

## German Education -- Opportunities For A Better Life

As you explore German education, you'll find that the 13 years of compulsory education within the country provide incredible opportunities for your child. Germany allows for both the gifted and the challenged. The country intends to provide quality education to all children no matter their age.

Education in Germany comes under the regulation of the various [German states](#). The federal government has only a very minor role in the education of German children. Within the 16 states in Germany, each state has its own school system, and the curriculum can vary greatly, although the organization varies little.

Home schooling isn't permitted in Germany. However, if a child is suffering from some type of illness that prevents his or her attendance, an exemption may be granted. Also if foreign families want to school their child for a short time in their own language, the German state may grant permission.

The grading system in Germany doesn't differ very much from others throughout the world. There's a grading system from one to six, with one being high. Six is failing.

All children born in the same year enter the same grade. This remains the same up through secondary school. Sometimes classes are split when there are a choice of subjects, such as additional languages, etc.

Children of three to six can do kindergarten, which prepares them for elementary school. Kindergarten is voluntary in German education, however. It can last from four to six years, but this depends on the state.

Elementary school is for years 1 to 4 in the schooling years. There's a choice of schools for parents, including the state school, the Waldorf School, Montessori and free alternative schools. There are also, of course, religious schools.

In years 5 to 6, a child can attend the German education orientation phase or the *Orientierungsstufe*. At this time, parents and teachers work out which track the child should pursue within his or her education. They may recommend math, science, languages or others.

Secondary school is divided into four options. A child may attend the *Hauptschule*, preparing for vocational studies; the *Realschule*, which has a broader emphasis; the *Gymnasium*, for gifted students or the *Gesamtschule*, which is a comprehensive school, including the other three approaches in one system.

With education in Germany, the kids can expect to have learning English mandatory. The amount of study of foreign languages differs from state to state, but it always starts young.

Studies for gifted students are available in every German state, but the forms are different in some. It's good to know that each state does cater to those who are gifted in order to enhance their future knowledge.

So that high school students can enter the university, all are required to take examinations. The *Abitur* exam is one of these. There also is a special apprenticeship program which allows students to learn within a real working environment.

When starting your child in the German education system, it's good to know the basics. But be aware that the systems change from state to state, sometimes so much that it's best not to move around and give your child a disadvantage.

German education is of a quality that makes it wonderful for a child of any age. And quality education early on makes for a bright and prosperous future.