

School preparation in the "World of Kids"

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Foreword

The time between the last year of kindergarden and the start of elementary school should be a smooth transition. In order to make this process as successful as possible for the child, a cooperative and trusting collaboration between all learning companions is required: The family, the teachers at the nursery and the teachers at the schools.

In principle, preparation for school in the daycare center is preparation for life and begins from a child's first day in the nursery or kindergarden. Nevertheless, the transition from nursery to elementary school is a major change for a child and their family. Therefore, it requires good preparation, which is intensified in the last year of nursery.

Preparing for school in the daycare center does not mean that lessons take place in the daycare center. The educational work in a daycare center differs fundamentally from that in school. The children achieve comprehensive school readiness (chapter 6), which enables them to cope with the new requirements and the change in everyday life. The *World of Kids* offers the children a highly qualified variety of activities and works in close cooperation with two elementary schools in the surrounding area. This concept explains the basic aspects of school preparation and describes the various processes as well as the framework plan for the last year of kindergarden.



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1. Hooray, soon I'll be a schoolchild

The last year of kindergarten is something very special for many children. Now they are among the oldest. Most children look forward to starting school with anticipation and curiosity. They proudly await the time when they finally learn to write, read and do arithmetic. At the same time, they are also facing a transition into a new and unknown world, which can sometimes be accompanied by doubts and concerns.

It's not just the children who are looking forward to starting school, parents and teachers are also concerned about how the transition into this new phase of life can be successful. Everyone involved in the educational partnership has a responsibility to make this important, promising and not entirely easy transition easier for the child. Parents play a decisive role in this. They are the ones who convey an image of school to their child and therefore also anticipation or skepticism.

For a successful start to school, the parents' main task is as follows:

a) Assistance with skills acquisition

to support your child in acquiring all the basic skills relevant for starting school.

b) Providing information

To help your child develop a positive image of what to expect at school.

c) Offering a safe haven

Give your child confidence, security and stability.

For educators, "school preparation" starts from the very first day the child enters the daycare center and is integrated into everyday activities over the years. In this way, the child develops step by step towards school readiness.

Nevertheless, the children at WoKi are offered some special content in the final year to help them refine their skills and make the transition to school easier.

The children are supported and encouraged in such a way that they can develop all the personal, technical and social skills they need for school. It is explicitly NOT about imitating school lessons or anticipating the first-grade curriculum.¹

Instead, the WoKi focuses on the individuality of each child. The last year in kindergarten is seen as a great opportunity for the children to help shape their lives.

For some time now, brain research findings on the subject of "learning" have shown that learning programs and training restrain children's enthusiasm for learning instead of firing it up.

In turn, people learn and retain content more easily if it interests them at the time or affects them emotionally. For this reason, the pedagogical work at WoKi is always based on topics that the children themselves bring up or that the teachers observe as topics of interest.




In the WoKi, two specialists work in each house who deal specifically with the topic of school preparation. Every year, around 20 children complete their last year of kindergarten in each house. Around 10 children in the forest group. Meetings for school starters take place once a week in each area. These approximately 60-minute meetings take place in small groups of around 10 children and are planned, organized and followed up by one specialist from the kindergarten and one from the WoKi school preparation coordinator. In regular team meetings on school preparation, the specialists discuss developmental steps, current areas of interest and new developments.

¹ Kikupedia "School preparation KIKU" (13.12.23)

2. The right school entry age

In principle, the child's date of birth determines the school entry age. In Bavaria, all children who turn six years old by June 30 of a given year are required to attend school.

"Children who turn six between July 1 and September 30 are in the school enrollment corridor. The start of compulsory schooling can be postponed by one year for these children.

 <p>HAVE TO</p> <p>Children who turn six years old by June 30:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school-age 	 <p>CORRIDOR</p> <p>Children who turn six between July 1 and September 30:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially required to attend school • Parents decide on the date of school enrolment after consultation • Decision deadline: April 10 of the school enrolment year 	 <p>CAN</p> <p>Children who turn six between October 1 and December 31:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not required to attend school, but may theoretically also be enrolled in school • Written notification to schools by December of the previous year
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Children in the enrollment corridor go through the registration and enrollment process at elementary school in the same way as all other children. Based on the findings, the school advises the parents and makes a recommendation.

The assessment by the elementary school provides parents/guardians with important information on the child's level of development, any need for support and the support options available at school. The assessments already provided by the daycare center and the school entry examination by the health department are thus completed from a school perspective.

Parents/guardians must inform the elementary school in writing by April 10 of their decision to enroll their child in school one year later.²

Children who turn six between October 01. and December 31. also have the option of starting school early. Here too, it is recommended that the decision is made together with teachers, pediatricians and, if necessary, the school.

² [School enrolment and safety on the way to school | Primary school | Types of school | Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs \(bayern.de\)](#) (14.06.24)

You can find out which school will be your child's future elementary school on the Bayernatlas website (BayernAtlas - the map viewer of the Free State of Bavaria).

In the WoKi, the specialists and the coordinator for school preparation are available to answer any questions on the subject.

3. Educational partnership with families

The transition of one's own child to elementary school is particularly unsettling for many parents. A close exchange and flow of information between the teachers and parents is extremely helpful here. An information event on the educational concept of WoKi takes place in advance as part of the school preparation process, which also provides a platform for questions.

In the summer, before the start of the last year of kindergarten, the team colleagues contact the families concerned. In 2024, the school entry screening was reformed to the effect that the screening no longer takes place within the last year of kindergarten as before, but in the year before. This means that families are already thinking about the decision to start school in the penultimate year of kindergarten.

Only those children who are due to start school the following year take part in the school preparation programs at WoKi.

In the last year of kindergarten, the previous reference teachers hand over "their" child to the team colleagues specializing in "school preparation". Thanks to the possibility of differentiated observation during future meetings, courses and excursions, these specialists are even better informed about the child's current learning progress and, thanks to their specialization and experience, can respond even more competently to school-specific questions from parents.

Regular door-to-door talks and six-monthly development meetings are held with parents to keep them informed about their child's learning progress.

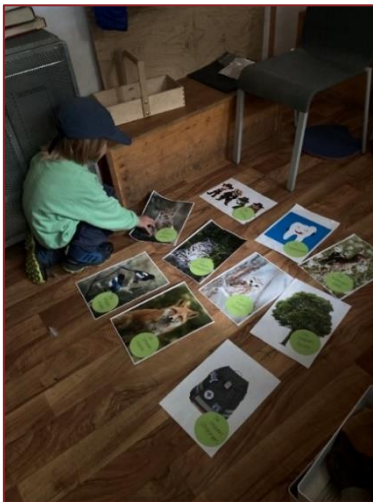
The discussion focuses on the child's strengths, skills and needs. School readiness and ability encompass *emotional, social, linguistic, motor and cognitive skills*. Based on these areas, the child's skills and further development opportunities are examined holistically.

All experiences during the meetings, courses or excursions are also documented promptly and displayed for the children and parents to see on the "Last KIGA year" pinboard in the indoor playground, next to the Wardrobe.



4. Designing the transition in the WoKi

The official start of the events of the last kindergarten year is usually calendar week 38. As usual in the WoKi, the first meetings of the school starters are used to choose a common name for this special group of children. In the following weeks, the children vote on future activities and each child is asked individually what they would like to learn before starting school. In this way, the group creates its very individual annual program in a very participatory way.



The weekly school preparation course meetings are based on these questions and topics brought in by the children. The teachers then have the opportunity to offer topic-specific skills that make starting school easier. These include writing stations, exercises on quantities and numbers, etc.

In addition, preschool work includes impulses that introduce new topics and make them interesting. The teachers keep a close eye on whether the children show further interest or whether other things are currently taking priority.

In order to feel part of their age group, more small group work takes place in the last year of kindergarten. For example, the children's group gives itself its own name, which needs to be negotiated. Ideas are collected, their own idea is promoted, then a vote is taken and, if necessary, a defeat has to be endured. That is democracy. The group name is written down and a symbol is chosen. During this process, the children strengthen their social, emotional, linguistic and motor skills in the community.

In order to promote the children's resilience in relation to the transition to school and also for their time at school, we focus on the topic of body and soul in the second half of the year. Various workshops with external speakers as well as internal projects with the children take place on this topic. On the one hand, the theme is about getting to know the body physically with all its functions. In addition to this part, the children will also complete the so-called "plaster pass" - a training course in first aid for children, as well as the "Not with me" prevention and self-defense course.

On the other hand, great attention is also paid to the importance of feelings and thoughts. In addition to exercises on naming and recognizing feelings, discussion groups and relaxation sessions, the "Dare to do something" course complements this thematic focus.

5. A framework plan for the year

5.1. ... for the children

The beginning of the kindergarten year is a time of reorientation. Older children have left the group, new children have joined, new friendships are forming. The older children begin to identify with their new role as "old hands".

The weekly meetings create a sense of belonging and the excitement for the coming year grows. Some fixed stages of the year can already be determined and transparently passed on to the children. Others are up to the children and must first be negotiated.

Educational excursions:

In addition to the weekly small group meetings to prepare the children for school, the schedule also includes a few deliberately selected in-house workshops and excursions. Which excursions take place this year depends on the decision of the majority. Once sufficient information has been gathered on the excursion destination, a vote is held within the small group. Such joint excursions on various topics strengthen the ability to find one's way in unfamiliar environments and systems. They raise new questions and can thus be a Kick-off for further activities at the in-house course meetings.

For most visits, the small group travels by public bus. This is the first opportunity to learn about safe behavior in road traffic and on the way to school and to take a closer look at the topic.

In-house workshops:

Three in-house courses that have proven themselves over the years are offered regularly at the WoKi every year.

On the one hand, the so-called "plaster pass", a training course for children to avoid accident situations and learn correct behavior in the event of accidents, offered by trained specialist staff from the Höchststadt district hospital.³

In addition, the violence prevention project of the German Ju-Jitsu Association: "Not with me", which aims to avoid dangers, recognize dangerous situations and, in an emergency, make themselves known and defend themselves.⁴

On the other hand, the "Dare to do something" personality training on the topics of self-assertion, social skills, improving communication, self-defense and violence prevention.⁵

Another important point of the last year before starting school is for children to experience how school works. Questions such as "What does a classroom look like?", "How does the break work?", "How do I know who I can turn to?", etc. are raised. A school visit is planned for all children transferring to Carl Platz Primary School. On the one hand, to get to know the school as a building, but also to talk to teachers and ask questions. The more questions can be clarified, the more concrete the picture becomes, which in turn creates security.

German pre-course and language club:

In addition, a firmly established internal WoKi *program* provides a platform for strengthening language skills.

The so-called "language club" is a supplement to the *German 240 preliminary course*. This is funded by the Bavarian State Ministry and is offered by an external teacher within the facility one year before the child starts school. The *German pre-course* is held by the teacher and the language club by the coordinator for school preparation within the WoKi for all participating children, alternating every two weeks.

The language club aims to expand the vocabulary of the German language, to convey the joy of speaking and respect for the language, to acquire knowledge in relation to the acquisition of cultural techniques and to deepen other skills relevant to school.

Which children are eligible for the German pre-course, or the language club is determined by the internal observations of the specialist staff. With the help of suitable questionnaires, the language skills of the individual child are assessed and a recommendation is made to the parents.⁶

³ [Home | Pflasterpass® first aid course for children](#) (29.05.24)

⁴ www.djjv.de/jugend/nicht-mit-mir-gewaltpraevention/kurskonzept/ (13.12.23)

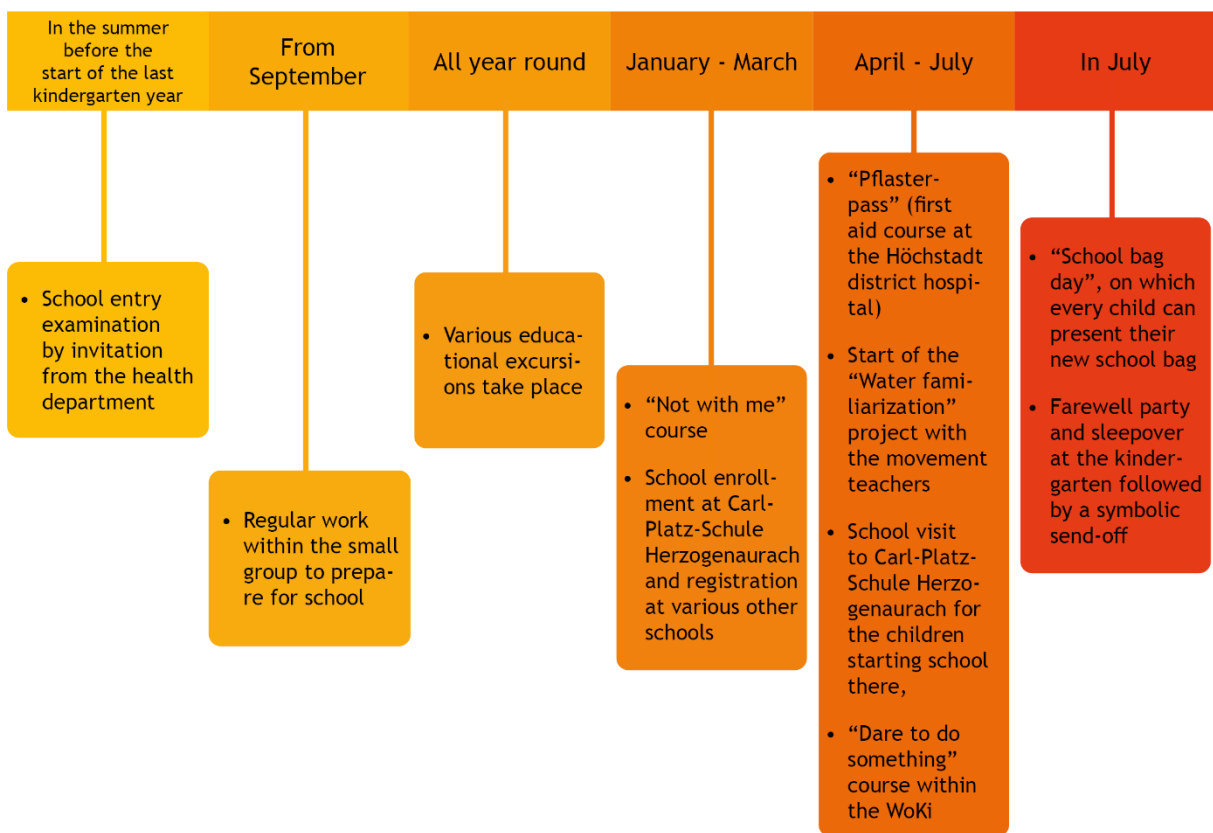
⁵ www.trau-dich-was.de/kurse (13.12.23)

⁶ The common observation instruments Sismik/Seldak are used to assess language skills.

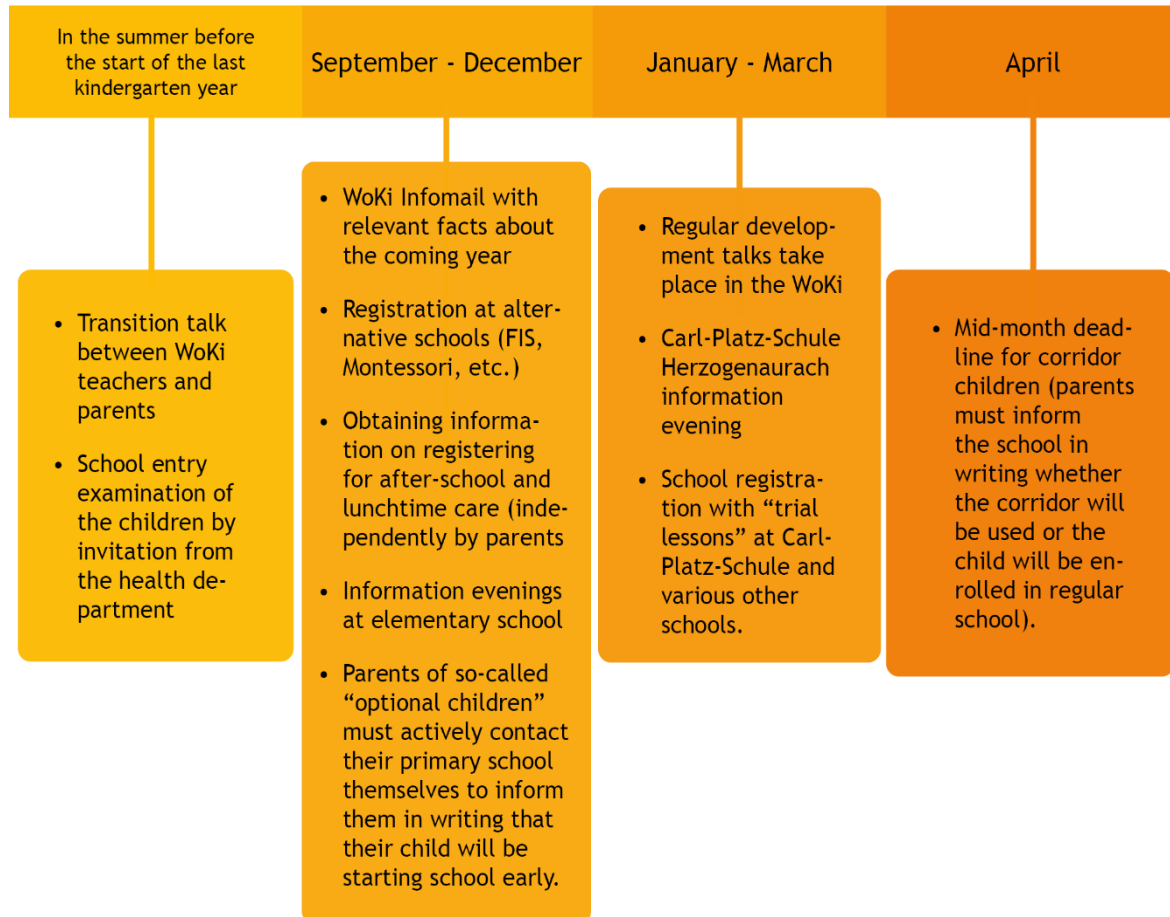
Offer of water familiarization:

Another project that has been specially developed for the oldest children at WoKi is "Getting used to water". We offer trips to the Atlantis leisure pool in Herzogenaurach every two weeks on a fixed day of the week. The main aim of this project is to get to know fun and games in the element of water, but also to reduce possible fears and learn the first movement sequences. The water familiarization course starts regularly after the Easter vacations.

Dates at a glance:



5.2. ... for the adults



6. Holistic school readiness

The Bavarian Education and Upbringing Plan is based on principles such as co-construction and participation. The pedagogical work at WoKi is based on these principles. The individuality of each child, their interests, their learning speed and their learning path are respected, recognized and taken into account. In order to guarantee this reliably, so-called "rough assessments" are regularly carried out by the educational team. In addition to the "Development Observation and Documentation" (EBD) by Professors Koglin, Petermann and Petermann, other observation tools include the *Sismik* and *Seldak* observation documentation of language development.

The teachers' assessment of the child's abilities and possible further learning opportunities are shared and discussed transparently in discussions with the parents. Regular feedback between children and adults during the meetings is also a matter of course. In this way, all those involved in the educational partnership meet as equals and are interested in the greatest possible success of the child.

There is no such thing as emotional, social, cognitive or motor school readiness. Rather, school readiness is made up of emotional, social, linguistic, motor and cognitive skills. These

should be evenly developed so that "the ball is rolling" and the start of school is a success. We therefore speak of holistic school readiness. In order to give every child a good start at school, the developmental steps of the individual are observed and individually assessed. The learning content of the last year of kindergarten is briefly described below. Of course, preparation for school does not begin in the last of the three kindergarten years, quite the opposite! Every child has already learned something new every day in the previous years to prepare them for school life.

Nevertheless, the final year in the WoKi will be used to once again focus on strengthening the following skills:

Emotional skills	Social skills	Language skills	Motor skills Competencies	Cognitive Competencies
Mindfulness	Consideration	Formation of multi-word sentences	Using a pen, glue and scissors	Know your full name, date of birth and address
Looking forward to school	Helpfulness	Knowing basic grammatical rules	Grasping and threading small objects	Correct naming of colors, body parts, shapes.
Own reflection	Ability to work in a team	Clear pronunciation	Adapting the movement to the situation	Motivation and perseverance to complete tasks
Independent work	Strategies for conflict resolution	Executing simple orders	Running backwards and catching the ball	Willingness to embrace new things
Being able to wait	Cooperation	Answering questions	Write your own name	Basic mathematical understanding

This list is only a rough selection and does not claim to be exhaustive. All of these and other areas of expertise are strengthened through weekly meetings, in-house workshops with external speakers and various excursions.

⁷ Schlaaf-Kirschner, Kornelia: At a glance: The big development poster for preschool children: Verlag an der Ruhr