

Germany

Distinctive Features: Constitutional commitment to the family; explicit family policies in most social policy domains; policies designed to encourage and sustain the traditional two-parent family with an at-home mother caring for the children and to protect the economic circumstances of children. Sociodemographic and economic differences continue to exist between formerly western and eastern Germany.

Maternity / Parental Leave

Benefit	Cash benefit and job-protected leave
Eligibility Criteria	Maternity and Parental: universal for all working mothers; Parental: universal.
Duration of Leave	Maternity Leave: 14 weeks (paid); Parental (child-rearing) Leave: Up to 3 years
Compensation Rate	Maternity: 14 weeks – up to 100% of wages; Parental: 2 years income-tested flat rate, 3 rd year unpaid

Early Childhood Education and Care

Age Group Served	Child Care (CC): 0 – 3; Preschool (PS): 3 – 6
Eligibility Criteria	CC: special needs, poverty, working parents; PS: universal
Fees	CC and PS: income-related parent fees (max 16-20% of costs)
Locus of Care	CC: centers and family day-care homes; PS: preschools
Funding Strategies	CC and PS: state and local govt. + income-related parent fees
Access/Coverage (%)	CC: 0-3 (54%); PS 3-6 (90%) place guaranteed.

Family and Child Allowances

Benefit & Eligibility	Integrated system of tax benefits or universal allowances for families with one or more children under age 18 ¹ , depending on income level.
Benefit Level	Benefits are generous; vary by ordinal position and number of children.

Child Support

Benefit	Guaranteed, income-tested maintenance payments advanced by government for a maximum of 72 months until child's 12 birthday.
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Child and Family Tax Benefits - Other

Tax Deductions/Relief	Tax deductions for employing in-home help to care for children under 10.
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Other Child-Conditioned Income Transfers

Benefits	Pension coverage credit equal to up to 3 years of work per child computed at an average wage for a mother who spends up to 3 years at home in child rearing.
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Child and Adolescent Health

Access to Coverage	Mandated Health Insurance Systems cover 90% of the population.
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Housing Benefits

Benefit	Child-conditioned tax benefits and subsidies for home ownership and rent assistance.
Eligibility Criteria	Means-tested; geared towards low-income families with children and large families.

School-Age Children Policies

Compulsory School	6 – 18
School Hours	8:00 – 12:30
	Various forms of financial aid for post-secondary, technical, and vocational students.

¹Under age 21 if unemployed, 27 if continuing education or training.