



Information for parents – German as a second language (DaZ)

Dear parents

Around a third of all young learners in the county of Zurich speak a language other than German in their family. One of the goals of elementary education is to ensure that all children/young people's German is good enough to enable them to participate in lessons. If necessary, the school supports learners by offering additional lessons in German as a second language (Deutsch als Zweitsprache (DaZ)). Here we aim to inform you about how the children/young people who need to improve their German skills can receive support at various levels of elementary school.

How does the school support children with learning German as a second language?

Kindergarten:

- *German as a second language (DaZ) in kindergarten*
Children who can only speak very little or no German have one-to-one or group lessons with a qualified DaZ teacher. The child has between two and four lessons a week. DaZ lessons take place in kindergarten.

Primary and secondary school:

- *DaZ for beginners*
Children and young people with no prior knowledge of German who move to the county of Zurich have „DaZ for beginners“ lessons at school every day for a year either in a group or in a „Reception class“. The aim is for the child/young person to learn enough basic German for them to actively take part in lessons in mainstream school as soon as possible.
- *DaZ for intermediate learners*
Learners who already have a basic understanding of German but not enough to be able to participate in mainstream classes have between two and four „DaZ for intermediate learners“ lessons a week („DaZ-Aufbauunterricht“).

The school takes the following approach when a child/young person needs support with learning German:

- When you or your child's teacher thinks your child needs support, the teacher will set up a parent-teacher meeting to evaluate your child's current level („Schulischen

Standortgespräch“). At the meeting you should both agree on the kind of support your child should receive. If there is any disagreement, the school governing board reaches a decision.

- The next step involves the DaZ teacher creating a study plan for each child and providing individualised support to learn German.
- The class teacher also helps the child/young person to learn German and ensures that the exercises they are given in class are appropriate to their German skills.
- The teaching staff talk to you about how you can help and encourage your child to learn German outside of the school.

What can parents do?

- Demonstrate to your child that both your own first language and the German language are of value and importance.
- Encourage your child's language development by talking to them often about different topics in the language you feel most comfortable speaking – it is often your first language.
- Make the most of opportunities to use German. Your child will learn a lot of German from being with German-speaking children in the playground, in play groups, in daycare, in after-school clubs, sports clubs, in scouts etc.
- Borrow books, audio books, educational games and other audio-visual material from your local library. Look at picture books with your child and read them books, making sure your child reads a lot themselves.
- Let your child attend classes in the language and culture of your country of origin (Heimatlicher Sprache und Kultur - HSK, see Information/advice), if such courses are available in your first language. This will help your child to learn to read and write in their first language. Being bilingual is an advantage.
- Provide your child with a quiet place at home where they can do their homework on a regular basis.
- Keep in touch with your child's teacher, talk to them openly about how your child's language and learning is progressing and about their well-being.

Information / advice

For any questions related to learning German, please contact your child's teacher or the Volksschulamt, Sektor Unterrichtsfragen, Tel.: 043 259 22 62, E-Mail: unterrichtsfragen@vsa.zh.ch

Further information about German as a second language can be found in the following brochure: „Deutsch als Zweitsprache in Aufnahmeunterricht und Aufnahmeklasse“ at: www.volksschulamt.zh.ch/daz.

For information about classes in the language and culture of your country of origin (HSK), such as contact details and information about what is available in 22 languages, go to: www.vsa.zh.ch/hsk and www.hsk-kantonzuerich.ch

Further reading for parents of children growing up in a multilingual environment:

- Nodari C. / De Rosa R. (2003). Mehrsprachige Kinder. Ein Ratgeber für Eltern und andere Bezugspersonen. Bern: Haupt.
- Cathomas R. / Carigiet W. (2008). Top-Chance Mehrsprachigkeit. Zwei- und mehrsprachige Erziehung in Familie und Schule. Bern: Schulverlag.