



Stadt Chur

Deutsch für die Schule

Learning German in the year prior to kindergarten

Information for parents

When entering kindergarten at the age of five, a child should be able to communicate in German. If a child from Chur does not have sufficient knowledge of German, he or she will attend the programme for early language development: In the year before kindergarten, the children are looked after two half days a week in a German-language childcare facility together with German-speaking children. The parents take part in a parent education programme and actively support their child during the support year. What does this mean for the children, how must parents proceed and what are the costs involved? An overview.

Why should children learn German already before kindergarten? *Equal opportunities*

The knowledge of German is very important for success at school. Children who hardly speak any or no German when entering kindergarten begin their school careers with worse conditions than their German-speaking comrades. It takes several years for children to master German as an ambient language. That is why it is important that they can learn German before they start kindergarten.

The most important age for language learning and development is preschool age. Kindergarten entry in Chur takes place at the age of five.

The Chur School Act (711, Art. 39) therefore created the possibility to support pre-school children with little or no knowledge of German in the "Deutsch für die Schule" programme and to make participation compulsory for parents and their children.

How do small children learn German? *Playful, from child to child*

Little children learn when they feel comfortable. They learn languages through a stimulating environment, contact with caregivers in everyday situations and with peers. Our specialists in playgroups (Spielgruppen), nurseries (Kinderkrippen), day families (Tagesfamilien) and the Montessori kindergarten (Montessori Kindergarten) are specially trained and promote language development in a targeted and playful way (see list of providers).

There are many other reasons for visiting such an offer in addition to supporting learning German. In these institutions the children play together, integrate into a group, develop their personality and become more independent. The children are given comprehensive support.

How can I find out whether my child speaks German well enough?

Experts from the University of Basel have developed a questionnaire in a scientific process. This enables parents to assess their child's knowledge of German precisely, even if they do not speak German themselves. The questionnaire is available in many languages. It is sent by post in January to families with a foreign-language background whose children are one and a half years before entering kindergarten.

Parents must fill in the questionnaire truthfully.

In March, the Social Services Chur will inform the parents in writing about the result and the next steps. If the evaluation shows that a child's knowledge of German is not sufficient for admission to kindergarten, parents receive a binding application to participate in the "Deutsch für die Schule" programme. If the parents refuse to register, they can submit a written statement to the Social Services. Non-participation may result in a fine pursuant to Art. 292 of the Penal Code.

Registration - what now? *Place confirmation*

Together with the registration for the "Deutsch für die Schule" programme, parents receive the list of providers with the available playgroups, nurseries, day families and early kindergarten. The parents make contact with an institution, go to "try out" events and reserve a place. The programme management "Deutsch für die Schule" supports parents in finding places.

If parents have found a place, they fill out the place confirmation together with the manager of the offering institution. The manager sends the confirmation to the programme manager.

How often does my child have to participate? *2 times 3 to 4 hours per week in the year before kindergarten*

The programme obligates children to learn German two half days a week in the year before they enter kindergarten. Half a day in a playgroup lasts at least three hours. Regular visits are obligatory. The playgroups are based on the school holidays of the city of Chur. In the nurseries, the programme year usually starts on 1st August and ends on 30th June. The parents agree that the provider shall inform the programme management if the child does not participate regularly or if the contributions are not paid.

How much do the parents pay? *Financial support*

If a child takes part in the programme, the city of Chur contributes to the care costs in the form of tariff reductions. These are graded according to taxable income and assets and range from 20 to 80% of the respective tariffs.

Additional hours or half days are paid by the parents themselves.

What does parental education mean? *Strengthening of parents*

Parents whose children take part in the "Deutsch für die Schule" programme undertake to take part in eight parent education events during the programme year. These events enable parents to support their children in language acquisition; they are given information about the school system and other useful topics. The parental education programme is designed in such a way that working parents and parents without German language skills can also participate. The parental education offer is free of charge.

Parents who have completed most of their compulsory schooling in a German-speaking school take part in two events.

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