



Canton of Zurich
Department of Education
Office of Elementary Education
Special support
Sektor Interkulturelle Pädagogik (Department of Intercultural Pedagogy)

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New residents with children of school age

All children and adolescents of school age who move to a municipality in the canton of Zurich have the right and the obligation to attend school. This applies from the beginning of their residence in Zurich and regardless of their residence status. Compulsory education also includes kindergarten.

Compulsory education

The period of compulsory schooling is eleven years, or until graduation from compulsory public school (end of elementary education) at the longest. It can also be completed at private schools that have the necessary permit from the canton.

When children turn four years old¹, they must start kindergarten at the beginning of the next school year. The cut-off date for birthdays is July 31st. In the canton of Zurich, adolescents are released from compulsory education when they turn 16, however, they do have the right to finish the school year.

For elementary education, you can not choose the school yourself: children attend school where they live. The local school supervisory authority (school board) assigns the children to the different schools. The parents are free to choose a private school. They must bear the costs for the private school themselves.

Enrolment

When a child moves to a municipality in the canton of Zurich, the parents are obligated to register it immediately with the local school supervisory authorities (school board). This applies to all children and adolescents of school age.

As soon as the family lives in the canton of Zurich, the parents contact the school board to discuss their child's enrolment and any questions there may be.

¹ Example
Birthday between...

01 August 2019 and 31 July 2020 → Starts school in the 2024/25 school year
01 August 2020 and 31 July 2021 → Starts school in the 2025/26 school year



The addresses of the local school supervisory authorities can be found here:

- for the entire canton:
www.zh.ch/schulen
- for the city of Zurich:
https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/ssd/de/index/volksschule/schulkreise_kreisschul-behoerden.html

Starting school

The school board assigns the child to a school. School management is then in charge of assigning the child to a suitable class. The class should be appropriate for the child's age. If a child speaks no or only little German, it will attend lessons in German as a Second Language ("Deutsch als Zweitsprache", DaZ) in addition to its regular lessons. The teacher of the regular class helps the child become an integrated part of the class and catch up with the curriculum.

In the cities, there are sometimes so-called Aufnahmeklassen (reception/induction classes). Children usually stay in these classes for a maximum of one year. They learn the German language and prepare for the transfer to a regular class.

Preparing for the labour market

The Amt für Jugend und Berufsberatung (Office of Youth and Career Services) offers counselling and information specifically for parents who do not speak German and have recently moved to the canton of Zurich.

This offer is called «Integras».

For adolescents who do not speak German and immigrated to Switzerland between the ages of 15 and 21, the Berufswahlschulen (vocational preparation schools) offer a special „Berufsvorbereitungsjahr Sprache und Integration“, a vocational preparation course focused on language and integration. In this one-year course, the adolescents mainly learn German. Additionally, they learn what they need to know to attend a continuative intermediate school or begin vocational education and training.

The Mittelschul- und Berufsbildungsamt (Office of Intermediate Schools and VET) offers [bridge-year programmes](#). These courses bridge the gap between the end of compulsory education and the beginning of initial vocational training. They are intended for adolescents who did not find an apprenticeship after secondary school or for whom it is still too early to choose a profession.



Further information for parents

- [Information for parents on elementary education in the canton of Zurich, including kindergarten](#)
- [Classes in German as a second language \(DaZ\)](#)
- [Voluntary classes in a non-German native language \(first language\)](#)
- [Overview of the different levels of the education system in the canton of Zurich](#)
- [List with links for migrants on the topics of integration, education, and work \(list is in German\)](#)