

Dear DaZ parents,

We are delighted that you entrust the care of your child to us. With your choice for the iDSB, you have made an important decision for the further education of your child: We offer your child the unique opportunity to learn the German language intuitively, with much joy.

Your child will learn German through our German-language education, contact with other German-language iDSB pupils, and **the iDSB DaZ language development** concept.

As a German school abroad, we have only limited influence over the language spoken near your child, which is why we strive to design the German input for your child as **intensively** as possible. The support of parents is both helpful and vital. They can assist their children as they learn the German language – even if it is not their own mother tongue.

To us, this “parental work” does not entail doing grammar exercises with your child at home or training vocabulary. With this reader, we strive to offer you a few **pointers** on how you can help shape a positive environment for your child – to experience and learn.

What can you do as a parent?

1. Guarantee punctual and regular participation of your child in the development programme

Please always drop your child off **on time** when the DaZ hours take place in the first hour. Please also try to avoid scheduling doctor's appointments, etc. during the DaZ hours. Regular participation is particularly important, as the development curriculum continuously builds on previous sessions.

2. Support of the mother language

Learning a second language does not imply neglecting the mother tongue. Quite the contrary, the child's mother-language capacities should be strengthened through **targeted playing and talking** by the parents with the children. Correctly and confidently mastering the mother tongue forms a good basis for learning a second language successfully.

Arrange fixed times for **regular conversation** in your daily family life. Allow your child to talk! Note whether you and your child spend around 15–30 minutes talking each day and whether this conversation is a true dialogue.

From our experience, we can offer you the following advice on this:

When?

- Arrange **fixed times**: Talk about your child's day in school every day, e.g. after your child comes home or goes to bed. Read a lot to your child.
- Use **every opportunity to converse**: when bringing your child to school/ kindergarten or picking him/her up, during drives, in the waiting room, when queuing for the cash register, etc.

What?

- **Vocabulary**: Your child should know new words/phrases in both languages, and not just in one each (no German "kindergarten vocabulary", e.g. rubber boots, rain pants, activity corner, rest period, morning circle etc.).
- Your child should learn how to **tell stories in the mother language**.
- Here, it is very important to **read to** your child in the mother language, as well as **tell your child stories**.

How?

Use the mother language consciously in daily life

- Read your child fairy tales, e.g. bedtime stories
- Tell stories
- Your child's language skills of the mother language are strengthened by audio books with accompanying picture books
- If your child asks you "Why" questions, explain the world to him/her
- Facilitate your child's experiences, e.g. in the museum, on the playground, at the sports club...
- Talk about daily life and describe as much of it as possible

Let your child tell stories

- Let your child tell stories about his/her day in school and experiences with friends
- Let your child re-narrate stories you read to him/her
- Talk about shared experiences/trips (What was your favourite thing today? Why?)
- Let your child finish his/her sentences

3. Support of the German language within the iDSB

- Already bring your child to **German-language** kindergarten regularly at a young age, for the earlier they start learning the language, the more frivolous and playful children deal with the German language.

- Use our **full-day programme**, which you can tailor to your child's needs in a modular manner
 - lunch at the school (canteen or pick nick)
 - homework time
 - work groups (WG) with sports, games, exercise, dancing, choir, theatre, cooking, pottery, basket weaving, building soapbox cars, and many other activities on offer...
 - Late afternoon care "Bunte Zeit"
- **Holiday care** at the iDSB: Please consult the iDSB homepage to find out about the dates of the iDSB care programme.

4. Support of the German language outside of the iDSB

Our recommendations:

- Do not talk German with your child if you do not master the language very well
- Support **friendships with German children** and stimulate playdates with German-speaking children
- Invite **adult German acquaintances** or visit them and let the adults play with the children if possible. The communication amongst children is very different, in terms of content and vocabulary, from the communication between an adult and a child.
- Use **event mailings**: Consult the iDSB homepage to find out about the link lists of the parents' council for Brussels and the Brussels area
- Visit **German-language events**: Puppet theatre, theatre performances
- Book German-language **internships/holiday care** for your child
- Use German-language **afternoon activities** in Brussels, such as:
- German-language leisure activities:
 - Pizzicato – music and exercise for children from 2-7 years at the Centre Imagine, Chaussee de Maline 77, 1970 Wezembeek-Oppem, tel: 02-6758322, chrisgusek@hotmail.com
 - The "Library of the Emmaus Congregation" (Av. Salomé 7, 1150 Brussels), regularly hosts afternoon reading clubs for children from 5 to 7 years. They take place on Thursdays and advance registration is not necessary: www.buecherei.degb.be
- Consult the information about Living in Belgium A-Z listed under the section "Information for Parents" on the iDSB homepage as well. Here, you will find useful information about daily life in Belgium, by parents for parents.

Further German-language input sources are provided by the **media**. Even if these cannot replace daily conversation, they can provide incentives for further conversations.

Please note that:

- you select a certain German-language programme in advance;
- you watch the programmes together with your children.

In the following, you will find a selection of recommended media offerings (many TV offerings can also be found on YouTube or in the ARD/ZDF media library):

ZDFtivi http://www tivi.de	recommendations for programmes and cartoons suitable for children
Sendung mit der Maus ARD, Sundays at 8:30 am	short cartoons and educational films in simple language
Löwenzahn / Fritz Fuchs YouTube	education broadcasts for primary school-aged children
Sandmännchen Kika	short stories for kindergarten-aged children
Pur+ / Wissen macht Ah / Willy will's wissen Kika	educational broadcasts for primary school-aged children
Motzgurke-TV www.kindernetz.de/motzgurketv	educational broadcasts for primary school-aged children
wasistwas.de	reports and educational website and search engine for primary school-aged children
YouTube	short recommend films for primary school-aged children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biene Maja • Winnie Puhs Abenteuer • Bummi und seine Freunde • JoNaLu • Tro Tro
The school library of the iDSB	the DVD collection is still in the development stage, and offers carefully selected children's films
The library of the Emmaus Congregation	German books, audio books, DVDs and Magazines for children and adults – www.buecherei.degb.be
Gutenberg	German children book store www.gutenbergbuchhandlung.be

The DaZ offerings of the iDSB generally support your child adequately; however, if you wish to make use of additional offerings to learn German (e.g. with a private tutor or institute), please consult with us briefly. In our experience, it might block and frustrate the natural language acquisition process of children if they are taught using different didactic concepts at the same time.

FAQs

1. How can I support my child's multilingualism?

Your child's original language is part of his/her identity. We do not consider multilingualism a "problem", but rather an important competence, cultural asset, and additional capacity that will benefit your child throughout life. Therefore, the original language merits particular attention and appreciation and should be stimulated. Here, one should follow certain rules – that require consistency, perseverance, and strength of parents – to facilitate sustainable learning and proper differentiation of both languages from the very beginning.

The **following principles** have been established in the teaching of a second language to children:

- The "one-person-one-language principle" (define in which language you will speak to your child)
- The domain-specific use of language (e.g. the original language is spoken at home, German everywhere else)
- Families that have more than one original language should define one language in which the family speaks when all members are together. This language should be understood by all.
- (Both) languages should be available to the child in balanced measure.

2. What do I do when my child answers in German?

Stay calm and answer in the original language. It requires a lot of determination and focus not to start talking German yourself, but it's worth the effort.

3. Is it a bad thing if my child mixes languages?

Mixing languages (code switching) is completely normal with multilingual people. The child needs to be able to assign words and rules to the correct language. Here, you can support your child effectively, by taking the sentence your child spoke in mixed languages and repeating it, e.g. as a question in ONE language, without explicitly correcting your child.

e.g.	Child:	<i>Mama, can I eat an Apfel?</i>
	Mother:	<i>Yes, of course, shall I peel an apple for you?</i>
	or Mother:	<i>Would you like to eat this, or this apple?</i>
	Child:	<i>Mommy, bitte, I need your Hilfe!</i>
	Mother:	<i>What can I help you with?</i>
	or Mother:	<i>What's up? What can I help you with?</i>
	Child:	<i>This is mehr schöner.</i>
	Mother:	<i>You think this is prettier?</i>
	Child:	<i>I'm waiting for dich.</i>
	Mother:	<i>Ah, you are waiting for me?</i>
	or Mother:	<i>That's great, that you're waiting for me.</i>
	or Mother:	<i>Why are you waiting for me?</i>

Use the word that was mixed into the sentence in your answer, without taking up the entire sentence. This way, you make sure that your child learns the word in both languages.

You can – depending on your child's age – also talk about both languages with your child and ask what one word might be in both languages. Play mishmash with your child: Invent mishmash words and sentences together.

4. In which language should I talk with my child?

You decide this yourself. However, you should talk to your child in the language you feel most comfortable in and can express yourself in properly.

5. What you can do if your child is very shy and doesn't have the confidence to speak German, or if you think that he/she is afraid to make mistakes.

These cases need to be considered individually. General advice: Allow your child time. If a very shy child is constantly prompted to speak or forced into unpleasant and unnatural communicative situations, he/she might retreat altogether.

6. What you can do if your child does not feel like talking about his/her experiences and daily routine in kindergarten or school.

Offentimes, children answer such questions with short answers such as "Yes/No/ Good/I don't know..." Here too, we can recommend: Keep at it! Create regular conversational situations with your child (during pickup, in the car, playing together, at dinner, before falling asleep). Try to avoid only asking closed questions that invite a "yes" or "no" answer. W-questions such as "What? Why? How did you do this?" stimulate your child to answer with longer sentences.

Now and again, we adults must also respect that children develop their own personality and do not want to share everything.

7. What you can do if your child is not listening when you are reading to him/her, is unfocussed and fidgety.

Discover the reasons for this behaviour: Is your child generally inattentive and fidgety, or does your child get restless because he/she does not understand something? Concentrated listening is also learned behaviour. Start by reading aloud short stories and introduce your child to concentrated listening by guiding his/her actions with accompanying storytelling and reading aloud.

8. My preschool-aged child is already interested in letters, reading, and writing. Is learning to read part of the advancement of language skills? And/or: How can I treat this topic with my child at home?

Preschool-aged children are prepared for the start of school from the spring before school starts onwards; they prepare for their reading education by (vocally) practicing consonants and their graphemic presentation.

9. Is it better to have a child, whose German skills are still somewhat weak, in kindergarten for as long as possible?

We would be happy to individually advise you. We look at a developing child from a holistic perspective, with all his/her strengths and individual characteristics.

10. Are numbers and arithmetic also part of the language development programme?

The numbers ranging from 1–10 are part of the language development, as is grasping amounts. Arithmetic is not part of the language development.

According to demand, we offer all DaZ parents an informational evening at the beginning of each school year. Here, we can discuss the opportunities for the development of your child and answer questions.

The DaZ team of the iDSB is gladly at your disposal to answer any further questions you might have:

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