

## How starting school is celebrated in Baden-Württemberg

Starting school is celebrated as an important occasion in Germany: Your child is leaving kindergarten and is now a schoolchild. This transition means changes for both the child and the parents; that's why the first day at school is a special day. The process of starting school is known as "Einschulung" in German.

On the first day, the school organises a celebration to which all children who are starting in year 1 and their parents (and often other relatives) are invited. The children bring their school bags with them – and a "Schultüte" (cardboard cone).

The "Schultüte" is a very popular German custom. It signifies a new start and is usually given to the child by the parents. It can be homemade, sewn or bought. The parents put sweets, small presents or school supplies (like coloured pencils or erasers) in the cone. The contents don't need to be expensive – the fact that it's a surprise for the children is more important.

During the celebration in the school, the older children often perform something like a short theatre piece, for example. The head teacher welcomes the parents and children. The children go with their teacher into their new classroom. There they usually have their first school lesson. While the children are having their lesson, you receive further information such as the timetable. You are also able to get to know the parents of the other children.

Some schools organise Christian service to celebrate the "Einschulung". This comes from the tradition that in Germany, a new stage of life is marked by a Christian blessing (e.g. a wedding). Parents who are not Christians are also invited and are welcome to attend – they do not need to actively take part.

The next day, normal lessons take place. You will receive detailed information about the day from your school.

