



DVD „Going to school in the county of Zurich – information for parents“

## **What you can do to encourage your child's learning**

Tips for parents with children in primary school (revised edition 2014)

### 1) Working with schools

- Take an interest in how your child is getting on at school and with their learning.
- Keep in regular contact with your child's teacher – once a year at least or more if desired.
- Come to events at the school – even if you don't speak German well and may not understand everything. By participating, you'll learn more about the school.
- If you don't speak German very well, the school can arrange for an interpreter to translate at important parent-teacher talks for example. Ask the school if they can bring someone in for you.
- Talk to the teacher about how you can support your child's learning.
- Get in touch with the teacher early on if you have any concerns.
- Having a positive attitude towards school supports your child's learning. Talk about school in a positive way in front of your child – even if you don't always share the views of your child's teacher. Negative attitudes can create divided loyalties for you child.

### 2) Workplace and study times at home

- If possible, create a well-lit, quiet workspace for your child.
- Make sure the most important equipment is to hand: pens and pencils, eraser, pencil sharpener, paper, scissors and glue.
- Try to ensure that while your child is learning they are not distracted by loud conversation, radio, TV or other digital media.
- Talk to your child about when in their daily programme they can learn well and without being disturbed. Agree regular study times with your child for homework and for learning – for example right after school or before dinner. Think about breaks and try not to fill your child's schedule too much.



### 3) Supporting your child with their homework

- See if and especially how your child does their homework. Encourage your child to learn independently (see 4).
- Help your child if they're having difficulty understanding something. Ask them to explain the task: „Tell me what you need to do“. Help them by giving an example or by explaining the first step (see 4).
- Talk to your child if doing homework regularly creates tension. Try to change any patterns that exist – for example by having dad check the homework instead of mom. You may also want to work with the teacher to find a solution.

### 4) Encouraging independence

- Encourage your child to do their homework on their own. Only help them if they ask for your help. Offering your help without being asked can be counterproductive (see 3).
- Work with your child to find out how they go about learning certain things best (which strategy best suits them). Whenever you can, remind your child about what works best for them.
- Encourage your child to check their own work: „There's something wrong with this exercise. Have another look at it.“

### 5) Understanding, confidence and praise

- Have confidence in your child's learning skills.
- Help build up their self-esteem by focusing on their strengths rather than on their weaknesses. Strengths include the skills, flair and dedication they have in any subject at school, not just their performance in graded subjects such as German and mathematics.
- Compliment your child on their achievements. Don't just praise them for their success (grades) but also for their efforts.
- Your child's interests and efforts play an important role in how good their performance or grades are. For their success at school, it's best not to attribute good performance to luck („You were lucky“). It's also not very beneficial to attribute poor performance to a lack of skills.
- Be understanding and patient if your child is having difficulty with their learning. Work with your child to find ways to overcome any difficulties (involve the teacher if necessary).

### 6) Encouraging language development

- Speak with your child a lot every day – and speak about a wide range of subjects. This will help them increase their vocabulary.
- Support your child's interest in language by looking at picture books together, saying rhymes, singing, and telling or reading stories out loud.



- Encourage your child's reading. Take them with you to your local library. If you enjoy reading, you're also setting a good example for your child.

#### 7) Further support

- If necessary, sign your child up for any additional learning support that is available – for example, a homework club at school or any other activities organised by the school, or by clubs, community social clubs or other organisations in the area.

#### 8) Sleeping and eating

- Make sure your child gets enough sleep.
- See that they have breakfast before going to school and that they take a healthy snack to school.
- Arrange for your child to be supervised over lunchtime and after school (at home, at a lunch club or a similar out of school childcare service).

For further information, go to:

[www.vsa.zh.ch/dvdeltern](http://www.vsa.zh.ch/dvdeltern)

and:

[www.vsa.zh.ch/translations](http://www.vsa.zh.ch/translations) (includes a factsheet on intercultural interpreters)

You can find detailed information on successful learning in the following brochure:  
Schader, Basil (2012): „Mein schlaues Lernheft“. Zürich: Orell Füssli. (You can also find translations in some languages here: [www.volksschulamt.zh.ch/quims](http://www.volksschulamt.zh.ch/quims) > Handlungsfelder > Förderung des Schulerfolgs > Training und Lerntechniken für erfolgreiches Lernen)

If you are interested in the DVD on Schools in the Canton of Zurich, contact:

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