Child care

Every child is entitled to childcare in order to receive individual support. Find out here what types of childcare exist.

Early support for children in child daycare facilities is an important contribution to equal opportunities. Children can build relationships with their peers and benefit from age-appropriate educational programmes. Early childhood educators support and accompany them in this process. Through a variety of offers, activities and different pedagogical approaches, they promote the social, emotional, physical and intellectual development of the child in a comprehensive and individual way.

Alongside the individual support for children provided by childcare services, they are often the most important factor in enabling parents to return to or enter the labour market.
There are many factors that determine where and at what age your child receives childcare. We have listed the different childcare options here:

Day nursery: a place for your children

The word Kindertagesstätte (or **Kita** for short) is an umbrella term for different types of childcare. In a **nursery** (Kita), your children will be looked after and cared for by early childhood educators for all or part of the day. Since there is a wide variety of pedagogical approaches, the concepts often differ from one nursery to another. Children aged zero to three are often looked after in crèches (Kinderkrippe). There are also nurseries with groups of different ages. You can visit any nursery in person to find out what is best for you and your child.

Crèches: for children aged 0-3

In Germany, a crèche (Kinderkrippe) is a place where children under the age of three can play with other children of the same age. Since younger children need more attention, they are cared for in smaller groups by qualified early childhood educators. The staff will playfully guide your children as they take their first steps in learning. Age-appropriate meals, naps and outdoor play are all part of the programme. Most day nurseries are flexible about drop-off and pick-up times. Parents' contribution to the cost of childcare varies according to their income, the region and the organisation running the crèche.

Childminding: flexible and comprehensive care

Childminding (Kindertagespflege) is a special form of childcare. It offers flexible, family-oriented and individual care by a designated childminder and is particularly beneficial for children **under the age of three**. These childminders are also referred to as **Tageseltern** (literally "day parents"). Depending on the arrangement, your children may be looked after in the childminder's home, in your home or elsewhere. In some federal states, several childminders can form a group and look after more than five children together. Such groups, usually called Großtagespflege (large day care centres), give children the opportunity to interact with their peers.

Kindergarten: care for children aged 3-7

The German word for preschool is Kindergarten – you may be familiar with it as it is also used in English. In Germany, kindergartens are for children between the ages of three and seven. Kindergarten usually starts in the morning and ends at lunchtime or in the afternoon, depending on the kindergarten and your preferences. As well as providing lots of fun and games, kindergarten aims to stimulate children's curiosity. Through simple experiments and playful instruction, they learn about nature and technology while developing their thinking and language skills. Germany also has bilingual kindergartens. Most offer English as a second language, with French and Danish the next most popular languages. As with day nurseries, prices vary widely. Some kindergartens charge no fees at all, while others can cost several hundred euros a year, depending on the parents' income, the region and the organisation running the kindergarten.

Since 2023, thanks to the Kita Quality Act (**KiTa**-Qualitätsgesetz), the federal states have been receiving financial support from the federal government to improve the quality of childcare facilities across the country.
You can also find out about all the benefits to which you are entitled as a family online at the **BMBFSFJ's Family Portal**.

Ask Me Anything: career and family in Germany

Legal entitlement to childcare

As of 1 August 2013, children aged one and over have the legal right to be looked after and supported in a nursery or by a childminder. This entitlement, set out in the **Child Promotion Act (KiföG)**, does not depend on whether the parents work or not. **Children over the age of three** have full entitlement to day care **until they start school**.

Finding the right childcare

1

Search

Start your search on the internet. Local government websites usually provide a good overview. Your local Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt) can provide information on all aspects of childcare.

Here you can find out what kind of childcare is right for your child and how much it will cost. Alternatively, internet sites run by and for families are a great place to find out about local services and to share tips with other parents.

2

Select

Use the **family portal** to search for local service providers. Visit your local authorities and different nurseries to find out more about childcare options.

Make an appointment for a face-to-face meeting with the early childhood educators to get to know more about their approach. Most centres also offer introductory sessions for parents and their children. Or ask your new neighbours, friends or colleagues if they know of a nursery they would recommend.

3

Register

Once you have found a suitable childcare centre, you can register your child there. Childcare places are scarce in many areas, especially in large cities.

Many centres have application deadlines and waiting times. You should therefore register your child early. Since admission requirements often vary from place to place, it is advisable to apply to several nurseries at the same time. Your local Youth Welfare Office can also provide you with information.

?

Did you know?

In addition, churches and social institutions often offer supervised playgroups for children (e.g. in family centres). Foreign language playgroups are also available in many cities.

Information on the web

Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ)

Information about child care and the rights of children and young people

KiTa.de website

Search for nurseries, creches and hoarding as well as job market for kindergarten teachers

Federal Employment Agency (BA)

Support possibilities for a better compatibility of family and work

Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ)

ESF federal program "Stark im Beruf" supports mothers with a migration background in getting a job

Print page

URL: https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/arriving-living/family-life/child-care
Date: 2026-10-30 07:09:59 GMT