



**Stadt Chur**



## **Deutsch für die Schule**

Learning German for School

Learning German in the year before kindergarten

**Information for parents**

**When entering kindergarten at the age of five, a child should be able to communicate in German. A child who speaks little or no German is required to attend the early language support programme "Deutsch für die Schule".**

### **Why learn German before entering kindergarten?**

The conditions of children who are about to start their school careers and spoke little or no German when entering kindergarten are worse than that of their German-speaking peers. It takes several years before children know German, the language of their environment. Thus, it is important for them to have the chance to learn German before entering kindergarten. Therefore, the School Act of Chur (711, Art. 39) formed the basis for supporting preschool children who speak little or no German through the "Deutsch für die Schule" programme and for declaring the attendance of parents and their children at this programme to be compulsory.

### **How do small children learn German?**

Small children learn best when feeling comfortable. They learn languages through a stimulating environment, through contacts with persons to whom they relate most closely in everyday situations as well as through play with other children. Our qualified and specially trained staff, who work in playgroups, crèches, family child cares and early childhood education centres, promote language development in a targeted and playful manner. The children do not only learn German, but also gain important experience in a group of children and develop their personality and independence. In short, the children will receive comprehensive support.



## **How can I find out whether my child has sufficient German skills?**

Around 18 months before kindergarten starts, the Municipality of Chur sends a questionnaire to the parents. This questionnaire allows parents to make an accurate assessment of their child's German skills, even if they do not speak German themselves. The questionnaire, which is available in numerous languages, was developed by the University of Basel.

The parents are required to fill in the questionnaire truthfully and to send it back in due course. Its results will be communicated to the parents in writing. If a need for support is identified, the parents will receive a form for registration for the "Deutsch für die Schule" programme. If the parents refuse to register, they can submit a written statement to the Municipal Office. Non-attendance may result in a fine under Art. 292 of the Swiss Penal Code.

## **Registration is done – what next?**

In addition to the registration form, the parents will receive the list of playgroups, crèches, day families and early childhood centres. The parents then choose an institution, contact it, look in and book a place. If requested, the programme management will help the parents find a place.

## **How often does a child have to attend?**

In the year before entering kindergarten, children are required to learn German for two half days or one full day per week (at least 6 hours). Regular attendance is compulsory. Playgroups are synchronized with the school holidays of the Municipality of Chur. The programme year in crèches usually starts on 1 August and ends on 30 June.

## **How much do parents pay?**

The Municipality of Chur contributes to the childcare costs in the form of rate reductions, which depend on the taxable income and assets and range from 20% to 80% of the respective rates. Additional hours or days are paid for by the parents themselves.

## How often do parents have to attend?

Parents whose children participate in the "Deutsch für die Schule" programme will attend eight parents' events spread over the whole programme year. These events inform parents about the level of their child's language development, their entry into kindergarten, the Swiss school system, leisure activities in Chur and other useful issues. This programme is also open to working parents or parents without German language skills. The parent education programme is free of charge.

## Contact

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**For more information:**