



## Family and work



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Society has changed in the past decades. Men and women both want to raise a family, as always, but both wish to move on in their careers, too. Work and family life have almost become two completely different spheres.

Many families depend on two incomes in order to get by. It is vital, therefore, that the state create a framework in which parents can reconcile work and family life. This includes, among other factors, a good network of professional childcare facilities and parents' rights in the workplace.

Last, but not least, domestic tasks should be shared equally between men and women. Part-time job? Who does the cooking and cleaning? Who looks after the children? And who takes the kids to the crèche? Every couple must find its own



answers to these questions. This is not always easy, because society expects different things of men and women. Every mother and every father has his or her own ideas of what it means to be a parent. Equal rights for men and women are a constitutional right in Switzerland. Now we must find ways for families to live up to this principle every day.

### Health protection during pregnancy

- Employers are obliged to create a safe environment for pregnant women.
- Pregnant women working in a standing position are entitled to a resting period of twelve hours every day from the fourth month of pregnancy onwards.
- Pregnant women are entitled to a ten-minute break every two hours, in addition to the regular breaks.
- From the sixth month of pregnancy onwards, they cannot be expected to work more than four hours per day in a standing position.
- If the job includes dangerous or hard work, the risk of these tasks must be assessed by an expert.
- A pregnant women working nights between 8 pm and 6 am can demand an equal job with daytime hours up to the seventh month of pregnancy.
- Night work is illegal in the last eight weeks before the expected date of birth.
- If the employer is unable to offer her an equal substitute for her job, a pregnant woman can refuse to do the job. She is entitled to 80% of her wages.
- If a pregnant woman is unable to work because of the pregnancy, she must

submit a medical certificate. The employer is obliged to pay her sick leave. The period for the continued payment of the agreed wages depends on the pregnant woman's years of service with her employer, and her contract.

### Maternity leave: health protection and daily allowance

After giving birth, new mothers are granted particular protection in the workplace:

- It is illegal to employ women during the first eight weeks after the birth of their child (even if they wish to work!).
- New mothers are entitled to a minimum maternity leave of 14 weeks.
- During maternity leave, a mother is entitled to 80% of her wages in the form of a daily allowance of CHF 196 max.
- The following women are entitled to receive the legal daily allowance: employed or self-employed women, women gainfully employed in a family enterprise, unemployed women receiving benefits, and women on sick leave receiving social or insurance benefits.

Breastfeeding is healthy for the child and strengthens the bond between mother and baby. Therefore, working mothers are granted special protection during the baby's first year, so that they can breastfeed their child at work:

Measures for the protection of the breastfeeding mother must be in place. Young mothers are entitled to take time out for breastfeeding. If they leave the



building, half the time used for breastfeeding counts as worktime.

### Protection against dismissal

The Swiss Code of Obligations states that pregnant women with a permanent contract cannot be dismissed during the pregnancy and 16 weeks following the birth of the child. Employees can give notice during the pregnancy, complying with the period of notice stated in their contract. If both parties agree, a contract can be cancelled. Both parties define the terms of the cancellation.

### The principle of non-discrimination

Discrimination based on sex or physical disability in the workplace is illegal. This principle applies to contracts, employment and the cancellation of contracts. Equal pay is particularly important: women and men should get the same remuneration for equal work.

### Parent's rights

Mothers and fathers of children under the age of 15 are defined as employees with family responsibilities. Under current law, employers must allow up to three days of care leave for parents whose child is sick at home. The legal situation of parents in the workplace is governed by the Swiss Employment Law and the Code of Obligations.

The traditional family with the father as breadwinner and the mother at home is no longer common. In many families, both father and mother have a job – a chance to really share the responsibilities within the family equally.

### Paid paternity leave

When a child is born, the father is allowed at least one day of paternity leave. Many employers, among them the public administration, grant more than the minimum leave.

- Collective agreements with more than the minimum paternity leave:

[www.travailsuisse.ch](http://www.travailsuisse.ch) > Suche > Vaterschaftsurlaub

### Unpaid paternity leave

It is up to employers whether or not they want to grant unpaid paternity leave. Fathers who work for the Canton of Baselland for example are granted up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during the first year after their child is born. If they want to take unpaid leave, they have to submit a written application at least two months prior to the first day off work. They can also choose to take several shorter periods of leave throughout the year.

### Reconciling work and family life

The birth of a child changes everything. Time management, for example, becomes harder – and more important. Several studies show that the birth of a child is also the onset of a new and more traditional way of life for many couples: As soon as the young mother is at home on maternity leave, she takes over all of the household chores as well as childcare. Quite often, the couple agrees on a traditional family model: After her leave, the woman opts for a part-time job, and takes on the role as housewife and main carer. The man works full time and becomes the main breadwinner. Once the second child is born, the roles are



reaffirmed. In such a situation, there is no equal distribution of money, childcare, gainful employment and domestic work. It is very hard to find the right balance between work and family life, between time spent with the children and time devoted to career. What would families need to reconcile more easily work and family life? There are three decisive factors:

- Flexible working time models and part-time work
- Core time at school
- Equal distribution of domestic work and childcare

The online platform «Beruf und Familie: Massnahmen der Kantone und Gemeinden» collects all the information on laws and measures taken by cantons and municipalities to improve work-life balance for parents.

[www.berufundfamilie.admin.ch](http://www.berufundfamilie.admin.ch)

Please read the chapters «Family Diversity» and «Childcare» of this guide for further information.

### Part-time work and working time models

In Switzerland, many parents work part-time in order to better reconcile work and family life. Many women have never had a full-time job. In 2005, 58% of all gainfully employed women worked part-time, as opposed to just 11% of the men. However, the percentage of men in part-time jobs is rising: In 1997, 95% of all gainfully employed men with children under the age of 7 worked full-time. In 2007, this rate decreased to 91% (according to the

Federal Office of Statistics). Unfortunately, many employers and teams do not encourage fathers to work part-time. It still seems to be a female prerogative.

However, the demand for part-time jobs is growing steadily, and employers have started to introduce flexible working time models. Job-sharing, for example, means that two people share equal responsibility for a job. Job-splitting means that the tasks and responsibilities for the same job are split between two people.

The traditional bourgeois family (full-time housewife and sole breadwinner) is becoming less common. It is wise for women to consider their future carefully when they are pregnant. It is not easy to return to work after staying at home for years.

If you want to work part-time after your child is born, consider the following factors (important for men and women):

- Consider how much you want to work, and consider that 70-90% jobs are easier to organise for your employer than smaller part-time jobs. Also, management positions are rarely offered below 70%. If you aim for a smaller workload, job-sharing may be an option. Do you have a colleague in a similar situation? Be open and talk about your ideas.
- Talk to your employer as soon as possible. Tell them what you want and explain the solution you have worked out. Make it clear that part-time jobs are profitable for employers: Employees working part-time are more effective and



efficient, happier in their jobs, more loyal and more willing to stay on.

- Talk about how you intend to organise your part-time job: Will you be working regular days, or are your hours flexible? Both systems have their pros and cons, which you need to consider carefully.
- Part-time work affects your social security and pension funds. Get the relevant information!

There are several flexible working time models, independent of whether you work full-time or part-time. Some are more family-friendly than others. Changing shift-work is usually difficult for families. Flexitime models, annual working hours etc. provide the necessary flexibility for parents in emergencies. However, flexibility becomes a problem when it is one-sided and only demanded of the employee. A family needs a certain degree of regularity and predictable hours. The children must be picked up from day-care at a certain time, school hours are regular, etc. Talk to your employer about flexible working time models, and all the consequences they entail.

### Kindergarten and school

School hours are just as important for families as flexible working time models. Core time, school lunch and afternoon childcare make it easier for parents to reconcile work and family life. Find more information in the chapter «Professional Childcare».

### Domestic and family work

If you strive to reconcile work and family life, you must also talk to your partner

about domestic work and childcare. If both parents work, domestic chores must be distributed fairly between both of them.

Women still carry the main load of domestic work. A recent study carried out by the Federal Office of Statistics shows, however, that men with young children (the youngest is under 7) are willing to take on more domestic work. Their domestic workload has steadily grown in the past ten years.

If you want to find out whether domestic work and childcare are distributed fairly in your family, check the questionnaire on [www.fairplay-at-home.ch](http://www.fairplay-at-home.ch). The website also offers tips and advice for fair play at home.

### Returning to work

Mothers or fathers who have spent several years at home with their children face specific problems once they want to return to work. They have no connections and may have lost track of new technologies, new products or markets. Quite often, they also lack confidence and don't value their own strengths. You will find counselling centres offering support listed below.



## Family and work: addresses and links

Please note: Most of the described services and links are in German. If a service is explicitly offered in English this is marked by a \*

Switzerland	Aargau	Basel-Landschaft	Basel-Stadt	Solothurn
<b>Health protection during pregnancy</b>				
<a href="http://www.seco.admin.ch">www.seco.admin.ch</a> > <a href="#">Dokumentation</a> > <a href="#">Publikationen und Formulare</a> > <a href="#">Broschüren &gt; Arbeit</a> > <a href="#">Mutterschaft-Schutz der Arbeitnehmerinnen</a> *  <a href="http://www.infomutterschaft.ch">www.infomutterschaft.ch</a>				
<b>Maternity leave: health protection and daily allowance</b>				
	Sozialversicherungsanstalt (social security office) Aargau: <a href="http://www.sva-ag.ch/dienstleistungen/mutterschaftsentschaedigung/">http://www.sva-ag.ch/dienstleistungen/mutterschaftsentschaedigung/</a>	Sozialversicherungsanstalt (social security office) Basel-Landschaft: <a href="http://www.sva-bl.ch">www.sva-bl.ch</a> > Leistungen > Mutterschaftsentschädigung	Ausgleichskasse (social security office) des Kantons Basel-Stadt: <a href="http://www.ausgleichskasse-bs.ch/sozialversicherungen/mse.php?folder=6&amp;parent=6">www.ausgleichskasse-bs.ch/sozialversicherungen/mse.php?folder=6&amp;parent=6</a>	Ausgleichskasse (social security office) des Kantons Solothurn: <a href="https://www.akso.ch/lebenssituationen/partnerschaft-und-familie/mutterschaftsentschaedigung.html">https://www.akso.ch/lebenssituationen/partnerschaft-und-familie/mutterschaftsentschaedigung.html</a>
<b>Protection against dismissal</b>				
	Department Volkswirtschaft und Inneres: <a href="https://www.ag.ch/de/dvi/wirtschaft_arbeit/stellensuchende_ar">https://www.ag.ch/de/dvi/wirtschaft_arbeit/stellensuchende_ar</a>	Amt für Industrie, Gewerbe und Arbeit (KIGA): <a href="http://www.bl.ch">www.bl.ch</a> > Volkswirtschaft, Gesundheits > KIGA >	Das Amt für Wirtschaft und Arbeit (AWA) advices on work law: <a href="http://www.awa.bs.ch/arbitne">http://www.awa.bs.ch/arbitne</a>	Frauenzentrale Solothurn offers financial and legal advice <a href="http://www.frauenzentrale-">http://www.frauenzentrale-</a>



	<a href="#">beitslose/rechtsberatung/informationen_zu_kuendigungen/informationen_zu_kuendigungen_1.jsp?tabId=2&amp;sectionId=155786</a>	<a href="#">Dienstleistungen für Arbeitgebende und Arbeitnehmende &gt; Merkblätter &gt; Schwangerschaft/Geburt</a>	<a href="#">hmende/arbeitsrecht/rechtsberatung.html</a>	<a href="#">so.ch/?page_id=14</a>
<b>The principle of non-discrimination</b>				
	<a href="#">www.humanrights.ch &gt; Themendossiers &gt; Diskriminierungsverbot &gt; Rechtslage in der Schweiz</a>			
<b>Parent's rights</b>				
	Information by SECO on parent's rights (e.g regarding missing work because a child is sick) <a href="http://www.seco.admin.ch/themen/00385/00420/04667/04679/?lang=de">http://www.seco.admin.ch/themen/00385/00420/04667/04679/?lang=de</a>			
<b>Paid/Unpaid paternity leave</b>				
	<a href="#">www.travailsuisse.ch &gt; Suche &gt; Vaterschaftsurlaub</a>  <a href="https://www.ch.ch/en/paternity-leave/">https://www.ch.ch/en/paternity-leave/</a> *			



Switzerland	Aargau	Basel-Landschaft	Basel-Stadt	Solothurn
<b>Reconciling work and family life</b>				
<p>Fachstelle UND <a href="http://www.und-online.ch">www.und-online.ch</a></p> <p>Informationsplattform „Vereinbarkeit Beruf und Familie“ des Bundes <a href="http://www.berufundfamilie.admin.ch">http://www.berufundfamilie.admin.ch</a></p>		<p>Kontaktstelle Frau und Arbeit: <a href="http://www.professionelle.ch">www.professionelle.ch</a></p>	<p>Abteilung Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männer <a href="http://www.gleichstellung.bs.ch">www.gleichstellung.bs.ch</a></p>	<p>Frauenzentrale Solothurn: <a href="http://www.frauenzentrale-so.ch/wordpress/">http://www.frauenzentrale-so.ch/wordpress/</a></p>
<b>Part-time work and working time models</b>				
<p>Information by the federal office for gender equality between women and men (Eidgenössisches Büro für Gleichstellung EBG) on part- time work and social security <a href="http://www.ebg.admin.ch/themen/00008/00486/00488/00490/index.html">http://www.ebg.admin.ch/themen/00008/00486/00488/00490/index.html</a></p> <p>Information for men who would like to work part-time <a href="http://www.teilzeitkarriere.ch/teilzeitmann.html">http://www.teilzeitkarriere.ch/teilzeitmann.html</a></p>				



Switzerland	Aargau	Basel-Landschaft	Basel-Stadt	Solothurn
<b>Kindergarten and school</b>				
	School lunch in the Canton of Aargau <a href="http://www.kinderbetreuung-aargau.ch/index.html">http://www.kinderbetreuung-aargau.ch/index.html</a>	School lunch in the Canton of Baselland <a href="http://www.bl.ch">www.bl.ch</a> >Bildung, Kultur, Sport> Kind, Jugend, Behinderte> Kind und Jugend> Kinderbetreuung> Mittagstische	School lunch in Basel <a href="http://www.volksschulen.bs.ch/schulen/tagesstrukturen/mittagstische.html">http://www.volksschulen.bs.ch/schulen/tagesstrukturen/mittagstische.html</a>	Information about school lunch offers can be found on the homepages of the schools or the municipality. Sometimes women's or parent's associations are involved.
<b>Domestic and family work</b>				
Guide „Fairplay at home“ of the Eidgenössisches Büro für Gleichstellung (EBG) : <a href="http://www.ebg.admin.ch/themen/00009/00088/00092/00412/">http://www.ebg.admin.ch/themen/00009/00088/00092/00412/</a>				
<b>Returning to work</b>				
	Ask! Counselling services for education and work Aargau: <a href="http://www.beratungsdienste-aargau.ch/berufseinstieg/wiedereinstieg.html">www.beratungsdienste-aargau.ch/berufseinstieg/wiedereinstieg.html</a>	The contact centre Frau und Arbeit (woman and work) helps to plan returning to work: <a href="http://www.professionelle.ch">www.professionelle.ch</a>  Amt für Berufsbildung und Berufsberatung BL: <a href="http://www.afbb.bl.ch">www.afbb.bl.ch</a>	Berufsberatung Basel-Stadt: <a href="http://www.berufsberatung.bs.ch">www.berufsberatung.bs.ch</a>	Amt für Berufsbildung, Mittel- und Hochschulen Berufs-, Studien- und Laufbahnberatung <a href="https://www.so.ch/verwaltung/departement-fuer-bildung-und-kultur/amt-fuer-berufsbildung-mittel-und-hochschulen/berufs-studien-und-laufbahnberatung/">https://www.so.ch/verwaltung/departement-fuer-bildung-und-kultur/amt-fuer-berufsbildung-mittel-und-hochschulen/berufs-studien-und-laufbahnberatung/</a>



## Book recommendations

Our book recommendations are generally for books that are only available in German. Where possible we've listed the English translation or an equivalent instead.

### On the topic of reconciling work and family life

„ **Und es geht doch! Wenn Väter mitziehen**“

Von Barbara Lukesch, Wörterseh Verlag, 2015.

### On the topic of part-time work

„ **Der Teilzeitmann- Flexibel zwischen Beruf und Familie**“

von Jürg Wiler und Claudio Zemp, Zytglogge Verlag, 2015.