

## **Call for high-quality implementation of the law on all day care for children of primary school age**

The legal entitlement to all-day education and care for children of primary school age has been implemented in the Eighth Social Code and is to be introduced in stages from 2026. This is an important educational, family and social policy measure of the Federal Government and the Länder, and constitutes a logical step after having introduced the legal entitlement to a place in day care for children under three years of age.

In recent years, the Länder have made great progress in expanding childcare and all-day care places, but the demand still clearly exceeds supply. In addition, there are large quantitative and qualitative differences between the all-day offers around the nation. If the All-Day Support Act (GaFöG) is implemented with high quality, this can help to even out these differences and lead to more equality of opportunity and of living conditions in Germany.

The triad of teaching, care and upbringing that infuses early childhood education must continue to apply to the all-day care of children of primary school age. This applies regardless of whether all-day education and care is offered within the school system, on the school premises or in other child and youth welfare institutions. This entitlement must apply equally to all service providers. It must be noted that existing and new all-day education and care services are offered in different ways depending on tradition and organisation in the Länder, be it in the context of bounded or open all-day schools, after-school care or child and youth welfare services offered in the afternoon. Depending on the type of service, further quality areas have to be developed, which include, for example, room facilities, time, the quality of cooperation and nutrition.

Only a high-quality implementation of the legal entitlement can guarantee an attractive offer for children and their families and invite them to make use of it. Therefore, the federal government must follow up on its plan in the coalition agreement and place particular focus on quality in the expansion of all-day offers for the advancement and care of primary school children. In the interests of children and families, the federal government, the Länder and the municipalities must develop a common quality framework for all-day education and care involving the relevant stakeholders, and safeguard it with binding quality standards.

**We demand that the federal government, the Länder and the local authorities engage in a continuous dialogue with practitioners and include the expertise of professional, welfare and interest groups in the development of an effective quality framework. This framework must encompass school and child and youth welfare systems equally and cooperatively, and present conclusions on the understanding of education, on professionals, on the regulatory framework and on the design of implementation. To this end, the signatory associations are making recommendations herewith, although these do not claim to be exhaustive. The positions of the signatory associations, which can be found in the respective publications, may vary depending on the topic and may go beyond the recommendations presented here. However, there is fundamental agreement on the relevance of the following central requirements for high-quality all-day provision.**

## **Common understanding by schools and child and youth welfare services for all-day education and care**

Good all-day education, care and upbringing focus on the needs of the children and promote the acquisition of far-reaching competences that enable the children to actively and sustainably shape their world. According to §22 of Book VIII of the Social Code, every young person has the right to the support of his or her development and upbringing to become a self-determined, independent responsible person capable of living well in the community. This right leads to a socio-educational mandate, which applies to all services within the framework of the all-day education, care and upbringing of primary school children.

Children of primary school age go through various personal development phases. These must be understood as educational and developmental challenges and it is the role of professionals in institutions to acknowledge and support these. A high-quality, all-day programme must encompass the rights of children to well-being, protection and education. An essential prerequisite for the design of such a programme is a cooperative relationship between schools and child and youth welfare institutions, in the sense of a common understanding of education. Formal, non-formal and informal education must be placed on an equal footing and designed in the best interests of young people.

Positive pedagogical relationships with the staff working in the institutions as well as positive relationships with the peer group are further features of a high-quality all-day service. Furthermore, young people must be able to deal with their own relevant issues and developmental tasks in a real-world-oriented and productive way and take a full part in decision-making.

Education and development take place not only at school, but also in the living environment and social space of children and families. Therefore, the environment of the institution (e.g. district, village, nature), the services of other institutions (e.g. sports clubs, cultural institutions, youth associations and facilities) and virtual spaces all have to be included conceptually and structurally and made available to the children as spaces for appropriation and experience. Depending on their development and age, they must be usable independently of adults.

### **Qualified professionals in all-day education**

The basis for a high-quality all-day service is the professionals who make it happen on site every day. It is therefore necessary to create a nationwide framework for the deployment of staff. Only in this way can the educational and participation opportunities for primary school children – as intended by the GaFöG – be improved throughout Germany. Socio-educational specialists, teachers, coordinators and managers, as well as specialists from other professions who are involved based on the respective concept, should be deployed in all-day education according to a scientifically based, child-oriented formula. In addition, the concept should include, depending on individual needs, the supplementation of teaching work with, for example, school social workers, special needs teachers or socio-educational assistants who on their specific job to accompany the developmental and educational stages through which young people pass,. Unskilled or semi-skilled staff who have hitherto been employed in all-day education must now be offered qualifications of a consistent standard nationwide.<sup>1</sup> In-service and further training must be designed in such a way as to be open

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<sup>1</sup> A proposal for standards for such further training can be found, for example, in the publication: DJI/WiFF (2022): Ganzttag für Grundschulkindern. Fundamentals for competence-oriented continuing education. WiFF Wegweiser Weiterbildung, Volume 16. Munich.

to all persons working in all-day education, enable encounters and contribute to the development of a common understanding of education. Pedagogical staff must be relieved of non-educational tasks by the deployment of appropriate personnel.<sup>2</sup> The necessary resources have to be included in the planning.

### **Regulatory framework**

Hitherto, federal legislation has refrained from clearly formulating quality criteria for all-day education, care and upbringing. However, the anchoring of the legal entitlement in Book VIII of the Social Code means that its basic principles, such as the support, protection and participation of children, must be corner stones in the implementation of this entitlement. A binding framework is also provided by SGB VIII in the form of the requirements it sets out for opening and closing hours, as well as for the professional qualifications of staff – another important step towards equal living standards in Germany.

It is essential to strive for equivalent conditions in regard to the quality of the process and structure of all-day services. This requires a framework that is equally binding for the youth welfare and education sectors and that enables sustainable and qualitative cooperation between all professions and actors. Such a framework can only be developed and implemented jointly by the ministries of education and youth. It should clarify goals and expectations for all-day education, serve as guidance for action for all Länder and at the same time allow for different forms of implementation at local level. The framework should lead to a common understanding of quality in important core areas of all-day provision, embedded in the school laws of all the Länder. We recommend statements on the following core areas:

- **Cooperation at all levels of the system:**
  - School development planning and child and youth welfare planning should be done jointly or in an integrated and closely coordinated manner. It is imperative that structures for cooperation between school and youth welfare are established.
  - For the socio-spatial work and work with cooperation partners (music schools, clubs, etc.), the responsibility for supervision and insurance issues must be clarified.
  - Appropriate structures must be developed to enable children and parents to participate.
- **Concept and quality development:**
  - The profile and concept must be developed in participation with and inclusive of all stakeholders. A child protection scheme must be submitted to the responsible local authority office on a regular basis.
  - Quality development, assurance and evaluation should be regularly undertaken, accompanied by internal and external monitoring.
- **Staff:**
  - Needs-based staffing ratios/skilled worker–child ratios are to be maintained in accordance with current scientific findings.
  - Adequate working conditions, demand-oriented working time models and payment according to the collective agreement (TvöD/TV-L) must be guaranteed for all employees.
  - Joint offers for further education and training for all professional groups working in whole-day education must be created by federal and state institutions for school and social pedagogy and contribute to a joint professionalisation.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, (school) administration staff, housekeeping staff, caretakers.

- The training and qualification of pedagogical professionals must adhere to agreements and qualification frameworks and are to be further developed in a cooperative process.
- Cooperation among professionals in the (multi-professional) teams must be ensured by allowing sufficient time for consultation, etc., and indirect pedagogical work.
- Leaders/leadership teams must be given sufficient time to generate school development concepts with all members and stakeholders.
- **Rooms and catering:**
  - Rooms and equipment that are appropriate for teaching, inclusive and child-oriented must be provided.
  - The room concepts should be realised in the immediate vicinity of the school. If this is not possible, pupils must always be guaranteed safe travel to and from such places.
  - A healthy, free lunch based on need must be ensured.

The undersigned associations and organisations stress the great relevance of these recommendations. The objective must be to fulfil them simultaneously with the introduction of the legal entitlement, because the potential for the participation and personal development of young people, as well as the added value for society as a whole of this educational, family and socio-political project, can only be ensured through high-quality all-day programmes. The signatories signal their willingness to contribute their expertise, practical knowledge and many years of experience to this end.

### **Alphabetical list of signatories**

Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V. (ASB)

Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – AGJ

AWO Bundesverband e.V.

BöfAE e.V. | Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlichen und freien, nicht konfessionell gebundenen Ausbildungsstätten e.V.

Bund der Jugendfarmen und Aktivspielplätze e.V.

Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Elterninitiativen (BAGE) e.V.

Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft für Bildung und Erziehung in der Kindheit (BAG-BEK e.V.)

Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Offene Kinder- und Jugendeinrichtungen e.V. (BAG OKJE e.V.)

Bundeselternvertretung für Kinder in Kindertageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege (BEVKi)

Bundesverband Caritas Kinder- und Jugendhilfe e.V. (BVKe)

Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung e. V. (BKJ)

dbb beamtenbund und tarifunion (dbb)

Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung (DKJS)

Deutscher Bundesjugendring e.V.

Deutscher Caritasverband e.V.

Deutscher Familienverband e.V. (DFV)

Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB)

Deutscher Kitaverband - Bundesverband freier unabhängiger Träger von Kindertagesstätten e.V.

evangelische arbeitgemeinschaft familie e.V. (eaf)

Familienbund der Katholiken (FDK)

Ganztagschulverband e.V.

Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft (GEW)

Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe e.V.

komba gewerkschaft

Verband alleinerziehender Mütter und Väter, Bundesverband e.V. (VAMV)

Verband Bildung und Erziehung e. V. (VBE)

Verband binationaler Familien und Partnerschaften, iaf e. V.

Verband deutscher Musikschulen e.V.

Verband Katholischer Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder (KTK-Bundesverband e. V.)

Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft (ver.di)

Volkssolidarität Bundesverband e.V.

Zukunftsforum Familie e.V. (ZFF)