

Language

Have you just moved to Basel-Stadt and do not speak any German yet? In that case, you should learn German as soon as you can. Speaking the language will mean you can get to know the country and people better. And you will find work more easily.

Standard German / Swiss German

Switzerland has four official languages: German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romance. German is the official language in Canton Basel-Stadt. There is High or Standard German and Swiss German.

- Standard German (Standarddeutsch)
People in German-speaking Switzerland write in Standard German. Plus, they speak Standard German in school and sometimes on the radio and television.
- Swiss German (Schweizerdeutsch)
Swiss German is a dialect of the German language. People usually speak Swiss German in everyday situations. Swiss German may be difficult for you to understand, even if you can already speak German very well. If you do not understand something, you can ask people to speak with you in Standard German. You do not have to speak Swiss German yourself. But it is important that you can understand it after some time.

German and Children

Does your child speak a different language to German? In that case, your child should learn to speak German as soon as possible. This will help your child to learn more quickly. For example, your child can go to a play group. There are also special programmes for parents and children.

Does your child not speak German yet or only very little? In that case, your child will need to learn German no later than one year before nursery. We will inform you about this in a letter 18 months prior to nursery. These programmes are available, for example:

- Play group with support in German
- Day-care centre (Kita) where German is spoken
- Day-care family

You can also help your child's language development. Talk to your child a lot, listen to your child and tell stories. Speak the language that you are best at and which you most prefer to speak.

Translations / Interpreting Services

Have you just moved to Basel and do not yet speak German well? In that case, you may sometimes need someone to interpret for you. You may be able to ask relatives or acquaintances.

However, some conversations are difficult or very personal. For example, an appointment at hospital or a public authority. You may then prefer an intercultural interpreter. This is an expert who specialises in helping people from other cultures. The experts know your culture and can interpret in a way that you understand everything. Have you received some letters from an authority and cannot understand them? Or do you need to complete a form or write a letter? You can get help here:

- Translation service from GGG Migration

Language levels in immigration and civil law

Do you want to apply for a residence permit (B) or a settlement permit (C)? Or do you wish to become naturalised? Is German not your mother tongue? In that case, you will need to provide evidence that you can speak German well.

Here, you can find information you need for these applications:

- Migration Office (Migrationsamt)

Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

www.hallo-baselstadt.ch/en/language-and-integration/language