

Going to school, Organisation of primary schools

In France, children can start school between the ages of 2 and 3.

They need to be enrolled first.

For public schools, you must contact the town hall, which will tell you which school your child will be going to, and what you need to do next. The school's head teacher will then finalise enrolment.

For private schools, you need to contact the chosen school directly.

Children go to preschool for three years. There's a little class, a middle class and a big class.

Your child will learn to interact with others, express themselves, develop their language skills and begin learning the three Rs.

Your child will be taught for 24 hours a week, from Monday morning to Friday afternoon.

The teacher, 'le maître' (schoolmaster) or 'la maîtresse' (schoolmistress), is responsible for the children in their class. You can talk to them about what your child is learning and how they are getting on.

From age 6, formal education is compulsory.

Your child will start primary school.

There are five school years: CP, CE1, CE2, CM1 and finally CM2.

Children go to school from Monday to Friday, the same as at preschool.

They develop their reading, writing and maths skills further so that they can understand and express themselves in French. They also learn another language, such as English or German, and they start being taught other subjects such as science, history and geography.

If your child is having difficulty, they will be helped by their teacher.

The teacher carries out several assessments throughout the year, which you will receive regularly.

These assessments help ascertain what your child has learnt, measure their progress and test their knowledge. These reports are filed in your child's school record over the course of their studies.

You'll hear of the "socle commun" (core knowledge, skills and culture) until they reach secondary school.

Please note that children can choose additional activities during school time and take part in activities the town hall organises out of school hours and during the holidays.

After primary school, your child enters secondary school, starting with 6e. The teachers do all they can to help your child move on.