Family Friendliness at the University of Freiburg
In the last few years, a fundamental change in values has taken place with regard to the understanding of employment and family work, and this has had an effect on the self-perception of universities. Finding solutions for the compatibility of family and career life is no longer understood as merely a private affair, but as part of an overall societal responsibility. The university has gradually created family-friendly structures and various offerings for childcare.

### Family Friendliness Step-by-Step

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Opening of the first university day-care centre (today: Uni-Kita Zaubergarten)</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>First Holiday Childcare Programme in the summer holidays</td>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>Establishment of the working group “Family-friendly University of Freiburg”</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>First Holiday Childcare Programme in the summer holidays</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>First Holiday Childcare Programme in the Pentecostal holidays</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Pilot phase for establishing telework</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Opening of the crèche Uni-Zwerge (today: Uni-Kita Wichtelgarten)</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>Opening of the crèche Biolino (today: Uni-Kita Blütengarten)</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>First Holiday Childcare Programme in the Easter holidays</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>First Holiday Childcare Programme in the autumn holidays</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>First Parent’s Room</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Establishment of telework</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Founding of Familienservice gGmbH as a university subsidiary</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>Joining of the best-practice club “Familie in der Hochschule” and signing of the club’s charter</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Opening of the university daycare centre Murmelgarten</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>Founding of Familienservice gGmbH on a university basis</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Opening of the university daycare centre “Familie in der Hochschule” and signing of the club’s charter</td>
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With the signing of the "Family in the University" charter, the University of Freiburg joined the "Best-Practice Club" - a network of German universities committed to the compatibility of familial responsibilities with studies, teaching, research and administrative work. For several years, the university has targeted to pursue ambitious standards of family orientation and attractive framework conditions. Much has been accomplished. For example, five of the university’s own child daycare centres in different campus locations ensure attentive childcare. During all legal school holidays (except Christmas), an attractive holiday programme is available for the children of employees. Flexitime, home-office work, family-friendly working hours, an infrastructure with several parent-child rooms as well as comprehensive nursing rooms and changing tables in all areas of the university enable a flexible organisation of work. Employees are supported through easily accessible information on all relevant issues of compatibility, supplemented through personal consultation in individual questions. Overall, the employees’ family-friendly options assist them in structuring their everyday work, create room to manoeuvre for them and raise satisfaction, balance, performance and thereby fundamental quality of life. The experience of the last years shows that, in addition to specific offerings, a general atmosphere of encouragement, including awareness and communication measures, is also required in order to ensure that study or career life with children is decisively considered on all levels of the university. In order to tackle challenges together, systematically and sustainably, the working group “Family-friendly University”, the staff office “Family Service” and the “Familien-service gGmbH” have created the following concept, which reflects the origins and developments of the past few years and offers a guideline containing detailed instructions on managing upcoming tasks. Positive accomplishments and the various offerings already existing in the field of compatibility are introduced, and necessary perspectives for development in the near future are identified. It took a long time until the issue of compatibility reached the necessary level of attention. Individual pioneering achievements and resilience have paved the way. I thank everyone who actively participates with a high degree of commitment and variety in the realisation of a family-friendly university. It is important that we continuously work on bringing this goal to life.

Dr. Matthias Schenk
Kanzler der Albert-Ludwigs-Universität

This is the only way we can succeed in balancing study, career and family life.
Family-friendly Atmosphere

The practical compatibility offers are supported by a family-friendly atmosphere that is characterised by understanding and support of university staff with children or relatives in need of care. One project making employees visible in terms of their role as parents is the Employee-Children Day. On this so-called “MiKi-Tag”, colleagues from the fields of science, administration and technology take a morning to show the children a look behind the scenes of the university. The children are able to take a sniff of everyday work life and participate in a programme that leads them through various university departments like the media centre, the Botanical Gardens or the book bindery of the law faculty. MiKi-Tag has been a well-visited tradition at the university since 2004. The great stock that the university places in a family-friendly culture is also expressed in the form of the “Family-friendly University” working group, initiated and led by the Chancellor. The working group constantly reflects on the compatibility of working conditions with familial responsibilities.

Making Work More Flexible

Thanks to offerings like flexible working hours, part-time employment on a short-term or extended basis, and alternating telework, during which employees switch between their workplace at the university and their home office, the demands of family life can be better integrated into career life. A balanced relationship between work and family life increases satisfaction and quality of life, contributes to motivation and productivity and helps in better implementing career goals. In the 2009-2014 University Equality Plan, it was resolved to observe meeting times that are family-friendly, and to take into account daycare opening times and school holidays when planning holidays among colleagues. This goal is pursued across the university and contributes to relief in daily life as a parent. In special situations, such as when a child is sick, parents may receive leave from work. The offerings concerning family-oriented structuring of work are targeted at working mothers and fathers alike because we understand the issues of family, children and care to be independent of gender in order to minimise conventional role assignments. Mothers who wish to re-enter their careers completely after childbirth should be just as able to do so as fathers who want to take over caring for their children.

At the right place at the right time.
Family-friendly Working Conditions
Dr. Raquel Benavides, Institute for Biology/Geobotany

“I turned to the Family Service when I became pregnant with my son Bruno. I’m from Spain and I had no idea what the legal regulations for maternity leave are like in Germany, for example, or how I could apply for them. When one lives in a foreign country, doesn’t speak the language fluently and has to prepare for childbirth at the same time, such administrative processes are a huge challenge. Everything was very frightening. Then I found out about the University of Freiburg’s Family Service, and I decided to inform myself on laws and processes there. However, I feared that there could be language-based difficulties and that no one would be able to advise me in English or Spanish. My worries were unfounded. The Family Service employees gave me all of the information I needed in English. They explained to me what my rights were and how I could apply for maternity leave, parental leave as well as parental and child benefits. Thanks to the Family Service’s advice, I understood the terms and the German system. In addition, the employees gave me tips for the next step, such as the search for a daycare centre. They informed me about the university’s daycare centre, which was key for me. I registered my son in time and was thus able to ensure that he would receive a spot. I would definitely recommend the Family Service to other people, as it helped me enormously.”

Prof. Dr. Abigail Morrison, Research Centre Jülich and Ruhr University Bochum

“The Family Service connected me with a babysitter who took care of my daughter Rowan for an afternoon, and with whom I was very satisfied. I work in the Jülich research centre in North Rhine-Westphalia, but I used to work at the University of Freiburg. Together with scientists in Freiburg, I placed a research application. A commission wanted to evaluate our research plans for an afternoon in order to decide whether we would receive a grant. Rowan was only four months old at the time. I couldn’t leave her at home in Jülich, but had to take her with me instead. During my appointment, someone had to watch over her, so I urgently needed a competent babysitter in Freiburg. A colleague in Freiburg gave me the advice that I should ask the Family Service for support. The employees there arranged for a babysitter for me. A young woman who had previously completed babysitter training. The young woman contacted me beforehand and we arranged everything in advance. The Family Service also took care of finding facilities. The employees spoke to the Uni Daycare Wichtelgarten and arranged for the babysitters to be able to go there to change nappies and for play time. This way, everything was provided for. At the end of the day, the babysitter took long walks with my girl. Everything worked out fantastically and I was happy.”

Fotos: Baschi Bender, Emil Bezold

Interview

Support in all aspects of life

What rights does a pregnant woman have? How does one find a competent babysitter? The University of Freiburg’s Family Service informs, advises and assists on these and other questions. Katrin Albaum asked two scientists about their experiences with this offering.

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Fotos: Baschi Bender, Emil Bezold
Between Daycare and the Lecture Hall. Good Study Conditions for Students with Family Obligations

Maturitacl Leave, Parental Leave and Leave of Absence
The university considers it its responsibility to take the special needs of students with children and relatives in need of care into account. Study and examination regulations include the option for students to claim maternity and parental leave. At the same time, leave of absence is possible for caretaking of close relatives. In such cases, students have the right to use university facilities, participate in classes and fully study and exam requirements despite being on leave. Maternity and parental leave or leave due to a caretaking period are not counted towards any times students may take a leave due to special circumstances, which should not usually exceed two semesters. Holiday semesters count as university semesters, but are not considered in the calculation of the number of curriculum semesters. This is significant with regard to the so-called free-attempt regulations for university and state exams.

Part-time Studies, E-Learning and Online Registration
The study programmes at the Albert-Ludwigs University are generally structured in a way that they can also be held as part-time programmes, with a corresponding extension of their regular duration. In addition, the degree courses are increasingly supported by E-Learning tools and enriched by study elements which can be complemented on the internet, which noticeably relieves studying parents in their everyday studies. Course contents are made available online in all areas of study, meaning that parents have access to them irrespective of time or location, allowing them to participate if, for example, a seminar or a work session cannot be attended due to a sick child or lack of supervision. A growing number of lectures are being recorded and made available on the internet. On the study platform ILIAS, research papers can be submitted online and appointments can be made. It is also possible to register for the next semester online, as well as schedule seminars or register for tests. In addition, working interactively with other students independent of location is also possible in the form of Wikis or work groups. Through video or web conferences, seminars, speeches and appointments are also increasingly held online.

Scientific Continuing Education
In addition to the fundamental courses of study, Scientific Continuing Education offers many courses parallel to students’ careers, including many online master programmes which can be studied part-time, as well as various smaller, modularly constructed offerings. They are directed at managers and technical experts with a university degree and at people with similarly qualified career paths who are pursuing career promotion, re-entry after family-related leave, reorientation or specialisation. E-Learning and blended learning formats with comprehensive, tutorially supervised self-learning phases as well as attendance-based courses on the week-end or in blocks, make this type of continuing education compatible with career and family. The target groups include those returning to their careers and people with family obligations as well.

Childcare and Family Apartments
Making compatibility succeed requires demand-sufficient child care and an adequate residential situation. In these respects, the Studierendenwerk Freiburg is ready to help students. The Studierendenwerk operates two daycare centres itself and has the right to assign spots in a third one, which is used jointly by the university, the university clinic and the Studierendenwerk. In the Studierendenwerk’s dormitories, there are several family apartments and apartments for student couples with one or more children, as well as for studying single parents, in the Edith Stein House, which is located in a scenic, neighbourhood close to the university and is operated by the Archdiocese.

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Childcare at the University

Uni Daycare Centres
Especially important for parents working at the university is reliable childcare. FamilienService gGmbH, a university subsidiary, operates four university daycare centres with a total of 113 care spots for employees and doctoral students at the university: the uni daycare centres Uni-Kita Blütengarten, Uni-Kita Wichtelgarten, Uni-Kita Murmelgarten and Uni-Kita Zaubergarten. Also, children of university employees have access to 20 spots in the Uni-Kindergarten network daycare centre, which is used jointly by the university, the university clinic and the Studyendwerk. The different locations of daycare centres ensure university-wide childcare that is close to employees' workplaces. The daycare centres are open for children under the age of three years. Furthermore, in uni-Kita Zaubergarten, spots are offered for kindergarten-age children between three years and the beginning of school. The Zaubergarten centre was founded as the first of four facilities in 1996 by the women's representative at the time. This uni daycare centre was one of the first daycare centres in Germany and, thanks to its long opening time, catered to the needs of parents active in the scientific community. In 2007, the Uni-Kita Blütengarten, located at the Faculty of Biology, as well as the Uni-Kita Wichtelgarten in the central campus, were opened. In 2015, the Uni-Kita Murmelgarten was opened in an old building bought and renovated especially for setting up the child care centre. The educational concept of all four Uni-Kitas is based on four principles that determine interaction with children and serve as the guidelines for the teachers with regards to the care, supervision and education of the children.

Mutual Respect
Each child is accepted for his or her individual personality. We approach all children with respect, empathy and authenticity, and we support them in developing at their own speed. We want to be role models for children, and we teach them appreciation for their fellow human beings and the environment. We support every child in understanding and accepting the needs of other children in a way appropriate to his or her age. We promote the ability to approach conflicts in an appropriate way, including equality between boys and girls. The principle of mutual respect applies both to the approach to children as well as a respectful relationship between adults. Together with parents, we strive for an educational partnership for the well-being of the children. From the beginning onwards, parents are integrated in the care, supervision and education of their children in daycare, and are recognised as their first and most important reference persons.

Participation
We encourage children to help shape daycare life, and we provide age-appropriate participatory opportunities. We take children seriously as providers of ideas and criticism. The younger the children are, the less likely it is that dissatisfaction and discomfort are shown verbally, and the more likely that these feelings are expressed through crying or reserved behaviour. We register and examine expressions of this type. It is just as important to us that we acknowledge the wishes and needs of children and consider them in everyday decisions. Our goal is democratic supervision and education from square one. Children should experience their own capacity for self-realisation, and should see themselves as the shapers of their lives from the beginning onward.

Relationship
The personal relationship between day care employees and children is an important foundation for the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of each child, and therefore is a substantial component of our educational work. A good and sustainable relationship is created through regular contact, reliability and consistency. We consider continuity a significant marker of quality in the care, supervision and education of children. This especially applies to small children only a few years of age. We provide a sense of attachment and belonging in our groups by way of familiar reference persons, rules and rituals. Children will find a family atmosphere in our care as well as a structured daily routine with enough time for free play. Relationships with other children and the adults of the group are close and provide a sense of security.

Individual Support
Children learn their way into the world primarily through interaction. Their education proceeds by being active. The most significant type of activity in early childhood is play, to which we give an adequate level of respect and space.
Through play, children acquire physical abilities, self-confidence as well as social and practical abilities. They get to know themselves and others, they learn rules and how to respect the rights of others. Teachers encourage support and show interest in it. Support a child in his or her own potential means to us that we promote play on the individual level, and more specifically on the appropriate stage of development at which the child is situated. To do so, we observe their current and document their development.

The furnishing of the Uni daycare centres' furnishings embrace the idea of the daycare centre as a place to play, and they create the necessary space for implementing up-to-date educational ideas. All daycare centres have special installations or elevated play areas that offer various opportunities for play, thereby both stimulating children's imaginations and giving them interesting challenges. There are flexible fixtures for climbing, sliding and balancing. Mirrors set up at a level appropriate to children invite them to observe themselves during play or dressing up. In some of the bathrooms, there is a gutter area to collect water, play with water scoops and colour the water to see how different colours mix.

Further Daycare Centres in Freiburg
In addition to the four uni daycare centres, the university also operates two educational establishments in Freiburg: the Jugendhilfswerk (youth aid association, JHW for short), founded in Freiburg in 1953 as a registered non-profit organisation, is responsible for ten daycare centres in Freiburg. Familienservice gGmbH and the JHW are involved in a regular exchange on the organizational and educational direction of the Wolkengarten daycare centre.

The Studierendenwerk Freiburg is the operator of two daycare centres with a total of 120 spots for the children of students, unrelated to children between one and three years of age. The ‘Kleine Knöpfe’ daycare centre is located near the central campus, and the ‘Pusteblume’ daycare centre is located on the campus of the College of Education (PH Freiburg). In addition, the Studierendenwerk has allocation rights for ten daycare centres in Freiburg. The Studierendenwerk Freiburg is the operator of two daycare centres with a total of 120 spots for the children of students, unrelated to children between one and three years of age. The ‘Kleine Knöpfe’ daycare centre is located near the central campus, and the ‘Pusteblume’ daycare centre is located on the campus of the College of Education (PH Freiburg). In addition, the Studierendenwerk has allocation rights for ten daycare centres in Freiburg.

Holiday Child Care
Since many working parents of schoolchildren are dependent on care options during holidays, holiday care is offered at the university for children between 6 and 12 years of age during all legal school holidays, with the exception of the Christmas holiday. In the summer, there is also an offering for kindergarten-age children (3 to 6 years) and one for young adults (12 to 15 years). The university’s cooperation partner organizes holiday supervision for schoolchildren and young adults, each under a specific motto. For example, life in the Stone Ages is simulated, theatre and circus performances are shown, a newspaper is published or a ghost train is built. The young adults, on the other hand, go treasure hunting for geocaches, climb in the high rope garden or build a raft with a sustainable food for wateranimals, while kindergarten children in university facilities are given age-appropriate craft and play opportunities.

In order to make yearly planning easier for parents, the dates and topics of all holiday care programmes are announced at the beginning of each year, giving parents the option to take the preferences of their children into account when planning their holiday.

Child Care During Events
During conferences or special sessions at the university, the institutes holding a conference are increasingly offering accompanying childcare. The Family Service supports them in the organization of such services by informing them of possibilities of finding good supervisors and providing toy boxes containing toys and books for different age groups as well as some furnishing equipment.

Babysitter Data Base
The Family Service and the Studierendenwerk have initiated a babysitter data base, which is led by the Studierendenwerk and assigns babysitters via an informative online database. Parents searching for a child supervisor can reach the database through the Studierendenwerk’s homepage or by using a link on the Family Service’s homepage. Since detailed search criteria can be entered, it is possible for parents to look for just the right babysitter to meet their specific care requests.

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How did this come up with the idea of founding a uni daycare centre? Gehrke: We wanted to make it possible for young women to reconcile their academic care-

ers with their families. When they have their fin-

al exams, they are on an age at which they can marry and want to have children. However, they aren’t done with their dissertation or habilitation until their late 30s.

The first Freiburg uni daycare centre, the original seed of today’s Family Service, was opened in 1996. This is thanks in most part to three

years later, Marieluise Deißmann-Merten and

the university couldn’t just misappropriate funds. Instead, it supported us indirectly. The rector’s

in a way to use the Women’s Office as its head-

Marieluise and me during a seminar and threa-

We still have a lot of things. For example, we

can do the dishes that the city had thrown out.

and kindergarten teachers were complaining.

we had to improvise. For example, we only had

chain of events. For example, we get the chas

foundry. And when all the children were there,

the Family Service as a charitable GmbH. How long did the foundation exist? Zoepffel: Then, we hosted the university’s holi-

in Baden-Württemberg’s orientation plan. But at

the first director. At that time, open concepts were intro-

At the university, the clinic, and later the biological fa-

man who would take over the institution. As the university’s Women’s Repre-

women their children would beat up ours if

they are of an age at which they can

Would the feedback from the parents like?

If you ask Marieluise and me and look at where they were at that moment and what

It all started with the university establishing

tempor Berg, and we wrote a documentation for

our daycare centre. At the beginning, the

the Family Service, everything was far

the rooms in the back building. We moved in within 14 days to use the Women’s Office as its head-

the first director.

The first director was a mistake. My te-

I'm still angry about the fact that the city didn’t

the first director was a mistake. My te-

that she brought their own little chairs, since

theo phone wouldn’t stop ringing because parents

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the landlord. So we went there. For the landlord, we

foundry. And when all the children were there,

the Family Service, everything was far

parents were very thankful, but they sometimes

What were the reactions like in the university?

Marieluise and me during a seminar and threa-

What was the feedback from the parents like?

theo phone wouldn’t stop ringing because parents

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When did the situation improve?

The Waterloo of today was the Children’s Play-

What educational concept do you follow?

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What educational concept do you follow?
For a long time, universities in Baden-Württemberg were prohibited by the state government from using budgetary funds for the financing of childcare services, as the money was only intended for university expenses in research and teaching. When this rule was changed in 2002, an important requirement for expanding childcare at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität was created. In addition to the investment of its own resources, the University of Freiburg was determined to draw funds from different grant programmes for the construction of several daycare centres. With a high level of commitment, the university converted its own available rooms, as well as using others that were purchased just for this purpose. Today, more than ten years later, the four university daycare centres, well-built and equipped in a child-appropriate manner, are an integral part of family-friendly work life at the university.

Parental Contributions in the Uni Daycare Centres and Holiday Child Care Programmes

The ongoing operational costs of uni daycare centres are funded, just as those of all childcare centres in Baden-Württemberg, according to the general kindergarten funding regulations in the state. Therefore, the largest portion of costs are covered by public funds on the state and municipal level, while another portion is funded by the organisation managing the daycare centre – in this case the university – and the rest is funded by parental contributions. The university has oriented the parental contributions of the uni daycares according to the rates of the daycare centres run by the city. This makes the parental contributions to the uni daycare centres among the most affordable in all of Freiburg. If several children from one family are cared for in university daycare centres, a discount is granted for siblings. This means that parents pay one regular contribution for one child, and a discounted rate for all of their other children. The contribution is discounted again for the third child in relation to that for the second child.

Parents with income below a certain level set by the city of Freiburg may apply for a grant deductible from the parental contribution from the city’s Office for Children, Youth and Family.
Affairs. On the Family Service’s website, pa-
tients can find links to further information on ap-
plying for the grant, as well as the appropriate
application form. Some spots in on-site
care centres have opening times of up to 13:00 or
14:30, and cost accordingly less than a full-day
spot. This allows part-time employees to adjust
care for their own needs with regard to time
and finances.

The university also subsidises its holiday child
care programmes, thus making possible more
family-friendly child-care practices. Each
school year, the Studentenwerk offers various
summer camps for children. If the children are
participating in the summer camps for students
or young researchers at the University, the costs
are reduced. Discounts for siblings are also
offered here.

Scholarships at the University of Freiburg
The University of Freiburg offers the Brigitte-
Schlieben-Lange Grant Programme for young
female scientists with children during the scientific qualifi-
cation phase, meaning during their doctoral
dissertation or habilitation, for two to three
years. The goal is to make a career in science
possible for more women through a better com-
patibility of the qualification phase with family
obligations, thus raising the number of women
in the fields of biology, medicine, microsystems tech-
nology and computer science working together.

The scholarship promotes re-entry into the aca-
demic field after a family-related break, and is
primarily directed at people in compatible fields
who have a Diploma, Master’s or doctorate de-
gree and have taken a break of between two and
a maximum of seven years for family reasons.

Business Trips with an Infant

The university provides a special compatibility
offering to mothers who undertake a work trip
and take an infant still requiring nursing with
them. They may make the trip together with a
second adult as well as reducing the costs
for the second person as their own travel costs.

University Job Ticket

In addition, all employees who acquire a yearly
ticket for the use of public transportation benefit
from the university covering a portion of the
financial costs. This reduced yearly ticket is the so-called
University Job Ticket and allows use of the public
transportation in Freiburg and the Palatinate. On
Saturdays and holidays, a second adult and
two or four children can be taken along free of
charge, making the Job Ticket especially
attractive for families.

City of Freiburg FamilienCard

One offering provided by the city of Freiburg to
all families living here is the Freiburg FamilienCard.
It contains financial discounts for city facil-
ities, cultural offerings and private services.

Families with an income underreach a certain
amount receive the FamilienCard free of charge,
and all others pay a yearly contribution of EUR
10. Employees and students at the Uni Freiburg
can get the FamilienCard at the university’s Family
Service.

Financial Aid for Studying Parents

In individual cases, studying parents at the end
of their doctoral or undergraduate studies may
be granted financial aid from the university in form
of degree loans and scholarships. Students in finan-
cial need may also apply for a grant from the Studienwerk’s
familienCard as a means of transitional aid. One benefit in everyday life
offered to studying parents by the Studienwerk
is the free ‘kids’ meals for children under
ten years of age in the university’s cafeteria.

Role Models for Young Female Scientists

Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Cheauré has been Professor of Obstetrics Gynecology at the University of Freiburg since 1995. As Women’s Representative of her faculty and the university, as well as Speaker of the State Conference of Women’s Representatives, she was involved in the development of new programmes for the promotion of women. The mother of four spoke with Annette Kollefrath-Persch on the compatibility of family
and career.

Ms. Cheauré, how were you able to pursue an academic career with four children?

I didn’t achieve that by spilling my children, but rather because of my children. Through them, I learned self-confidence and strength, and I learned to work efficiently and to organise.

What caused that to improve?

No, there was much opposition, especially in childcare. When I came to Freiburg as a young professional, I was a single mother raising three children. My youngest son was only three years old. At the time, the university offered the childcare to on-campus parents only. I was therefore not able to make use of it, because I was supposed to register the child as an extra family member. There was still resistance, especially in academics. What was your focus as Women’s Representative?

As Women’s Representative, I was involved in the development of childcare, as well as the integration of the best practices from the public sector to the university. In qualitative child care. Family-friendly times for meetings and classes would also be important. Often-inflexible working hours are also a big prob-
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Elisabeth Cheauré, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Freiburg

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Often, it’s just a small yet decisive tip that saves parents time and effort, and makes it easier to make career and family demands compatible with each other. At the University of Freiburg, there are various service facilities that support employees and students in bringing both areas of life into harmony with one another.

**Family Service**

The Family Service acts as a guide, helping employees from the scientific, administrative and technical fields to find the right contact person for their particular questions. Through its information portal, it also provides information on daycare centers, the holiday care programs and on further subjects of compatibility at the university. Brochures with information on individual topics are designed for specific target groups in particular, such as new employees or students with family obligations. A newsletter provides information on the holiday care program, free spots in daycare centers and all family-friendly new developments at the university. For international employees who come to Freiburg together with their family, individual consultation can also be provided in German or English, in most cases concerning the issues of childcare and the German school system. For these families, a close exchange takes place with other consultation services such as those provided by the university and city welcome centers, as well as the Freiburg Studierendenwerk.

**Human Resources Department**

Of course, the HR department also assists university employees on questions regarding family issues like maternity leave, parental benefits, parental leave or care periods. Even simpler is a look at the “Service A-Z” on the central university administration homepage. Here, employees receive comprehensive information on issues of employment law. A checklist on maternity, parental leave and parental leave, which is also available in English, provides a detailed action guideline and contains all relevant information and step-by-step instructions on what should be taken into account when expecting a child.

**Studierendenwerk Freiburg**

Studying parents will find advice and help at the Freiburg Studierendenwerk. Here, they can take advantage of a personal appointment including social consultation on financial issues such as those pertaining to BAföG, Unemployment Benefits II (ALG II) and residential benefits (Wohngeld). Furthermore, they receive legal advice free of charge and inform themselves on the childcare offerings and family apartments offered by the Studierendenwerk, as well as on job opportunities and questions of insurance.

**Equal Opportunity Representative for the Scientific Staff**

The Equal Opportunity Representative campaigns for family friendliness. She especially supports female researchers and students with regards to the compatibility of work/studies and family life and will, upon request, mediate between different interests.

**Occupational Medicine and Healthcare Service**

The Healthcare Service assists expecting mothers with the assessment of the workplace in regard to possible health risks for the mother or her unborn child. Pregnant women may not be exposed to any dangerous chemicals or infectious materials that could threaten their own health or that of their unborn child. The university doctor informs the expecting mother on this topic and provides assistance to her supervisors on the assessment of danger associated with her work.

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**Equal Opportunity Representative for Administrative and Technical Staff as well as for Scientific Staff**

The Equal Opportunity Representative for the administrative and technical staff advises on the issues of family-friendly working hours, parental leave and re-entering one’s career after a break due to family reasons, and possibilities of telework and part-time work. There is also a program for maintaining contact for employees on parental leave. Parents will receive the “uni’leben” newspaper at their home four to five times per year, and are thus kept informed on current events at the university. They also have the option of remaining caught up through participating in the university’s continuing education offerings.

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A Topic Affecting Everyone. Compatibility of Career and Elder Care

The number of elderly people is continually increasing. Even today, there are more people in need of elderly care than there are children under the age of three. Over two-thirds of people in need of care are cared for at home by relatives. Also, almost half of the people taking care of relatives are employed. This means that an increasing number of employees face the challenge of reconciling career with care work.

Flexible Work Models

It often happens very suddenly, while one is not able to predict the scope and duration of the care needed: Relatives need help, and one’s own career life must be adjusted to fit the changed circumstances. In this phase, most employed people need flexibility at time most of all, whereby their needs range from a short break to handle an acute situation to a partial or full release from work for an extended period. In this situation, university employees should coordinate matters well with their supervisors. The university’s HR department provides help and explains the various flexible working hour models regulated by German law.

Non-university Places to go for Advice

On the Family Service’s information portal, employees can gain an overview of external contact persons and locations such as the City of Freiburg Senior Office or the care support offices of surrounding municipalities. There is a list with self-help groups for caregiving relatives, as well as links to other informative websites. Since domestic care can mean a strong physical and emotional strain, especially for employed caregivers, the university informs caring employees of various possibilities of health support. The Freiburg Network of Family-Conscious Businesses, of which the university is a member, offers a series of lectures on various care-related issues, e.g. how to balance one’s career, taking care of relatives and one’s own needs. Psychosocial support of caregiving relatives is also the aim of an internet portal supported by the following three health insurances: the Barmer GEK, the TK and the DAK. It offers anonymous psychological online consultation free of charge for relatives who care for those in need in their own domestic environment. Employees can find a link to this offering on the Family Service homepage. As part of operational health management and internal continuing education, courses on managing stress and strain are regularly offered, which can be especially useful for employees with family obligations.

Senior Services Exchange

Those looking for support for a relative in everyday life, such as with buying groceries, with household affairs or with computer problems etc. can register with the senior services exchange at the Freiburg Studierendenwerk homepage. Here, students are registered who have experience in dealing with the elderly and are looking for a student job in this area. For the activities requested by the family – not including caregiving services, however – the Studierendenwerk then looks for qualified students and refers them to the interested families.

Questionnaire on Need for Further Support

As part of a survey of employees taking place in 2015, it is to be determined whether there is a need at the University of Freiburg for more support for employees with relatives in need of care than is provided by the offerings mentioned above.
Interview

Doctorate Degree with Three Children

Florian Siglisch is a doctoral student at the Institute for Molecular Medicine and Cellular Research. His wife, Helene Siglisch, is also in a doctorate programme – in mathematics. She is a doctoral student at the 1821 Graduate College for “Cohomological Methods in Geometry”. The two have three children at the ages of one, four and six, of which the youngest girl attends the Murmelgarten uni daycare centre. The oldest son attended the autumn holiday care programme in 2014. Mathilde Bessert-Nettelbeck talked to the doctoral student about his everyday family life.

Mr. Siglisch, you and your wife are employed at the university as doctoral students. What is a typical workday like for you?

We both work on our doctoral programmes about 35 hours a week. Our youngest daughter is in daycare from 8:30 to 4:00 in the afternoon. Whether daycare or holiday care, we are accustomed to having a little ear to – around 3:45. Otherwise, I stay at 18:00, we’re all at home together in Haslach. Sometimes, I programme a little at home, but there isn’t usually any time for that. We don’t see the kids enough during the week anyway.

What is special to you about the offering from the Murmelgarten uni daycare centre?

The holiday care was especially good: With a schoolchild that’s on holiday, it’s hardly possible to have enough on offer and there were some field trips. But he was able to do what he wanted. He enjoyed that. He just wanted to play.

How did you rate the support of the university for doctoral students with children overall?

The university’s service was good. Group directors very much help to more strongly inform professors about these options, thereby removing the fear of doctoral students with children.

What do you think are the advantages of a doctoral degree with three children?

Whether daycare or holiday care: for doctoral students, university’s service is good. Group directors very much help to more strongly inform professors about these options, thereby removing the fear of doctoral students with children.

How do you rate the support of the university for doctoral students with children overall?

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Development of Family Friendliness at the University

When the Zaubergarten uni daycare centre was opened as the first uni daycare centre in 1996, the issue of compatibility of family and career was a problem publicly held to affect mothers, not fathers. Creating structures for more family friendliness at the university was understood to be a measure for promoting women and therefore was the responsibility of the university's women's representative. In 2005, the position of women's representative was re-named to equal opportunity's representative, whereby the focus was automatically shifted to women as well as men and their role relationship to one another. In addition to equal entitlement to taking part in career life, equal rights in family care also became an area of focus, and compatibility measures were increasingly directed at both parents. In the years thereafter, the childcare services at the university were also considerably expanded: Currently, there are five daycare centres and a holiday child care service during all legal school holidays (with the exception of Christmas holidays) at the University of Freiburg – a comprehensive child care offering that supports fathers and mothers equally.

In 2007, the working group “Family-friendly University of Freiburg” began its work. Under the leadership of the chancellor, the working group coordinates all measures for the better compatibility of family and studies at the university. In 2010, the subject of compatibility and family friendliness was transferred to the newly created Family Service staff of the university, which is responsible to the chancellor as part of the central university administration. In 2011, finally, FamilienService gGmbH was founded at the Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg as a university subsidiary. The FamilienService gGmbH serves as the supporting organisation of the four uni daycare centres.

Part of the increasing institutionalisation of family friendliness is a growing networking process within the university, as well as the increasing presence and growing significance of the topic, which is today a self-evident component of university work culture. The close integration of the university's faculties and the various departments of the central administration is thereby a requirement for an optimal coordination and decision process, making it also integral for the acceptance of the family-friendly direction of the university.

A Good Collaboration. Organisation and Networking of Family Friendliness

A Good Collaboration. Organisation and Networking of Family Friendliness

The university's health management makes a contribution to this goal, as it can contribute to effective stress relief in times of high physical and mental stress. In addition to the general university recreational sports programme, which is available to all employees, there are also other offerings meant to promote healthy living, such as the “Pausen-Express”, during which a trainer comes directly to the workplace for a 30-minute exercise programme, and the “Rücken-schule”, which works to counteract the muscle tension that is frequently due to excessive strain or stress.

Another set of guidelines addresses the return to work after a break taken due to family reasons. It offers leading staff detailed tips on how to best organise the temporary absence of an employee, and how to plan the re-entry phase together.

The offerings of the internal continuing education programme regularly address the compatibility of family and career or more generally discuss stress and strain, for example in the form of courses on various relaxation techniques. In order to promote the attendance of part-time employees with school-age children, all half-day courses take place in the morning and take breaks during school holidays. For special events such as the Information Day for Office Management, childcare can be arranged on demand.
Networking with other Institutions

An important partner in the city of Freiburg, which financially supports the daycare centres, is the city-daycare centre. The city also offers a childcare centre for all children living in Freiburg as of one year of age. In addition, the city offers an educational institution for children of German universities that addresses the issue of compatibility. Telework is an important factor in that respect. I can work at home every day at 17:00. Without the support of my boss, that wouldn’t have been possible. How- ever, was asked in 2008 if I wanted to become a personal representative of the then-Prorector for Studies and Teaching. The pair became the personal representative of the then-Prorector for Studies and Teaching. Since 2013, the post-doctorate-level media science expert heads the Student Service Centre, with her husband heading corporate communication at the Freiburg University Clinic. The pair has three sons at the ages of two, four and ten, and they live in a suburb of Freiburg. Rimma Gerenstein asked Schoch how she organizes her family and career.

Interview

Christina Schoch

Shift work at a Desk

Dr. Christina Schoch started her career at the University of Freiburg in 2006 as a trainee in the Press and Public Relations department, and became the personal representative of the then-Prorector for Studies and Teaching. Since 2013, the post-doctorate-level media science expert heads the Student Service Centre, with her husband heading corporate communication at the Freiburg University Clinic. The pair has three sons at the ages of two, four and ten, and they live in a suburb of Freiburg. Rimma Gerenstein asked Schoch how she organizes her family and career.

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Dr. Christina Schoch started her career at the University of Freiburg in 2006 as a trainee in the Press and Public Relations department, and became the personal representative of the then-Prorector for Studies and Teaching. Since 2013, the post-doctorate-level media science expert heads the Student Service Centre, with her husband heading corporate communication at the Freiburg University Clinic. The pair has three sons at the ages of two, four and ten, and they live in a suburb of Freiburg. Rimma Gerenstein asked Schoch how she organizes her family and career.

Networking with other Institutions

An important partner in the city of Freiburg, which financially supports the daycare centres, is the city-daycare centre. The city also offers a childcare centre for all children living in Freiburg as of one year of age. In addition, the city offers an educational institution for children of German universities that addresses the issue of compatibility. Telework is an important factor in that respect. I can work at home every day at 17:00. Without the support of my boss, that wouldn’t have been possible. How- ever, was asked in 2008 if I wanted to become a personal representative of the then-Prorector for Studies and Teaching. The pair became the personal representative of the then-Prorector for Studies and Teaching. Since 2013, the post-doctorate-level media science expert heads the Student Service Centre, with her husband heading corporate communication at the Freiburg University Clinic. The pair has three sons at the ages of two, four and ten, and they live in a suburb of Freiburg. Rimma Gerenstein asked Schoch how she organizes her family and career.

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Everyone participates. Quality through Educational Standards, Evaluation of Programmes and Participation of Children and Parents

Complaint Management for Parents

Parents with children in one of the uni daycare centres have several options to express ideas, criticism and wishes during the entire care period. They can either contact the parent representative at their daycare centre, who is elected at the beginning of each kindergarten year, or they can seek direct contact with Kindergarten teachers, daycare management or, if these options have been exhausted, the supporting organisation. Regardless of whether parents use these opportunities, the Family Service regularly feedback on the daycare centre’s care services. For feedback of all kinds, employees can also use a virtual mailbox.

Parents whose children have been part in a holiday care programme are also requested to provide feedback via an online questionnaire once their child leaves the daycare centre. This way, it regularly receives feedback regarding their satisfaction in the form of a standardised questionnaire.

Participation of Children and Parents

After the end of the holidays, the questionnaire is regularly evaluated via the directors documenting the criteria for each newly assigned daycare spot.

Securing Quality Standards

Especially important is the assurance of quality standards in educational work. To that end, a regular exchange takes place between Familienservice gGmbH and the Kindergarten personnel. The pedagogical approaches and individual support provide orientation for the implementation of educational concepts, HR management or the organisational and educational matters, including speech development, music in kindergartens, theatre and environmental education events on different educational topics.

In addition to the applied pedagogical approach, the issues of profitability and security are also regularly examined. An auditor checks the annual report and the performance of Familienservice gGmbH. The spot assignment procedure is regularly evaluated via the directors documenting and analyzing the criteria for each newly assigned daycare spot.

Expert advice for Kindergarten personnel is also an important component of quality assurance. Expert advice means the support of kindergarten teachers. For new employees and parents, they are accessible to anyone interested on the homepage of Familienservice gGmbH. The spot assignment procedure is regularly evaluated via the directors documenting and analyzing the criteria for each newly assigned daycare spot.

Networking for Quality Assurance

The work of Familienservice gGmbH itself is also an important component of quality assurance. Expert advice means the support of day-care centres and supporting organisations on organisational and educational matters, including the implementation of educational concepts, HR management or the organisational development of a daycare centre overall. Familien service gGmbH also regularly presents expert advice from the Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs to ensure the quality of care for children under three years of age. The directors of the four uni daycare centres also regularly participate in offerings by the city of Freiburg in which the issues are discussed pertaining to their directorial activities. The uni daycare centres’ teachers have access to regular continuing education events on different educational topics, including speech development, music in kindergartens, theatre and environmental education events on different educational topics.

Every year, the directors of the four uni daycare centres also regularly present the advisory committee with an activity report on the development of its field of work. The report is then published on the Family Service’s website. The advisory committee works to provide excellent conditions in the uni daycare centres for children, parents and teachers.

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Mr. Weinacker, do you feel that the atmosphere at the University of Freiburg is family-friendly? It is very family-friendly at the Professorship of Remote Sensing and Landscape Information Systems. Maybe it’s due in part to the fact that our professor has children herself. There’s more understanding for situations in which one sometimes finds oneself when one has children. For example, I can set my working hours flexibly. Which of the Family Service’s offerings have you taken advantage of? We already had our two sons Niko and André in a daycare centre run by the Family Service. For kindergarten children, there was a child care offer during the holidays, when other kindergartens are closed. Otherwise, we would always have had problems during the holidays. Since they’ve been in school, my sons have also participated in the programmes during the Easter, summer and autumn holidays. What were your sons offered in the holiday child care programme? The teachers think of something new for the programme every time. This prevents the holiday care from becoming boring for the kids, Holger Weinacker confirms. Even after four years of attending. For example, two teachers initiated a theatre and music project. That was really creative. They learned a musical together with the kids, and it was recorded on video. That was really professional, with a stage set and light settings. There was a performance that lasted 45 minutes, and we got a DVD recording afterwards. It was incredibly fun for the kids. Another time, they started a circus. The kids were placed in different roles like artists or clowns, for example. We also got a recording of that. Does the Family Service help you to better reconcile family and career? Yes, if the Family Service didn’t exist, it would be really difficult, as it isn’t that easy to get daycare spots. For me, the service is also optimal because the spring and summer care services are in the same building where I work. I can take my children to work with me, bring them to the first floor and then go two floors up to my office. This proximity to the workplace is of course very comfortable, since I can go without a long drive through commuter traffic. In addition, the Family Service has expanded its offerings for holiday care. Up to now, there was only a programme for children between six and twelve years of age. Since two years ago, there has also been a two-week-long care service during the summer holidays for children and youth over twelve. It would of course be nice if one could extend this service to other holidays.

How do you rate the registration process? The organisation is very unspectacular. One can register online within a few minutes. Then, one receives the confirmation two to three weeks later, and that’s basically it. Since two years ago, one now also receives an email reminder about the registration deadline. I find that very helpful, since one often forgets things like that now and then.

Foto: Jörg Blum

Interview

Circus and Musicals during the Holidays

Dr. Holger Weinacker is an assistant to the Professorial Chair for Remote Sensing and Agricultural Information Systems at the Faculty for the Environment and Natural Resources. He has two sons at the ages of nine and eleven. Yvonne Troll spoke to him about his experiences with the Family Service.
## Child Care Offers

### Holiday Child Care Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holiday period</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Number of spots</th>
<th>Age of Children</th>
<th>Day Care Times</th>
<th>Partner Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easter</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>20 (weeks can be booked separately)</td>
<td>6-12 years</td>
<td>8 am-5 pm</td>
<td>Agentur COGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>20 (weeks can be booked separately)</td>
<td>6-12 years</td>
<td>8 am-5 pm</td>
<td>Agentur COGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
<td>10 (weeks can be booked separately)</td>
<td>3-6 years</td>
<td>8 am-5 pm</td>
<td>Agentur COGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td>20 (weeks can be booked separately)</td>
<td>6-12 years</td>
<td>8 am-5 pm</td>
<td>Agentur COGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
<td>10 (weeks can be booked separately)</td>
<td>12-15 years</td>
<td>8 am-4 pm</td>
<td>Freiburger Turnerschaft von 1844 e.V.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The parental fee is income-contingent and also depends on the number of bookings made in a holiday child care programme. The parental fees can be found on the Family Service’s website. All data valid at the time of printing.

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**Note:**

1. Children of parents who are employed by the Faculty of Biology will be given priority on spot allocation.
2. A meal contribution for a warm lunch meal and a contribution for an afternoon snack where applicable. All data valid at the time of printing.