

Childcare

To enable fathers and mothers to return to work after giving birth, the Canton Bern promotes childcare services. There are various offers, for example day care centers, day parents or day schools. Most of them have to be paid for. However, those who receive childcare vouchers (Betreuungsgutscheine|bons de garde) pay less.

Day-Care Centres

Children are supervised throughout the day at day-care centers. (Kinderkrippen|Kindertagesstätten|garderies). Most offers are for children from three months of age until school age. Some day-care centers do supervise school age children (before and after school and at lunchtime). Waiting lists are long and parents must enroll their children early. Costs vary and many communities help pay for them: they give childcare vouchers to parents. Need must be documented. The day-care centers or the communities have additional information on enrollment and costs.

Playgroups

Many children attend playgroups (Spielgruppe|Groupe de jeu) before they reach school age. In these playgroups children over the age of approximately 3 meet without their parents to play, do crafts, etc. with a trained leader. Playgroup attendance is voluntary. Particularly for children who do not speak German at home the playgroup is a good opportunity to become exposed to the German language. This facilitates entering school. Costs vary and some communities help pay for playgroups. Playgroups are available in many communities. The community of residence will provide further information.

Day Schools / School Lunch

Some schools offer supervision outside of classes. This depends on the number of registrations. Children can, for example, stay at school during lunchtime if their school has a day school program. There they will be given a lunch. After school they can do their homework under supervision. Before school they can eat something, play or read. These programs must be paid for by parents. The costs often depend on parents' income. The child can benefit from the program on one or more days a week. Day school programs are not to be confused with day schools where children must participate in day school 5 days a week.



Day Families

Day families (Tagesfamilien) are families that care for children for a certain amount of time (usually the whole day). This childcare service is popular amongst working parents. There are services that help parents find suitable day families and that will provide information on average costs.

Babysitters / Emergency Situations

In Switzerland young people are often employed as babysitters for evenings or weekends. The Swiss Red Cross (SRK|CRS) Bern keeps a list of babysitting services that work with sitters who have attended a babysitting class. It is common to pay young people for their time. In unpredictable emergency situations the Swiss Red Cross (SRK|CRS) Bern runs an emergency childcare service, for example, when a parent must go to hospital and no other form of childcare is available. The service is not free of charge, but some costs are covered by health insurance.

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-bern.ch/en/partnership-and-children/childcare