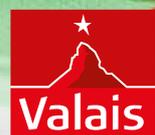


LIVING AND WORKING IN VALAIS.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION CONCERNING
SUPPLEMENTARY CHILDCARE SERVICES FOR FAMILIES.



ENGRAVED ON MY HEART.

Compatibility of work and family life in Valais.

Those who want to combine work and family life far away from private networks are dependent on a good infrastructure for childcare. In Valais, many municipalities offer childcare on an hourly or full-day basis to supplement family and school care. And the service is being continuously extended. If the necessary infrastructure is not available in the desired place of residence, the municipalities offer support wherever possible in order to organise everyday working life in harmony with family life.

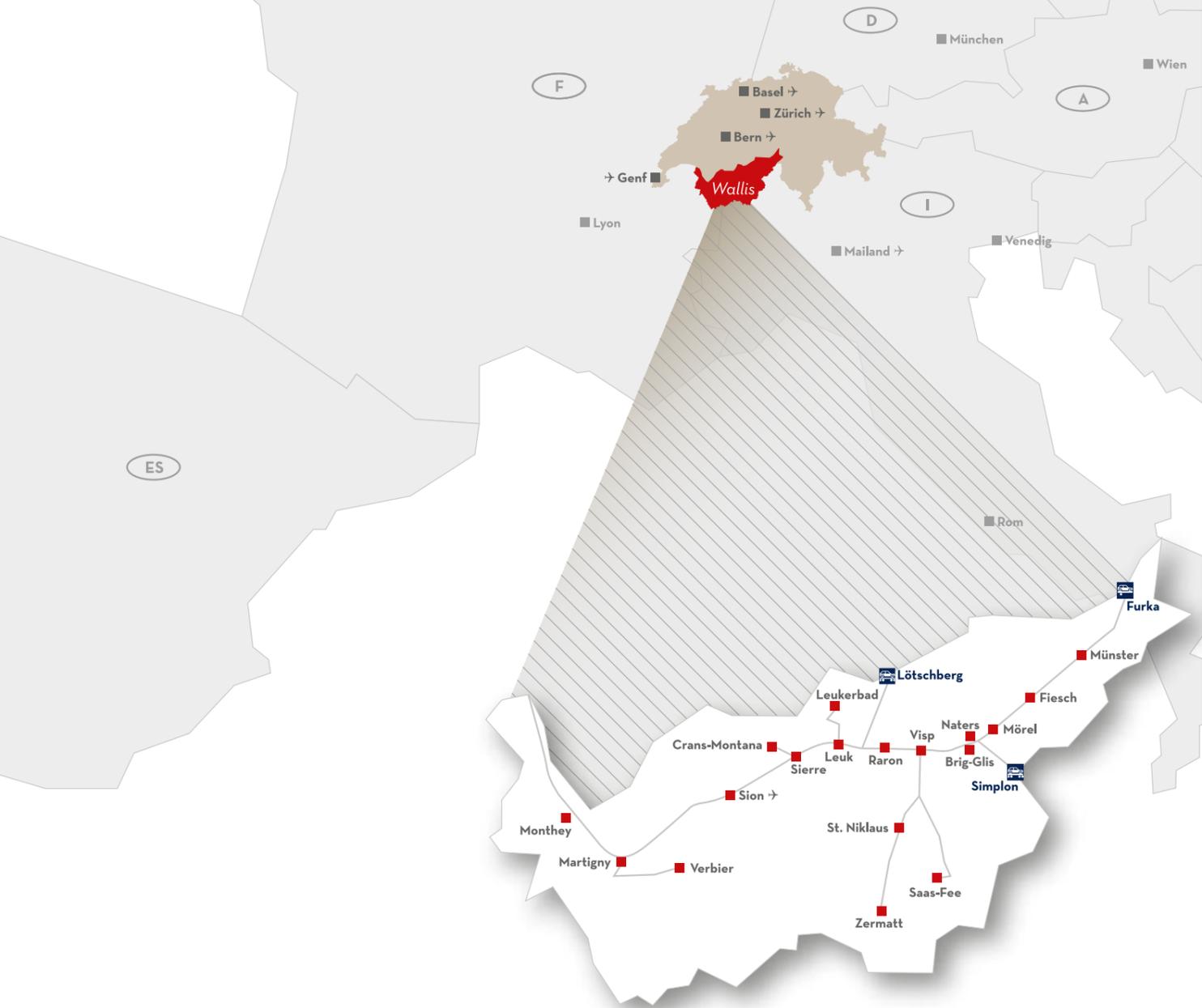
This brochure gives an insight into how childcare can be organised before and during compulsory schooling in Valais.



Contents.



Further information for a good start in your new home can be found at valais4you.ch



Swiss school and childcare system - An overview.

In Switzerland, childcare and education are the responsibility of the cantons. Every child is entitled to a place in education and from the age of school entry parents are obliged to send their children to school. This means that support during school hours is covered according to an individual timetable. Parents must take advantage of additional services for the off-peak hours, days off/half days and, if necessary, lunchtime, and organise them independently if there is a need for more comprehensive and continuous childcare.

Many tasks and provisions of education and childcare are organised at the municipality level. In many municipalities, there are childcare services to supplement family care. However, there are differences and varying special features among the municipalities and school regions. These include different school hours or provisions and tariffs. With timely organisation, it is possible in many municipalities to find an individually suitable offer for childcare hours for children of all ages.

Childcare in combination with compulsory schooling (schematic representation, variable depending on the municipality)

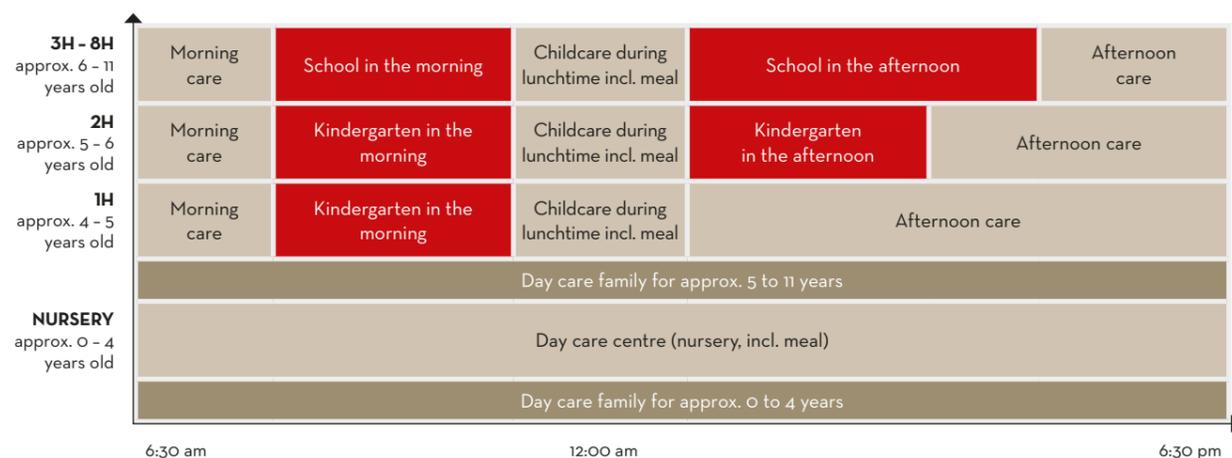


Figure: Overview of supplementary childcare services for families and the coordination of school hours according to age groups.
Important: The exact school hours and childcare modules vary greatly between the various institutions and weekdays and are organised differently from municipality to municipality.
Key: ■ = Compulsory school; ■/■ = Additional, voluntary childcare services (to be organised privately)

Childcare services by age group.

Outside of compulsory school hours and for children of preschool age, many working parents are often dependent on childcare facilities. Different provisions are available depending on the age of the child and the municipality.

You can find an overview of the care services available at www.valais4you.ch



RED CROSS VALAIS

The Red Cross Valais offers unbureaucratic and very short-term assistance for childcare in case of emergencies or unforeseeable events.

Babysitters are also provided by the Red Cross Valais. The young women and men (mostly 15 to 20 years old) complete a basic course at the Red Cross. They are available as babysitters, so that parents are relieved or can also enjoy a relaxing evening away from home.



Preschool age.

Children of infant and preschool age are looked after in a day care centre (nursery). Children are normally looked after weekly and on fixed weekdays. Some establishments also offer half-day care with or without lunch. Day care families are an interesting option, depending on requirements and in particular for covering irregular, individual care periods.

Day care centres (Nurseries)	Day care family
Infants and toddlers are cared for all day in day care centres (nurseries). Most of the facilities are aimed at infants from 3 months up to entry into kindergarten (1H) (usually full days per week and fixed weekdays).	Day care families look after one or more children in a family setting at home. Together with the daycare family, the parents agree on the days and for how many hours their child will be looked after. Regional coordination offices are available as contact points.

PLAY GROUP AND CRECHE

The playgroup is aimed at children who are not yet in kindergarten (from about 3 years). Playgroups serve more to socialise the children and do not aim to enable parents to combine work and family life. The children are looked after by a trained specialist. The composition of the group remains unchanged over a school year. In the creche, children are looked after without advance notice and irregularly by the hour or half-day (without lunch).





Compulsory schooling.

Compulsory education begins at the age of 4 and lasts 11 years. The state school is free of charge. It is divided into three levels:

1H and 2H (Kindergarten)

Kindergarten is part of compulsory schooling in Switzerland. Attendance is obligatory (e.g. also with regard to regulation of absences).

Various skills are developed in a playful way and the children are prepared for primary school. The kindergarten is often located in the residential area so that the children can reach it on foot without being accompanied.

3H to 8H (Primary school)

The children are taught the usual basic subjects. From 5H onwards, French is added, and then English.

Most municipalities have their own primary school, in other municipalities without a primary school location there are agreements with neighbouring municipalities with regulated transport for pupils.

9H to 11H (Lower secondary/orientation school)

At the orientation school the focus is on career guidance in addition to the subjects already taught in primary school.

The orientation school is often organized regionally, the students go to school by public transport. The timetables are adapted to the school.



SAFETY ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL

Walking to school independently and without adult company is usual. It is an important part of the children's everyday life and contributes to social development. Parents are urged not to drive their children to school by car. This is possible without any problems thanks to the high level of safety for the children.

Supervision of the children between the day care centre (nursery) and the school is ensured by the childcare facility, depending on age and municipality.



OPENING AND OPERATING HOURS



Many childcare facilities offer opening hours from 6.30 am to 6.30 pm. Opening hours do not always correlate with parents' working hours, especially in the case of shift work. In such cases, childcare provided by day care families is a good alternative.

During the company holidays of the childcare facilities (on a weekly basis in summer and over Christmas, sometimes also in spring and autumn), care must be organised privately. In the agglomeration municipalities of Brig-Glis, Visp and Naters, holiday care is available in the childcare facilities during most school-free periods.



Out-of-school care and recreation (OSCAR).

Voluntary childcare from the age of 4, i.e. from entry into compulsory school until the end of primary school, is offered in most cases by an out-of-school care and recreation (OSCAR). In some cases, this type of care is offered by nurseries, but depending on the municipality, it may also be offered directly by the school or by a separate institution.

School hours in Valais are usually divided into a morning and afternoon

block. Many children spend the time before and after school and especially over lunchtime at home with their families. If both parents are working, it is their responsibility to organise childcare through a childcare facility, a day care family or privately. In principle, supplementary school supervision is organised in individually bookable days and modules (before and/or after school and/or over lunchtime) and cannot be booked by the hour.

Work and family.

Smooth compatibility places high demands on all those involved - parents, employers, municipalities, schools and childcare facilities are all equally challenged. In principle, it is the responsibility of parents in Switzerland to organise family and professional life according to their own needs and, above all, those of the child.

The needs of parents as employees must be discussed with the employer at an early stage. The individual players in extra-familial childcare are also endeavouring to continually optimise and coordinate their services. In any case, they are there to advise the parents.

Out-of-school care and recreation (OSCAR)

For school-age children from 4 years of age until the end of primary school, day structures exist, commonly known as "Mittagstisch". These supplementary school services include care before and/or after school hours: Morning care before school and afternoon care (incl. homework help/leisure activities) and during the lunch break incl. lunch.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS



In addition to the public school, there are private schools with specific programs and, if necessary, different school hours.



Registration.

Once school age has been reached, the necessary registration processes are ensured via the municipality of residence or the responsible school directorate. Anyone moving to the Valais with school-age children will receive a registration form from the school authority after registering in the municipality of residence where they live. You can register with your municipality of residence and school before moving to Valais. Newcomers will be contacted by the responsible school management at the appropriate time.

Parents are responsible for the early registration of their children for supplementary family care. As a rule, parents contact the independently organised childcare facilities directly. In individual cases the municipalities are responsible. The currently available care services and the relevant contact points are listed at www.valais4you.ch. Registration is effected usually for specific weekdays or modules on specific weekdays.

First steps and contact points.

Moving to Switzerland

- > Registration in the chosen municipality of residence (residence permit)
- > Information about school / lesson times and additional childcare options, possibly pre-registration with childcare facility

Children of preschool age:

- > Registration at the day care centre (nursery)

School-age children:

- > Registration for compulsory school using the registration form provided (via the municipality or school management)
- > Registration for OSCAR at the school, the responsible childcare facility or the municipality

WAITING TIMES FOR CHILDCARE PLACES



Waiting times for childcare places are generally short - but they exist! Early registration is recommended. Individual weekdays are popular. Those who are flexible with regard to care days can usually organise themselves more easily. In general, there is no entitlement to a childcare place. Especially childcare places on 5 days per week are not always available and therefore have to be clarified early.

Sample process.

Sequence of the most important steps

1

- > Clarification of residential location
- > Recommendation: Preliminary clarification of childcare facility (possibly including reservation)

2

- > Decision and registration at the municipality of residence
- > School enrolment registration
- > Registration at childcare facility

✓

- > **Moving to Valais**

3

- > Start of work by parents/parent
- > If necessary, settling in at the childcare facility (different durations, depending on the institution)
- > Initial schooling incl. settling in at childcare facility

4

- > Regular workload for parents/parent
- > Regular nursery attendance according to registration
- > Regular school attendance including OSCAR

Figure: The sample process shows the sequence of the most important steps for the organisation of childcare when moving to Valais.

OUT HERE IN THE OPEN,
AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL.

DIFFERENT SERVICES

Childcare services are offered in many municipalities (possibly in a group of municipalities). However, the offers differ from municipality to municipality with regard to opening hours, costs and organisation.

The range of services offered may not cover all age categories or days. The availability of childcare facilities should be taken into account when choosing a place of residence.

Tariffs.

The family and school supplementary care services are subject to fees. The costs vary depending on the municipality, childcare facilities and parents' income and are partly borne by the municipality of residence.

Most cost models offer discounts according to the taxable income of the household, the number of days and modules booked or if several siblings are registered.

Costs of full-day care for children of preschool age.

Assumptions: 1 child (2.5 years old), without discounts for several days of childcare; average taxable net income or average tariff level (approx. CHF 80,000/year).

	Usual opening hours ¹	Average Tariff per childcare hour ²	Average Total costs
Whole day, lunch included	6.30 am - 6.30 pm ¹	CHF 5.00/h ²	approx. CHF 50.00

Costs for individual modules or full-day care for children of school age.

Assumptions: 1 child (9 years old); no discounts for further modules; average taxable net income or average tariff level (approx. CHF 80,000/year).

Modul	Usual opening hours ¹	Average Tariff per childcare hour ²	Average Tariffs per module/day
Preschool childcare Settling-in period	6.30 am - 8.30 am	approx. CHF 5.50/h	approx. CHF 9.50
Midday (incl. meal)	11.30 am - 1.30 pm	approx. CHF 9.50/h	approx. CHF 19.00
Afternoon	1.30 pm - 6.30 pm	approx. CHF 5.00/h	approx. CHF 12.50
After-school childcare Tasks	4.00 pm - 6.30 pm	approx. CHF 6.00/h	approx. CHF 14.50
Whole day or all modules including lunch	6.30 am - 6.30 pm	approx. CHF 4.50/h	approx. CHF 54.00

¹ These are standard opening hours of the childcare facilities. However, most parents bring their children later and/or pick them up earlier.

² Hourly rates only serve as a comparative value. As a rule, billing is based on days of care.

The Smith family case study.

The Smith family moves to Valais for professional reasons. Mr Smith works part-time 4 days a week, Mrs Smith works full-time. Together they have a taxable net income of around CHF 140,000 (highest pay scale level). The older child will attend the 3rd grade (5H) in a primary school and has a school-free afternoon on Wednesdays. The younger child is 3 years old and should attend a day care centre (nursery).

What kind of childcare must the family organise for their two children and what costs must they expect?

	1. Child (school age)	2. Child (preschool age)
Childcare facilities	School / OSCAR (1st Child, no reduction, tariff level 6)	Day care centre (Nursery) (1st Child, no reduction, tariff level 6)
Monday	Settling-in period:	CHF 12
	Lunchtime club:	CHF 24
	After-school childcare:	CHF 21
Thursday	Settling-in period:	CHF 12
	Lunchtime club:	CHF 24
	After-school childcare:	CHF 21
Wednesday	Settling-in period:	CHF 12
	Lunchtime club:	CHF 24
	After-school childcare:	CHF 21
Thursday	Settling-in period:	CHF 12
	Lunchtime club:	CHF 24
	After-school childcare:	CHF 21
Friday	-	-
Costs per week and child	CHF 228 / week	CHF 348 / week
Costs per month and child	CHF 912 / month	CHF 1'392 / month
TOTAL costs per month	CHF 2'304 / month	



PLACE OF RESIDENCE, SCHOOL LOCATION AND CHILDCARE

In Switzerland there is no free choice of school (apart from private schools). By law, therefore, the location of kindergarten and school is determined by the place of residence. When choosing your place of residence, pay attention to the range of school services offered as well as the family and school-related childcare options.

Some day care centres are organised and financed by a cooperation of municipalities. For this reason, the location of the childcare facility for preschool-age children can also be outside the municipality of residence. On the other hand, childcare services for children of school age are restricted to the school location.



The minor differences.

The range of schools and complementary care in Switzerland are organised on a cantonal basis. At the municipal level, however, there are sometimes considerable differences in services, organisation and tariffs. In Valais there are some peculiarities compared to more urban regions and other countries. Below are a few small and noteworthy differences.

- > School children are traditionally at home for lunch. Many municipalities, however, offer supervised lunchtime clubs ("Mittagstisch") as part of OSCAR. Separate registration via the school or childcare facility is required.
- > Children grow up in a protected and safe environment. The crime rate is extremely low.
- > Thanks to a high level of road safety, children can walk to school almost everywhere. In remote municipalities, transport to the public school is organised by public transport or school buses.
- > In small municipalities and in neighbourhoods people know each other. Children are integrated into society in a natural way through the state school and, for example, through associations. The linguistic integration is practically self-evident. In larger municipalities there are also specific programs for the social and linguistic integration of children and parents.



At www.valais4you.ch you will find further information on the subject of family and an up-to-date overview of available childcare services in German-speaking Valais.

Do you have any questions on the subject of childcare?
Contact us!
family@valais4you.ch

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ENGRAVED ON MY HEART.