

# I'M PREGNANT!

## HELP FROM THE FEDERAL FOUNDATION MOTHER AND CHILD

### **I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS. WHO CAN HELP ME?**

Everyday life at a pregnancy counselling centre: a counsellor talks about her work.

### **WHAT IS THE COUNSELLING CENTRE?**

Women and couples share their experiences of pregnancy counselling.

### **WHERE CAN I FIND A COUNSELLING CENTRE?**

Your personal guide to one of the more than 1,600 pregnancy counselling centres throughout Germany.

### **WHAT OTHER KIND OF SUPPORT IS THERE?**

A review of and information on the work of midwives and family midwives.



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Dear Readers,

Pregnancy as a time of hope - unfortunately not every woman is able to have this experience. Financial issues frequently make bringing a new life into the world challenging and complex. The Federal Foundation Mother and Child has been providing additional financial assistance via local pregnancy information centres for over 30 years, helping expectant mothers – and fathers - in severe difficulties directly and with no bureaucracy.

Improved framework conditions during pregnancy are part of today's family policy, as far as I'm concerned, just like the new ElterngeldPlus which came into force on 1 January 2015, as well as the further expansion and increase in child care quality.

My wish is that as many expectant mothers as possible can experience their pregnancies in a relaxed way and full of anticipation!

My wish is that every expectant mother could be able to experience her pregnancy in a relaxed way and full of anticipation!

*Manuela Schwesig*

**Manuela Schwesig,  
Federal Minister for Family Affairs,  
Senior Citizens, Women and Youth**

## "A CHILD DURING TRAINING?"

• Nora, 19 years old

I'm doing an apprenticeship as a retail clerk and am five months pregnant. When I learned of my pregnancy, I was totally overwhelmed. My boyfriend and I are both still in the midst of training and now, at 19, we'll already be parents? I had no idea how we would cope. My doctor then recommended a pregnancy counselling centre to me. I've had many discussions with my counsellor there, and my boyfriend was involved in some of the meetings too. Now I know that I won't lose my training place because of my pregnancy and that the training can even be carried out part time. We also receive financial aid and were supported in our search for a new apartment because our previous flat was not suitable for a child. So training and a child are possible, after all.



## "AM I CAPABLE OF RAISING A CHILD ON MY OWN?"

• Anna, 26 years old



For my boyfriend it was clear right from the beginning, that he didn't want any children. When I became pregnant, the relationship fell apart. I was alone and did not know what to do, because I've actually always wanted a child. Then I turned to a pregnancy counselling centre. My very open, patient counsellor listened to my concerns and showed me not only that she was there for me, and that our discussions would not leave the room. That was a good feeling! But she also told me frankly that it can be difficult if I have to take care of everything alone, and gave me links to other organisations that support women in similar

situations. I'm so glad that I went to the counselling centre when I did so that I could make a request for assistance from the Federal Foundation Mother and Child. The financial support and advice helps me a great deal and makes my start with the baby easier.



## “ANOTHER CHILD – I’M NOT SURE ...”

- Sabine, 41 years old



When I found out that I was pregnant for the third time, I was a little shocked. I had just begun to work again and was glad that our two children were cared for during the day in kindergarten and at school. A third child makes it very difficult for us financially. In addition, I was worried about possible complications because of my age. My gynaecologist noticed this quickly and put me in touch with a pregnancy counselling centre. I found a valuable contact in my counsellor, who took my fears and worries seriously and showed me specific ways and means to cope. For example, he did a calculation example and

explained what financial assistance we could get. We now know who we can turn to when we need help.

## “HOW CAN A MIDWIFE HELP US?”

- Senna, 31 years old and Vlado, 29 years old



I was already three months pregnant when I found out about the pregnancy, just as we got the news that my husband had lost his job. This was too much for me, and I had no idea how we would deal with the pregnancy and the child, particularly as we haven’t lived in Germany for long, and had no great understanding of how giving birth and having kids work here. My chronic condition worsened as a result of all the stress. An acquaintance told us that we could get support from a family midwife. She started visiting us when I was five months pregnant. During in-depth discussions with her about our concerns and fears,

we found that we should not be putting ourselves under such pressure. Together, we also made a checklist of everything which needs to be done. She also helped us in corresponding with the authorities and applying for financial aid and accompanied us to appointments. That was a great help and such a relief. Though our son is born she carries on visiting us regularly and gives us valuable tips.

### FEDERAL FOUNDATION “MOTHER AND CHILD – PROTECTION OF UNBORN LIFE”

#### WHEN DO THEY HELP?

You can get foundation support,

- if you do not have enough money available to cover the expenditure caused by the pregnancy and birth and subsequent care and upbringing of your child,
- if you live in Germany,
- if a pregnancy certificate is present,
- if other services are not enough to cover your expenses or do not arrive in time.

To determine this, the pregnancy counselling centre will review your income status. The decision lies with the central institutions in the Federal States. In principle, refugees can also apply for foundation funds.

#### HOW DO THEY HELP?

- Allocation of funds, for example for the first needs of the child, the continuation of the household, the apartment and arrangements, the caretaking of the child.
- The grants are not credited to Arbeitslosengeld II, social welfare (“Sozialhilfe”) or other kinds of social benefits.
- The amount and duration of the benefits depend on your personal circumstances.
- You have no legal entitlement to financial support from the Federal Foundation.

#### WHERE DO I APPLY?

The application for financial assistance is made at one of 1,200 pregnancy counselling centres nationwide. It must be filed during the pregnancy. The counsellors help you to complete the application forms and the necessary documents. They will also provide advice and practical assistance regarding any other questions about financial and individual support services.

For links to search engines and hints on how to use them to specifically find pregnancy counselling centres in your area where an application may be made for foundation support, please visit:

[www.bundesstiftung-mutter-und-kind.de/beratungsangebote.html](http://www.bundesstiftung-mutter-und-kind.de/beratungsangebote.html)

In addition, you will find extensive information on key issues related to pregnancy and childbirth as well as fact sheets in many languages.



## “WE CAN HELP ALL”

- Monica, 45 years old, counsellor in a pregnancy counselling centre

Anyone can come to us: from 14-year-old schoolgirls to women going through the menopause who have no longer bargained on getting pregnant. Even expectant fathers are welcome. In addition to general questions about the pregnancy, many come because they have financial worries and cannot actually “afford” a child. Our counsellors then explain their legal rights, outline which support options are available and also fill out requests for financial aid from the Federal Foundation Mother and Child together with women seeking advice. If women experience a bad separation or have psychological problems during their pregnancy, our psychological professionals can help. We also arrange contacts with other organisations, such as mother-child facilities.

We want women to feel comfortable during their consultation with us. You can say whatever you have on your mind - in peace and without taboos. If necessary, we can also call on an interpreter to help those who speak little German. Of course, everything remains confidential because all counsellors are bound to secrecy.

As a counsellor, I do not try to guide people seeking advice in a specific direction. The counselling session creates a space for an honest examination of their own situations and supports the women in their decisions.

### How can a midwife help me?

Midwives accompany expectant mothers, women giving birth and mothers and families up to the twelfth week of the child. The support covers both advisory and medical services. The costs of these services are covered by the statutory health insurance. It is advisable to contact a midwife already during the pregnancy.

(Expectant) mothers and families in stressful life situations (e.g. illness, partnership conflicts, violence, overburdened) may seek the help of a **family midwife** - usually until the child is a year old.

#### Find a suitable midwife or family midwife in your area:

- [www.hebammenverband.de/verband/landesverbaende](http://www.hebammenverband.de/verband/landesverbaende)
- [www.bfh.de/hebammsuche](http://www.bfh.de/hebammsuche)
- [www.hebammsuche.de](http://www.hebammsuche.de)

**TIP:** Ask your gynaecologist or your friends and acquaintances if they can recommend a midwife.

## YOUR RIGHT TO CONSULTATION

Every woman and every man has the right to receive advice on all matters relating to pregnancy, childbirth and family planning (Section 2, Act on Assistance to Avoid and Cope with Conflicts in Pregnancy, SchKG). For this purpose you can contact one of the more than **1,600** pregnancy counselling centres in Germany. The advice is usually free and takes place anonymously, if desired.

For pregnancy counselling centres in your area, please visit:

- [www.familienplanung.de](http://www.familienplanung.de)
- [www.dajeb.de](http://www.dajeb.de)  
>> Beratungsführer online

The counsellors help you to get practical assistance and inform you about

- Available **family support benefits and assistance** for children and families, including special rights in employment,
- Social and economic assistance for pregnant women, including **financial benefits** and assistance in finding or keeping **accommodation, employment or a training place,**
- **Assistance for people with disabilities** and their families.

The counsellors are on hand particularly when you are thinking about an abortion and the pregnancy is getting you down.

In **financial emergencies**, you can apply for financial aid from one of 1,200 pregnancy counselling centres run by the Federal Foundation Mother and Child. The counsellors will help you to receive practical assistance.

### The services provided by statutory health insurers during pregnancy and motherhood include:

- Medical check-ups
- Doctor and midwife care
- Midwife assistance
- Help with medical, dressing and remedies
- Birth in a hospital
- Household care
- Household help
- Maternity benefit