



A Good Start in Education, Switzerland Basel Kindergartens



Dear Readers,

A good start in education is very important for successful school life. A good preschool education prepares students for primary school and further education life. Therefore, kindergartens have an important role in children’s success. Kindergarten education makes a great contribution to the mental, physical, social, emotional and language development of children. In kindergarten, it is aimed to give children feelings such as love, respect, tolerance, justice, morality, cooperation, sharing, frugality, socialization, responsibility, cooperation, self-confidence and self-control besides attitudes, skills, rules and manners.

Kindergarten is a part of compulsory education in the canton of Basel-Stadt and lasts two years. Kindergarten is of great importance in the Basel education system. Children usually start kindergarten at the age of five. A child can be admitted to kindergarten early if he or she turns four between August 1 and January 31. The prerequisite for this is that the level of development corresponds to the requirements of the kindergarten. If a child is not yet ready for kindergarten, entry can be delayed for one year with the application of parents (Erziehungsdepartement, 2022a).

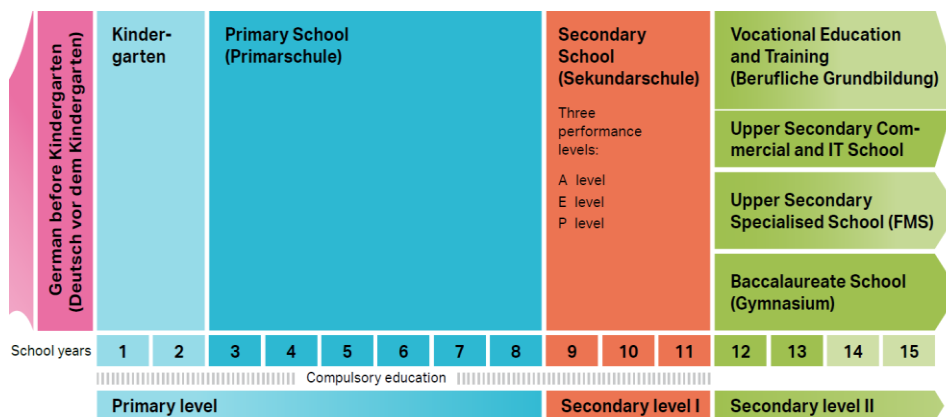


Figure 1
 The Education System in Basel (Erziehungsdepartement, 2022b)

Kindergarten, together with primary school, forms the primary school level. Kindergarten lasts for two years and is the beginning of compulsory education. Success

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in school is directly related to good kindergarten education. When children start two years of kindergarten at the age of five, they begin their school life. This is followed by six years of primary school. The primary level umbrella term aims to show the intense cooperation between kindergarten and primary school (Kindergarten, 2022).

As a rule, a maximum of 20 children attend a kindergarten class together. Classes are held from Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 12:00. There are classes once a week from 14 to 16 in the afternoon. Afternoon classes are held with only half the children in a class. The distribution of the groups is under the authority of the class teacher. Nursery facilities are available almost everywhere outside of class hours (Erziehungsdepartement, 2022a).

School attendance is mandatory. Parents are obliged to justify any absence of the child in the classroom to the teacher. If the child is absent from school for an urgent reason, the parent must apply for leave through the classroom teacher. In addition, children are insured by the family's health insurance against accidents that may occur during school and on the way to school (Kindergarten, 2022).



Der Kindergarten Basel-Stadt



Figure 2
The Basel-City Kindergarten (Kindergarten, 2022)

Kindergarten classrooms are heterogeneous groups with children in the two-year age range. As a rule, they are carried out in two stages, that is, children in the first and second school years go to the same class together. Children start kindergarten with different individual experiences, different abilities and skills. Teachers record children's progress by observing children and talking to parents. They recognize strengths and

weaknesses, abilities, interests, and needs. These findings together with the requirements of the curriculum form the basis for the courses (Erziehungsdepartement, 2022a).

Children learn how to use language in kindergarten. Since German is the language of instruction in schools, it is very important for children's school success that they speak and understand German when they start primary school. In Basel schools, the first language children speak is considered the mother tongue, even if they speak and understand the language they learned after their mother tongue. Therefore, for foreign children, German is always a second language. For this reason, language education becomes very important in the pre-school period. Integrative language support is provided to children with a different mother tongue other than German by an additional teacher in the lesson plan.

Learning in kindergarten takes place through play. The most important activity in kindergarten is play. Children learn while playing and play while learning. Play is the way to live and learn in kindergarten. In a game, the child can develop mentally, emotionally and physically, gain a wide variety of experiences and become a community. Children are encouraged and gain self-confidence in all areas holistically. It prepares the child for school in a fun way and encourages his/her holistic development. Teachers support children in their development and learning processes and encourage them to act independently. They holistically develop children in personal, social and specialist skills. In this sense, kindergarten is not just a place to play but also a "preschool" with clear learning goals. Kindergarten prepares children for a primary school in a fun way. Also, field trips and excursions are part of the lessons (Erziehungsdepartement, 2022a; Kindergarten, 2022).

Children can play games and have different experiences in kindergarten. However, kindergartens are not just a place to learn and play. During the game, the child develops himself mentally, spiritually and physically. Here he gains a wide variety of experiences and learns to join a community and live together in it. Kindergarten supports education in the family, creativity and socialization in children.

In kindergarten, children learn to act independently, develop their ability to perceive and express themselves with manual dexterity, and acquire the habit of concentrating. They learn to use different objects, toys, tools and instruments. In a safe environment, the child's self-confidence is strengthened. In kindergarten, children's differences are taken into account and their personal development is supported. In short, kindergarten creates an infrastructure for primary school success.

Education in kindergarten is holistic. This is achieved by selecting and designing learning opportunities in such a way that all areas of the child's personality (self-efficacy, social competence and professional competence) are promoted and reinforced in a balanced way. Teachers take into account the relevant developmental level of a child and build on individual skills and abilities. Each child is different, and their needs are different. Teachers take into account the individual development of the child. Teachers are in contact with experts and can advise parents if they have any questions (Kindergarten, 2022).

Children with special needs may be offered additional care by the co-teacher and supported in small groups. Children with disabilities can study with other children under certain conditions. However, there are also special kindergartens for children with different disabilities.

After kindergarten, a child goes to primary school. Kindergarten attendance is confirmed by a document. The repetition of the last year of kindergarten is possible only in exceptional cases with the recommendation of the teachers. The decision is made by the school administration after taking the opinions of the parents. Also, if a child is particularly productive and motivated, he may skip a school year and go to kindergarten for only one year. The decision is made by the school administration on the advice of the teachers if the parents agree (Erziehungsdepartement, 2022a).

At least once during the school year, parents are invited by the classroom teacher to a mandatory parent's evening. There they are informed about class activities, teaching materials and current issues and have the opportunity to exchange ideas. In addition, parents of each kindergarten and each school class appoint two parent representatives at the beginning of the school year. They collect the wishes and concerns of each classroom parent and discuss them with the classroom teacher or raise them at the parents' council. Parent delegates support teachers in organizing special projects and classroom activities (Kindergarten, 2022).

Delegates from all classes together form the school's parent council. The members of the Parent Council meet regularly with the school administration. They exchange experiences and advise and support issues affecting the whole school. Valuable opportunities arise through various events at schools, such as meetings and celebrations. At the parent council meeting held at the beginning of the school year, the two-person representative of the parents on the school council is elected (Kindergarten, 2022).

Sincerely,

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