

Info Sheet

Pregnant scientists and new parents

Whether you are pregnant or a new parent, exciting but challenging times are ahead of you! We are here to support you.

This information is collected with international scientists in mind, who may not be familiar with the German system, but German scientists may find some helpful tips as well! Please be aware, that the information in this sheet is for general reference only. While we try to keep it accurate and up to date, some details might be outdated or not be fully accurate. Please double-check with official sources before making any decisions, as we are not responsible for any issues that may arise from using this information. We inserted many links to official sources and can guide you personally, if you have questions. [Don't hesitate to contact us!](#)

Quick links:

Students and employees of FSU and the Microverse Cluster will find a wealth of well-organized information at the [Family Office](#).

When a pregnancy becomes a challenge, the counselors from the [Pregnancy Emergency Hotline are here for you](#). (chat, Telephone or Email, in 19 languages)

This [online booklet](#) (German) concisely summarizes all the important tasks and paperwork you will need to fill out around your pregnancy, specifically in Jena.

Working while pregnant

It is recommended to inform your supervisor and your employer of your pregnancy as soon as possible to assess work tasks

Important: Many tasks are not recommended for pregnant people. The Microverse Cluster can pay for a HiWi to take over these tasks so that your research can move forward. Please let us know how we can help.

Your employer or supervisor is responsible for helping you evaluate your work tasks to ensure that they are safe during pregnancy, and finding alternative solutions for potentially dangerous tasks. It is recommended that persons working in a laboratory setting discuss this with their supervisor as soon as the pregnancy is known. You may also be offered the opportunity to speak with the company doctor about your risks.

Please also speak to the Human Resources office of your institute so that they can provide you with information about pregnancy and work, as well as the steps to registering for maternity (Mutterschutz) and parental leave (Elternzeit). All information shared will be kept confidential.

Attending medical appointments (doctor and midwife) is allowed during the workday time without any reduction in pay. This goes also for pregnancy-unrelated appointments. If possible, let your supervisor know in good time so that they can plan around your appointments.

Pregnancy resources

The first days at home can be challenging. Health insurance covers regular visits from a midwife during the first weeks to support you in all aspects of becoming a new parent and caring for your baby. To ensure support after birth, contact midwives in your hometown as early as possible during pregnancy.

Health insurance will also pay for a prenatal birth preparation course for pregnant women, and will often reimburse the course for partners as well. Many midwives offer courses, and you can find English courses at the [Uni Klinik in Jena](#)

[BFVEK](#) (German only) provides support (medical and mental) when the pregnancy is not going well, for example, if the pregnancy has to be terminated early because the baby is too ill or when the baby is born with physical complications.

This [English language website](#) was suggested as a resource for parents who are experiencing one of the above difficulties.

Please know that you can seek psychological care during your pregnancy, for routine concerns as well as more serious complications. Speak to your doctor, midwife or health insurance for recommendations.

Maternal leave, parental leave, parental money and child money

Germany offers significant support with respect to time off work to care for your child and financial support. The rules often change, so please check the appropriate websites for the specific allowances. Be aware that there is a lot of paperwork, so give yourself time to fill it all out and do not be afraid to ask the responsible offices for help. These benefits are generally available to all employees and students with residence in Germany, regardless of nationality.

Maternal leave (Mutterschutz) generally runs from 6 weeks before the predicted birth date of your child until 8 weeks after the actual birth (12 weeks for twins or premature births). This is automatically granted; just tell your HR office and they will register this.

Parental leave (Elternzeit) is available to mothers and fathers (and in some cases other partners). As of this writing, each parent is entitled to up to 3 years until the child is 12 years old, and can be divided up into at least three time periods. This must be registered in writing to your human resources office at least 7 weeks before you plan to take leave. Please [check current info here](#).

Parental money (Elterngeld) is money paid to parents in the first 14 months of the child's life if they are not working or have reduced working hours. You can also choose to receive a smaller sum over a longer period of time. You must register for this via the Familienservice Jena, and be aware that you will only receive three months of retroactive payments, so register as soon as possible after your child is born. [You can fill out the forms electronically here](#). [More information and the list of required documents is here](#).

Kindergeld (child support) is money paid monthly to parents after the birth of your child, be aware that you will only receive six months of retroactive payments. [You should register here](#)

For unmarried couples and single parents

Vaterschaftsanerkennung (Paternity Declaration): If you are not married, the father has to sign a Vaterschaftsanerkennung to declare paternity. This can be done before the birth. It is not required to have a Vaterschaftsanerkennung if you do not wish to list the father on the birth certificate. [More info](#)

Sorgeerklärung (Custody agreement): If you are not married, the full custody will go to the mother – even if the father has signed the Vaterschaftsanerkennung. If you want both parents to have legal rights over the child, you need to sign a custody agreement (Sorgeerklärung). If you are confused about your legal rights, the Familienzentrum can help you make an informed decision. [More info](#)

If you are a single parent, pay attention to mark “**Alleinerziehender**” when you are filling out your paperwork. This reduces, for example, the money you have to pay for daycare, and can make it easier to get into certain KITAS or programs.

Be aware that parents who are not the biological parent (i.e., in the case of same sex couples) are currently required to adopt their child to receive legal rights.

Deciding against pregnancy

If you are pregnant and do not wish to be, you can have an abortion. It is allowed within the first 12 weeks if the pregnant person undergoes mandatory counseling at a state-approved center at least three days before the procedure. Beyond 12 weeks, abortion is permitted if the pregnancy poses a serious health risk or results from rape. The cost is usually covered only in cases of medical necessity or financial hardship. While restricted, abortion remains accessible under regulated conditions.

[Find support at the ASB](#) or at the [AWO](#).

Tasks upon birth

For daycare: Register with the [Kita Portal](#). This will allow you to apply to different daycare locations. If you have questions, you can call the [Kita Search office](#).

Residence permit: If your child does not have German citizenship, you need to make an appointment at the Ausländerbehörde to arrange a residence permit for them.

Health insurance: Register your child with one parent's health insurance (they will be generally insured under the mother until they receive their own card). The child's insurance is free of charge.

Coming back to work

The Microverse Cluster/FSU will extend your work contract to compensate for time missed due to maternal and/or parental leave when possible based on the funding period. In some cases, such as completing your PhD or another "qualification", you may be eligible for a funding extension even if your original funding source has run out. Insist that all options be explored for further funding, and contact the Microverse Office or the family office at your institute if you need additional support.

Your supervisor should take care to reintegrate you into the work environment, and help you reestablish meaningful projects in the case that your original project was taken over in your absence. You have the right to work part time ([more info](#)). You have the right to extend your Elternzeit, as long as you notify the HR department at least 7 weeks before your return (preferably, as soon as you know you want to extend).

When your child is sick: Each parent can register for 10 "Kindkrank" (child-sick) days per child per year. Single parents can register for 20. This means you can stay at home with your child and do not need to take holidays or work from home on these days.

You simply need to call your pediatrician, if you think your child is too sick for daycare or school. They will give you a "Krankenschein/AU" to be submitted to your human resources department as well as to your health insurance. Instead of your normal salary, you will receive Kinderkrankengeld for the time that you are home with your child. This is generally

90% of your normal salary. Please check the regulations, as the number may change in future years.

Enrolling your child in daycare or school

Please check our info sheet Enrolling in Daycare or School.

Contact for Further Questions

Family Office at FSU: <https://www.uni-jena.de/en/familienbuero>

Family Office at UKJ: <https://www.uniklinikum-jena.de/Familie.html>

Microverse Office: Silvia Kolossa, silvia.kolossa@uni-jena.de

JSMC Office: Katja Präfcke, katja.praefcke@uni-jena.de