

## Important Message

Dear Parents or Guardians,

**Mastery of German is one of the most important factors in ensuring your child or children do well at school.** A sound knowledge of German also provides a **very important basis** when starting work or moving on to more advanced schooling.

**At school**, children with a language background other than German are provided with effective support in learning German through the programme “Deutsch als Zweitsprache” (DaZ - ‘German as a second language’). However, our experience indicates that children only gain sufficient mastery of the German language if they **come into as much contact as possible with Swiss German and standard German outside school as well**. Here the children rely on your help as their parents/guardians! We therefore recommend that your children ...

- ... frequently play with children who speak Swiss German or standard German (1).
- ... visit daycare families who speak Swiss German or standard German (2).
- ... are supervised at lunch groups and daycare centres where Swiss German or standard German is the most commonly used language (3).
- ... get involved in local Swiss sports and music clubs in their free time (4).
- ... borrow books in German from the library and read them (5).

Watching films and television programmes in German is a passive way of helping children gain a somewhat better understanding of German. However, if your child is to learn to speak German well and gain active mastery of the language, simply watching films and television programmes in German is far from sufficient! Points 1 to 5 listed above are much more effective!

Essentially, the simplest way is to learn Swiss German or standard German before starting nursery school. If you have children who are still at this age, points 1- 3 above are especially important for your younger children.

Thank you very much for taking note of this advice: it is vital for your children’s future!

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