



Generalitat de Catalunya  
Departament d'Acció Social i Ciutadania  
Secretaria per a la Immigració

## MATERIALS DE SUPORT A L'ACOLLIDA EN L'ÀMBIT DE L'EDUCACIÓ

*"We're going to school."*

Regardless of their country of origin, all children who live in Catalonia have to receive an education.

*"We go to school from Monday to Friday, to learn and to make friends."*

It is compulsory to go to school between the ages of 6 and 16. Before the age of 6, pre-primary education is available for children. Between the ages of 0 and 3, they can go to nursery schools, which are also called day nurseries.

Then, between the ages of 3 and 6, they can go to kindergarten. Like nursery school, kindergarten is not compulsory, but the vast majority of families opt for their children to receive such education.

*"Is taking my children to nursery school and kindergarten worthwhile, if it isn't compulsory?"*

*"At nursery school, your children learn to get along with other boys and girls. They also become familiar with Catalan and learn the language faster. At kindergarten, they're introduced to reading, writing and numbers. All of this helps them to adapt to school."*

*"And after kindergarten?"*

*"Between the ages of 6 and 12, they have to receive primary education, which is normally provided in the same centre where they went to kindergarten. Compulsory secondary education, which is also known as ESO in Catalonia, begins at the age of 12 and continues until the age of 16."*

After ESO, your children will be able to decide whether or not to continue studying. Two options are open to them between the ages of 16 and 18. The first is to receive vocational training, which is also called FP in Catalonia, and the second is to take higher secondary education. Those who opt for FP are prepared for employment by learning and practising a trade, while higher secondary education qualifies students to go to university.

*"I took vocational training in Electricity and Electronics. It really helped me to find a job."*

*“I chose higher secondary education because I wanted to go to university and be an architect.”*

*“My daughter completed higher secondary education. She now has a job and wants to study for a degree. Can she do that?”*

*“Yes. What’s more, there are distance-learning universities for people in your daughter’s situation. Distance-learning university is an option for anyone who wants to study for a degree but can’t attend classes because of their working hours, family commitments or the fact that they live too far away from a university.”*

Schools in Catalonia are mixed. Boys and girls go to the same classes and take part in the same activities.

*“Boys and girls go to school together. I sit next to Laia.”*

*“I found it strange at first, but not anymore.”*

Boys and girls share the same classrooms, Physical Education classes and breaks.

*“Does that mean that my daughter will have to take Physical Education classes with boys?”*

*“Yes. Physical Education is not only healthy, but it also helps children to learn to assume responsibilities, work in a team and follow rules. Boys and girls both have to learn those things, and if they learn together, so much the better!”*

Education in Catalonia is the responsibility of the Generalitat, the Catalan government. It is free for everyone who lives in Catalonia to go to public schools and private schools authorised to provide compulsory education.

*“You do need to pay for school material and meals.”*

*“What if I don’t have enough money for my child to eat at school?”*

*“The school timetable is divided up so that pupils have time to go home for lunch. You can also apply for economic aid called a meal grant. However, you have to meet certain requisites to receive such a grant, and applications must be made within a set period.”*

*“It’s against our religion to eat pork.”*

*“There are usually some schools with menus that cater for specific cases.”*

Parents are also required to pay for excursions, cultural trips, camps and extracurricular activities. Camps involve spending a few days in a natural environment, where pupils learn about nature and science. Most extracurricular activities take place in school, but outside school hours. Sports, music, swimming, theatre and dance are examples of such activities.

*“Is it worthwhile for children to do all those things?”*

*“Of course! It’s worth making the effort because it’s one of the best ways for children to adapt at school, to develop their creativity and to make friends. My children love playing in basketball matches.”*

All schools offer the same study programme content, meaning that they teach the same subjects, as they are governed by the same education law.

*“Today we had Modelling, Drawing, the Environment and Catalan.”*  
*“Hoy hemos hecho Plástica, Dibujo, Medio Natural y Catalán.”*

Catalan is the language in which classes are taught in primary and secondary schools. At the end of compulsory education, children will know enough Catalan and Spanish to be able to use both languages fluently and correctly. They will also learn one or two foreign languages.

*“I speak Catalan with my teacher and my friends, in the dining hall, on the playground, in classes and at school.”*

*“How do you say “schoolbag” in Catalan?”*

*“Motxilla.”*

*“Speaking Catalan is useful and offers you lots of new opportunities. You just need to have the courage to speak it. People will really appreciate it if they see you making an effort.”*

*“How do you say “to do homework” in Catalan?”*

*“Fer deures.”*

*“What should I do if I want to learn Catalan?”*

*“Watching television in Catalan really helps. You learn without realising it.”*

*“Parents can study Catalan too. You can ask for information on courses at the [Consorti per a la Normalització Lingüística](#), which, in English, means Association for Linguistic Normalisation. There are also official language schools and other organisations.”*

When they start going to school, your children will be taken care of linguistically and emotionally. Many schools have reception classrooms, where children are taught Catalan and other subjects that will enable them to follow classes with the greatest degree of normality possible.

*“I’m in the 4th year of ESO. I spend some time in the reception classroom, where I learn Catalan, make new friends and understand the teacher more.”*

*“But my children don’t know a word of Catalan. Won’t they feel lost in those classrooms?”*

*“We reception classroom teachers have resources for communication and educational material that helps us.”*

The school year begins in September and ends in June. The Generalitat establishes the exact dates on which classes start and finish. There are holiday periods, as well as specific public holidays.

*“When will my daughter have her holidays?”*

*“The first holidays are at Christmas, usually from 22nd December to 7th January. There are also holidays at Easter, around March or April. Lastly, the summer holidays at the end of the school year run from late June to early September.”*

*“Ah, yes, like 1st November, which is All Saints’ Day. We don’t go to school, we eat marzipan sweets called panellets and we roast chestnuts.”*

For your children to be able to go to school, there are a number of procedures that need to be carried out in different places in your town or city. Firstly, you need to go to the municipal education office in the town or city hall, or to a local school. There, you will be told how to enrol.

*“When does enrolment have to be carried out?”*

*“Although the school year begins in September, you need to register in advance in spring.”*

*“What if we’ve just arrived and the enrolment period is over? Will our*

*children be able to go to school?"*

*"Yes. People who've just arrived or moved to a new home can enrol their children at any time of year. In such cases, it's only possible to enrol at the town or city council's municipal education office."*

For your children to enrol, you will need the following documents: a family book, a Spanish national identity document or tax identification number, a vaccination card and a certificate of inclusion on the electoral roll.

*"There are quite a lot of documents and getting them takes time, but it's a very worthwhile process."*

For your children to integrate better at school, it is advisable for parents to get involved in school life straight away. Tutors are key people in that respect.

*"The first time the tutor called me to go for an interview, I thought that our son must have been misbehaving, but that wasn't the case. A lot of these interviews are to tell us about our son's progress."*

*"The tutor is a professional who monitors pupils. If parents notice that their child is struggling to adapt or is having problems during breaks, they should let me know. I'll do everything I can to find a solution."*

*"Tutors are teachers who help us. They tell us if we learn things properly, and if we behave well or badly. My tutor also holds interviews with my parents."*

Another way to get involved in your children's school life is to become a member of the Association of Parents of Pupils, which is known as AMPA in Catalan.

*"At AMPA, we arrange informative talks for parents, parties and concerts. We raise funds for the school library and organise extracurricular activities, the dining hall, etc."*

*"What do I have to do to become an AMPA member?"*

*"You simply need to join AMPA and offer whatever time you feel you can."*

It is not only children who have the right to learn. Members of older generations can also study at free adult learning centres.

*"Mums and dads can go to school too. You're never too old to learn."*

*“What if I can’t read or write? Are there schools for me?”*

*“Of course. There are schools where you can learn to read and write. There are also schools that can prepare you to go to university, if you want.”*

The most important thing is to receive education, something that will open up the doors to this host society.

Remember that you can go to this web page for more information.  
[www.acollida.cat](http://www.acollida.cat)