



ElternMail Berlin

YOUR CHILD IN YEARS 4 AND 5

Your child takes big steps towards independence in Years 4 and 5. They discover more and more about their own personality and the world around them.

Careful use of digital media is also very important at this age. Friendships and physical and emotional changes are further topics covered in this ElternMail Berlin.

We hope you and your family enjoy learning and benefit from this support – entirely at your own pace, of course.

Your ElternMail Team



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EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE – PLEASURE IN LEARNING, CONFLICTS, TRAVELLING SAFELY

Many children are curious and eager to learn at this age. Give your child positive reinforcement so that learning continues to be fun. Step by step, your child will learn to learn independently. Encourage your child to try new things. This motivates them and helps them develop confidence in their own abilities.



At the same time, school work becomes more varied and difficult in Years 4 and 5. Some children feel under pressure from tests and the marks they get in them. They are worried about making mistakes or not being good enough.

This can reduce their willingness to learn and their motivation. Motivation means that your child enjoys learning and keeps going, even when things are difficult. Your child has to learn that mistakes are part of learning and marks are just feedback on their learning progress. They do not indicate the value of your child.

Learning strategies may be one option for dealing with the pressure to perform and improving motivation. This can help your child to learn. The next section will give you some ideas about how this can work.

Learning strategies for your child

There are many different learning strategies. Every child is different. Try different learning strategies together to find one that will help your child to learn.

Important: Does your child spend a lot of time studying every day? If so, please talk to the teacher about it. Your child also has the right to free time. It is important to limit learning time.

The learning collection

You need: a small notebook or pieces of paper that can be glued together to make a book.

How it works:

You write down a topic or rule on each page. Or you could use important terms. Then give an example or an explanation below them. Only write down things that your child finds difficult. The learning collection helps your child to learn at their own pace. And to work on topics that they are finding difficult. The learning collection is practical because your child can take it with them wherever they go. They can learn on the bus or train, for example.

Why children like this method

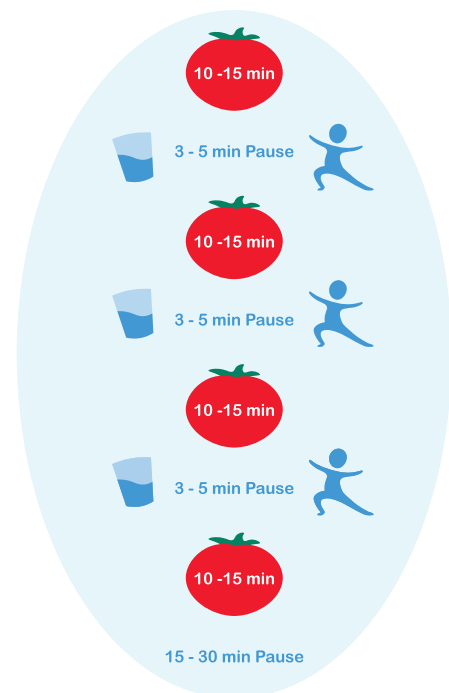
- Everything is in one place. Nothing gets lost.
- The learning collection is clear.
- It helps to organise the material. This develops independence.

The Pomodoro technique

Another learning strategy is the Pomodoro technique. You divide individual tasks into short work periods with breaks in between. Each work period represents a tomato. Your child can draw a tomato on a piece of paper after each period, for example. You can use the piece of paper with the tomatoes for a long time. Your child will gradually collect lots of tomatoes. Collecting is fun for children.

How it works:

1. One tomato corresponds to a short period of work: 10-15 minutes of concentrated work, timed with a stopwatch.
2. Short break: move around for 3-5 minutes, have a drink and time the break with the stopwatch.
3. Repeat: 2-3 repetitions is about right.
4. Then take a longer break of 15 or 30 minutes.



Why this helps

- Breaking things down into small steps makes the work clearer.
- The work period matches your child's ability to concentrate.
- After each work period your child has a feeling of achievement.

**Tip:**

Use an hourglass, for example. Then your child will understand individual periods of time better.

When tutoring can help your child

Does your child often have difficulty understanding the work they are set even though they have had a lot of practice? Do they get frustrated quickly when they are learning? If they then get bad marks, the stress increases. Perhaps your child still needs to develop learning strategies so that they can separate important things from unimportant things. If your child needs support to understand their work and more structure to their learning, tutoring can help. This will give your child regular support.

**Tip:**

Do you receive benefits through the Education and Participation Package (Bildungs- und Teilhabepaket – BuT)? If so, tutoring or learning support is often paid for. You can also get support for music, for example, or sport. You will find more information about the Education and Participation Package (BuT) at the end of this ElternMail Berlin.

For some children, tutoring does not offer enough help. If they have an identified learning difficulty, for example. In this case, integrative learning therapy (ILT) can be helpful. Sometimes the Youth Welfare Office will pay for integrative learning therapy. This is the case if children have a reading and spelling difficulty or dyscalculia (problems with maths), for example, and therefore have difficulties in everyday life. When you make an application, the school informs the Youth Welfare Office about the support measures that your child has already received in school. The Youth Welfare Office decides whether ILT is necessary and helpful. You will find more information about this at the end of this ElternMail Berlin.

How to keep your child motivated to learn

- **Get your child involved in decisions.** Your child will be more motivated if they can take decisions themselves. For example, let your child choose between two different tasks. Limiting the choice helps some children. They can choose which task they start with or how they practise. With pictures or index cards, for example. They might prefer to study on their own and then tell you what they have learnt.

**Good to know**

Children learn in different ways. Make a note of the ways in which your child enjoys learning. Some children learn well with pictures, colours or drawings. Others understand material better when they listen to it or have it explained to them, and there are also children who understand and internalise content well when they read. Many children also enjoy learning through movement or by trying things out for themselves. Try different ways of learning to find out the best way for your child to learn.

- **Set an appropriate goal**

Step 1: Decide together on the goal that your child wants to achieve.

Step 2: Write down your goal and hang it up, preferably in a place where your child will see it all the time. Above their desk, for example.

Step 3: Talk about it regularly: are we still on course? Will we make it?

Step 4: Celebrate small achievements. When your child completes a small step on the way to the goal, celebrate it together. Talk about how your child managed to complete it, for example. And what worked well.

A goal could be something like:

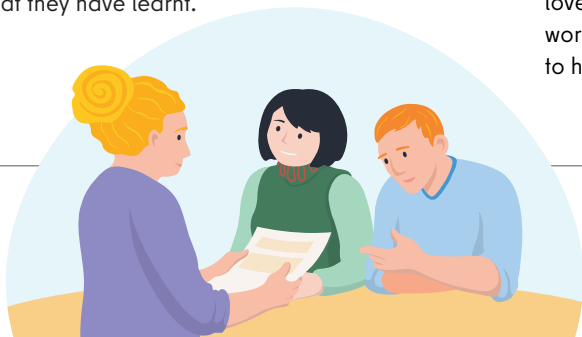
"I want to get almost all my times tables correct in the test. So for the next two weeks, I'm going to practise my times tables for 10 minutes every day, either on my own or with mum or dad." Are you finding it difficult to choose a suitable goal? Talking to the teacher can help to find something that your child can achieve.

- **Stay calm if your child has setbacks or gets low marks**

Step 1: Take your child's feelings seriously when they are disappointed. Say something like: "You really wanted a better mark, didn't you? And now you feel sad. Let's have a hug."

Step 2: Appreciate your child's efforts and celebrate small achievements. "Let's take a look at what you got right, we should celebrate that." "You've tried really hard here. I can see that."

Step 3: Talk about what your child can learn from setbacks. This helps their self-confidence. "You are important. No matter what mark you get. I always love you." "Would you like me to sit down with you and work out what else you need to learn? I'd be happy to help."



EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE – PLEASURE IN LEARNING, CONFLICTS, TRAVELLING SAFELY

Conflicts

Problems can sometimes arise in school. Your child might talk about the school staff, for example, and you might not like what you hear about how they behave. You can start by helping your child to talk to the person themselves. If your child can't resolve the situation on their own: try to keep calm and arrange a meeting. Remain respectful so that you can find an amicable solution.

Remember that your child will always describe things from their own point of view. At this age, many children still make up stories about situations that may have been different in reality. They are not lying, but they want to be heard and seen. So stay neutral and listen carefully to the views of the teacher and any other educational professionals. Then you will get a complete picture of the situation. This is important in resolving the conflict.

Important: You have the right to protect your child and speak your mind in a friendly manner.



Tip:

Encourage your child to ask for help if they are having difficulties at school. Get them to talk to the school counsellor, for example, or the liaison teacher. In this way, your child will learn that they can solve some problems themselves. If your child has special educational needs, specialist professionals may also work with them outside school. You may feel that your child needs additional support in school too. Get in touch with the school counsellor or support unit. Your child can get help from them if they are not doing well at school.

Here are some tips on talking to the teacher:

- **Keep calm**
Your child is the most important thing to you. As a result, you may react emotionally if your child is doing badly at school. This is normal. Remember that you and the teacher have the same goal. You both want to support your child's learning. And you both want your child to do well at school.
- **Describe a specific situation**
This makes it easier to understand where the difficulties currently lie.



- **Avoid "you" messaging and accusations**

Rather than saying: "You're treating my child unfairly." Try: "I get the impression that my child feels insecure in school. He/she often feels he/she is being treated unfairly. What do you think?"

- **Speak appreciatively**

Say what you think is good. Say something like: "I know how much you do for the class. Thank you for all your hard work."



Good to know:

School support meeting In crises or difficult situations, it helps to talk to people who know your child or can provide professional support. That's what a school support meeting is all about. At the support meeting, the educational specialists look at your child's situation together. This means it is examined from different perspectives.

It is important that a variety of specialists who know your child take part. This includes school staff such as teachers and school counsellors. It can also include therapists, the Youth Welfare Office or a counselling service. Ask the school management or a teacher to make sure that these people are included. When parents and professionals talk to each other, they are able to consider carefully what help the child needs. And who can provide that help.



My child no longer wishes to attend the supplementary support and care centre (after-school care club)

Some children say: "I don't want to go to the after-school care club any more." The term "after-school care club" is used colloquially to describe supplementary support and care (ergänzende Förderung und Betreuung - eFöB). eFöB is a service offered by all-day schools and gives children time after school for learning, support, play and recreation. Some children do not like the after-school care offered through eFöB. They prefer peace and quiet or they want to decide for themselves how to spend the afternoon. This is often not possible if both parents work. Or if you are a single parent who works.

You can help your child to enjoy eFöB again

- Talk to the staff. Work out together: What help does your child need to enjoy the after-school care club?
- Show that you understand. Instead of saying "You have to go", it's better to say: "I now it's a lot to deal with. I am here for you. What do you need to make it easier for you?" Your empathy and closeness will help your child to calm down.
- Take a look at the situation together. Perhaps your child's interests have changed. They may want to take part in a different service. Talk to the staff about this.
- Use the time after school for joint activities. Let your child tell you about their day at school and listen attentively. You could go for a walk. Or play a game together. Or bake or cook something together. Ask your child what they want to do.

Cycling safety

Your child will take a cycling training course in Year 3 or 4. They will learn the most important rules of the road through this. And how to cycle safely on the roads. The children practise this in safe practice areas, referred to as Youth Traffic Schools. There is a test at the end of the training course. The teacher and the police check: Can your child set off and brake safely? Does your child know the rules of the road and do they obey them?

Your child needs a roadworthy bike to be safe on the road. This includes brakes that work, good lights and reflectors. The bike does not have to be new. You can also buy a second-hand bike. Your child also needs a bike helmet of the right size. A light-coloured or reflective jacket is also important. This makes it easier for drivers to see your child.

What you can do

- Explain road signs to your child when you are out together. Get your child to explain road signs that they know to you.
- Practise the rules of the road together. For example, the right-before-left rule. Or what to do at traffic lights and zebra crossings.
- Find and watch the traffic lights that apply to cyclists.
- Practise setting off, braking and taking one hand off the handlebars in a safe place. In a park, for example.
- Talk to your child about places that are dangerous because of the traffic. Near your home, for example. Or near the school. Or around lorries.

My child cannot ride a bike

Not all children can ride a bike. But road safety lessons are still important. Children learn how to keep safe on the roads. Does your child have a disability? The course content can be adapted to their needs. Texts can also be read aloud. In the cycling training course and the test, for example. They may be able to practise with a tricycle or wheelchair. Or with support from an inclusion assistant. Deutsche Verkehrswacht offers materials and guidelines about all this. You will find more information about this at the end of this ElternMail Berlin.



EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE – PLEASURE IN LEARNING, CONFLICTS, TRAVELLING SAFELY

Travelling by bus and train

Is your journey to school too long to walk or cycle? Then your child probably has to travel by bus or train. Over time, your child can learn to manage the journey on their own. In Berlin, school students get a free student ticket for the bus and train. You can only get the ticket online. You will find information about where to get your ticket at the end of this ElternMail Berlin. You will also find a guide to it there.

What you can do

- Practise reading the network map and timetables together and travel together on buses and trains. This develops a sense of security for when your child is travelling alone.
- Explain to your child at home what they need to remember. Road safety rules on the way to the bus stop, for example.
- Are there any other children who take the same route by bus or train? If so, the children can meet up and ride together. Many things are easier to do together than alone.
- Some children at this age already have a smartphone, mobile phone or smartwatch. This can give you and your child more security. If your child uses a mobile phone or smartphone, discuss together beforehand how they can contact you or someone else quickly in an emergency.
- Take a look at the information and emergency call pillars at underground and suburban railway stations. Explain to your child that they can get help and information if they press a button.
- Find out about "Emergency Islands" on the routes that your child uses. Emergency Islands (Notinseln) are shops and businesses where your child can get help. If they feel unsafe, for example, or if a bus is cancelled. Or if they have any other questions. There is a sticker on the door so that your child can recognise an Emergency Island. You will find more information about the Emergency Islands at the end of this ElternMail Berlin.
- Tell your child that they are not allowed to go anywhere with strangers. Say something like: "Only go with people that we know. With grandma, grandpa, mum or dad, for example. If a stranger offers you anything, say in a loud voice: **"Leave me alone!"**"

Important: Does your child travel alone on the streets with a smartphone? If so, it is advisable to switch off all unnecessary smartphone functions. These include social media, games and video portals, for example. Your child will not then be distracted and can concentrate better on the route and the traffic.



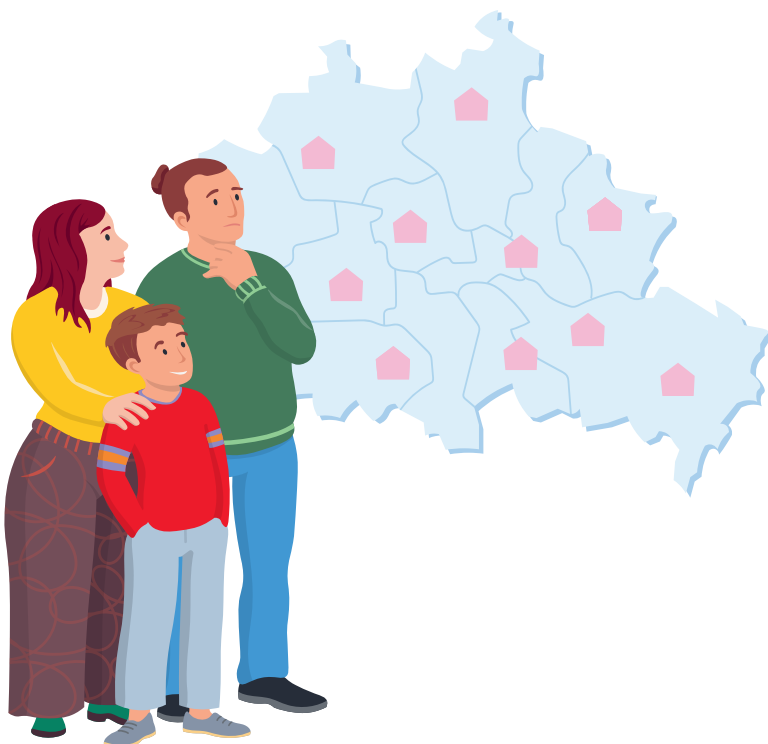
INFORMATION ABOUT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

General information about changing schools

Your child will have learnt a lot in the first years of primary school, including reading, writing and maths. Most children also know the routines of everyday school life. And they know who they can ask if they need help. Your child still has some time left at primary school before moving on to secondary school. Most children do not move on from primary school to secondary school until the end of Year 6. You can have a look around and find out which school is right for your child. There are many different types of secondary school in Berlin. For example, integrated secondary schools (Integrierte Sekundarschulen), community schools (Gemeinschaftsschulen) and grammar schools (Gymnasien). Your child can achieve all the school-leaving qualifications at all three types of school. There are no longer any fixed catchment areas for secondary schools. That means: your choice of school does not depend on where you live. All schools have limited places. You can select a total of 3 schools when you apply. So it is advisable to get to know several schools:

- **Visit websites:** Take a look at the websites of the schools. They will give you initial information about the school.
- **Go on an open day or tour:** Many secondary schools offer open days between November and January. Sometimes there are also tours of the schools. These give you the chance to get to know the school, its strengths and its staff. Talk to students, staff or parent-teacher representatives. They will give you honest insights into everyday school life. Encourage your child to ask questions themselves.
- **Try out the route to school:** On the day of your visit, travel by bus, train or bicycle. Just as your child would travel to the school. You will then know whether the route is manageable.
- **Listen to your instincts:** Does your child feel uncomfortable when you visit the school? It is important that your child feels at ease about attending school every day.

With you get your child's half-year report in Year 6, you will also be given documents to apply for a secondary school place: an application form for secondary schools and an academic forecast. The academic forecast is an assessment by the primary school about which type of school appears suitable for your child. For example, an integrated secondary school (Integrierte Sekundarschule), a community school (Gemeinschaftsschule) or a grammar school (Gymnasium). If your child is not recommended for a Gymnasium, you will also be given a registration form for a taster lesson.



Does your child want to go to a Gymnasium but their academic forecast recommends a different type of school? Then your child can take part in a taster lesson at a Gymnasium. Further information can be found at the end of this ElternMail Berlin.



Good to know:

The academic forecast consists of 2 parts.

Part 1 assesses your child's aptitude for a Gymnasium; part 2 gives their average mark in all subjects. Their report marks from the 2nd half of Year 5 and the 1st half of Year 6 are important for this.

You can ask questions at a meeting with the teacher. Applications for secondary school are usually made in February and March. The exact dates are set every year. When you apply, you will need the completed application form and the academic forecast.

Are you a single parent and wondering which parent decides on the choice of school? If you have joint custody, you decide together. Talk to each other about what is the best decision for your child. Do you have different opinions on this and can't agree? Then take advantage of the free Parenting and Family Counselling Service (EFB) in Berlin. Through counselling, you can find the right solution for your child together. You will find more information about the Parenting and Family Counselling Service at the end of this ElternMail Berlin.

INFORMATION ABOUT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Important: Make sure that the first foreign language taught at your primary school is offered at the secondary school. This is a prerequisite for attending secondary school. If your child wants to go to a school with a different foreign language, they need to apply for a change of foreign language. You submit the application to the school supervisory authority.

Childcare during the holidays

Many parents are unsure who to get to look after their child during the summer holidays. There is no legal entitlement to after-school care or holiday care at secondary schools. Sometimes schools offer services of their own. For example, project days, trips or study groups during the holidays. Please ask if opportunities of this sort are available. And whether your child can use them.

You can also find out about holiday programmes and youth leisure facilities. They offer many different options for children and young people during the summer holidays. These include day trips and holiday camps, for example. In Berlin, there are also other free or low-cost services during the holidays. You will find information about these at the end of this ElternMail Berlin.

Does your child get very good marks at school? Are they already very independent? Then you may have thought about changing to a secondary school at the end of Year 4. Some of the Integrierte Sekundarschulen and Gymnasien offer a programme from Year 5 onwards. You will find details of the schools that offer this at the end of this ElternMail Berlin.

Discuss this option with the teacher before mid-December of Year 4. The teacher can advise you on whether it is advisable to make the change early. The teacher will also give you the academic forecast. You will need this to change schools.

Special educational needs – which school to choose for your child?

Has your child been identified as having special educational needs? Then you may be wondering which secondary school they will attend. All schools are inclusive. There are also schools with a focus on special educational needs. It is best to get to know the schools. At an open day, for example. You will often be able to make appointments with the school's specialists at these events.

At the meeting, they will describe their experience of inclusion at the school. You may also be able to get in touch with parents at the school via the parents' association (GEV). They will tell you about their experiences. You can contact the parent's association via the secretary's office or the school website.

School inclusion assistance and school assistance

You may have decided on a school, but your child needs more support. Schools can apply to the SIBUZ for so-called school inclusion assistance for pupils with care and support needs. This provides support in the group.

School assistance is a service for school students with disabilities in everyday school life. The Youth Welfare Office can advise you on the requirements. You can also get more information there.



Good to know:

All schools in Berlin have all-day programmes. Some programmes are compulsory, others are optional. A compulsory all-day programme means: all children at the school attend the all-day programme. The programme is obligatory. In a compulsory all-day programme, there may also be lessons in the afternoon. The optional programmes work differently. You and your child decide whether you need and want to use the service. In an optional all-day programme, lessons only take place in the mornings.

Are you intending to send your child to an independent school? Then find out what type of all-day care is available before you sign the school contract.

Does your child have special educational needs? In this case, the child may also be entitled to additional support and supervision (eFöB) at secondary school. If your own school does not have a holiday programme, your child can go to another school for childcare.



DEVELOPMENT IN PRE-PUBERTY AND PUBERTY

Social development of your child

Time with friends becomes increasingly important for your child. They may go out a lot. Or they may enjoy meeting other children for leisure activities. Your child needs other children and wants to be part of a group.

But time with the family is still important. It gives your child security and an emotional bond. During the move to secondary school, for example.

Plan a fixed routine for family time together. Games evenings, for example. Or chatting together before going to bed. This allows your child to recharge their batteries. Children often prefer to play with their friends, but they also need time in the family nest. Talk to your child about why family time is important to you.

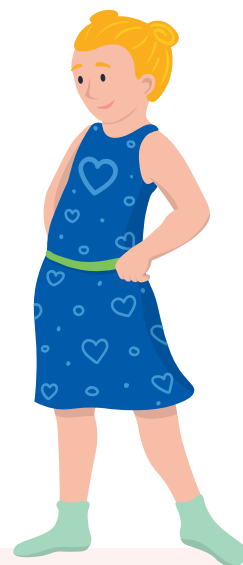
For some children with disabilities, it is more difficult to participate in class and make friends. Because of language barriers, for example. Educational professionals teach children about barriers, differences and similarities. This helps to ensure that everyone gets on well together. If your child needs more support, talk to the class teacher about it. Take someone who knows your situation well to meetings of this sort: a case worker or therapist, a medical professional or someone from a counselling centre. Together you can work out what your child needs.

Your child may find it helpful to meet other children with disabilities. For example, you can take part in inclusive leisure activities or trips. You will find more information about this at the end of the ElternMail Berlin.



Tip:

Does your child often feel excluded? Or do they often get angry? You will find information on the topic of exclusion in the ElternMail Berlin for Year 2. It also explains how to deal with exclusion.



Physical and emotional changes

- **Change in sleeping habits:** Does your child find it difficult to get out of bed in the morning? Or are they going to bed later at night? Changes in sleep patterns are normal during pre-puberty and puberty.
- **The body changes:** Your child has growth spurts again. Sometimes they seem to grow over night. Their reproductive organs also mature and change.
- **Hormones:** During puberty, hormones affect mood, among other things. Perhaps your child is happy one moment and sad the next? Emotions are particularly intense during puberty.
- **Brain development:** The brain also changes its structure. This is often referred to as the "brain under construction". This is why children at this age are sometimes forgetful or seem different.
- **Social relationships:** Friends become increasingly important. Your child gets recognition from them. And a feeling of belonging. As a parent, you are still important. You offer your child security. Especially when things are difficult with their peer group.



DEVELOPMENT IN PRE-PUBERTY AND PUBERTY

Friendships

At this age, friendships become increasingly important. Some children have lots of friends, other children have few. Both are fine. At this age, children want to belong. They want other children to like them. That's why the opinion of friends is particularly important. Sometimes children adapt or go along with things even though they don't feel comfortable doing them.

Encourage your child by saying, for example: "All children have strengths and weaknesses and every child is unique. You don't have to do everything or be able to do everything to be popular. You're great just the way you are." This strengthens your child's self-confidence. Strong self-confidence helps children to set their own boundaries and deal with friendships. Feel free to talk to your child about friendships. For example, ask them what is important to them in a friendship. This makes it easier for them to recognise friendships and get on well with others.

Does your child often talk about arguments? And do they often have different friends? That's frequently the case at this age. Feelings and arguments come to the surface quickly. And they get over those arguments just as quickly.

Sexuality and contraception

In the first to third year of school, your child will already have had sex education as part of their personal development lessons. Topics such as sexuality, identity, the body and setting boundaries are also part of the curriculum in Years 4 and 5. However, these lessons are not enough. Talk openly with your child about sexuality and physical changes. Talk to them about the fact that they can and must say "no" if something does not feel right. Protect your child from information on the internet. Many children watch videos there that are not made for them. Does your child find it embarrassing to talk to you about this kind of thing? Perhaps another trusted adult can talk to them about it. An aunt or an uncle?

The physical and emotional development of children with developmental delay can progress at different speeds. While their body is already showing changes, their feelings are sometimes still very childlike. They may be very open with people they don't know. Or they may not be able to distinguish between "private" and "public" situations. It is important to teach your child this difference to protect them. Be patient with your child and don't make them feel ashamed. Explain to them that some situations are "private", such as going to the toilet. Or when they are naked.



Typical or simply different?

Your child is allowed to develop as they wish. But some people say: "That's only for boys!" Or: "Only girls do that!" It is important that every child is allowed to decide for themselves what suits them. Interests, hobbies, clothing and colours do not belong to a particular gender.

- Let your child choose which leisure activities they want to do. Or what they find interesting. Sometimes children think that some hobbies are only for boys. And others only for girls. The school's after-school care club often offers free leisure activities. Encourage your child to try out different things.
- Your child is free to decide which colours, clothes or toys they like.

Tell your child that all people are equally important. And that every person is fine as they are. Say something like: "Everyone is equal. No matter what gender they are. And everyone can decide for themselves what they like and what interests them."

Your child learns from your example. So always speak respectfully about other people. Avoid old role models. Don't say things like "Boys don't cry" or "Dancing is for girls".



Tip:

On Girls' and Boys' Day, children can try out different professions. This is where children discover that anyone can work in any profession. Women also work in manual and technical professions. And men also work in social professions.

Encourage independence

- **Independence begins at home:** Your child can take on responsibility in everyday life. By doing household chores, for example. They can hang out the washing. Or put their own clothes away in the wardrobe. They can help to prepare a meal. Or help you with the shopping.
- **Travelling alone:** Maybe it's time to let your child go to their leisure activities on their own? Or to the playground or the library? Work out together how much your child can do independently. This is different for every child. Also practise describing where they are: street names, building numbers and landmarks such as well-known shops.
- **Take individuality into account:** Perhaps you are worried because your child has an impairment. Talk to other trusted people: work out which situations allow your child more freedom. What are the realistic goals? Maybe your child could buy themselves a snack in the supermarket while you wait outside the door. Or walk a short distance alone. Or take the bus a short distance if someone is waiting for them at the bus stop. You and your child will feel more secure and confident with every successful experience.
- **Learning organisational skills:** Let your child organise their school materials themselves. They can work out which materials they need on which days. It may be a little chaotic at first. Or things may get forgotten. That's OK. Your child needs the opportunity to practise this. A checklist helps some children to keep track of the materials they need to pack.
- **Confidence and trust:** Many parents want to protect their children. But your child wants to have experiences themselves and will learn from those experiences. Only intervene if it really is a matter of the safety of your child. Ask, for example: "Would you like my opinion on this or should I stay out of it? I trust you!"



USE OF MEDIA

Using media sensibly

Using media can be helpful. For example, your child can practise researching on special sites for children. They learn where to find content that suits their age and interests. Learning videos or learning apps can also be helpful sometimes. If your child is having difficulty understanding learning materials, for example. Or you find it difficult to explain particular pieces of work. Feel free to ask your teachers about their experience.

Think about how you use media as a family and stick to age restrictions. What is your child allowed to send when they are chatting online, for example? And what are they not allowed to do? Also think about how to recognise advertising and misinformation.

Try to use media creatively. For example, you can create images or videos. Or you can try out a creative idea from social media together. Follow the instructions to make something, for example, or follow a recipe. This strengthens your bond and your child's media skills. Media literacy means using media safely. This includes ensuring that your child understands how the media work. And understanding how to use media sensibly.

Remember to talk about media usage times and breaks. Clear rules are needed so that your child learns how to use media sensibly. Talk to other parents about good, fair rules. Perhaps you can set rules for your children together.

The Media Literacy Centre (Medienkompetenzzentrum) in your district offers opportunities to learn and practise how to use media. For your child and for yourself. You will find information about this at the end of this ElternMail Berlin.

How old should your child be to have a smartphone? Social networks, online dangers, cyberbullying

Some children are given a smartphone at the start of Year 5. Consider together whether your child needs a smartphone. If they walk to school alone, for example. Or go to their leisure activities alone. Then a smartphone can make you and your child feel safe. But please remember that there are also dangers. At this age, your child will not yet understand the risks. And they will find it difficult to put their smartphone down. That's normal.

That's why they need your help to use it properly. And clear rules are required. For example, when and for what your child is allowed to use their smartphone. Further information about this topic can be found on the last page of this ElternMail Berlin.



Tip:

Giving your child their first smartphone can be a good opportunity to talk about media rules as a family. A media usage agreement, for example, can help you to lay down the rules. You can discuss together which rules are important to you for using media. Make sure that you stick to all the rules yourself.



Social media: Ideals of beauty, role models and stars

Social media is part of everyday life for many children. Examples include YouTube, TikTok and Instagram. Your child is not old enough to use social media alone. There is a lot of false information on social media. Your child cannot yet distinguish between what is reality and what is not. Talk to your child about the fact that many things on social media are not real. Explain to them how they can recognise this. Then they can learn how to use social media properly.

Important: Do not leave a child under the age of 12 unsupervised when using the internet.

Gaming

Many children of this age like to play computer games and games on consoles or mobile phones. Here, too, your child needs clear rules and some guidance from you. Fixed rules and restrictions on gaming times can help to ensure that your child still has time for rest, exercise and friends. This will help your child to enjoy gaming in a sensible way in the long term. Also pay attention to age restrictions for games. Take a look at the games your child plays. Or play along with them. You will then understand the experience your child has from gaming. Many children get angry, sad, anxious or very excited when gaming. This is normal, and stopping can sometimes be difficult. Talk to your child about how they feel about gaming and stick to gaming time restrictions. This will protect your child from gaming taking over.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying on the internet. A group of people of any size insults individual victims. Sometimes the victims also receive unpleasant messages. They are laughed at and excluded by the others. This can happen on social networks or via messaging. Because it's digital, cyberbullying can go on all day. This is very difficult for the victim. Talk to your child about this issue. They need to know: if anything like this happens to me, I can talk to my parents. I am not alone and I can get help. Is your child a victim of cyberbullying? Then you will find further information and advice on the last few pages of this ElternMail Berlin, together with a link to the Berlin Family Portal (Familienportal).



Good to know:

There are special protection filters and parental controls for young people. For example, you can use them to limit your child's content and screen time. The "Ins Netz gehen" (Going online) website provides parents, professionals and young people with comprehensive advice on topics such as safety, prevention, data protection, etc. Further information about this topic can be found on the last page of this ElternMail Berlin.



HEALTH

The U11 examination takes place at the age of 9 or 10.

The U11 focuses on the following:

Attention and concentration skills

Developmental abnormalities

General physical development

Motor development

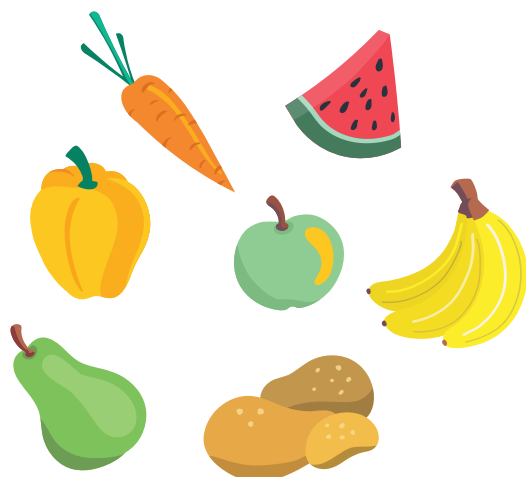
Development of the genitals

Examination of the eyes

Another focus of the examination is healthy nutrition. Some children of primary school age are overweight. This can be due to diet and too little exercise. Make sure that your child is getting enough exercise during the day and sleep at night. If you are concerned about your child's weight, talk to your paediatrician. They can give advice on topics such as exercise and healthy eating. You can also find out if there are any other causes of the problem.

Psychosocial health is also a topic covered by the U11 examination. This includes, for example, the ability to concentrate or deal with stress and social behaviour. You will be given tips on how you can strengthen your child's psychosocial health.

The paediatrician will also tell you about the HPV vaccination. The vaccination protects against human papillomaviruses (HPV). These viruses can cause cancer in the long term. It is advisable for girls and boys aged 9 to 14 to be vaccinated against HPV.



Exercise

Exercise is important for your child. It helps them to stay healthy and feel good. At this age, at least 60 minutes of exercise a day is good. This can be playing, running around, sport or cycling.

Exercise is not only important for the body. It also helps your child to reduce stress and concentrate better. Ideally, you should combine exercise with fresh air. A game of football or table tennis in the park can be a great way to get some exercise together. And you will also strengthen your relationship with your child.

Healthy nutrition for your child

A balanced diet is particularly important for your child's healthy growth. Children of this age need enough energy and nutrients for learning and good concentration.

Regular meals: Children need something to eat in the morning, at lunchtime and in the evening so that they have enough energy for school and their leisure activities.

Balanced diet: Fruit, vegetables, wholemeal products, dairy products and some meat, fish or vegetarian alternatives are all part of a good diet.

Healthy drinks: Water or unsweetened tea are best. Sweet drinks should be the exception.

A good snack: Snacks should be filling, for example wholemeal bread, cheese, cream cheese, vegetables or fruit.

Less sugar and sweets: It is better to eat sweets and highly processed snacks only rarely; as a guide, only give your child as many sweet treats as will fit in their hand.



Tip:

Take another look at the enrolment email. Here you will find lots of good ideas for healthy snacks and a suitable diet for good concentration.

SUPPORT SERVICES IN BERLIN



Education and Participation Package

The Education and Participation Package (Bildungs- und Teilhabepaket – BuT) supports families who don't have much money. In addition to tutoring, it subsidises school trips, travel costs to school, school materials and leisure activities.

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/bildungspaket-fuer-mein-kind-leicht-erklart>



Reading and spelling difficulties – information for parents

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/lernschwierigkeiten-in-der-schule>



Difficulties with numeracy (counting/doing sums) – information for parents

<https://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/schule/foerderung/lernschwierigkeiten/rechenschwierigkeiten/flyer-rechenschwierigkeiten.pdf?ts=1732099102>



Giving children confidence

It is important to give children the confidence to set boundaries and say no, including when it comes to their own bodies. Or to get support if they have experienced assaults or violations of their personal space. There is plenty of help available on this important topic:

<https://nicht-wegschieben.de/schuetzen>



<https://multiplikatoren.trau-dich.de/initiative/>



<https://beauftragte-missbrauch.de/hilfe-und-praeventionsangebote>



Girls' and Boys' Day - Future Day for girls and boys

A nationwide day of action offering career guidance for boys, girls and genderqueer children without stereotypes is held every spring. Companies can be found for taster days and internships in a database on the website of the German Education Server.

<https://www.bildungsserver.de/schule/girls-und-boys-day-zukunftstag-fuer-maedchen-und-jungen-4173-de.html>



Remodelling the brain – changes during puberty

The Berlin Family Portal (Familienportal) gives clear information and practical tips for parents and information about advice and support services relating to puberty.

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/pubertaet>



Leisure activities for children and adolescents with disabilities

There are holiday and leisure activities for all children in Berlin. There is an overview for children and adolescents with disabilities on the Family Portal. Costs may also be covered.

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/freizeitangebote-fuer-kinder-und-jugendliche-mit-behinderung>



<https://kinderversorgungsnetz-berlin.de/ferien-und-reiseangebote>

SUPPORT SERVICES IN BERLIN



Safe routes with Emergency Islands

Emergency Islands are shops or institutions throughout the city. They have a sticker with a recognisable image. They will help children if they are assaulted, if they get lost or if they lose their wallet, keys or smartphone.

<https://www.notinsel.de/>



<https://www.bvg.de/de/abos-und-tickets/schuelerticket>



<https://buergerstiftung-berlin.de/berlin-rallye/>



Integrative learning therapy

Integrative learning therapy helps children and adolescents with learning problems such as reading, writing or numeracy difficulties. It combines different methods to help children learn more easily and regain self-confidence.

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/lernschwierigkeiten-in-der-schule>



Help with bullying, violence and mental health problems

Bullying and cyberbullying can occur at any school. It is important to act quickly.

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/unterstuetzung-bei-mobbing-in-der-schule-und-im-internet>



<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/hilfe-und-beratung-bei-psychischen-erkrankungen>



<https://www.berlin-suchtpraevention.de/>



School psychology service helps with worries and problems

School Psychology and Educational Inclusion Advice and Support Centres (Schulpsychologische und Inklusionspädagogische Beratungs- und Unterstützungszentren – SIBUZ) provide advice and support about learning and behaviour, including anxiety about school, concentration problems, reading, spelling or maths problems, conflicts at school and support for gifted children. There are SIBUZ in all districts. Advice is free, confidential and neutral.

<https://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/unterstuetzung/beratungszentren-sibuz/>



<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/schulpsychologischer-dienst>



<https://www.berlin.de/sen/bjf/hilfe-und-unterstuetzung/>



Children with disabilities/impairments - strengthening participation

The Youth Participation Service (TeilhabeFachdienst Jugend) helps children and adolescents with disabilities or special needs. It supports them in school, education and leisure activities and organises help such as school assistance or therapy. The service is part of the Youth Welfare Office (Jugendamt).

www.berlin.de/sen/soziales/besondere-lebenssituationen/menschen-mit-behinderung/



www.kinderversorgungsnetz-berlin.de/leistungen-zur-teilhabe-bildung



<https://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/schule/inklusion/schulische-inklusionsassistenz/>



<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/inklusion-in-der-schule>



Media use and media education

Children need help with using digital media. There are many support services in Berlin and online. These will give you answers to your questions about media use.

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/medienkompetenz-fuer-kinder-und-familien>



https://jugendnetz.berlin/jn/00_Medienkompetenzzentren/



Media use and media education

<https://www.ins-netz-gehen.de/>



<https://www.schau-hin.info/>



Vaccination protection: "A quick injection for long protection - fight back against cancer!"

Infections with human papillomaviruses (HPV) can cause cancer. They can cause various types of cancer. In girls and boys, HP viruses are among the most common sexually transmitted pathogens. The HPV vaccination offers protection against cancer. The Standing Committee on Vaccination (Ständige Impfkommision - STIKO) recommends vaccination between the ages of 9 and 14. This can be done through a paediatrician or a gynaecologist.

https://www.rki.de/SharedDocs/FAQs/DE/Impfen/HPV/FAQ-Liste_HP_V_Impfempfehlung.html#



<https://www.bvkJ.de/politik-und-presse/pressemitteilung/maedchen-und-jungen-stark-machen-mit-einer-impfung-gegen-den-erreger-von-krebs/>

SUPPORT SERVICES IN BERLIN



Conflict support – Parenting and Family Counselling Centre (EFB)

Conflicts, disagreements and arguments are part of family life – but they can also be stressful. The Parenting and Family Counselling Centre (Erziehungs- und Familienberatungsstelle – EFB) supports parents in dealing with uncertainties, finding solutions and taking the stress out of everyday family life. Counselling is confidential, free of charge and helps you to cope better with difficult situations.

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/hilfe-und-beratung-rund-um-die-kindererziehung>



<https://efb-berlin.de/>



Services for children in the holidays and family holidays on a budget

Holidays are great – but they can sometimes be challenging when parents have to work. There are children's and youth holiday options where children can travel without their parents. "Mein bewegter Sommer" (My Active Summer) organised by Sportjugend Berlin offers reliable two-week day care for Berlin primary school children with attractive, exciting and exercise-based activities during the summer holidays. Many activities are cheaper with the Super Holiday Pass (Super-Ferien-Pass).

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/kinder-und-jugenderholung-angebote-und-foerderung>



<https://sportjugend-berlin.de/themenwelten/programme/mein-bewegter-sommer-1>



<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/super-ferien-pass-fuer-berlin>



<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/familienurlaub-fuer-familien-mit-wenig-budget>



<https://familienportal.berlin.de/news/der-berliner-familienpass-2026-ist-da>



Leisure activities for children and adolescents with disabilities

There are many youth leisure centres in all districts that are run by church parishes and public or independent organisations. They are places where children and young people can spend their free time. There are games, sports and creative activities and rooms where they can meet up, listen to music and relax. Many organisations offer workshops, excursions and support if you have any questions or problems. Further information about leisure activities can be found in the ElternMail Berlin "Your child in Year 3".

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/erlebnis-grossstadt-berliner-vereine-jugendverbaende>



Remodelling the brain – changes during puberty

The Berlin Family Portal (Familienportal) gives clear information and practical tips for parents and information about advice and support services relating to puberty.

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/pubertaet>

What happens after primary school

Gymnasium from Year 5 or Year 7, Gemeinschaftsschule or Integrierte Sekundarschule with or without Abitur? The Family Portal and the website of the State Parents' Committee (Landeselternausschuss) provide information and help with decision-making. Has your child been identified as having special educational needs? You may be wondering which secondary school they will attend. There are inclusive schools and schools with a focus on special educational needs.

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/wie-geht-es-nach-der-grundschule-weiter>



<https://leaberlin.de/267-aktuelles/4090-infosammlung-zum-uebergang-von-klasse-6-zu-klasse-7-2025>



<https://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/schule/bildungswege/uebergang-weiterfuehrende-schule/>



<https://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/schule/bildungswege/uebergang-weiterfuehrende-schule/wechsel-zur-5-klasse/>



Safe on the roads of Berlin - road safety training

There are various road safety training programmes in Berlin. You will find Youth Road Safety Schools (Jugendverkehrsschulen) in the districts. These teach safe cycling and the rules of the road. The programmes are aimed at children, adolescents and the whole family. There are inclusive learning opportunities for children with mental impairments.

<https://familienportal.berlin.de/artikel/verkehrserziehung-fuer-kinder>



<https://buergerstiftung-berlin.de/berlin-rallye/>



<https://www.Berlin-sicher-mobil.de>



<https://www.verkehrswacht.de/mobil-teilhabe-kids-mit-geistiger-behinderung-lernen-verkehr/>





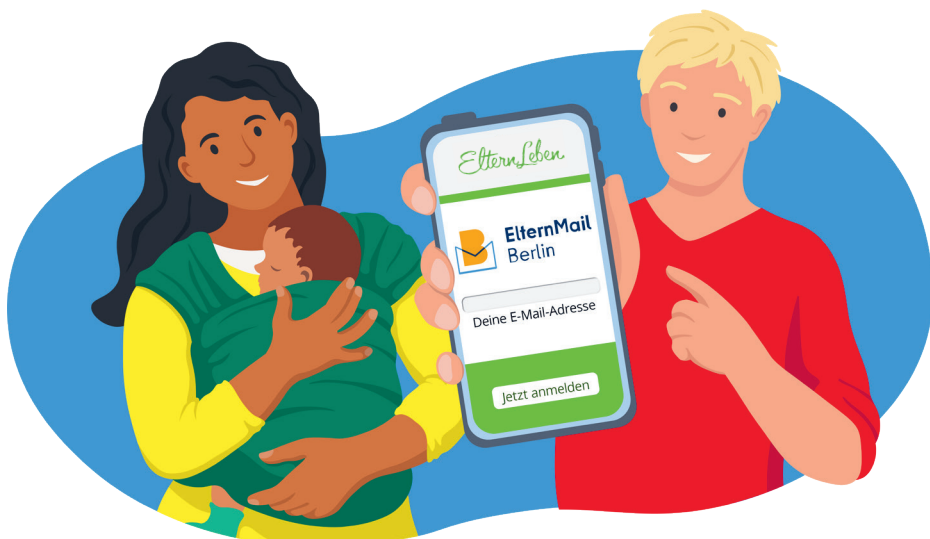
GOOD SUPPORT FROM THE START

Through the **ElternMail Berlin**, the **Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family** aims to support and strengthen all parents at the start of family life and on their subsequent journey as parents.

The service is free of charge and is designed to provide mums and dads with helpful information about their child's development and practical tips and advice on local support services.

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Concept

wellcome gGmbH: Dr Martina Stotz

Editorial board

wellcome gGmbH: Dr Martina Stotz,
Madeline Hoffmann, Sabine Linz

Stützrad gGmbH: Katja Brendel,
Friederike Siggelkow

Editors

Rebecca Pascual Vega, Natasha Eliason,
Franziska Teske

Coordination, marketing & design

wellcome gGmbH: Berit Lohnzweiger

Graphics and layout

wellcome gGmbH: Jette Schweer

Illustrations

Franziska Bachmaier (House of Creatures)

Photop.

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