

## INFORMATION ON EARLY LANGUAGE STIMULATION FOR PARENTS / LEGAL GUARDIANS

---

Dear parents, dear legal guardians!

**Language education** and **stimulation** are part of the legally defined **tasks** and the general **educational mandate** of Austrian child education and care facilities. In order to be able to guarantee optimal and appropriate support, so-called **language assessments** are carried out in all Styrian child education and care facilities. These are intended to provide information about the **language level** of your child.

The focus is on **observing** the language skills of your child with the help of an observation sheet developed for this purpose, the so-called **BESK KOMPAKT** or **BESK-DaZ KOMPAKT**. This tool helps assess the **language skills** of children with German as their first language (BESK KOMPAKT) and with German as their second language (BESK-DaZ KOMPAKT).

Observation is an indispensable part of the daily work of **educators** and **childcare workers** in child education and care facilities and takes place in natural everyday situations. Great emphasis is placed on playful and integrative implementation in a stimulating language environment. The **evaluation** of the targeted observation reveals the **abilities, strengths** and special **skills** of the child and offers approaches for planning and designing an environment that stimulates language development.

**Language assessment** by means of BESK KOMPAKT/BESK-DaZ KOMPAKT is carried out at least once for all children within three years before school entry. If the results show that a child needs language stimulation, he or she will be observed again at a later date.

Repeated use of the observation tool with one and the same child offers the opportunity to document their progress during language support and to adapt the support measures to his or her current language level. The aim of these measures is to optimize the future educational opportunities of the children and, subsequently, to offer them a better start in their professional lives.

If you have any questions about BESK KOMPAKT/BESK-DaZ KOMPAKT or about the observation, please contact the head of the education and care facility of your child. Findings from a language assessment can be included in the annual discussion of your child's development between the educators in charge of the group and you.

### **Handover sheet**

The **handover sheet** provides an **overview** of the results of the observation of your child with the BESK KOMPAKT or BESK-DaZ KOMPAKT observation tool. It provides information for the **elementary school**, especially for the teachers, regarding the language level of your child at the time of the last observation. You, as the parent or legal guardian, are **obliged** to present the handover sheet to the school your child will be attending. If this is not done, the elementary school may request the handover sheet from the child education and care facility.

### **Additional support measures**

Early language stimulation in child education and care facilities is largely covered by existing staff resources. Depending on the number of children identified as children who need language support, child education and care facilities will

- call in **additional** language stimulation **staff** to provide on-site language support to children in an integrative manner;
- employ **first language assistants** to support, promote and accompany children with first languages other than German;
- use **interpreters** in the context of language assessments in different first languages, and also for assistance in the settling-in phase;
- offer advice, support and further training for the pedagogical staff by the "**Early Language Stimulation**" **expert advisory service** of the Province of Styria.