

Kindergarten – a good start





KINDERGARTEN – a good start

Kindergarten is an educational establishment that maintains the care, play and learning needs of children; and it is the first stage of formal education. Most children aged 1-6 living in Norway attend kindergarten.

KINDERGARTEN – an educational service in close cooperation with parents

All kindergartens, both private and municipal, follow the Norwegian Kindergarten Act. Kindergartens employ kindergarten teachers with at least three years of higher education. This means that competent and caring staff with extensive knowledge about children will take care of your child. Your child will be followed up through close contact with the home. Should you have any questions, you can speak to the staff and contribute with input to promote well-being and social development for your child. The contact between the kindergarten and the home is especially important in a multicultural environment.



KINDERGARTEN – a place for play, learning and development

- **At kindergarten, your child will become included in a social environment with other children.** The children get to know each other's culture, language and interests. They unfold themselves and learn through play and activities during interaction with other children and adults. Your child will make friends, develop social competence, and have experiences that will strengthen his/her all-round development before starting school.
- **Kindergarten stimulates children's language development.** Through play and exploration with other children, they process their thoughts, opinions, emotions, and experiences. This is how children develop language at kindergarten.
- **Children can learn multiple languages at the same time.** The kindergarten will enable your child to learn both their mother tongue and Norwegian – mother tongue at home and Norwegian at kindergarten.
- **Language learning takes time.** Research shows that it takes one to three years to learn a language well enough to communicate with others, and five to seven years to use the language in more formal learning situations, such as reading and writing. Therefore, it is important to start kindergarten early to learn Norwegian before starting school.

KINDERGARTEN – gives parents possibilities

- When your child is taken care of by competent and caring kindergarten staff, you will have the possibility to start working or studying.



How much does a kindergarten place cost?

A maximum fee applies to kindergarten places in Norway. This means that kindergartens cannot demand parents to pay higher fees than what the Norwegian Parliament has set. In addition, you will have to pay money for food. The amount will vary from kindergarten to kindergarten.

You can find information about kindergarten fees here:

www.bergen.kommune.no/pris-barnehageplass.

Families on a low income may be entitled to reduced parental fees.

You can read more about this here: www.bergen.kommune.no/reduisert-foreldrebetaling.

Choosing a kindergarten and applying for a place

You can apply for a kindergarten place at: www.bergen.kommune.no/barnehageplass.

In the digital application app (blue button), you can find kindergartens near your home.

Visit: www.bergen.kommune.no/barnehager for a full list of all the kindergartens in Bergen.

You can search for kindergartens in your local area at: www.barnehagefakta.no.

Need help with the application?

Visit the Innbyggjerservice (citizen service centre) in Kaigaten 4, next to Byparken, or telephone **55 56 55 56**.

Here you can also get help with the application if you do not have a Norwegian D-number.



Innbyggjerservice, Kaigaten 4.

Photo: Kristin Hauge

BEING A PARENT of a child at kindergarten



COOPERATION BETWEEN THE HOME AND KINDERGARTEN

For children to thrive and develop, it is important to have close cooperation between the home and kindergarten. This is greatly emphasised in the Norwegian Act relating to Kindergartens and the regulations on a framework plan for the content and tasks of kindergartens. For successful cooperation, parents and the kindergarten must have close contact. This contact is performed daily when bringing and picking up children, and through development meetings and parents' meetings.

Start-up

The first meeting with the kindergarten is important for both the family and staff. The kindergarten shall help ensure that the child and parents experience security and trust from day one. Children are different and respond differently to starting kindergarten. Some settle down in the new environment very quickly while others need more time.

At the beginning, the child should only remain at the kindergarten for a few hours with one or both parents. The number of hours can gradually be increased. The kindergarten will make an agreement with you on how to arrange the first few days. It is important to be present and available for the child during this period. Always tell your child when you are leaving and let them know that the kindergarten staff will be taking care of him/her while you are gone. This helps the child to feel safe and secure, and to trust you and the staff.

Many kindergartens like to have a meeting with the parents immediately after the child starts kindergarten. The meeting shall help the kindergarten to become familiar with the child. Here you can inform the kindergarten about any special needs the child may have, for example, in relation to food, sleep and interests, and who is allowed to pick up the child or other things the kindergarten should take into consideration. At the meeting, the kindergarten will also have the opportunity to give you important information.





Information about the content of kindergartens

All kindergartens have a yearly plan describing the kindergarten's educational programme, and they often give information through monthly or departmental newsletters. Here you will receive a timetable, and perhaps an assessment of completed activities. Many kindergartens regularly document what has happened during the day in the form of photographs, text, or both. Some kindergartens also have digital solutions for exchanging information.

Informal conversations

Much of the contact between the kindergarten and parents is in the form of informal conversations, for example, in the cloakroom when bringing and picking up their child. Other children and adults may also be present. Should you wish to talk about something that you would prefer no one else to hear, you can request a private conversation.



Formal conversations

Kindergartens invite parents for a mandatory development meeting twice per year. This is a meeting between the kindergarten teacher and parents of each child. Here you can discuss the needs of your child, and his/her wellbeing and development. You can ask the kindergarten to book an interpreter for the development meeting should you wish to have one.

Parents' meetings

Kindergartens hold a parents' meeting once or twice per year. All parents are invited. Current issues concerning the kindergarten are discussed at the meeting and everyone parents can make suggestions.

Parents' council and coordinating committee

The parents' council is made up of all the parents of the children at the kindergarten. The parents' council shall promote the parents' joint interests and help ensure that the cooperation between the kindergarten and parent group creates a good kindergarten environment.

The Coordinating Committee (SU) is made up of the parents and kindergarten staff. SU shall safeguard good collaboration between the kindergarten and the children's homes. Matters that are important for the kindergarten must be handled by SU, for example, the yearly plan, budget, changed operational form or organisation.

Kindergarten opening hours, bringing and picking up children, illness and holidays



OPENING HOURS

Kindergartens are normally open from 7.30am to 4.30am. Some kindergartens have extended opening hours. The applicable kindergarten will inform you about their opening hours. You decide how many hours your child will attend the kindergarten every day.

The kindergarten often has excursions, singing sessions, language and play groups, and other activities in the morning. Inform the kindergarten if you will be arriving later in the day. The staff will then know whether they should wait for your child or to go ahead and start the day's activities.

BRINGING AND PICKING UP YOUR CHILD FROM KINDERGARTEN

Inform the staff when you arrive at the kindergarten, so your child can be properly greeted. In addition, speak to the staff when you pick up your child and inform them when you are leaving the kindergarten. This is important for your child's safety and for exchanging information about the child.

It is important to inform the kindergarten if anyone other than you will be picking up your child. The kindergarten will then be able to prepare your child. The kindergarten is not allowed to let children leave with anyone else unless agreed in advance, even if the child recognises the person.





HOLIDAYS AND DAYS OFF

There are four fee-free weeks per annum. This includes five planning days, which are days off for the children. The other three weeks are taken as holidays.

Some kindergartens are open the whole summer while others are closed for two-three weeks for holidays. Kindergartens will often ask the parents to let them know when their child will be taking a summer holiday. Once holidays have been set for a child, they cannot attend kindergarten during that period.

If your child will be taking holidays beyond those which have been agreed, you must inform the kindergarten. Kindergartens are closed on Sundays/public holidays and 17th May. Many kindergartens ask parents if their child will be taking time off in connection with Christmas, Easter and school autumn and spring half-term holidays. This is done to obtain an overview of how many children will be attending kindergarten, so they can plan the number of staff they will need.

ILLNESS

If your child's overall health condition is reduced, he or she must stay at home. A reduced health condition may include abnormal tiredness, nausea, laxity or a poor appetite. Children who are vomiting and have diarrhoea must stay at home for two days after the symptoms have disappeared, even if they are fever free.

The most important reason for keeping children at home is to prevent the spread of infection at kindergartens. Children also need extra care during illness and kindergartens do not have the capacity to assign one member of staff to take care of a sick child.

You must telephone the kindergarten to inform them when your child is ill. This is particularly important if he/she has an illness that may infect others.

MEDICATION

Sometimes a child needs medication to recover from an illness. Parents are generally responsible for ensuring that medication is given properly and at the right time according to what the doctor has prescribed. The kindergarten cannot be ordered to give medication, but will normally assist with giving medication after illness. This must be arranged with the kindergarten.

Some children need medication daily due to chronic illness. If the kindergarten is to give such medication, it must be specifically agreed. Should this apply, the staff must be trained in the necessary medication procedures.



Regarding food and meals at kindergarten



THE KINDERGARTEN SHALL:

- aim to ensure that nourishing meals are eaten every day – in the form of a packed lunch or through food the kindergarten provides
- aim to ensure that meals and the preparation of food contributes to happy mealtimes, participation, conversation, and the sense of community for the children
- give the children a variety of different tastes
- serve water and semi-skimmed or skimmed milk to drink at mealtimes
- ensure that the children have water to quench thirst between meals
- avoid food and beverages with a lot of added sugar
- ensure good hand hygiene, especially in connection with meals





MEALS

Children can eat breakfast, lunch, and a fruit snack at kindergarten.

Breakfast

Children who arrive early at kindergarten can eat their breakfast there if their parents request it. Often children bring a packed breakfast. This should contain healthy, nourishing and filling food, preferably with some pieces of cut up raw vegetables. Avoid sugary foods. The children are served milk or water at breakfast time.

Lunch

At most kindergartens, lunch is covered by the money that parents pay for food every month. Some kindergartens may have other schemes. Your kindergarten will inform you of these. The kindergartens serve a hot or cold lunch. Cold lunches often include sandwiches with various toppings/fillings, which the children make themselves with the staff's help. Hot lunches may consist of soup or other simple dinner dishes.

The children are served milk or water to drink at this meal.

Fruit snack

Most kindergartens have a fruit snack every day. Normally the children bring a piece of fruit with them. The fruit is cut up so that everyone can taste everything. Some children may also eat the rest of their packed lunch during this snack time or a yoghurt.

The children drink water with the snack.

Packed lunch for excursions

Kindergartens take the children on excursions as part of their service package. The children normally must take their own packed lunch on excursions. It is best to take food that does not require warming up or any special preparation. Sandwiches with toppings/fillings are a good alternative. Preferably include some pieces of cut up raw vegetables and fruit as well. The kindergarten staff can give you advice about packing lunches for excursions.

Other

You must inform the kindergarten staff if there is something your child should not eat. This can be for religious, cultural or health reasons.



Regarding clothes at kindergarten



CLOTHES

At kindergarten, your child should wear clothes that you are not concerned about getting dirty or ruined. The clothes should be easy to put on and remove, and comfortable for the child to move in. Bergen has a lot of rain and changeable weather, and it can be difficult to dress children correctly. Children must not get cold, but they are active and do not need to wear ample layers of clothing, so they are unable to play or move. The kindergarten staff can help you choose suitable clothes for different types of weather.

Labelling clothes

To ensure that your child takes the correct clothes home, you should label all clothes with your child's name. Name labels that can be bonded to the inside of clothes can be ordered online. Clothes can also be labelled with a waterproof felt-tip pen.

What clothes does your child need at kindergarten?

Your child needs rain clothes and boots when it is raining or very wet outside. It is also a good idea to keep a set of rain clothes at the kindergarten at all times. When rain clothes are dirty, they are taken home for washing.

Children must wear indoor shoes or slippers every day. Floors can be slippery, and your child may slip if only socks are worn. The floors may also be wet, so if your child is not wearing slippers or indoor shoes, his/her feet will get wet.





Extra clothes

It is common for children to get wet or dirty when playing at kindergarten and will need to change their clothes. It is, therefore, necessary to keep extra clothes at the kindergarten, such as underwear, a pair of socks, tights, a jersey, a sweater and a pair of trousers. Check on a regular basis to see if your child needs any more extra clothes.

Summer term

When the weather becomes warmer, your child will need more light-weight clothes and shoes. In the spring and autumn, a thin hat is suitable and preferably an unlined outdoor suit. When it is very sunny, your child should bring high-factor sunscreen. In addition, a sunhat or cap is good to protect the head.



Winter term

When it is cold outside, your child will need a warm outdoor suit, under which he/she can wear a fleece or wool sweater and trousers. Otherwise, it's important to have a warm hat, wool socks, waterproof footwear, and warm mittens/gloves. Remember that mittens/gloves often get wet, so preferably have multiple pairs.

What your child should wear when sleeping outdoors in a pram or pushchair

The youngest children need a nap during the day. At some kindergartens, the children sleep outdoors in their pram or pushchair under the supervision of staff. It is a good idea to have a pram or pushchair sleeping bag, so your child will not have to wear as many clothes. Thin wool garments may often be enough even in the winter. If you have any questions about your child sleeping in a pram or pushchair, speak to the kindergarten staff.

Other

Nappies, dummies, and nappy rash cream must be kept in the kindergarten at all times for children who need them.



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