



Information for parents of pre-school children

**School Health Services**

# Pre-school and school in good health





# Dear parents and guardians



**It is impressive to see how a child grows and becomes more independent over time. How they develop, their personality matures and their abilities expand.**

## **Important prerequisites**

**The physical and mental health of your child also plays a key role in pre-school and school. Only when your child feels comfortable in their skin, has enough physical exercise and feels accepted can they engage with life in pre-school and school. They also need to see and hear well, have healthy teeth, strong bones and muscles, as well as curiosity and a healthy amount of confidence.**

**Life in pre-school and school also comes with difficult moments. Your child will come to you with questions. Their feelings will fluctuate, and the range between enthusiasm and drive on the one hand and disappointment and sadness on the other can sometimes be wide. You face the important task of guiding and supporting your child, dealing with their insecurities and motivating them to try new things.**

## **Stumbling blocks are part of the process**

**It takes time and a high degree of sensitivity to support a child in their development. Things do not always run smoothly. There may be problems in school, perhaps your child has difficulty learning, feels uneasy in school or suffers from a chronic illness.**

**The School Health Services are at your side with medical, psychological and pedagogically qualified experts for these kinds of situation. The sooner difficulties are identified and addressed, the better the chances of finding a good solution.**

**I wish your child all the best for their school education and health!  
Warm regards,**

**Claude Hunold  
Director of School Health Services**



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# Does my child see well?

**People are visual creatures. Most of our impressions and observations are gathered through our eyes. Only when both eyes see well is 3D vision possible. Clear and effortless sight with both eyes is a prerequisite for the brain to capture and process images.**



**If a child can't see properly, they have to take more effort to complete a task. Many things will seem more difficult than necessary: whether in learning, in sports or on the way to school. By the time the child attends pre-school and school, this can become a problem.**

### **Recognising problems with sight early**

**Children have not yet developed an understanding of clear sight. For this**

**reason, and because seeing poorly doesn't hurt, children rarely complain about problems with eyesight. But it is assumed that one in ten children does not see clearly enough.**

**Some eyesight problems can be positively influenced during the first seven to eight years of life. Regular check-ups for your child's eyes are therefore important for healthy sight, as well as for the continued school education of your child. Check-ups with the paediatrician,**

optician or the School Medical Service can provide clarity and certainty.

**Tip**  
**Short-sightedness can be prevented**

Studies have shown that daylight and looking into the distance regularly can prevent short-sightedness. When children play outdoors, they don't just do so to become fitter and stronger, the bright light and distant views also help to reduce the risk of short-sightedness. Opticians therefore recommend letting children play outside as often as possible.

**Don't miss the signs!**

Diagnosis is especially critical if one of the two eyes sees much worse than the other or in the case of squinting. If this problem is left untreated, there is a danger that the sight of the weaker eye irreversibly worsens and the child becomes blind in one eye.

**Possible signs of sight problems**

- ▶ **Books or objects can only be seen clearly at a certain distance to the eye (peering closer or holding objects at a distance)**
- ▶ **Frequent blinking, crossing or squinting of the eyes**
- ▶ **Frequent rubbing of the eyes**



## Our offer

Are you unsure whether your child is able to see clearly? Parents can register their child for an eye test at the School Medical Practice.





# Does my child hear well?

**Besides the eyes, the ears are our most important sensory organ. Good hearing is hugely important for learning to speak and comprehension. The ears open up the world of spoken language, sounds and noises. In school, most learning content is taught through speaking and verbal explanations.**



**The causes of poor hearing can be either congenital or acquired. Possible reasons for acquired hearing difficulties may include:**

- ▶ **Blocked ear canal due to ear wax**
- ▶ **Frequent middle ear infections**
- ▶ **Damage due to excessive noise**
- ▶ **Intake of special medication that can damage hearing**

**Constant noise, such as due to traffic or loud music, is a persistent stress for hearing and can have a negative effect. Children who don't hear well often don't realise it. For this reason, regular check-ups are recommended in order to identify hearing problems at an early time. A hearing test can determine whether the hearing threshold of your child is in the normal range.**

## **Tip**

**Treat ear infections seriously and have them examined by a doctor.**

Do not use cotton buds to remove ear wax from your child's ears. If necessary, clean the ear with a damp cloth.

Remove or limit loud toys such as whistles, play guns, children's trumpets, firecrackers, etc. A single loud bang, such as from a play gun fired directly next to the ear, is enough to cause permanent damage to hearing.

## **Signs of hearing problems in children may include**

- ▶ **The child suffers from frequent ear infections or infections of the upper airways**
- ▶ **The child isn't startled by loud noises, such as doors slamming**
- ▶ **The child always turns the volume up very loud for CDs, cassettes or the television**
- ▶ **The child has difficulty localising noises in the environment**
- ▶ **The child doesn't respond when spoken to outside their field of view**
- ▶ **The child shows difficulty in learning to talk**

## Our offer

If your child requires audio-pedagogical support due to a hearing difficulty (e.g. children with hearing devices or cochlea implants), you can obtain advice and assistance from the School Medical Service.



I hear the blowing  
wind, I hear it whistle  
and sing.



# For long-lasting healthy teeth

**Today, we understand that healthy teeth are essential for a healthy body. The School Medical Service of the City of Zurich offers a wide range of services to prevent and treat dental diseases.**



During the entire period of compulsory schooling, a free annual check-up is held for each school class at the school dental clinic, allowing tooth damage, teeth alignment problems or oral diseases to be recognised and treated at an early stage. Moreover, specially trained experts show all children from pre-school through to the end of school how to clean their teeth properly and keep them healthy up to five times a year.

This helps to prevent tooth damage (cavities) and gum inflammations as much as possible.

### **Appropriate to children's needs**

The School Dental Service has several modern school dental clinics in the city of Zurich. An adept and sensitive approach is particularly important when providing dental care to children. The qualified dentists of

the School Dental Service are therefore specially trained to treat infants, children and young people in a patient and age-appropriate manner.

However, you and your child themselves are able to contribute most to the dental health of your child. The following three points are especially important for maintaining healthy teeth:

### No cavities without sugar

Sugar is the main cause of cavities. It is therefore a good idea for children to only consume a limited amount of food and sweets containing sugar – ideally during (or after) main meal times. Snack times should always be sugar-free.

### Regular teeth cleaning

Make sure your child thoroughly cleans their teeth three times a day right after meal times. A small, soft tooth brush is best used. If you lead

by example as a parent, teeth cleaning will quickly become a natural routine. Parents should brush or finish cleaning their child's teeth after dinner until around third grade.

### Fluoride for strong teeth

Bacteria on teeth convert sugar into acid in a matter of minutes, which can dissolve the tooth enamel. Fluoride protects teeth by making the tooth enamel more externally resistant to this acid. If you use fluoride toothpaste as well as table salt containing fluoride (packs with green print), you will therefore help support your child's dental health. In addition, ask your child to brush their teeth with fluoride gel one evening a week.



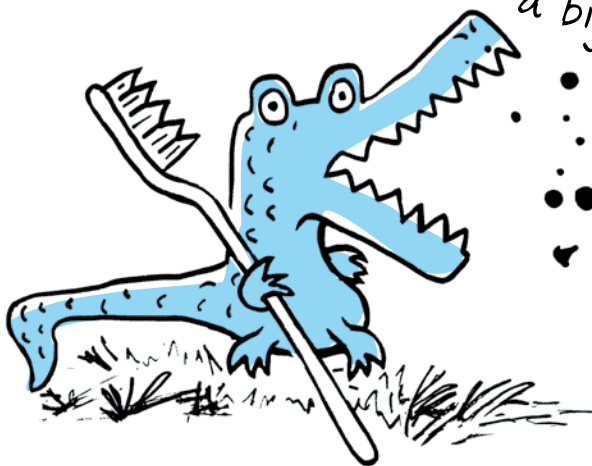
## Our offer

- ▶ A free annual dental check-up in the school dental clinic (until the age of 18)
- ▶ Special, child-appropriate and low-cost dental treatment according to the latest scientific standard

Find out more at:

[www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schulzahnarzt](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schulzahnarzt)

I am a wild  
crocodile, who  
cleans his teeth for  
a big, white smile.





# Children need exercise

**Exercise is fun and promotes physical health, well-being and the performance of your child. A child should be able to engage in intense exercise for more than an hour every day.**



**Regular and varied exercise has the following benefits**

- ▶ **Developing muscles**
- ▶ **Strengthening bones**
- ▶ **Training the cardiovascular system**
- ▶ **Improving coordination (dexterity)**
- ▶ **Promoting circulation to the brain**
- ▶ **Strengthening the immune system**
- ▶ **Decreasing stress and anxiety**
- ▶ **Building self-esteem**
- ▶ **Promoting social contact among children**

**Plenty of exercise from an early age also prevents future cardiovascular diseases, back problems, bone atrophy (osteoporosis), obesity as well as accidents due to a lack of coordination. In other words, lots of exercise can increase the quality of life and the performance of your child.**

## Exercise as often as possible

Children have an intrinsic need to exercise in a frequent and varied manner. However, this natural urge to exercise is increasingly limited in densely populated, high-traffic environments such as cities. As a result, even younger children often suffer from a lack of exercise and coordination problems. Pre-school and school children should be able to let off steam physically every day. For this reason, allow your child to play outside as often as possible and ideally with other children. Children have a lot of fun running over fields, balancing on walls, playing in sand and mud, climbing trees and jumping over puddles – and all this makes them fitter and more resilient. So, try to incorporate as much movement as possible into everyday life and model an active lifestyle for your child.

### Tip

#### Varied exercise supports learning

Exercise is good for the brain. That's because running, climbing, skipping, balancing, dancing, swinging, etc. promote circulation to the brain and improve concentration and memory. Frequent and varied exercise not only makes children physically fit, but also fit to learn.

## Walking to school

Children who walk to school have the opportunity to meet other children, make friends and get to know their own neighbourhood better. Let your child walk to pre-school or school and avoid acting as a parental taxi. Walking to school enables your child to get moving before and after pre-school or school and enjoy the fresh air. If the walk to school is rather long, perhaps your child can walk with older children.

### “Purzelbaum” scheme – combining pre-school with movement

The City of Zurich supports pre-schools with an exercise-friendly approach. These “Purzelbaum” pre-schools are designed to encourage children to engage in frequent and varied exercise. Moreover, regular exercise is included in the classes.

► [www.stadt-zuerich.ch/purzelbaum](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/purzelbaum)

## Sports courses for fun and friends

There is a wide range of sports courses during the school semester for children of all age groups. The free sports courses offered directly by school are particularly suited to younger children. Plus, there are open sports programmes in every school district on Sunday during the winter semester. Children can participate without registering and try out all sorts of sports and games.

► [www.sportamt.ch/jahreskurse](http://www.sportamt.ch/jahreskurse)

## Exercise in school holidays

The Sports Department also offers many different sports courses during school holidays. The programmes are published on the Sports Department website every quarter. Help your child to select one of these courses. If school friends also register, the course will be even more fun.

► [www.sportamt.ch/kurse](http://www.sportamt.ch/kurse)

## Our offer

For pre-school and primary school children who have less exercise experience and/or are overweight, there are special exercise programmes available ("MiniFit" and "Fit im Wasser").

Once a week, these children can try out a wide range of fun physical activities under expert supervision in a gym hall or pool in the school district. What's important is that children find joy in exercise, experience success and like to get active often. Contact your child's teacher or the School Medical Service if necessary.

► [www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt)



Kids want to run, shout,  
skip, jump and roll all about;  
they want to spin, sing, climb,  
and have a fun time.



# Why free play is important for children

**Free, unsupervised play is essential for children's personality development. During free play, children learn to make decisions, solve problems, exercise control over themselves, manage emotions, assess dangers and follow rules.**



**Play involves social learning and is the best driver of learning and development for children. Accordingly, free unstructured play (not guided by adults) is important and necessary for the healthy physical, emotional and social development of children.**

**We have noticed that children have fewer and fewer opportunities to move around their living environment independently and without supervision, to play and meet other**

**children. There are many reasons for this. Increasing road traffic, denser cities, rising media consumption, full calendars and an increased need for safety among parents and overprotection play a role.**

**This is not without consequences. Children who have less opportunity for free play are often limited in their development, especially in terms of motor skills, risk competence, concentration and creativity.**

## Less is often more

Those who give their children freedom to play support their development. Children need spaces where they can be among themselves and not observed and protected by adults. Places where they can play out their stories, come up with their own rules, try out new things, test limits, deal with risks and experience adventure. This doesn't just mean fun and games, but also experiencing surprises, liveliness, successes,

disappointments, cohesion, opposition, strengths and weaknesses.

This is why free play without the guidance of adults is by no means time wasted, as perhaps some parents may believe. To the contrary, it is the prime discipline when it comes to healthy development and the best way to encourage children.

### Tip

#### I'm so boored

Even though it can sometimes be difficult, try to endure children's boredom. Boring phases can often lead to entirely new ideas for play and train creative thinking. Parents can support their child in overcoming times of boredom independently by not providing suggestions for play or offers straight away, but friendly passing the ball back to them (such as "You're sure to come up with something, I'm certain. Maybe you just need a little more time?").



## Our offer

The “toy-free pre-school” is a project for promoting the life skills of children. For eight to 10 weeks, lessons are held without any ready-made toys or play suggestions from teaching staff. This gives children the freedom to take the initiative and be creative. Should you have any questions, please contact the Addiction Prevention Centre of the City of Zurich.

► [www.stadt-zuerich.ch/suchtpraevention](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/suchtpraevention)



Splish, splash,  
in the rain,  
jumping in puddles.  
what a game!



# Language is the key to the world

**Language is the most important means of understanding and learning. Language makes it possible to comprehend the world around us, understand and pass on information.**



**In order for a child to develop well linguistically, they need to be able to hear and listen well. By reading stories to your child, talking and playing together, active listening, singing, reciting rhymes, etc. you can encourage your child to enjoy speaking and support them in expanding and improving their ability to express themselves with language.**

## **Children and multilingualism**

**Growing up multilingual is an opportunity for children. As a rule, they learn languages they have been in contact with from a young age better than in future foreign language lessons. What's important is that the child regularly hears the language of their parents and also speaks the local language. This means it is benefi-**

cial to a child when their parents consistently speak their own native language and the child can practise the second language “playfully” with other children or adults at the same time. If a child speaks their mother tongue well, they can generally acquire a second language well too.

### **German language skills are essential in any case**

When a multilingual child speaks German well, they find it easier to make contacts with other children. Good German skills are also important for success in school. Children need to understand and speak German sufficiently to follow class. For this reason, courses in German as a second language are offered for children with other mother tongues in schools from the first year of pre-school.

### **Our offer**

Not all children learn a language (or multiple languages) without problems. If your child has difficulties learning to talk, a speech therapy consultation can help. You can generally register for a consultation with the school speech therapist through the respective teacher of the child. Find out more at:

▶ [www.stadt-zuerich.ch/logopaedie](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/logopaedie)

TRAPP...

NICK

ZUPE

KLATSCH

TICK



My feet go  
tap, tap, tap,  
My hands go  
clap, clap, clap,

My fingers go prod, prod, prod,  
My head goes nod, nod, nod,  
My ears go twitch, twitch, twitch,  
And my hair goes swish, swish, swish.



# Awaken the joy of healthy eating

**Getting enough nutrients, vitamins and minerals is not only important to a child's growth. This also supports well-being and good performance in school, free time and sports.**



**A good meal is not only nutritious but also enjoyable. People who experience a varied, tasty diet as a child also typically have an uncomplicated relationship with food in later life.**

**Schools in the city of Zurich support parents in their efforts to provide healthy nutrition for their children. Meals in pre-school and school are based on the nutritional guidelines of the School Health Services for a healthy, teeth-friendly and child-appropriate diet. This means that as a**

**parent, you can be sure your child can always choose from a balanced range in pre-school and school.**

## **Breakfast and morning snack**

**A wholesome and unhurried breakfast gives your child the energy they need to start the day right. In pre-school, a morning snack is enjoyed together in the group. For the morning snack, it is best to give your child some fruit or fresh vegetables, sup-**

plemented if necessary with brown bread, wholegrain crackers or unsalted nuts. This way, the morning snack will help your child to focus and stay attentive, while also providing plenty of vital nutrients.

### Tip

#### Water is the best thirst quencher

It's important for children to drink regularly so they can perform and feel well. Water or unsweetened tea are good thirst quenchers. Sugary drinks like soft drinks, milkshakes, lemonade and fruit juice are not suitable as thirst quenchers. They promote cavities and can lead to obesity. What's more, the intense sweetness of these drinks (including "diet" or "light" drinks with artificial sweeteners) make the child accustomed to the sweet taste of drinks.

Conversely, this also means that you should avoid giving your child sugary drinks, sweets, pastries or chips. On the one hand, these can lead to cavities as their teeth are not cleaned after the morning snack. On the other hand, sugary food can result in a rapid rise in blood sugar levels, which then crash and can lead to problems concentrating. Find out more at:

► [www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt)



## Our offer

The School Health Services give all children in pre-school and first grade a flyer with ideas for suitable morning snacks. If you have any questions, please contact the nutritional advice service.

ernaehrung.sad@zuerich.ch  
Telephone 044 413 46 61



There's a rumble in my tummy. I feel a little hungry. Time to eat something yummy!



# Body perception and body weight

**Having a good relationship with one's own body is an important factor for the well-being and health of all children (as well as adults). People who accept their bodies and see themselves in a positive light feel better and have a healthier sense of self-esteem than those who are unhappy with their bodies.**



## Feeling comfortable in your own body

Those who have a positive body image can typically also perceive feelings and signals from the body, such as stress, hunger, tiredness, comfort and exhaustion, correctly and respond accordingly. There's a lot that parents can do for their child to feel comfortable in their body. It's a big help if you generally treat your child with an appreciative attitude and make no negative comments (includ-

ing playful teasing) about their appearance and their body. By supporting your child in developing a loving and fundamentally positive self-perception, you can contribute greatly to the healthy self-esteem and confidence of your child.

## Body weight

A child's body is constantly developing; body size and body weight continuously increase. A healthy body weight is a sign of healthy development. But what is a healthy body weight?

A simple reference for assessing body weight is available from the Swiss health promotion foundation ([www.gesundheitsfoerderung.ch](http://www.gesundheitsfoerderung.ch)). If you enter the size, weight and sex of your child, you will receive an evaluation compared to other children of the same age in addition to the calculated body mass index (BMI). However, a single metric is not all that useful – the development of a child's weight over time is more important. It's best to discuss any issues or uncertainties with your paediatrician. Advice should be obtained from the paediatrician especially in the case of major discrepancies.

## Excess weight and obesity

In Switzerland, around 20 percent of children are overweight and 5 percent obese (seriously overweight).

Experts attribute the reasons why excess weight in children has generally risen strongly in recent decades to the following factors: frequent consumption of sweet drinks, snacking, the prevalence of high-fat and high-sugar food as well as a lack of exercise exacerbated by frequent media consumption.

The widespread view that overweight children have themselves to blame is oversimplified. The causes of excess weight are varied and they include genetic predispositions, lifestyle, unsuitable nutrition, lack of exercise, stress and psychological pressures. For some people, it is more difficult to keep their weight within the normal range. This means it is all the more important to ensure healthy nutrition and sufficient exercise during childhood and to prevent a child from becoming obese in the first place.

### Risks and stresses

Serious excess weight (obesity) among children can result in negative health effects in the long term. These include risks such as hormone disruptions, joint problems, diabetes

as well as cardiovascular diseases. For most seriously overweight children, however, the mental stresses they are exposed to are worse: they experience illness as well as ridicule and discrimination from other children and adults more frequently. These daily humiliations can be extremely harmful and it comes as no surprise that the self-esteem of the children affected is often very low.

Parents of overweight children face the challenge of identifying serious excess weight in their child and – perhaps with the support of experts – addressing this issue, while also trying to avoid the child developing a negative relationship with their body.

If you are unsure whether your child is overweight and whether steps need to be taken, you can also contact the School Medical Service. The nutritionists are highly experienced with the topic of excess weight and work with care and understanding with the families affected.

### Is your child underweight?

As long as your child is fit, feels good and eats a balanced diet, you do not need to worry as a parent. The child should neither be pressured to eat nor fed large, high-calorie portions.

**Thin children – just like overweight and normal-weight children – need regular and balanced meals and snack times. Food should be primarily associated with enjoyment, not with pressure.**

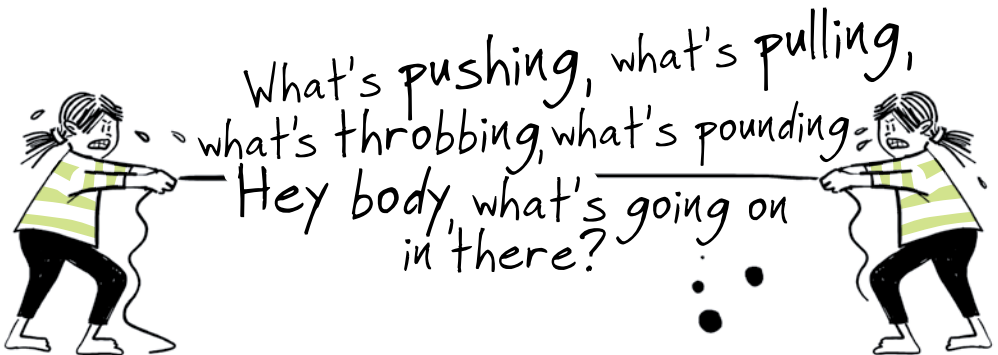
### **When is help necessary?**

**If a child is very thin, no longer puts on weight or even loses weight, if they are often tired, seem listless, have no appetite, eat an unbalanced diet and are often ill, the paediatrician should definitely be consulted. Growth and weight can be assessed in the children's medical practice, and factors like chronic illnesses, allergies or deficient nutrition ruled out.**

### **Our offer: Individual nutrition advice**

**Are you concerned about the body weight (overweight or underweight) or the eating behaviour of your child? The School Medical Service offers individual advice tailored to children, young people and families where there is a proven need, which is provided by a BSc nutritionist at three locations in the city. The costs are settled through the basic insurance of the health insurance provider when referred by (school) doctor. You can register via the School Medical Service.**

▶ [www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt)





# Taking care of your child's men- tal health

**Health is more than just the absence of illness. It's a state in which a person feels comfortable in their body and environment and enjoys a zest for life.**



**Children come home from pre-school and school with all sorts of impressions and experiences. Even young children often tell us directly or indirectly how they feel and show us what concerns they have. Children respond to stresses in a wide range of ways: some talk about them, others become quieter and others still respond physically with stomach or head aches.**

**If you are unsure what may be causing the persistent discomfort of your child, you can contact the School Psychological Service or your paediatrician or school doctor.**

### **Mood or crisis?**

**Of course, not every little difficulty in life is a problem and not every fluctuation in mood is a sign of impaired mental health. But it is worthwhile to**

**pay attention to and take care of the mental well-being of children and young people.**

## **An appreciative attitude and clear rules**

**Parents can create the prerequisite for healthy growth by adopting a loving and appreciative attitude towards their child. If you create clear structures, rules and values as a parent, you will give your child a sense of security and orientation. If you also focus on your child's strengths and ability, not their shortcomings, this will improve key aspects of their mental health. Sincere praise often has a greater effect than warnings and punishments. However, excessive praise or praise for something that doesn't really merit praise can also have the opposite effect.**

## **Conflicts are part of life**

**Conflicts, problems, frustrations and life crises are normal and not exclusively negative. Children, young people and adults can grow through these experiences and develop further. Handled well, conflicts can improve mental health. Parents can help children develop a strong ability to deal with conflict. How is this possible? By helping them not to avoid disputes but to resolve conflicts as constructively as possible.**

**Arguing among children can often be annoying for adults, but every argument is also an important social learning environment for children. During arguments, they can learn to recognise their own needs and also perceive and respect the wishes of other children. Differences of opinions should be expressed, without the use of violence or without a child always giving in. Conflict rules can help here. When an argument is at risk of escalating or if a child is ostracised, humiliated, threatened or attacked, adults must intervene to prevent the situation from worsening. The argument can be settled with the children at a later time, when emotions are no longer running high.**



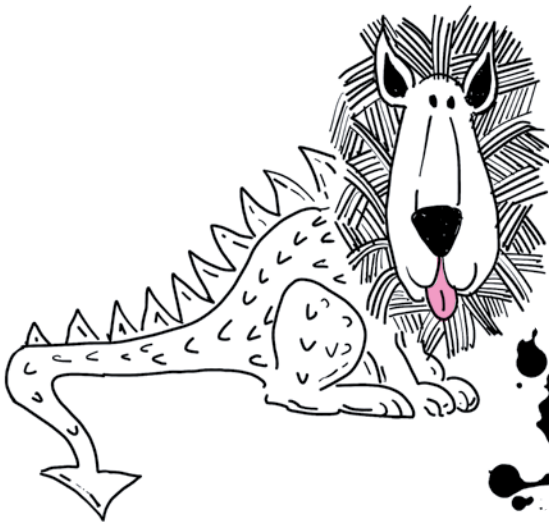
## Beginning pre-school or first grade

Beginning pre-school and later first grade is a big step in a child's life. This step usually goes well. But there are also children who are unsettled or overwhelmed by the new demands placed on them. A child may develop anxieties, for example a fear of leaving their parents on a morning. Other children have great difficulty concentrating, are extraordinarily restless or exhibit other behavioural issues.

## Our offer

In case of any questions regarding mental health and development, persistent discomfort in class, behavioural issues, learning difficulties or questions regarding school progress as well as support and assistance, you can contact the school psychologist of your school district:

► [www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schulpsychologie](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schulpsychologie)



Today I am  
wild and mean,  
I'm a wolf on the prowl,  
the biggest dragon  
and lion seen,  
and I bite and  
I growl!



# Enough sleep for your child

**Sufficient sleep is important for the health of your child. At night, the body recovers from the day. In addition, much of what we see, hear and learn during the day is reprocessed in our sleep. Sleep is therefore vital for learning and memory functions.**



**Not all children need the same amount of sleep. But they should sleep as long as necessary to feel fit all day (typically 10 to 12 hours of undisturbed sleep at night for children at pre-school age). Signs of insufficient sleep include tiredness, weariness, bad mood or an inability to concentrate for an extended period of time. If your child shows these signs, we recommend consistently (!) setting their bed time earlier.**

**Tip**  
**Often tired?**

Day-time fatigue can also be a result of disturbed night-time rest such as child snoring, teeth grinding or nightmares. If your child is unduly tired or unconcentrated despite plenty of sleep, it is a good idea to talk to your paediatrician.



Sometimes  
I can't fall asleep,  
because my thoughts  
are so loud.



# Vaccination protects

**Inoculations are still among the most important and effective preventive health measures available. Today, children can be protected against dangerous diseases with the recommended vaccines. That's because even childhood illnesses considered harmless (e.g. measles) can trigger serious complications.**



**Vaccination not only protects the child's health but also the health of others. For instance, babies and pregnant people as well as children and adults with certain immune weaknesses can't receive all vaccines. For this reason, they are especially dependent on not becoming infected. Unvaccinated people infected with measles, for example, pose a danger to them. Comprehensive vaccination protection is the**

**best way to protect yourself and others from a range of infectious diseases.**

### **Compatibility**

**Vaccines are among the best examined and also most compatible medications available. Minor and harmless reactions to a vaccine (such as swelling, sensitivity to pressure and slight fever) are, however, possible. These kinds of vaccination reactions are always a sign that the immune**

system is responding to the administered vaccine and building effective protection. Serious complications are extremely rare. Plus, it is often unclear whether the vaccination is the cause of the complication or merely took place coincidentally at the same time.

### Recommended vaccinations

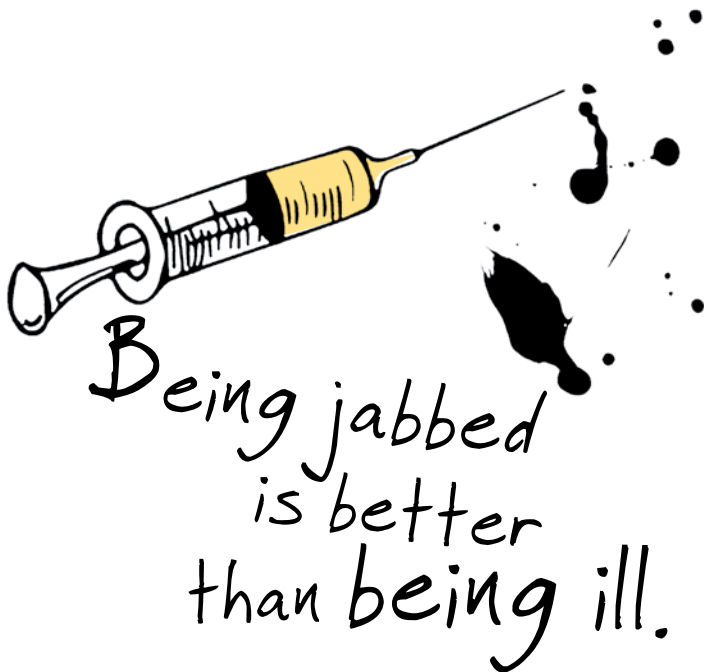
The official vaccination plan of the Federal Office for Public Health (FOPH, [www.bag.admin.ch/impfinformation](http://www.bag.admin.ch/impfinformation)) shows which vaccinations make sense at which age. We recommend having your child vaccinated by your paediatrician or family doctor according to this plan. To limit the number of times your child is

jabbed, there are now highly compatible combined vaccinations available (one vaccination for multiple illnesses). Most vaccinations require multiple rounds in childhood to allow sufficient (often lifelong) protection to be developed. During the school medical check-ups, the school doctor checks your child's vaccination record and informs you of outstanding (refresher) vaccinations in writing.

## Our offer

You can arrange any missing vaccinations for your child through your paediatrician, family doctor or also free of charge through the School Medical Service of your school district. You can find the address of your School Medical Service at:

► [www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt)





# Head lice in school – annoying, but harmless

People have had to deal with head lice for thousands of years. They are a sign of close social contact, not a lack of hygiene. They can spread wherever people put their heads together. Since children often put their heads together, head lice are a regular occurrence in pre-school and school. Any family can be affected.





**Head lice feed on the blood of their “host”. They do not transmit any diseases and therefore do not represent a danger to health. But they can still be annoying for families.**

### **Does my child have head lice?**

**Head lice are 1 to 2 mm in size and are difficult to find in hair. They like to hide at the hairline on the neck or behind the ears. The eggs or nits are**

**typically easier to see. They stick to the hair close to the scalp and are quite visible there. Itching on the scalp can be a sign of an infestation of head lice.**

### **Act fast**

**The earlier head lice are discovered and treated, the lower the chances of them spreading further. For you, this means once head lice have been discovered, treatment should begin**

## Tip

### Is it possible to prevent head lice?

Practically speaking, no. After all, you can't forbid children from putting their heads together. Even frequent hair washing or the use of strong-smelling shampoo can't prevent a head louse infection. The best way to prevent head lice is to regularly check the hair.

This is particularly the case after holidays. Based on experience, more social contact takes place in the holidays, which promotes the spread of lice. If your child is affected by head lice, it's important to inform the people your child has had contact with. This can reduce the further spread of lice.

the very next day if possible. Physically acting head louse agents are not only particularly effective, but also completely free of side effects. What's important is that at least two treatments are administered per day, with seven to nine hours between them, in order to catch all freshly hatched lice too. You can find an information sheet on treating lice at:

► [www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt)

Some more good news is that head lice only infest people's hair and scalp. So, only the hair needs to be treated, not also the bed linen, hats, teddy bears, etc.

## Our offer:

The School Medical Service of the City of Zurich offers a free consultation for parents who would like advice or guidance on treating head lice. You can find out more at:

- ▶ [www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt)
- ▶ Telephone head lice consultation: 044 413 46 13



Louse shampoo twice a day.  
and all the lice go away.



# Hints and tips on media use

**Nowadays, children grow up in a rich world of media. Completely shielding them from that is neither possible nor practical. Instead, it's important to set clear rules and teach children how to use media in a healthy way.**



**When used well and in moderation, media not only provides fun and entertainment, but also promotes creativity, concentration, dexterity and technical know-how. How can families encourage healthy use of smartphones, TVs, computers, tablets, consoles and other devices?**

### **Together with your child**

**Accompany your child as they consume media. This way, you'll learn what your child particularly likes, what scares them and also answer any questions they may have. This doesn't mean constantly looking over their shoulder. But you should at least know the current media formats and heroes of your child so you can talk to them about what they**

consume. It's a good idea to put the TV, tablet or computer in a shared room as this allows you as a parent to follow what your child is watching and which games they are playing.

## Role model

Whether or not a child learns how to handle a smartphone, TV or computer responsibly depends heavily on their parental role models. Do the agreements you have with your child match your own behaviour? If not, experience shows that children will find it harder to follow the rules.

### Tip No PC, tablet or TV in the child's bedroom

You do your pre-school or primary school child no favours by allowing them to use their own television, computer, Internet access or games console in their room. There is a danger that the child will sit in front of the screen for far too long and watch programmes unsuitable for their age. Children who already have a smartphone should always leave it outside their bedroom at night and stop using any screens at least 30 minutes before bed time.

## Binding rules

Set clear rules about which media and media content may be consumed at what times and for how long. As a rule of thumb, we recommend no longer than 30 minutes per weekday for pre-school children and no more than one hour on weekends (for smartphone, TV, DVD, computer and console use combined). For children in primary school, media consumption may be increased to five hours per week. Media consumption is often so captivating that children easily forget the time. So, it's important that you make sure the agreed rules are respected. It should also be clear that meal times together, active leisure activities, reading and homework have priority over media use. And lastly, boredom should never be the reason for consuming media.

## Warning signs

If a child is overwhelmed by media or certain forms of media become overpowering in their daily routine, parents should apply the brakes. Signs that media consumption is doing more harm than good to children include that the child may hardly have any ideas for other activities, they become highly frustrated by media restrictions, no longer play outside or withdraw within themselves. Parents need to intervene at this point and clearly regulate media use. After

all, digital experiences can never replace real experiences with all the senses and contact with other children.

## Further information

Tips on media use in 11 languages

▶ [www.suchtpraevention-zh.ch](http://www.suchtpraevention-zh.ch)

Tips for safe behaviour online

▶ [jugendundmedien.ch](http://jugendundmedien.ch)

Suggestions for media education

▶ [www.projuventute.ch](http://www.projuventute.ch)

▶ [www.fritzundfraenzi.ch](http://www.fritzundfraenzi.ch)

## Our offer

The “Bildschirmwelten” (or Screen Worlds) programme helps pupils develop an appropriate and responsible relationship with digital media. It includes lessons for all ages, parent evenings and further training for teachers.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Addiction Prevention Centre of the City of Zurich.

▶ [www.stadt-zuerich.ch/suchtpraevention](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/suchtpraevention)

My bedroom  
is a screen-free  
zone.





# Learning to learn

**Children want to learn and discover the world. They are naturally curious, they ask questions, observe, imitate, try, invent and create things. Children learn in all sorts of different ways. They gather experience and knowledge about themselves and the environment, they recognise rules and relationships and they modify and adjust their behaviour.**





**Children learn differently than adults. They need time, a good relationship with the people around them and enjoyment in trying things and succeeding. A child learns a lot automatically as well as during play. For other things, they need guidance and support.**

**The school curriculum describes the goals in the most important areas of development and subjects in the form of competencies for each**

**school grade. The task of the teacher is to achieve these competencies with the children. Not all children learn equally fast and the same amount. For this reason, the teacher adjusts the lesson and requirements to each child.**

**Show interest and get involved in what your child is learning at school. Take part in school events for parents. Support your child with their**

**homework if necessary. Be calm and understanding and avoid putting any pressure on your child. Motivation is like hunger – you can't force it. Effective learning is supported by regular learning times, a quiet, well-lit place with fresh air, breaks and plenty of exercise in free time as well as rewards for effort and, last but not least, enough sleep.**

**Much of what children do and learn doesn't quite work out the first time. It requires repetition and practice until a child has acquired a new skill**

### Tip

- ▶ **Arouse curiosity in your child and interest in their environment – this is the best motivation for learning.**
- ▶ **“I can do this”:** Let your child do as much as they can themselves – independence and success encourage them and give them more confidence.
- ▶ **Trial and error, mistakes and setbacks are all part of the learning process. You can best support your child by directing your attention to what worked well and not to what was less successful.**

**and can put it to use. Learning involves a child accepting an externally set task, as well as approaching and completing this task with perseverance and concentration. If you yourself are unsure how to support your child, it's important to get help. Learning shapes and promotes a child's personality.**

**If there is not enough encouragement in class and a child doesn't enjoy learning for a prolonged amount of time, or even has trouble learning, parents and teachers should carry out a school progress meeting. This dialogue covers which areas of focus in learning are important, what a child can achieve and where they may need help. If your child has difficulties learning, contact the teacher and have a conversation about it. A wide range of support and assistance is available in school, which can be used if necessary. Discuss how you can help your child with the teacher.**

**A child lays the foundation for life-long learning in pre-school and school. But learning has to be learned. Guide your child on this exciting journey of discovering the world.**



There's a whole world  
to explore, let's  
*dive* in and learn more.





# What to do when my child is sick

**Children who have a fever or feel unwell should stay at home and recover. Above all, they need to rest and be cared for. Very sick children should never be sent to school, even with medication to reduce their fever. If your child is ill, please inform the teacher before class begins.**



Once the fever has subsided, a child should spend at least one more day at home without fever or medication before going back to pre-school or school. They should return only once they are completely healthy again.

## Temporary exclusion from school

In the case of certain contagious diseases, your child may not be allowed to attend pre-school or school temporarily, even if they feel fine. For example, children who are not vaccinated against measles and have had close contact with someone with measles are excluded from attending child care, pre-school and school for 21 days. This is a precaution to prevent other school pupils and teachers from becoming infected and ill. Other illnesses that can result in temporary exclusion from school can be found in the policies of the Department of Health of the Canton of Zurich here:

- ▶ [www.vsa.zh.ch](http://www.vsa.zh.ch)  
(Search for the keyword: "Schulausschluss")

## Being prepared for illness

For parents, it's often inconvenient when children fall ill. There may be important meetings scheduled at work, perhaps travel arrangements planned or a visit announced. Where possible, working parents should find out in advance how they can organise care for their sick child. Here, a good network of friends, neighbours, grandparents, godparents, etc. is truly precious.

## What rights do parents have if their child is ill?

According to Article 36 of the Employment Act (ARG), parents may stay at home for up to three days per case of illness in order to look after their child. Caring for a sick child is a legal duty. After these three days, the parents need to have organised further care for their child. The employer may request a doctor's note.

## Possible support

Various organisations offer a child care service for children who suddenly fall ill or have suffered an accident. Here, a guardian looks after the child at your home and also administers medication if necessary. You can find out more, for example, here:

- ▶ [www.kinderspitex-zuerich.ch](http://www.kinderspitex-zuerich.ch)
- ▶ [www.entlastungsdienst.ch](http://www.entlastungsdienst.ch)

Some health insurance providers also offer a care service for ill children or provide a contribution for such a service. Contact your health insurance provider to find out more.

**Tip**  
**Hygiene measures to protect against contagious diseases**

Children can learn to protect themselves and others against contagious diseases. The two most important measures are:

- ▶ **Hand washing:** Instruct your child to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before every meal time and after using the bathroom.
- ▶ **Coughing or sneezing into the crook of the arm:** This is more hygienic than covering the mouth with a hand.



A person wearing a striped shirt, light blue shorts, and purple shoes is walking on a dark grey floor. They are stepping on a series of colorful, textured stepping stones: a blue one in the foreground, a yellow one, and an orange one. The background shows a classroom setting with wooden chairs and tables. The text "Safe and sound through school despite chronic illness" is overlaid in white on the image.

# Safe and sound through school despite chronic illness

**Between 10 and 20 percent of school pupils are affected by chronic illness. This includes diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, heart problems, asthma and many other conditions. Schools and the School Medical Service strive to ensure that these children can participate in school life as much as possible despite these health issues – including day care, sports day, school trips and class camps.**





or instructions to teachers and carers. In order for these measures to be defined and implemented for the protection of the affected children in the first place, however, it's necessary for the parents to inform the school or School Medical Service about their child's illness as soon as possible. If necessary or in the event of questions, please contact the School Medical Service of your school district.

### Our offer:

The School Medical Service advises and supports affected families and schools to help children with special medical needs to feel safer and provide good care for them in pre-school and school.

School doctors can mediate between the specialist doctors of a child with chronic illness and the school. This is because precautions may be necessary in school to protect health, depending on the condition. This may include individual support measures, emergency arrangements



Max has diabetes, Paula has a cough,  
I have a nut allergy.

# Useful addresses

**Schulgesundheitsdienste  
der Stadt Zürich (School Health  
Services of the City of Zurich)**

**Parkring 4, 8002 Zurich  
Tel. 044 413 88 98  
sg.ssd@zuerich.ch  
www.stadt-zuerich.ch/sg**

**Schulärztlicher Dienst  
(School Medical Service)**

**Tel. 044 413 88 95  
sg-sad.info@zuerich.ch  
You can find the various locations at:  
www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt**

**Ernährungsberatung des Schulärztlichen  
Dienstes der Stadt Zürich (Nutrition  
Advice of the School Medical Service  
of the City of Zurich)**

**Tel. 044 413 46 61  
ernaehrung.sad@zuerich.ch  
www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schularzt**

**Kopflaussprechstunde des  
Schulärztlichen Dienstes der  
Stadt Zürich (Head Louse Consultation  
from the School Medical Service  
of the City of Zurich)**

**Rotbuchstrasse 42, 8037 Zurich  
Tel. 044 413 46 13**

**Schulzahnärztlicher Dienst der  
Stadt Zürich (School Medical Service  
of the City of Zurich)**

**Tel. 044 413 88 04  
You can find the various school  
dental clinics at:  
www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schulzahnarzt**

**Schulpsychologischer Dienst  
der Stadt Zürich (School Psychology  
Service of the City of Zurich)**

**Tel. 044 413 41 20  
You can find the various locations at:  
www.stadt-zuerich.ch/schulpsychologie**

**Suchtpräventionsstelle der Stadt  
Zürich (Addiction Prevention Centre  
of the City of Zurich)**

**Röntgenstrasse 44, 8005 Zurich  
Tel. 044 412 83 30  
suchtpraevention@zuerich.ch  
www.stadt-zuerich.ch/suchtpraevention**

**Further health information and tips, for example regarding ticks,  
ADHD, preparation for first grade, various infectious diseases,  
trauma groups, etc. can be found at:**

**[www.stadt-zuerich.ch/sg](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/sg)**

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P. 20: Translated adaptation of poem "Kinder wollen sich bewegen" by Karin Haffner

P. 41: Translated adaptation of poem or book by Jutta Richter: "Heute bin ich wild und böse"

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**The School Health Services of the City of Zurich represent the competence centre for health and prevention in school. With innovative projects and comprehensive services, they are committed to promoting healthy young people in school with good development opportunities. The School Health Services include the School Medical Service, the School Dental Service, the School Psychological Service and the Addiction Prevention Centre. The School Health Services are affiliated with the School and Sports Department.**

City of Zurich  
Schulgesundheitsdienste  
(School Health Services)  
Parking 4, Postfach  
8027 Zurich  
T +41 44 413 88 98  
sg-ssd@zuerich.ch  
[www.stadt-zuerich.ch/sg](http://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/sg)

