

## **The school enrolment examination (Einschulungsuntersuchung / ESU) in Baden-Württemberg**

To ensure that all children get as good a start in school as possible, they undergo an examination by the health office (Gesundheitsamt). In German this school enrolment examination is known as the Einschulungsuntersuchung or ESU for short. In the ESU, the medical personnel look to see if the child is healthy and how it is developing.

The ESU establishes the level of development of the child in terms of

- Vision and hearing
- Height and weight
- Language
- Motor skills
- Drawing and writing
- Basic mathematics skills
- Behaviour

In Baden-Württemberg, the examination of the future first graders begins up to 2 years before they start school. This means that parents and kindergarten teachers have enough time to help children who need support.

The ESU is made up of two steps: Step 1 in the last-but-one year of kindergarten (23 to 12 months before the child starts school) and step 2 in the last kindergarten year (a few months before the child starts school).

Participation in the ESU is compulsory for all children. For the first part (step 1), children are invited who will be 5 years old by the summer. The second part (step 2) applies to children who have been registered for school. This part of the examination is only necessary if the health office tells you that your child needs it.

The ESU is carried out by medical personnel. All results are subject to medical confidentiality. The health office is only allowed to speak to the kindergarten, school or another doctor about the results if the parents agree to it (in German this is called "Entbindung von der ärztlichen Schweigepflicht"). The parents should think carefully about whether they want to agree.

### **What happens during the school enrolment examination?**

The parents receive an invitation from the health office and a questionnaire. Filling out the questionnaire is voluntary but it's a good idea to do it.

The parents should bring the child's vaccination certificate, yellow early years screening booklet and the questionnaire (voluntary) with them. In the parental questionnaire, the parents are asked to give details

- about important pre-existing medical conditions,
- medical examinations (e.g. eye specialist) and
- any therapies the child has done (e.g. speech therapy).

The details in the parental questionnaire help the medical personnel to evaluate the child correctly.

If the child attends a kindergarten, the teaching staff are asked about the child's level of development. The parents have to agree to this.

### **Step 1**

In step 1, a screening examination takes place. It normally takes place in the kindergarten, so that the children are in a familiar environment. The parents are present during the examination. The kindergarten will inform you about the date of the examination.

After the screening, the health office decides if further examinations are necessary.

If the examination is complete, the parents will be informed about the results. This includes an assessment: Either the development of the child is appropriate to their age or special help is recommended such as speech therapy (Logopädie) or occupational therapy (Ergotherapie).

### **Step 2**

Step 2 takes place during the child's final kindergarten year, a few months before starting school. Now the examination will focus above all on the child's health. The medical personnel will check whether the child is able to take part in school teaching ("school readiness" or "Schulfähigkeit" in German).

If the child attends a kindergarten, the teaching staff are asked to give information about the child's level of development. Here too, the parents have to agree to this. On the basis of these details and the results of step 1, the health office decides whether further examinations are necessary.

Step 2 always takes place if children do not attend a kindergarten.

### **Deferment**

At the end of the ESU, the health office gives a recommendation to the school responsible for the child's place of residence. Among other things, the health office may recommend a deferment ("Zurückstellung"). This means that the child should first go to school at the age of 7, not – as usual – at the age of 6. The health office can also advise that the child attends a special educational school.

Video no. 2 also explains the school enrolment examination: [www.wegweiser-bw.de/en/videos](http://www.wegweiser-bw.de/en/videos)