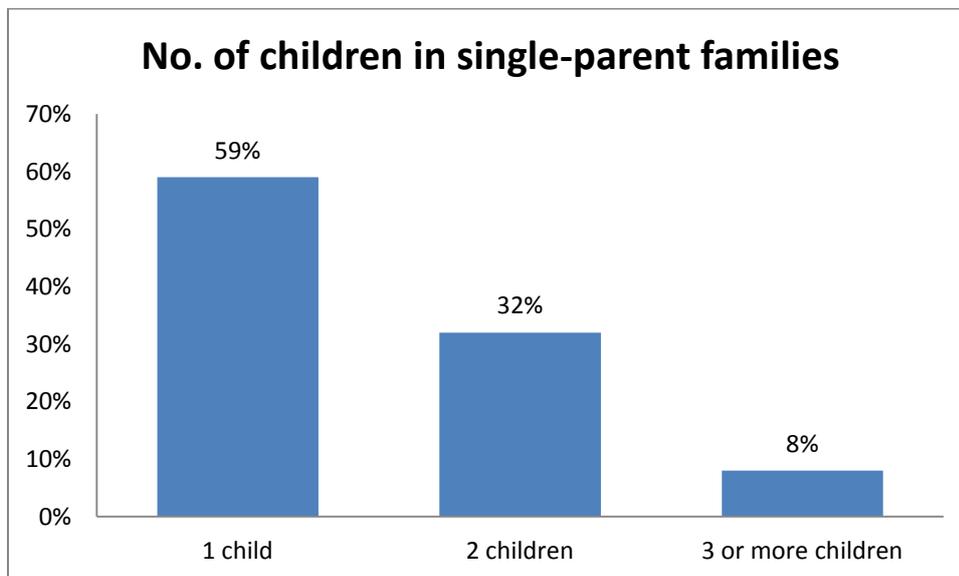
In 2011 81,8 million people were living in Germany, in total 40,2 million households were registered. This equals an average of 2,2 persons living in one household. Since 1996 the number of households with children under the legal age is decreasing. While the number of traditional families (married couples) is decreasing, the number of alternative family forms (single-parents and living communities) is increasing.

Although the decreasing development, married couples with children under the legal age are with 71% the most common family form. Single mothers or fathers represent 20% of the families with children under 18. 9% of the families with children are cohabitation partnerships. In 2011 90% of all single-parents were women.

In terms of geographical segmentation in the eastern part of Germany the number of single-parents is significantly higher than in former West-Germany: in the east 27% percent of the families with children under 18 are single-parent families, in the west there are 17% single-parent-families.

In terms of age 3% of the single-parents are under 25 years. The main reason to become a single-parent is divorce (40% of the single-parents have been married).

In average single-parents have significantly less children compared to mothers and fathers in partnerships:



- **Politically correct terminology in national language and translation in English**

The German national centre for statistics uses the term "alleinerziehend" which can be translated as educating alone/on his/her own. The German national conference on poverty criticizes this term because it is supposed to have negative connotations like bad education or lack of social embedment. (<http://www.spickmich.de/news/201302282200-politisch-korrekt-weg-mit-den-sozialen-unwoertern>)

- **Child care situation:**
 - Options for child care
 - legal situation and legal entitlement
 - Number of available places

Initial situation/legal situation and entitlement

The rights and duties of parents and children are regulated in two law books: the Sozialgesetzbuch XIII (social law book 8) and the Kinderförderungsgesetz (child support law) and provides regulations for the planned extension of child care options.

Since 1996 each child from the age of three is guaranteed for a place in a kindergarten until it goes to school with six years.

Common goal of the German government, its federal states and communes is to guarantee a place in the child-care system for each child in Germany which has completed its first year. This goal of providing a day-care place is due on 01. August 2013.

After this new law had been agreed on in 2007 the predicted number of child-care-places was 750.000, which equals around 35% of all children. Current estimations demand more places (780.000) and the state is providing more money to meet these projections.

The day-care rate for children under 3 years is currently 27,6% in 2012, in 2011 the rate was 25,4%. In total 558.000 children under 3 years are been taken care of in a day care institutions. There is a huge regional difference in using day care options: in Eastern Germany (including Berlin) 49% of the under-3-year children are in day-care, in the western part only 22,3% make use of day-care.

Options for childcare

The communes, churches and free providers offer the following child-care options

- 1. Kindertagesstätte (institutions providing child care)**
 - 1.1 Kinderkrippe (day nursery) for children under 3 years
 - 1.2 Kindergarten for children between 3 and 6 years
 - 1.3 Hort (hoard) for children in school

In regard to the care times four forms can be distinguished:

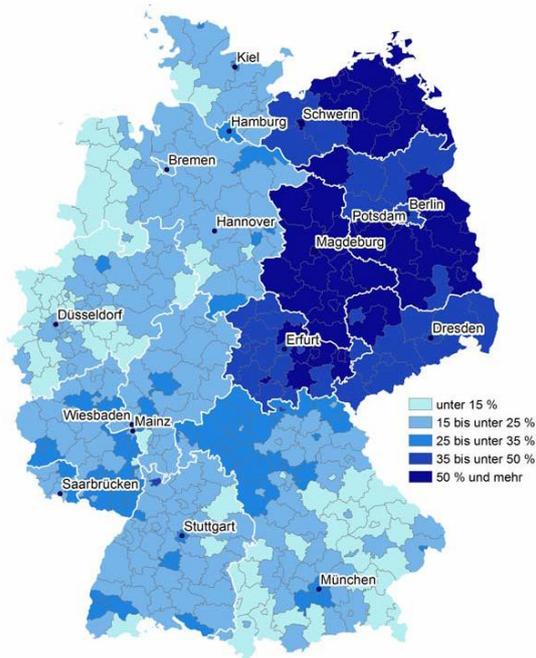
1. Part-time care: mostly in the morning, or in the afternoon
2. Extended morning offer (until after lunch)
3. Full-time care: covers morning until late afternoon
4. Extended full-time care: to consider the needs of parents some providers offer child care until late evenings, sometimes even with support on the weekend or overnight stay

In general the possibilities differ strongly in the regions. Also there are many institutions which cover several of the offers mentioned above.

In March 2011 2.4 million children under six years have been taken care of in child-care institutions, 0.5 million children of these were under the age of 3. This equals a rate of 25,2% of all children in this age. There are huge regional differences: in the western part of Germany 19,8% of the children under six years have been taken care of in childcare institutions in the eastern part of Germany the rate is 41,9%.

(source: Kindertagesbetreuung in Deutschland im Überblick Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, Kindertagesbetreuung regional 2011)

Figure 1: rate of children under 3 years in child-care institutions



(Kindertagesbetreuung in Deutschland im Überblick Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, Kindertages-betreuung regional 2011)

- **Abortion policy and approach on advice**

Abortion (German: Abtreibung)

Under German law abortion is prohibited (§218StGB). The amendment §218aStGB allows abortion after attending professional counselling in an officially recognised institution in a certain period of time – within the first 12 weeks of superfetation - without being punished.

Abortion process in Germany

First women seeking an abortion have to go to a gynaecologist to get a written diagnosis of being pregnant. After that the women have to go to an information centre to have a counselling session. Counselling is free of charge. The counsellors ask for the reasons for abortion, tell the women about the consequences and risks of abortion. Also the women get information on hospitals and doctors. The counselling is liable to professional discretion. After receiving counselling the women get a certificate for attending the counselling which is needed to legally undertake the medical intervention. Between counselling and medical intervention three days have to pass. This is meant for preventing spontaneous decisions and to create room for reflection.

Health insurances pay for the intervention in the following cases:

- Social indication: if the social situation is too tense and a pregnancy would mean too much pressure
- Medical indication: if the health of the woman is in danger because of the pregnancy or if the embryo is physically damaged or damage is expected
- Criminological indication: if pregnancy occurred after violation

In 2012 106.815 abortions were reported to the federal agency for statistics. This means 2.100 less than in 2011. 38,1% of these women were married, 57,1% single. Nearly three quarters of the women who made use of an abortion were between 18 and 34 years old (74,3%), 3,6% were under the legal age of 18 years.

39,9 % of the women did not give birth to a child before the abortion. 96,9% of the abortions were conducted after receiving counseling and getting the certificate. In 3,1% of the abortions criminal or health indication were the reason to abort.

Most common method for abortion used is vacuum aspiration (69,4%), the second most used approach is a drug, Mifegyne®, used in 16,2% of the cases. 80,1% percent of the abortions were conducted ambulantly.

Since 1996 the rate of abortions after receiving counselling and certificate is stable (around +95%). The contingent of females under the legal age, who abort is stable (around 3,5%), the number of married women is decreasing.



pro familia is the leading association for sexuality, partnership and family planning in Germany. They provide the biggest counseling network in the republic with 180 information centres and more than 200.000 support-seekers per year. Another 250.000 children and teenagers are reached by the pro familia sexual pedagogues, mainly in schools. They employ 1.600 persons and with the help of 4.000 members they provide various offers.

- **Issues and barriers faced by lone parents**

Issue	Single-parents with children of pre-school age	Single parents with older children only
Economic status: I can only afford what is necessary and have a lot of concerns on financial issues.	41%	31%
Currently employed are	43%	78%
Obtaining social benefits for unemployment, housing	61%	28%
Worried about failure in organizing everyday life	29%	17%

Especially single-parents with younger children seem to face more problems.

- Single-parents have to manage more tasks and cannot divide their responsibilities, this means higher requirements in self-organising competencies.
- Separation means economic descend: 35% of the single-parents are facing the risk of poverty, especially younger women are confronted with this.
- 83% of the single-parents would be prefer living in a partnership, where both partners are employed.
- The child-care situation in Germany cannot compete with the system in Scandinavia or France: often it is not possible to coordinate working hours with the opening hours of the child-care institutions.

- The housing situation for single-parents is difficult: they do not have enough money to live in neighbourhoods with a good infrastructure, still they have to spend around 30% of their income for paying the rent.
- Professor Kurt Kreppner (developmental psychologist, Berlin)
Often family life seems more peaceful and quiet in single-parents households. Because the children have to be more self-reliant, many common argument issues in regular families do not appear. Problematic is the fact that the inter-generational difference can vanish, so that normal friction between parents and their children arising from differentiation is not that likely to appear.
- missing of subsistence payments: among single-parents 40% of ex-partners do not or only partly pay for their obligations
- Not being employed and no formal qualification (25% of the single-mothers do not have a vocational degree). Only one third of the single-mothers think that training or qualification would improve their situation.
- 52% of the single-parents wish for more childcare options in their region, 21% of them are explicitly not satisfied with the available childcare options.
- 41% of the single-parents desire a more family-friendly working environment with more flexible working times and more part-time jobs.

- **Welfare system (source <http://www.bmfsfj.de/BMFSFJ/gesetze,did=3264.html>)**

The federal, regional and local administration spent 760,6 Billion Euros on social benefits in total in 2011. The ratio between gross domestic product and expenditures on social benefits in Germany was 30,4% in 2011. 30,5 billion Euros out of this were used for child- and youth-support. The expenditures rose for 5,7% compared to 2010. In total 2,6 billion Euros were gained from charges and participant fees, so the public authority has spent 27,9 billion Euros.

Table of expenditures for the welfare system in Germany in 2011

welfare benefit	expenditures
Elderly and bereaved	297,7 Billion Euros
Illness and invalidity	294,7 Billion Euros
Children, spouses and maternity	79,9 Billion Euros
Unemployment	42,3 Billion Euros
Habitation, general support	20,2 Billion Euros

Parents' money

With this benefit public authorities support parents who have been employed before their child was born. In general 65% of the previous income is paid to the parent, for low-income earners it is possible to receive up to 100% of their previous income. The two parents can claim parents' money in total for 12 months and may share the months as they want to. It is possible to work while receiving parents' money, the only limitation is that the working hours per week may not exceed 30 hours.

In 2010 810.000 persons took this benefit, 62% of them have been employed before birth, 38% received only the minimum amount of 300 Euros because they were unemployed or earned too little. 642.547 of the beneficiaries were women (this equals 79,3%). The parents' money is charged on other welfare benefits one may receive.

Maternity protection

Every employed pregnant woman is protected by several regulations which prevent them from dangers, excessive demands, health risks at work, financial penalties and job loss. Becoming mothers are not allowed to work in the period six weeks before birth and 12 weeks after they gave birth to their child.

It is not possible to fire a woman expecting a child nor fire them for four months after a birth.

Child benefit

Child benefit is paid by the public authorities and does not depend on the income of the beneficiaries. It is graded by the number of children and amounts:

For the first and second child each 184 Euros per month

For the third child 190 Euros per month

For the fourth and each following child 215 Euros per month.

The child benefit is paid for all children up to the age of 18, for children in vocational training up to the age of 25 and for unemployed children up to the age of 21. The child benefit is paid to the person, who is taking care of the child.

Child benefit is credited against unemployment benefit in total, because the children get unemployment benefit also and the state does not have to provide the same amenities for non-tax-payers as are provided to tax-payers.

integration allowances for employers

For parents returning after parental leave the jobcentres can grant an integration allowance for employers during the re-adjustment for their former position.

Vocational training

BAB: vocational education support benefit

For persons in their first vocational training to achieve a formal vocational certificate it is possible to receive welfare support besides the money earned in the training. The trainee has to apply at the job-centre and document their need for the support.

Options for further training or occupational re-training

If needed for finding a job or if it is not possible to continue in the previous occupation, it is possible to get funding for further training or re-training. If the jobcentres agree that there is an adequate need, they will pay for the expenses.

Parental subsistence

The parents of young single-parents (mostly mothers) have the legal obligation to render possible the first vocational training of their children. Because early parenthood often leads to conflicts in the families, many of the young single-parents waive this support-option, which could be enforced by public authorities.

Study support

The BAföG is a funding program for students at universities. Up to 670 Euros per month can be granted. 50% of the BAföG is donated by the public authorities, 50% have to be repaid after finishing university. If necessary, money out of other funding opportunities like welfare can be received.

Difference between teenage mothers and 1-parent-families

In the last 20 years around 1% of the mothers that gave birth to a child were teenagers. Circa 5-6% of the abortions registered have been conducted with teenage women. For years the rate of how many teenage women get pregnant stays at around 3 out of 1.000. In total the average number of teenage mothers giving birth to a child in Germany per year is 7,000. In a survey by pro familia 1.800 teenagers who were pregnant were interviewed. 92% of them stated that their pregnancy was not planned. 75% of the pregnant teenagers were 16 or 17 years old. Here a summary of factors that make a teenage pregnancy more likely: young women attending the low-level secondary schools are most likely to get pregnant as a teenager (52%). One main observation was that especially teenage women with a precarious background tend to give birth to their children while teenagers from well-protected families and a higher level of education tend to abort. The motive for getting the child by teenager mothers with a precarious background is that they were not provided with a loving and stable surrounding by their parents. The highest demand by teenage mothers seeking support is how to make a living and receiving benefits.