



Research on children, young people and families

at the interface between science,
politics and professional practice

The Deutsches Jugendinstitut (DJI; German Youth Institute) is one of the largest social science research institutes in Europe. Around 400 employees work at its two offices in Munich and Halle (Saale). The specialist units within the five research divisions investigate the living conditions of children, young people and families as well as the associated state welfare services and measures. Experts from the DJI have been advising policy-makers and practitioners as well as federal, state and local authorities for over 60 years now. They analyse social trends, conduct scientific studies on new professional developments, prepare forecasts and contribute important impetus for professional practice.

The DJI national survey on growing up in Germany (AID:A) and other regular and ad hoc studies compile valuable information on the life situations of children, young people and parents. The DJI moreover supports the German federal government in preparation of its child and youth reports and family reports, and is involved in drafting of the biennial national report on education.

Research at the DJI: topics of high practical relevance that benefit society

The DJI works at the interface between science, specialist practice and politics on topics that can help to solve challenges that our society is currently facing.

Scientific findings also arise from networked thinking and the exchange of knowledge, hence the DJI cooperates with higher education establishments such as the two leading universities in Munich (LMU and TUM), MLU Halle-Wittenberg and countless other research partners. A research alliance has existed with the TU Dortmund University since 2002.



The DJI's research divisions

Division for Children and Childcare

The division is tasked with reflecting on the transitions observed in childhood, gaining empirical insights into different contexts of growing up, analysing their significance to the well-being and development of children, and contributing to educational offers and childcare services.

The division's research units examine the life situations and living environments of children within their families, among their peers, in educational settings and during their leisure time. They analyse the structural and professional situation at childcare facilities and within child welfare services and contribute to the elaboration and evaluation of educational concepts for children. The professional development initiative for early education professionals (WiFF) affiliated with this division primarily seeks to strengthen early childhood education as the basis of education by professionalising the child daycare system.

Division for Family and Family Policy

The division conducts research on the living conditions and lifestyles of families and on family-related state welfare and assistance systems. It contributes its findings to the scientific discourse and also uses these to support and advise practitioners and politicians and inform the general public. Among others, the research team considers the questions of: How do families live, develop and change over time and in different social and structural contexts? How do family members organise their everyday lives and how can a sense of togetherness be fostered? What do families currently need to meet social and individual expectations? And what effect do family-related policies have?

The division's research units explore family life situations and lifestyles, family policy and support, family welfare and child protection as well as specific questions relating to early childhood intervention. The DJI partners with the Federal Centre for Health Education (BZgA) to operate the National Centre for Early Prevention (NZFH), which is financed by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ).

Division for Youth and Youth Welfare Services

The division examines the life situations and lifestyles of adolescents and young adults. General and diversity-related youth research topics are covered. Research is also conducted into youth welfare programmes and their recipients, the structure of child and youth welfare services, and the related policies. Interfaces with institutions working in the fields of education, training, social welfare and health systems are taken into account, as are links to the police and justice system.

The division prepares theoretical and empirical analyses of the interplay between young people's individual life situations and coping strategies on the one hand and their institutionalised environments on the other. The research unit based at the branch office in Halle explores the topics of political socialisation, the promotion of democracy and the prevention of extremism.

Centre for Social Monitoring and Methodology

The research unit focuses on indicator-based social reporting, further development of the methodology for social reporting, and the provision of research data, among others via the DJI research data centre. The unit's researchers support all DJI departments as well as external research projects that use DJI data.

The DJI national survey on growing up in Germany (AID:A) provides reliable data and analyses on the profound changes in the living conditions of young people and their families in Germany. Up to 25,000 parents, children, adolescents and young adults are surveyed at regular intervals as part of this.

Every year, the DJI childcare study (KiBS) asks more than 30,000 parents in Germany how they manage childcare for their children aged 0 to 10 years.

Research Unit for Youth Transitions

The research unit examines the institutional framework conditions and how adolescents and young adults handle the transition to adulthood. Above all, it considers the demands made of young people and the learning opportunities that exist in formal, non-formal and informal educational settings, along with their interplay with individual characteristics influencing development processes.

Based mostly in Halle though in part also in Munich, the research unit focuses on educational paths during adolescence with the different educational locations and programmes. Barriers to education, the corresponding support systems and municipal education strategies are analysed. The focus is on non-formal and informal education as well as on local and regional education policy.

Communication of research findings

The DJI communicates research findings on relevant topics via various channels: Overviews are provided on the DJI website and social media. The latest topics are explored and input prepared and made available to the political and scientific spheres and professional practitioners in the research magazine 'DJI Impulse'. Studies and reports are published directly on the DJI website as well as via peDOCS (open access repository for publications on educational science and research), SSOAR (open access repository for social science articles) or ResearchGate.

Researchers share more in-depth findings in brochures, scientific journals and books published by scientific publishers or the DJI's in-house publishing house. A social science reference library is maintained at the DJI in Munich. It currently comprises around 100,000 books and 185 print editions of specialist journals and is open to the public.

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