Funding

Early childhood education and care

Publicly-maintained day-care centres for children (maintained by the local authorities) are financed by the local authority (Kommune), by the Land (subsidies to cover personnel and material costs etc.) and through parental contributions. Meanwhile, day-care centres that are privately maintained (by churches, parents' initiatives etc.) are also financed by the local authority (Kommune), by the Land and through parental contributions, and, in addition, by the maintaining body's own resources. Financing by the Länder may include subsidies to cover investment, personnel and material costs etc.

In 2014 according to the financing statistics, the public sector expended Euro 22.3 billion on day-care centres. The Länder share amounted to Euro 10.0 billion or 44.8 per cent of expenditure on the primary sector and the local authority share to Euro 12.3 billion or 55.2 per cent of expenditure.

Public spending rose by 8.8 percent between 2013 and 2014. The increase in expenditure is closely linked to the expansion of childcare places for under 3-year-olds. The Federation, the Länder and the local authorities agreed in 2007 to progressively establish quality and needs-oriented day-care services for children under three years of age in day-care centres and child-minding services until 2013. The Children Promotion Act (Kinderförderungsgesetz – KiföG) from 2008 regulates, amongst other things, the financial aid provided by the Federation to expand day care for children by setting up a “child care expansion” special fund. Since 1 August 2013 all children from the age of one have had a legal right to early-childhood education in a day-care centre or child-minding service.

Since 2008, the Federation has provided massive support for local authorities to expand day care for children and has invested in the quality of the care:

- through the “child care expansion” special fund with three investment programmes “child care financing” 2008–2013, 2013–2014 and 2015–2018 (a total of Euro 3.28 billion);
- through operating grants since 2015 with Euro 845 million each year; the Federation increased this support in both 2017 and 2018 by a further Euro 100 million (a total of Euro 6.26 billion in operating grants between 2009 and 2018);
- by providing funds that became available from the discontinuation of child care subsidies of around Euro 2 billion, which can be used by the Länder from 2016 until 2018 to invest in supporting child care.

Through the new investment programme “Child care financing” 2017–2020, the Federation supports the Länder with a total of Euro 1.126 billion to help create further childcare places.
Primary and secondary education

Financing of school education

The public-sector school system is financed on the basis of a division of responsibilities between the Länder and the Kommunen (local authorities). While the latter bear the costs of non-teaching staff and the material costs, the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder are responsible for the teaching staff payroll. Attendance of public-sector schools is free of charge.

In order to balance out school costs between the local authorities and the Länder, for certain expenses (e.g. for transporting pupils to and from school) the local authorities receive reimbursements or lump-sum allocations from the Land budget (generally by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs or by the Ministry of Finance). The Land also supports the local authorities through one-off grants, for example, contributions to school construction costs or certain subsidies for running costs.

Where schools have catchment areas extending beyond the local area, e.g. certain sonderpädagogische Bildungseinrichtungen (special schools) and Fachschulen, the Land can be the Schulträger (maintaining body) and therefore also responsible for funding the material costs and the non-teaching staff payroll.

In 2014, according to the financing statistics, the public sector expended Euro 61.8 billion on general and vocational schools. The Länder share amounted to Euro 50.6 billion or 81.8 per cent of expenditure, and the local authority share to Euro 11.2 billion or 18.1 per cent of expenditure.

Financial autonomy and control

Early childhood education and care

Under the statutory provisions the maintaining bodies for day-care centres for children are free to administer their own funding.

Primary and secondary education

A process to modernise and further develop the field of public administration is currently underway, which aims to attain a more effective and efficient use of resources. The purpose of this process is, above all, to remove the heavily regulated use of resources by extending the financial autonomy of the schools. The possibility of schools managing their own budgetary funds has increased in recent years on the basis of amendments to the school legislation. In the majority of Länder, schools are already able to determine their own use of resources for one or several types of expenses (e.g.
learning and teaching aids) within the budget allocated by the maintaining body. Initial approaches are also in place for the autonomous use of the personnel resources allocated.

**Fees within Public Education**

**Early childhood education and care**

Early childhood education is not a part of the state school system, and attendance of day-care centres is not, as a general rule, free of charge. To cover some of the costs, parental contributions are levied, the level of which may vary from Land to Land as well as from local authority to local authority and can depend on parents' financial circumstances, the number of children or the number of family members. In some Länder no contributions are levied for the final year or the final years in a day-care centre for children.

**Primary and secondary education**

Attendance of public-sector primary and secondary schools is free of charge, and there are no fees for enrolment or for report cards.

**Financial Support for Learners’ families**

**Early childhood education and care**

On application, financial contributions may be waived in part or in full if parents cannot afford to pay them. These would then be assumed by the local youth welfare office.

**Primary and secondary education**

In the *basic social security for persons seeking employment* [1] (Zweites Buch Sozialgesetzbuch) and welfare benefits (Zwölftes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch), in accordance with the *Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz* (German social welfare law for asylum seekers) and with the *Bundeskindergeldgesetz* (Federal Child Benefit Act) (for families who receive a supplementary child allowance or housing allowance), children, youths and young adults in need are in principle legally entitled to education and participation benefits (so-called education package).

The law takes into account the following needs for pupils who are eligible for the benefit:

- Additional expenses for the lunch together in the day care facility for children, school and in the child day care centre;
- suitable learning support that supplements the schooling,
- a total of Euro 100 each academic year for personal school needs such as a satchel, writing, calculation and drawing materials;
- expenses for school trips lasting one or several days (including class trips within the scope of education regulations), day care facilities for children and child day care;
- expenses for school transport, unless these are covered or assumed otherwise.

Benefits of up to Euro 10 a month are possible up to the age of 18 for participation in the community’s social and cultural life (e.g. for membership fees in sports clubs or fees for a music school). The implementation of the education package is the responsibility of the respective local authorities and districts.
Low-income parents may, under certain circumstances, receive the so-called supplementary child allowance from the Family Benefits Office on the basis of the federal law on family allowances. This supplementary allowance may be up to Euro 170 per month and child. It can be applied for from the Family Benefits Office, which also pays the children’s allowance.

**Financial support for families of pupils with special educational needs**

No information is available on financial support measures for families of pupils with special educational needs. Families of children with disabilities can be supported in the framework of services promoting the rehabilitation and participation of people with disabilities pursuant to Social Security Code IX (Neuntes Buch Sozialgesetzbuch).

**Financial Support for Learners**

**Financial support for pupils and trainees in vocational education and training**

In general, there are no provisions for financial assistance to secondary school pupils from grades 5 to 9. Some Länder have regulations allowing for the provision of financial assistance to pupils up to grade 9 who must be accommodated outside of their home.

On the basis of legal regulations on the part of the Federation (Federal Training Assistance Act – Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz), pupils from grade 10 onwards at general and vocational secondary schools are entitled under certain conditions to financial support from the state in the form of a grant, if they have no other means (mainly from their parents' income) of maintenance and financing training. For certain types of school, financial support for pupils is dependent e.g. on pupils being accommodated outside the parental home if the place of training is not accessible from there. Training assistance is paid to cover living costs and training, with the income and financial means of the pupil as well as the income of his or her parents and, if applicable, his or her spouse also being taken into account. Pupils may – depending on whether or not they live with their parents and what type of training institution they attend – receive financial assistance of between Euro 231 and Euro 504 monthly under the terms of the Federal Training Assistance Act. In individual cases a health and long-term care insurance subsidy of Euro 86 may also be granted. The assistance provided by the state does not have to be repaid.

In 2017 255,000 pupils received training assistance under the Federal Training Assistance Act. Federation and Länder expenditure on financial support for pupils under the Federal Training Assistance Act amounted to about Euro 800 million. Pupils granted support each received an average Euro 456 monthly.

Besides federal training assistance, pupils are entitled under certain circumstances to basic social security benefits for job seekers under the Social Security Code II (Zweites Buch Sozialgesetzbuch II – Grundsicherung für Arbeitsuchende). Some Länder have provisions under which upper secondary pupils who have no claim to assistance under the Federal Training Assistance Act can receive financial assistance from the Land under certain conditions.

During the final years of their education and training, pupils can make use of the federal government’s Educational Credit Programme (Bildungskreditprogramm).

**Teaching aids**

So that pupils have access to all teaching aids used in lessons regardless of their economic and social circumstances, most Länder have regulations on the provision of financial assistance for pupils to
purchase teaching aids (Lernmittelhilfe), or on their provision free of charge (Lernmittelfreiheit); this provision is, in part, staggered according to parents' income and number of children. Under these regulations, pupils are either exempt from the costs of teaching aids or only have to pay part of the costs. The funds are provided either by the Schulträger (the local authority responsible for establishing and maintaining the schools), or by the Land in question. As a rule, pupils at public-sector schools are lent textbooks and other expensive teaching aids for the time they require them. A fee is charged in some cases for the loan or the parents may be required to pay a portion of the costs in some cases. Parents and pupils are expected to provide their own expendable materials (exercise books, pens and pencils) and other items (e.g. drawing instruments, material for use in crafts and needlework/metalwork lessons). Each Land decides differently on whether pupils at privately-maintained schools are to be supplied with teaching aids free of charge.

Transport to and from school

Each of the Länder has arrangements as regards the transport of pupils to and from school. There are certain differences as to who is entitled to use school transport and the scope of services provided. In all cases, however, there are comprehensive provisions for the period of compulsory full-time schooling to which the following statements refer. In general, fares are reimbursed, usually for public transport, while under certain conditions a school transport service is established in its own right. The purpose is to guarantee fair opportunities for pupils from all walks of life, between urban and rural areas, schoolchildren with and without handicaps.

It is generally the responsibility of the districts and municipalities to ensure adequate provision for transporting pupils to and from the school they attend. School transport is usually funded by the maintaining bodies or the rural or urban districts (i.e. usually the local authority). In most cases subsidies are granted by the Land in question.

School transport services must be reasonable in terms of costs for the authority which supplies the funding and offer acceptable standards to the pupils who use them. Only such pupils who live a certain distance away from their school have a right to use transport to school. There are slight differences on this between the various Länder. Two kilometres is the general minimum distance for which transport is provided for primary school pupils, whilst from grade 5 onwards pupils living up to three or four kilometres away from school are expected to make their own way there and back. Exceptions can be made for shorter distances than these if the roads are particularly dangerous, and for handicapped pupils. Public transport is usually the cheapest solution. Where no public transport is available the local authorities provide school buses. In cases where this alternative does not make economic sense or is unreasonable for handicapped pupils, a subsidised private car or handicapped taxi service often provides the best solution. Where a pupil is unable to make his own way to school because of a physical or mental disability or strong sensory impairment, the local authority may also pay the fares of a person to accompany him. The actual form of transport between home and school always depends on local conditions and the specific cases involved. Some Länder have enacted very detailed regulations, while others leave it up to the districts and municipalities to make their own arrangements for the implementation of general guidelines.

The authorities are not obliged to provide transport for pupils to any school, regardless of distance. A right to school transport as such exists only to the nearest school, though the term is defined differently from one Land to the next. A partial refund of travelling costs may often be granted in cases where parents decide to send their children to a school other than that which is nearest to their home.

The assumption of travelling costs by the authorities does not mean that school transport is entirely free of charge in all Länder. In some Länder, the transport costs are assumed in full if the parental
income is so low that they are considered to be living in poverty. In other Länder, parents still have to make a contribution despite being on a low income. However, in this case, the amount of the contribution depends on the parental income.

**Accident insurance for pupils**

In the Federal Republic of Germany accident insurance does exist for all pupils and students during lessons, on the way from home to school and back and during school functions. School functions also include any programmes immediately preceding or following timetabled lessons where the school is required to provide supervision. These also include meals provided by the school, school walking excursions, study trips within and outside Germany as well as school trips. Statutory accident insurance is normally in the hands of the local authority accident insurance association.

**Private and Grant-Aided Education**

**Early childhood education and care**

Maintaining bodies for child and youth welfare services from the private sector receive financial support from the Land as well as from the local authorities (Kommunen) to run day-care centres for children (e.g. for operating costs and investments).

**Primary and secondary education**

The maintaining bodies of privately-maintained schools receive some financial support from the Länder, in various forms. The reference value is the situation pertaining to costs in the public-sector schools. All of the Länder guarantee standard financial support to schools entitled to such assistance; this includes contributions to the standard staff and material costs. The Länder either grant a lump-sum contribution, calculated on the basis of specific statistical data and varying according to school types, or the individual school may have to set out its financial requirements and receive a percentage share in subsidies. As well as school fees and standard financial support, there are other forms of financial assistance, which may be paid together with that support, such as contributions to construction costs, contributions to help provide teaching aids to pupils free of charge, contributions to old-age pension provision for teachers, and granting sabbatical leave to permanent teachers with civil servant status while continuing to pay salaries. Parents and guardians may have school fees and transport costs reimbursed. The funds are mostly provided by the Länder, but a small proportion is provided by the local authorities. A huge number of Ersatzschulen (alternative schools) are maintained by the Catholic or Protestant churches, which fund their schools from their own means to the extent that sometimes little or no fees must be charged. The share of public funding in the overall financing of privately-maintained schools varies between the Länder, and also depends on the type of school (there are also numerous special provisions, for example for approved privately-maintained schools in contrast to recognised privately-maintained schools, for boarding schools and for church-run alternative schools).
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