

# Report: Survey of requirements for family friendliness of MNF

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## Survey of requirements for family friendliness at MNF

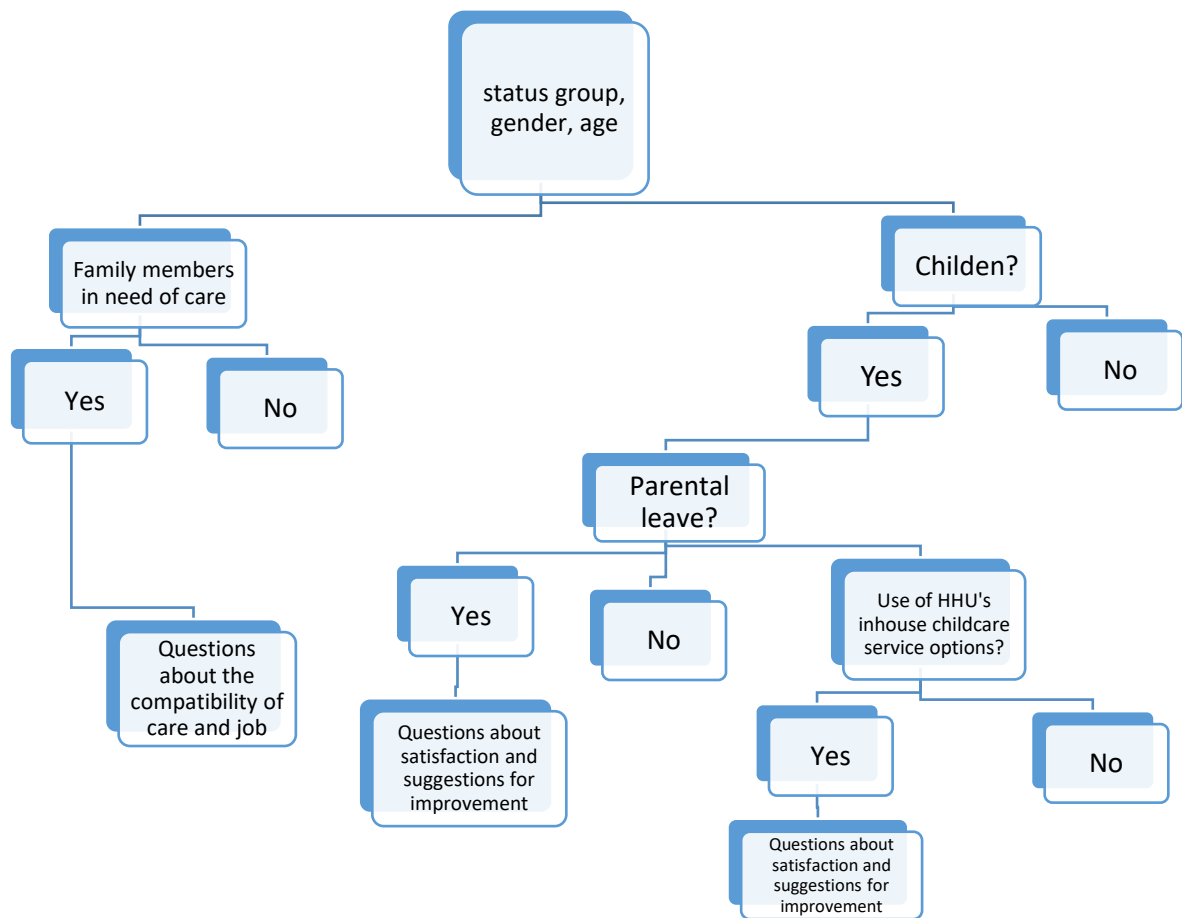
Between March 28 and May 28, 2023, the MNF surveyed academic and technical staff, professors and scholarship holders at the faculty via a web link. Students were excluded from the survey. The survey focussed on potential needs, suggestions and wishes regarding the MNF as a family-friendly working, teaching and learning environment. This included questions about the central childcare services, the compatibility of work and family, personal experiences during parental leave, and caregiving responsibilities toward family members.

All questions were asked either as multiple choice questions with the option to fill in a free text field, as Likert scales, or as free text questions. In addition, there was a free text field at the end of the survey where additional information, comments, and wishes could be entered. The mean values of the judgments of all Likert scales refer to the range from 1 = "agree" to 5 = "disagree". All percentages are rounded, and free-text answers are abbreviated.

All questions and information were optional. The survey was distributed only digitally. A total of 355 people participated.

## Structure of the survey

The survey was structured as follows:



## Care of relatives

### Multiple choice answers

Gender distribution of the 355 participants:

Percentage	Number	Gender
57,8	205	female
40,2	143	male
0,2	1	diverse
1,8	6	no indication
100	355	total

60 people had relatives in need of care at the time of the survey, and 32 people were providing care themselves. Of these 32 people, 69% are female and 31% male. The participants are divided into the following status groups:

Percentage	Number	Status group
56	18	Scientific staff
21	7	Verwaltung und technisches Personal

19	6	Administration and technical staff
3	1	Scholarship holders
100	32	total

The average time spent on care is more than 20 hours per week for 35% of the respondents. The biggest challenges cited were (multiple answers were possible):

Prozent	Anzahl	Herausforderung
56	18	overlapping working and childcare hours
38	12	unfavorable and/or long travel distances
31	10	insufficient option to work from home
28	9	lack of flexibility in working hours
16	5	lack of understanding from superiors for the compatibility of care/work
9	3	lack of understanding from colleagues for the compatibility of care/work
9	3	other
100	32	total

15% of the 60 people with relatives in need of care stated that they were currently unable to provide this care themselves, but intended to do so in the future. Reasons were given by 9 participants (multiple answers were possible):

Percentage	Number	Reason
67	6	time constraints
67	6	organizational aspects (e.g. physical distance, travel distances, etc.)
11	1	stated too specific care needs (e.g., need for medical equipment, special care skills, etc.)
11	1	the physical or mental strain of caregiving
100	9	total

## Childcare

### Multiple choice answers

90% have or care for 1 to 2 children and 10% have more than 2 children. 3% are single parents. The children are divided into the following age groups (multiple answers possible):

Percentage	Number	Age group
17	60	children between 6 and 12 years
12	42	children between the ages of 13 and 17
12	42	children under 6 years
8	23	children under 3 years
3	10	children under 1 year
10	35	children of full age
55	195	no children
100	355	total

159 people have childcare support. It is provided by (multiple answers possible):

Percentage	Number	Childcare support
77	122	partner, family, and relatives
48	76	childcare facilities such as a daycare center, daycare parents, or after-school care
10	16	friends or acquaintances
10	16	care for their children on their own
100	159	total

Care is guaranteed during working hours for 135 people:

Percentage	Number	Time frame
36	49	all the time
56	76	partly guaranteed (e.g. due to the opening hours of the care facility)
4	5	rarely
4	5	not at all
100	135	total

Interesting to note that, of the 55% of respondents who do not have or care for children, 55% are female, 43% are male, and 1% are diverse.

### Challenges of combining work and childcare

#### Likert-Scales

All Likert scales follow this scheme, which is why the graphics are not shown every time and the texts are shortened.

The reliability of childcare, even in the event of short-term changes to plans, was satisfactory (2.8).



Time or organizational difficulties regarding childcare can be discussed with the team or superiors at any time (1.4).

In the past, most of the solutions found to time or organizational difficulties regarding childcare were satisfactory (1.8.).

#### Multiple choice answers

159 people (multiple answers possible) mentioned conflicts and challenges between the duties towards their children and their jobs:

Percentage	Number	Reason
65	103	bottlenecks in care when the children are ill
56	89	overlapping of work and care times

30	48	inconvenient and/or long travel distances
14	22	insufficient options for home office
7	11	lack of understanding on behalf of colleagues for the compatibility of childcare and work
6	10	lack of understanding on the part of superiors
100	159	gesamt

### Free text answers

The free text responses regarding the challenges of combining work and childcare covered the categories „HHU services", "Vacation times and lecture times", "Childcare", "Organizational matters" and "The employee's team" (answers shortened):

#### HHU services

- Care bottlenecks due to illness of caregivers in HHU's large daycare. Children are not allowed to be brought if the caregiver is not present, substitution only works to a limited extent (**mentioned 3x**).
- Daycare spots could be arranged through the FamilyCounselingOffice.

#### Vacation times and lecture times

- Lecture times and vacation times overlap too frequently. This causes difficulties with the care of the children during that time. (**mentioned 13x**)

#### Childcare

- As the children are old enough, there is no need for childcare (**mentioned 6x**)
- Too little time overall. You also want to spend time with adult children (**mentioned 2x**)
- Childcare only works because partners can provide support as they have flexible working hours. (**mentioned 2x**)
- Place with nanny obtained only by absolute coincidence, the first months after parental leave no childcare - work accordingly in the evenings/early mornings (during the child's sleeping hours); only one response from the HHU daycare centers (out of a total of three applications), and that was a rejection

#### Organizational matter

- Urge to operate on a presence basis, which makes flexible working hours difficult.
- Inflexible administrative processes with long lead times often create unnecessary punctual workloads.
- Even childcare at 45h/week is tight for a 40h workweek considering the commutes.

#### The employee's team

- Childcare is only possible because of generous exceptions by supervisors. Also,

colleagues show a lot of understanding (**mentioned 2x**).

- Bad conscience towards colleagues, as most colleagues do not have children and work significantly more than contractually agreed upon (**mentioned 2x**).

## Central childcare services

### Multiple choice answers

The 355 respondents indicated their previous use of the centralized childcare services as follows (multiple answers possible):

Percentage	Number	Childcare services
7	25	Holiday camps
6	21	childcare in the city/region
6	21	Personal or digital counseling
2	7	childcare on campus
2	7	information opportunities via social media
1	4	the babysitting exchange
83	295	none
100	355	total

62 respondents plan to use the services in the future as follows (multiple answers possible):

Percentage	Number	Childcare services
29	103	Holiday camps
23	82	childcare in the city/region
19	68	mobilen Angebote (z.B. mobiles Eltern-Kind-Büro)
19	68	childcare on campus
15	53	personal counseling on-site or digitally
13	46	the babysitting exchange
10	36	information opportunities via social media
35	124	none
100	62	total

### Likert-Scales

The FBB service used met expectations well (1.9).

The FBB service used could be recommended to others (1.7).

### Free-text responses:

The free-text responses revealed which expectations of childcare services were not met. They are divided into the categories "flexibility of care", "U3 places" and "information flow through FBB" (answers shortened):

### Flexibility of care

- Offers not flexible, with no option to choose between half-day or full-day care **(mentioned 2x)**
- In case of illness of one of the childminders, the child cannot be cared for by the second childminder and is not allowed to come to the facility **(mentioned 2x)**
- Offer only in the summer vacations, not during autumn or Easter vacation
- Childcare for employees, who move in during the year is not provided

### U3 places

- There are very few U3 care places in the large daycare centers, which are intended for HHU employees. Namely, there are 3 facilities in total, two of them having 9 spots and one with 5 spots for U3 kids **(mentioned 3x)**.
- The places at Studierendenwerk facilities are inaccessible to employees **(mentioned 2x)**
- The FBB has little influence on the organization of childcare at least that is the impression.

### Information flow through FBB

- There are only references to other brochures from the BMFSJ and little to no university-specific information compilations; more information about existing offers would be nice **(mentioned 2x)**.
- Although I was comprehensively informed about care options, I had to look for places myself (kindergarten, after-school care), which took a lot of time and was associated with a high level of uncertainty.
- I have tried once to request a babysitter through the babysitter exchange. Because I have not received any feedback, I have always looked for support after that rather than through other channels.
- I contacted the FBB, and received very friendly counseling, but some questions were not answered

### Information on the existing offers

#### Multiple Choice answers

Percent	Number	Information channels
30	106	HHU website
23	82	intranet
12	43	asked personally at the relevant contact points



19	67	talked to colleagues and university staff
6	21	notices and posters around HHU
1	4	By other means (see free text field)
55	195	none
100	355	total

The free text answers also showed that the existing childcare services are not known everywhere (answers shortened):

- I only learned from this survey that there is a FamilyCounselingOffice (familienBertungsBüro)! No colleague with children told me about it! (**mentioned 3x**)
- Others informed themselves via committees, the FBB mailing, or online counseling during the pandemic

### Likert-Scales

The offers and services of the HHU regarding childcare and family justice are not satisfactorily known (3.8).

In the past, respondents did not actively inform themselves to a satisfactory extent about existing services and offers of the HHU regarding childcare and family justice (3.8).

The respondents' existing knowledge of where they can find out about offers and services is satisfactory (3.4)

The availability of information about existing offers and services regarding childcare and family justice at HHU is satisfactory (3.2).

The accessibility of available information about existing offers and services regarding childcare and family justice is satisfactory (3.2).

### Compatibility of family and career

#### Multiple-Choice answers

For the 355 respondents, a family-friendly working environment means multiple answers possible):

Percent	Number	A family-friendly work environment means
87	309	option of home office
86	305	flexible working hours
84	298	understanding by colleagues and superiors for family emergencies
63	224	predictable working hours
61	217	meetings at daycare and family-friendly times
12	42	other (see free text field)
100	355	gesamt

## Free text answers

The answers in the free text field to the question about a family-friendly working environment included the topics "Contract conditions", "Childcare", "Workload", "Parental leave/maternity leave", "Time management", and "Other" (answers shortened):

### Contract conditions

- permanent employment at the university/less temporary contracts (**mentioned 4x**)
- A salary with which you could afford to have children (and above all suitable living space), and the opportunity to go into partial retirement (**mentioned 2x**)

### Childcare

- A university daycare!/company kindergarten/company daycare (already clear that this is not a problem that MNF can solve) (**mentioned 13x**)
- The university daycare centers close at 3:00 p.m. and the children must be picked up before then. This is not compatible with regular working hours. The university daycare centers must be open between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. so that regular working hours are possible at all (**mentioned 5x**).
- Not having to work during school vacations, especially when regular childcare is closed, esp. not having to teach or work overtime (**mentioned 3x**)
- Spontaneous emergency offers in case of daycare, school or bus strike or closure, e.g. for days of the facility WITHOUT long formalities, independent choice of home office use in case of need, e.g. illness of relatives or similar (**mentioned 4x**).
- Vacation offers that are not offered over the entire day, but only 3 hours, are not helpful due to drop-off and pick-up times (**mentioned 2x**)
- Temporary relief in the case of special circumstances (school difficulties, illnesses, etc.), which require increased commitment at home (**mentioned 2x**)
- The reduction of all childcare contracts in the Studierendenwerk Kita Abenteuerland to 35 hours is a problem. Childcare hours are generally limited for small children. If there is no possibility of private childcare, it becomes even more difficult (**mentioned 2x**)
- Reducing all childcare contracts at the Studierendenwerk Kita Abenteuerland to 35 hours is a problem
- Support and immediate help for childcare from 2 months of age, also for short-term durations, e.g. max. 3 months

### Workload

- The tasks that one has as a professor are altogether too many. They go far beyond the normal workload (50 hrs plus) (**mentioned 3x**)
- Time requirements for chronic or long-term illnesses of relatives should be accepted in the same way as time requirements for children and relatives with a recognized care level or other reasons (without children). Otherwise, discrimination and gender-specific discrepancy arise (**mentioned 3x**)
- The credibility of overtime. Introduction of the 4-day week.

### Parental leave/maternity leave

- Without the understanding of superiors and the possibility of working flexibly or having a partner in the home office, it is difficult to implement a work-life balance. (**mentioned 2x**)
- Recognition and compensation also for colleagues who take over the work of people who are absent due to family issues/parental leave/maternity leave. This compensation often becomes a burden. (**mentioned 2x**)
- As the one without children, who often have to step in for colleagues with children, it is an additional workload; understanding for colleagues with family emergencies is great, but it is too often at the expense of us employees without children (**mentioned 2x**)
- Clarity as to who will take over one's responsibilities (teaching, publications in the review process) during parental leave (**mentioned 2x**).
- When announcing parental leave/pregnancy, an information pack about all contact points/options available at HHU would be desirable

### Time management

- Option to temporarily reduce/increase weekly working hours without high bureaucratic hurdles and career disadvantages.
- Option to reschedule courses if these have large overlaps with school vacations
- Home office options and flexible working hours, are not something that needs to be regulated from above by the university/faculty. These are parameters that the heads of the working groups can control themselves. In contrast, they do not influence childcare and can only share the frustration of our employees.

### Other

- It would also be possible to receive an invitation from the family counseling office, where all questions can be clarified

### Likert-Scales

Family concerns are well taken into account when planning holidays (1.9).

Family concerns are well taken into account in work organization and scheduling (2.2).

Colleagues respond sympathetically to family concerns (1.7).

Supervisors respond sympathetically to family concerns (1.7).

MNF is perceived satisfactorily as a family-friendly working environment (2.8).

Respondents are good at reconciling work and family demands (2.4)

### Parental leave

#### Multiple-Choice answers

53 of the 355 respondents took parental leave during their employment at HHU. These are distributed as follows:

Percent	Number	Status group
71	38	scientific staff
21	11	Technical staff or administration
8	4	professorship
100	53	total

Percent	Number	Gender
63	33	female
37	20	male
100	53	total

The parental leave amounted to:

Percent	Number	Time frame
36	19	Up to 1 year
26	14	2 to 3 years
19	10	1 to 2 years
19	10	up to ½ year
100	53	total

46% of the 53 people worked part-time during this period.

### Likert-Scales

The level of satisfaction with the organization of maternity coverage is satisfactory (2.7).

The level of satisfaction with the organization of the pregnancy replacement is satisfactory (2.7).

The organization of the replacement fulfilled expectations satisfactorily (2.7).

Supervisors provided satisfactory support in organizing the replacement (2.5).

Colleagues provided good support in organizing the substitution (2.3).

The accessibility of the necessary information regarding applications, deadlines, and modalities of parental leave was satisfactorily accessible and understandable (2.7).

Returning to work after maternity/parental leave was well manageable (2.3).

The support provided by the team/supervisor when returning to work after maternity/parental leave was good (2.1).

### Free text answers

The answers in the free text field show which expectations were not met regarding the organization and implementation of the parental leave substitution. They all relate to the category "substitution" (answers shortened):

### Substitution

- There was no substitution (**mentioned 10x**)
- "Substitution" usually only means that another person, who is already there anyway, takes over the tasks additionally. There is no staff pool, etc. from which a real substitute can be obtained. (**mentioned 3x**)
- It should be the supervisor's job, to find replacement arrangements and not the task of employees on parental leave to go "door to door" with colleagues, to distribute at least the most important tasks (**mentioned 2x**)
- During the parental leave, the working time could not be reduced to the desired 50%. A reduction of the assigned tasks was hardly possible, so I also worked full-time during this period.

### Wishes for the future – advancement

To improve the compatibility of work and family, the respondents consider promotions of the following measures to be useful:

### Multiple-Choice answers

The 355 respondents consider the following measures to be useful for improving the work-life balance (multiple answers possible):

Prozent	Anzahl	Maßnahme
54	192	option of home office
39	138	each expanded opportunity for all-day care
39	138	more flexibility in work hours
37	131	a more open atmosphere for communicating needs and conflicts
37	131	expanded opportunities for short-term care on campus
35	124	erweiterte Angebote zur Ferienbetreuung
32	114	expanded options for vacation care
22	78	more support for work-life balance from supervisors
15	53	expanded options for short-term care in the city/region

14	50	support for work-life balance from colleagues
11	39	Other (see free text field)
100	355	total

### Wishes for the future – free text field

Last, there was an open text field in which wishes, ideas, suggestions, or proposals for improvement for the future development of MNF in terms of family friendliness and compatibility of family and work could be entered. The answers can be divided into the categories "Childcare", "Vacation times", "Time management and planning", "Administration", "The employees' team", "Parental leave/maternity leave", "Childless employees" and "Other" (answers shortened):

#### Childcare

- Creation of childcare places for employees' children on campus (daycare from 3 months - until entry to school) with corresponding opening hours parallel to slots of teaching events (from 8:00 a.m., until 6:30 p.m.) **(mentioned 3x)**
- Open all-day school care times as well as daycare center opening times (until approx. 4:30 p.m.) collide with times for teaching courses (slot 2:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m.; slot 4:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m.) - travel time from HHU to the school close to home is not yet included in this **(mentioned 3x)**
- HHU offices pay 10 euros/hour and the babysitter still has to pay tax on this - this is not worthwhile for anyone and is not an hourly rate that is currently paid in Düsseldorf (more likely 20 euros/hour) **(mentioned 2x)**
- A more reliable backup in the KiTa, in case of absence of care due to illness. **(mentioned 2x)**
- A flexible care offer that can be booked relatively spontaneously and by the hour. **(mentioned 2x)**
- Creation of child-friendly play areas (similar to a children's café, possibly a playground) with childcare staff if care cannot be provided by parents/daycare centers/daycare mothers/daycare fathers **(mentioned 2x)**
- Care possibility from 15 o'clock until the celebration band **(mentioned 2x)**
- Cooperation with external care providers is useful and necessary

#### Vacation times

- Better coordination of the lecture-free periods with the school vacations in NRW. This is not specific to MNF, but it is the biggest problem with vacation planning. (I am aware that MNF has virtually no influence here, but would still like to have this

addressed). **(mentioned 7x)**

- It should also be possible for teachers to take 1-2 weeks of vacation during the Easter or fall vacations. The time between Christmas and the three weeks of summer vacation that remain is very long **(mentioned 3x)**
- A vacation camp for >12 year old children.

#### Time management and planning

- Schedule meeting and session times to be child-friendly. **(mentioned 13x)**
- More flexible working hours to be home earlier (17/17:30), and be able to spend time with family/kids, and if necessary to continue working in the evening. **(mentioned 3x)**
- Courses (which are very difficult to reschedule due to the very tight schedule for students and/or availability of rooms) repeatedly go beyond 16/16:30, but the opening hours in care facilities just do not **(mentioned 2x)**
- Time tracking at MNF. Part-time employees often work overtime compared to our full-time employees so that they manage to get all the work done **(mentioned 2x)**.
- The best family support is a permanent full-time job. Temporary employment prevents meaningful planning, and half-day positions despite the desire for full-time employment leads to poverty! **(mentioned 3x)**
- permanent contracts **(mentioned 2x)**
- Relief of female scientists with family duties, e.g. by reduction of teaching load. **(mentioned 2x)**
- When applying for parental leave, there were delays in processing due to administrative overload, despite the application being submitted three months in advance. This meant an enormous amount of extra work, e.g. because of incorrect salary payments, etc. The processing time for such matters is far too long and must be improved.
- EG 8 should be a matter of course for secretaries, as they hold everything together!
- Abolition of meetings at Schloss Mickeln. It is too far, difficult to reach, and usually in the evening hours.
- Since HHU is the employer's home office should be contractually regulated. At the moment some supervisors don't want it. This is completely unequal from subject to subject and from chair to chair, and therefore not fair.

#### The employees' team

- Support in balancing family and career should not (have to) be provided by colleagues

**(mentioned 4x).**

- Taking over tasks should rather be organized by superiors or there have to be defined arrangements for absences that everyone, including colleagues WITHOUT care obligations, can count on and plan for **(mentioned 4x)**
- It is of no use if those who take over the work of others (limited and predictable, usually with pleasure additionally) due to family friendliness become overloaded and ill in the long run.

#### Parental leave/maternity leave

- Better planning of who takes over tasks during parental leave **(mentioned 2x)**
- Who encourages fathers to share parental leave fairly? The topic of family and children is often left out and not discussed, but third-party funding, publications, and competition are constantly discussed **(mentioned 2x)**

#### Childless employees

- I think that it makes sense and is appropriate to promote various measures. However, since I am not yet involved, I cannot name any specific measure that requires promotion. However, the indication "None" would not correspond to my opinion either **(mentioned 4x)**
- Consideration of all types of family structures, including childless relationships **(mentioned 2x)**

#### Other

- You are directing inquiries to professors here and talking about contractual working hours. This does not make sense. Professors have neither working hours nor vacation days. So these questions are only about TVL employees **(mentioned 2x).**
- Thanks for this survey/great survey **(mentioned 2x).**
- There is a lack of positive feeling that family planning is welcome for young scientists. In research, too much emphasis on scientific results and too little emphasis on starting a family during the scientific qualification phase as a result **(mentioned 2x)**
- Desirable would be a parent-child café at the MNF - all parents would have the opportunity to bring their child and network in a pleasant with colleagues. This often results in a network, regardless of the parents' status group
- To be more flexible between work and childcare facilities, the option of a job bike (cargo bike) would be ideal. This way you don't have to rely on public transport and you are still environmentally friendly.



- The environment does not seem family-friendly because there are hardly any children on campus.
- Regular awareness-raising measures for employee leaders to increase acceptance of the needs of employees with family responsibilities and to support a work culture that lives work-family compatibility. Such workshops can also include practical guides for the practical organization of work within the team.

#### Measures implemented so far

- Based on the answers and results of the survey, the information on the MNF website has already been updated.
- Based on the answers and results of the survey, the information on the FBB website has already been updated.
- The FBB can provide 20 new daycare places for U3 and Ü3 children, available from 01.08.24.