

Going to school for the very first time.

Useful tips and facts for parents and their pre-schoolers

Soon your toddler will attend school for the very first time. It is a special moment that might raise some questions on your behalf. The booklet Going to school for the very first time hopes to answer them: you will find useful tips and tricks, true stories and clear information. This translation leaflet in your own language serves as a stepping stone.



“We take good care of your child”

Ms Ellen, teacher at Basisschool Klaverdries, Dronen

“Together with the childcare worker, I make sure that every child feels comfortable at school and develops well. It’s like I’m a mother-hen nestled among her chicks. I also believe in a good relationship with the parents. That makes talking easier. That’s why I love it when parents visit the class after school and the children show what they have been doing. Their shining faces are magical.”

“A special teacher is available to help out with language”

Ola Bogdanowicz, Amelia’s mum

“Amelia will attend school in 2 months. We have already visited the school once last month. The teacher and head teacher seemed very friendly. And all those beautiful new toys: just what Amelia likes. At home we speak Polish. Some Flemish friends joined me on visiting day and helped me with the registration. At school, a special teacher is available to help out with language if necessary.”



Five parent questions

1 My child does not speak any Dutch. Is it allowed to attend pre-school?

Yes, of course. Your child will quickly learn Dutch at school through playing. Most schools offer additional support for learning Dutch for the children that need it.

2 Are diapers and afternoon naps an option at school?

Some pre-school classes dispose of a sleeping area, while others do not. If your child still needs an afternoon nap, it could start off by attending school only half a day. You can discuss the options with the teacher. It is also good to ask about the agreements concerning toilet training. Even if your child still wears a diaper it is allowed to attend school. However, starting potty-training at home with when your child is ready, is recommended.



3 What does pre-school cost?

- Materials and school trips needed to reach development goals are free of charge.
- For hot meals, drinks and supervision during lunch hour, schools are allowed to request a reasonable contribution.
- The expense for extra school trips or magazines may not exceed the amount of 45 euros per school year.
- School bags and gym shoes are at your own expense.

Low-income families can obtain financial support subject to certain conditions. This is called a **pupil grant**. This amounts to 93.21 euros (for the 2016-2017 school year) for a pre-schooler.

4 What is the best moment for my child to start attending school?

Your child is allowed to attend pre-school from the age of 2 and a half. There are fixed starting dates for new pre-schoolers: the first school day after each school holiday, the first school day in February, and the first school day following Ascension Day.

As a parent, you are free to choose a school. However, you must always follow the registration procedures. These vary from school to school and from region to region. It is recommended to find out all about this when your child turns 1. Kind en Gezin can also provide information and help.

5 Why is pre-school important for my child's future education?

The teacher will encourage your child to experiment, persevere, and think in an abstract way. In doing so, it will experience joy and success in learning. That will make learning in the future easier.

Language is also practised at school: how should you talk with adults or other children? A rich language basis makes thinking and studying simpler.

If your child regularly attends pre-school, it will also get used to the way school life is structured.



Would you like to learn Dutch?

Find a school for adult education in your neighbourhood at www.huizenvanhetnederlands.be or ask your child's school for the address.



This package also contains:

A school story card. "How did your day go at school?" For pre-schoolers, that is not an easy question. Visualising the school area can facilitate your conversation. After school, look at the illustrations on the card together. Ask questions about what your child did in class, on the playground or in the cafeteria.

Stickers. Did your child do a good job tidying up? Or was it able to keep his or her underpants dry? Reward it with a sticker.

A beginner's book for parents: Going to school for the very first time. Discover more information, more tips and more stories here.