

## ***Parental Leave—Time for your child***

### **What is parental leave?**

Parental leave is the time period in which parents may take unpaid leave from work in order to dedicate themselves entirely to caring for their children. Employees are entitled to parental leave up until the child's third birthday according to the German Federal Parental Pay and Parental Leave Act (Bundeselterngeld- und Elternzeitgesetz). This also applies to civil servants. Parental leave for civil servants is governed by the Hamburg Parental Leave Regulations (Hamburgische Elternzeitverordnung).

You have an entitlement to parental pay for the first 12 to 14 months of parental leave. For more detailed information in Hamburg, please consult your local district office.

### **Can I apply for parental leave?**

Parents may take parental leave simultaneously or consecutively. Non-civil service employees must apply for parental leave at least seven weeks prior to commencement thereof. Civil servants must submit an application no later than six weeks before the commencement of parental leave. Up to 12 months of the period of parental leave may be transferred to a time up until the child attains eight years of age. If you intend to transfer part of your parental leave in this way, you must seek approval from your employer. The length of parental leave for which you are eligible at the outset will thus be reduced correspondingly.

You may also apply for parental leave for adopted children and stepchildren. In such cases, deadlines and periods other than those indicated above apply.

In certain circumstances grandparents may also qualify for parental leave.

### **Will I still receive my salary and emoluments?**

You shall receive no compensation from your employer during parental leave.

Employees who are included under the scope of collective wage agreements shall receive an annual special payment (*Jahressonderzahlung*) in the year their child is born.

Parental leave shall be taken into account up until the child has reached 12 months of age with respect to the annual special payment in December for civil servants, provided that immediately prior to the commencement of parental leave there was an entitlement to emoluments based on a legal relationship grounded in public law. The annual special payment in July (only for those classified in pay grades A 4 to A 8) shall be remitted, only if there was an entitlement to emoluments for at least three full calendar months in the first half of the calendar year or if there will once again be an entitlement to emoluments immediately after parental leave ends.

### **What other things must I be aware of?**

If you have not used your vacation entitlement before taking parental leave, you are entitled to use any remaining unused portion of vacation time during the current or subsequent calendar year upon returning from parental leave. You also may work part-time while on parental leave, which shall not negatively impact any parental pay entitlements, provided that such work does not exceed more than 30 hours per month.

You are generally entitled to continued benefits coverage under public employee supplemental contributory health care insurance (*Beihilfe*) during parental leave.

Public employee supplemental contributory health care insurance (*Beihilfe*) will generally reimburse civil servants up to 80 percent of medical care expenses for children covered under a private health insurance policy. Conditions of coverage: You must be receiving family allowance benefits (*Familienzuschlag*). Only when you are receiving family allowance benefits will your child be registered in the public employee supplemental contributory health care insurance system (*Beihilfe*). You can apply for the allowance with the Familienkasse (Family Benefits Office).

Civil servants in active duty who have more than one child will receive up to 70 percent coverage from public employee supplemental contributory health care insurance (*Beihilfe*). Please be aware that child-related income components can also impact the amount of your contributory coverage (*Beihilfe*) entitlements.

### **Supplemental benefits**

If FHH employees take unpaid parental leave, then the duration of parental leave shall be credited towards the waiting period in the calculation of supplemental benefits pursuant to the Hamburg State Supplemental Benefits Act (Hamburgisches Zusatzversorgungsgesetz (HmbZVG)) and towards the time of employment to be used for the determination of retirement pay (§ 4 (6)(3) HmbZVG). Please note: If for personal reasons you take special unpaid leave after parental leave has ended, this special leave will not be credited towards the calculation of retirement benefits.

### **Civil service social security**

Parental leave is not considered time of service, which is creditable towards retirement benefits, because it is unpaid leave. Part-time employment during parental leave is proportionately creditable towards the calculation of retirement benefits.

For example: Employment measured at a quarter of regular working time will only be credited at a one-quarter amount when calculating retirement benefits.

With respect to parental leave there are under certain circumstances allowances creditable to retirement benefits and widow or widower benefit payments pursuant to § 56 to § 59 of the Hamburg Civil Service Social Security Benefits Act (Hamburgisches Beamtenversorgungsgesetz).