

**Prof. Dr. Thomas Goll** (\*1963) holds the chair of Integrated Subject Didactics in the Faculty of Social Sciences and is a member of the TU's Academic Senate. He lives in Dortmund with his wife and daughter (\*2016).



Source:  
private

## The deep relaxed father

*In order to be able to knock on Professor Goll's door on time, I wait the last remaining minutes in the corridor in front of his office on the South Campus. Suddenly the door opens and Professor Goll comes out. With a glance at his watch, he walks past me and kindly says he will be back on time. And it's true, after a few minutes he's back, invites me into his office and offers me a Kaffee. We chat briefly about my studies and then start the interview.*

## Organization is everything

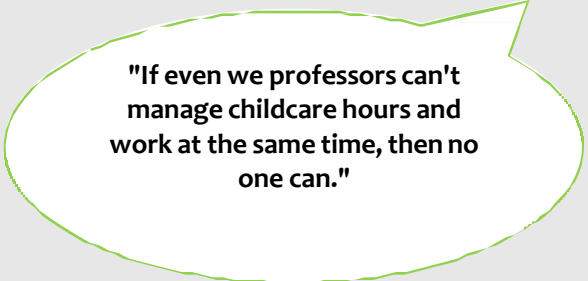
A typical day in the life of the Goll family starts early in the morning. First they start with a joint breakfast. After that, the parents agree on who will take the little one to the daycare center, where their daughter is cared for from nine to four o'clock. There is no clear arrangement for dropping off: "My wife or I or both of us take our daughter to the daycare center." After that, the workday begins either at homeoffice or at TU Dortmund University.

"Between 3 and 4 p.m., one of us usually picks up our daughter again and takes her shopping for the necessities. Afterwards, one of us takes over the afternoon care again."

In their free time, the family goes to the playground, to Rombergpark or to the zoo. At the same time, the little one is currently practicing riding a running bike. "We also like to go out into the garden, where the daughter can let off steam. We recently installed a swing there," says the father of the family.

The three of them also have a lot of fun together on vacation. The family spent a great time in Holland on the beach. They did a lot of things there. "On the beach we built a sand castle built, rode bikes, went out to eat a lot, played in the ball pool and visited the meeresaquarium," the family man recalls joyfully.

The parents found it relatively easy to arrange their care responsibilities after the birth of their daughter. Thomas Goll says in a detached tone: "We looked at our pay slips. I have a W3 professorship and my wife is an academic councilor. So it's relatively easy to decide what the postpartum arrangement will be." When his daughter was born, Thomas Goll had been an "established university lecturer" for some time. While his wife went on parental leave for a year, the professor continued to work as usual. "But I was still flexible," he emphasizes in conversation. The flexible work schedule as a professor still allows him to set up care time for his daughter.



**"If even we professors can't manage childcare hours and work at the same time, then no one can."**

Thomas Goll's wife is also an academic councillor in the field of subject didactics at the TU Dortmund University. "We are fortunately active in the same subject area," says Thomas Goll happily. When asked why he didn't take parental leave, Thomas Goll answers: "It's actually relatively simple: I didn't have to. There was no need to take parental leave because I can organize my day-to-day work well. I

I can take my little girl to the doctor or pick her up from daycare. Even if my wife gets sick, I can take care of my daughter. Besides, it would actually have been a disadvantage in terms of income to take parental leave."

## Displacements

The professor's working hours vary greatly. Thomas Goll describes it this way: "I work varying hours in my office at the TU. I have a workplace here that gives me so much freedom, that there is a danger that he will take away your freedom outside the office." The professor has a sense of humor, that is clearly audible. He continues with a grin, "No, it depends on what I'm working on and what phase of a project I'm in. Essentially, I can be flexible with the work."

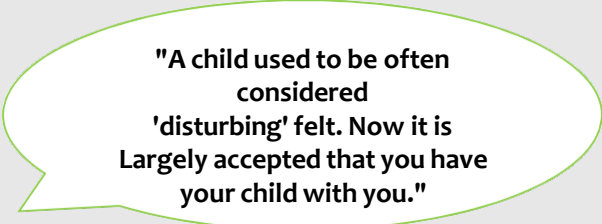
By career, he means having the freedom to set his own professional goals and to realize them in a self-determined way. When his daughter was born, he was already an established professor. "My career was not affected by my daughter, of course. The career was already there," the father notes with a laugh.

His little daughter is basically very bright and curious, but sometimes also very demanding and demanding. She then needs the full attention of at least one parent. During such phases, he and his wife have to take turns with his daughter.

and divide his working time differently.

"When phases like this come, we can As parents, of course, we can't work full-time on the side, but we have to take care of them. I then have to organize my working hours differently. It shifts, so to speak, from outside the home to inside the home." This shift also applies to leisure activities. Says Thomas Goll: "Priorities are shifting a bit here, too. For example, going out independently and such ge-nities have been shifted because we have obligations as parents and fulfill them as a matter of course." Even concert visits with friends are now only possible one at a time.

"My wife goes to the choir and I meet up with friends, for example. Meanwhile, one parent stays at home and watches the little one."



**"A child used to be often considered 'disturbing' felt. Now it is Largely accepted that you have your child with you."**

In urgent cases, i.e. "if one parent falls ill outside the childcare hours, the healthy parent can take the child with him or her without any problem," Thomas Goll says simply. He finds that this solution does not pose any difficulty in normal office activities.

The daughter has already been in various professional situations, for example in the office of the father, in a senate meeting and also when talking to the principal.

"We also take them to conferences, where there are now finally childcare facilities. In the past, that wasn't the case at all," recalls Thomas Goll.

### **A touch of tradition**

When I asked him if he had always wanted to become a father, Thomas Goll answered clearly: "For me, becoming a father is part of life. Children are a gift.

In everyday life, the parents share the care tasks for their daughter equally.

"So, there's no difference in who's doing the diaper changing, for example." However, the Famili-

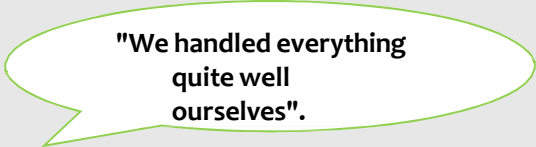
envater in the household rather the physical and manual work. On the other hand

his wife usually takes care of other household tasks, such as the laundry. "Quite traditionally just," grins Thomas Goll. In addition, the

Father likes and can also operate the washing machine. When his wife was in the hospital for the birth, he took care of the household as a matter of course.

Privately, the parents are socially involved and maintain many acquaintances. "We have friends who had children at relatively the same time as we did.

have gotten. New contacts were also made at the KiTa or in the PEKiP group, where my wife went while I was at work at the university." Thomas Goll and his wife enjoy meeting other parents and talking about all kinds of things, such as the children's sleeping and eating habits or their toys, but also about completely different topics, such as soccer or politics. These should not be missing, because it should not always be about children's topics.



**"We handled everything quite well ourselves".**

There is a family connection in the Golls' lives: even though they don't live in Dortmund, their grandmother is an important caregiver. However, they do not have all-around care from the family or friends. "That shouldn't be the main focus either. We've managed everything quite well ourselves," says the family man.

Whenever the daughter is asleep, the parent couple has time for themselves. "We take care of our daughter and then actually relatively equally and around the clock. Our central concern is not to push the child away."

## The view into the future

The father of the family admits: "It's not particularly difficult with our daughter at the moment. I don't expect it to get harder either. It will remain as similar as it is now." And even if his assessment were to deceive him, he is convinced: "Suitable opportunities will always be found for us."

Next, the parents plan to support their daughter musically. This will help her to perceive the world differently once again, and that is important to the parents as an educational goal.



**"When our daughter wants to learn to play an instrument, we will support this as best we can"**

To make it even easier for working parents at TU to balance family and career, Thomas Goll recommends more information. "I think that you have to be particularly aware of a higher transparency of the offers should be protected. In other words, a supplier market instead of a demand market. For example, I am now organizing a conference in December. Upon request, I learned that we can organize childcare here.

This allows colleagues to bring their children as well." He suggests advertising such offers offensively.

He also reports that other universities offer flexible childcare options for students' children, for example. There, care times can be arranged individually according to need. "I can imagine something like that at the TU. But overall, I'm quite pleased."

Finally, he is looking forward to the coming time with his daughter. "The next few years will be fun and lively, certainly also strenuous, but everything is in the green," says Thomas Goll, looking to the future in a relaxed manner.

 The interview was conducted by Rahime Eser 2019 

Thomas Goll on vacation with his daughter



Source:  
Private