



Dear Parents,

Education is the most important thing that your child needs for a good life in Germany. We are therefore writing to you to provide you with the most important information on education opportunities in our federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz).

Education begins at *Kindergarten* in Rhineland-Palatinate. Another word for *Kindergarten* used even more frequently in Germany is *Kindertagesstätte*. In a *Kindertagesstätte*, your child can play with other children and make friends. But most of all, he or she will learn German. Children learn foreign languages especially quickly by playing together, so it is a great opportunity for your child to start attending a *Kindertagesstätte* as early as possible. All children in Rhineland-Palatinate have a legal right to attend a *Kindertagesstätte* when they reach the age of 1. This means that your child will definitely get a place at a *Kindertagesstätte* should you want it, even free of charge from the age of 2.

You can discuss everything in more detail with the nursery nurses at the *Kindertagesstätte*. You can also accompany your child there in the first few weeks to see how he or she likes it. Here in Germany, it is very important for us that you, as parents, trust the nursery nurses and work together with them. For this reason, you should ask them questions whenever you have any.

Attending a *Kindertagesstätte* is the first step in a new country for young children. Older children in Germany attend school.

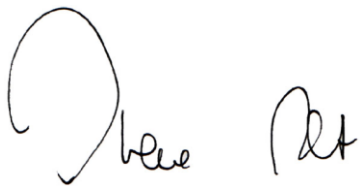
Assiduous learning, good education and a good school leaving certificate are prerequisites for having a good life and finding work in Germany, and because education is so important, school is compulsory in Germany. This means it is also the law in our federal state of Rhineland-Palatinate for each child to attend school (Section 56 Education Act).

Your child must learn German quickly if he or she wants to be successful at school. The schools in Rhineland-Palatinate offer intensive courses for this purpose. They provide up to 20 hours of German instruction per week. Your child will learn alongside German classmates from the very beginning as well as attending German lessons. Your child can socialise with German children of the same age and make new friends

in lessons where knowledge of German is not immediately necessary. These lessons include art, music, physical education and English, if your child already speaks the language.

A good school needs the trust and cooperation of parents, teachers and pupils. You will also receive information at the school on the education opportunities in our country. You can and should therefore talk to your child's teachers or head teacher at any time if you have any questions.

We wish you all the best in Germany and hope your child enjoys *Kindertagesstätte* and goes on to be successful at school.



Irene Alt

Minister of State for Integration,
Family Affairs, Children, Youth and Women



Vera Reiß

Minister of State for Education,
Science, Further Education and Culture