

## Child care

---



The early support of children in child day care facilities is an important contribution to equal opportunities. Children can establish contacts with their peers and benefit from educational programmes appropriate for their age. Educators will support and accompany them throughout this process. Through a variety of offers, activities and different pedagogical concepts, they encourage the children's social, emotional, physical and mental development in a broad and individual fashion.

Apart from the individual support for children provided by child care services, they are most often the main prerequisite enabling parents to return or go to work.

### **Kita: A place for your children**

The word Kindertagesstätte (**Kita** for short) is a collective term under which different forms of childcare are summarised. At a Kita, your children are supported and fostered by the educators of the respective institutions for either the whole or only part of the day. Since there are various pedagogical approaches, the concepts often differ from one Kita to another. Children from zero to three years of age are often looked after by the day nurseries. However, there are also Kita centres offering groups of different ages. You can obtain information personally in each facility and find out which concept is most suitable for you and your child.

### **Day nurseries: For children from 0 to 3 years**

A German day nursery (Kinderkrippe) is a place where children under the age of three can play with other children of the same age. Since younger children need greater attention, they are looked after in smaller groups by qualified educators. Appropriate meals, naps and playing outdoors are all part of the programme. Most day nurseries are flexible about drop-off and pick-up times. Day nurseries are run by private and public agencies and by churches. Prices vary considerably and partly depend on the parents' income. Availability differs greatly by region.

### **“Kindertagespflege”:** Flexible and comprehensive care

"Kindertagespflege" is a special form of child day care. It offers flexible, family-oriented and individual care by a designated caregiver. This benefits especially children under three years of age. These caregivers are also referred to as "**Tageseltern**" which translates to "**day parents**", whose tasks are essentially comparable to those of childminders. Depending on the agreement, your children will be looked after in the childminder's household, in your home or in other premises. In some federal states, several childminders may also form a group and look after more than five children together. Such groups are called "Großtagespflege" and provide the opportunity for children to interact with their peers.

## Kindergarten: Child care for children from 3 to 7 years of age

The German word for preschool is Kindergarten - perhaps you are familiar with it, since it is also used in English. In kindergartens, your little ones are usually looked after in the morning and sometimes also in the afternoon. In Germany, kindergartens are for children between the ages of three and seven. More and more of these institutions are focusing on satisfying the curiosity of these young children, in addition to providing plenty of opportunity for active play. Simple experiments and play-based instructions teach them about nature and technology as they hone their thinking and language skills. In Germany, there are also bilingual kindergartens. Most of these offer English as a second language, the next most popular languages being French and Danish. Kindergartens are run by cities, churches, specially-founded associations and other private entities. As with day nurseries, prices vary widely. Some kindergartens charge no fees at all, while others may cost several hundred euros per year, depending on the parents' income and the region.

The so-called "**Gute-KiTa-Gesetz**" (**Good KiTa Act**) [↗](#) has created standardised regulations in Germany since August 1, 2019. Since then, not only families receiving social benefits but also families with a low income are exempt from parental contributions.

The **Strong Family Checkbook** [↗](#) and an **information** [↗](#) brochure for advising families with low incomes provide a brief overview of the government support families can rely on.

### Legal entitlement to child care

Since 1 August 2013, children from the age of one are legally entitled to receive care and support in a child care facility with a childminder. This entitlement does not depend on whether the parents are employed or not. It is laid down in the "**Kinderförderungsgesetz**" (**KiföG**) [↗](#). Children over three years of age have an unrestricted entitlement to child care in a Kita until they enter school.

### How to find the right childcare

**Step 1** - Starting your search: Start with the Internet: Local government websites usually provide a good overview. The respective youth office will provide you with information on all aspects of child day care. Here you can find out which form of child care is suitable for your child and what costs are involved. Alternatively, there are also Internet portals by and for families.

**Step 2** - Making your selection: You can use the **family portal** [↗](#) to search for points of contact in your area. Visit the various local authorities and institutions to find out about child care options. Make an appointment for a personal meeting with the educators to get to know the concepts of the respective facility. Most facilities also offer introductory sessions for parents and their children. Or ask your new neighbours, friends or colleagues if they can recommend a particular facility.

**Step 3** - Registering your child: As soon as you have found a suitable child care centre, you may register your child at that facility. Child care spots are scarce in many areas. Many facilities have registration deadlines and waiting times. Therefore, you may consider registering in advance. Since the requirements of the admission procedures often vary from place to place, it is advisable to contact several institutions simultaneously. The local youth office will also provide information in this regard.

## Information on the web

### Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)

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

Familienportal: information regarding child care

### KiTa.de website

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

Show more

**Federal Employment Agency (BA)**

Support possibilities for a better compatibility of family and work

**Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ)**

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

---

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/living-in-germany/family-reunification/child-care>

17.08.2021, 13:42