

Choosing a school in Barcelona

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR
INTERNATIONAL FAMILIES



Barcelona is a fascinating city with many opportunities and an incredible quality of life. It is no surprise that it is one of the most popular locations chosen by international companies. Indeed, many entrepreneurs, professionals and students arrive in our city every year to develop their professional and personal projects and some of them come with their families.

This guide is mainly aimed at families who move to Barcelona from other countries with school-aged children. When arriving in a new environment, it is important for families to understand how the local education system works and

to be aware of the different educational options available so that they can choose the school that best suits their particular circumstances and priorities.

This booklet provides key practical information and tips to help families make these important decisions. The content focuses on two main areas. Firstly, it refers to Barcelona, although the information is also valid for other cities and towns in Catalonia. Secondly, the guide focuses on the stages of education that are of universal provision in our country, from the age of 3 until 18 years old.

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1.

Understanding the Catalan school system

International families arriving in Barcelona with school-age children need to understand how the Catalan school system works so that they can make informed choices about their child's education.

This chapter provides an overview of the Catalan school system, how it is organised, the types of schools, the levels of education and a general summary of what you can expect when enrolling your child in a school in Barcelona.



1.1. ORGANISATION AND GOVERNANCE

This guide, which focuses on Barcelona, refers to the Catalan school system because the administration and governance of education in Spain is decentralised.

This means that many of the powers of governance and administration of education are devolved to Catalonia, one of Spain's largely self-governing autonomous communities (regional governments).

The Catalan school system therefore falls under the legal framework of both the Spanish Education Act (*Ley Orgánica de Educación*) and the Catalan Education Act (*Llei d'educació de Catalunya*).

At national level, the **Spanish Ministry of Education** ensures that there is a unified education system that guarantees equal access to the right to education.

The Government of Catalonia (*Generalitat de Catalunya*) is responsible for implementing state laws as well as developing and approving its own educational regulations. The **Department of Education** (*Departament d'Educació*) is the administrative body of the Government of Catalonia responsible for education.

At the local authority level throughout Catalonia, city or municipal councils (*ajuntaments*) also have a role in education management. In most of Catalonia this is in the form of a **municipal schools office** (*oficina municipal d'escolarització*).

Due to its size and complexity, Barcelona has a slightly different structure than the rest of the cities and towns of Catalonia. Alongside the Department of Education, the City Council (*Ajuntament de Barcelona*) manages education through the Municipal Institute of Education (*Institut Municipal d'Educació de Barcelona*). In order to facilitate co-management, a new body was created in 1998: the **Barcelona Education Consortium** (*Consorci d'Educació de Barcelona*).

Educational authorities

In the city of Barcelona, the Barcelona Education Consortium is responsible for managing education and dealing directly with schools and families to ensure the proper functioning of the Catalan school system. It also takes care of enrolment in local schools.

In the rest of Catalonia, the Department of Education of the *Generalitat de Catalunya* is the sole education authority, supported by the municipal education offices.

1.2. SCHOOLING

The **school year** runs from September until June. The year group a child falls into is determined by the calendar year they were born. For example, children born in 2020 start the first year of primary school (*educació primària*) in September 2026, so children born in January are the oldest, and children born in December are the youngest.

The Catalan school system encompasses various **stages of education** from four months of age right through to university entrance at 18 years old. Pupils in Catalonia pass through the same stages of education and receive the same qualifications as pupils throughout Spain.

The core years of **compulsory education** are from the ages of 6 to 16, comprising six years of primary education (*educació primària*) followed by four years of secondary education (*educació secundària*).

The ten years of compulsory education are preceded and followed by two other stages which are not compulsory, but are universal - meaning that all pupils are guaranteed a place. These are pre-primary education (*educació infantil*) from the ages

Understanding the Catalan school system

of 3 to 6 years old, and upper secondary education secondary education (*Batxillerat i els cicles formatius de grau mitjà*) from the ages of 16 to 18. This effectively means that there is **universal provision of tuition-free education** from the ages of 3 until 18.

There is **no streaming** in the Catalan primary school system so children learn in **mixed-ability** classes. Fully state-funded schools are secular while private schools may be secular or religious. There are very few single-sex schools, and the ones that exist are private schools.

Home schooling

Home schooling is officially not allowed in Catalonia and is therefore much rarer than in other countries.

By law all children have the right to attend school and their families are obliged to not neglect this right.



1.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CATALAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Catalan education system is based on the principles of **equity, quality and excellence**.

It offers quality teaching that ensures **equal opportunities** for all children and the universal provision guarantees them a tuition-free education.

The purpose of compulsory education is to facilitate the pupils' acquisition of "basic competences" in different areas of knowledge and promotes the development of **skills for life**. Competence is defined as the ability to solve real-world problems by applying appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes in different contexts.

Schools are **inclusive**, which in practice means that all kinds of students learn together and no one is excluded. This model is applied in all stages of education and operates on the principle that all children deserve the same rights and opportunities.

There is special care for pupils with **specific educational support needs** (*necessitats específiques de support educatiu, NESE*). Each district in the city of Barcelona has an **EAP** (*Equip d'Assessorament Psicopedagògic*) which is a team of psychologists, specialist teachers and other professionals whose role is to identify and assess the needs of pupils and help schools to support them. Generally, contact with the EAP is initiated by the school, but they do respond to enquiries from families offering guidance and information about services and resources they might need.

If an EAP determines that a child's needs cannot be met in an ordinary school, they will be referred to a **special education centre** (*centre d'educació especial*).

These schools are well equipped with the

resources and expertise to support a wide range of learning needs.

The Catalan school system promotes integration and is based on **plurilingualism**, with Catalan as the main language of instruction. At the end of compulsory education, students are fluent in both official languages –Catalan and Spanish- and have an adequate knowledge of at least one foreign language. This language is generally English but in some schools it may be French or German.

There are ongoing **innovation programmes** in a number of areas of education, and in recent decades there has been a shift from a more traditional style of education to a more child-centred approach.

1.4. TYPES OF SCHOOLS

In Catalonia there are two types of schools: state schools and private schools.

State schools

State schools (**escoles públiques**) are publicly owned and managed by the local educational administration. They are fully state funded, secular, and tuition is free.

Although state schools are free of charge, additional services and activities such as remaining at school at lunchtime (with or without a meal), excursions and some books may cost extra.

State schools do not select their pupils and places are allocated via an annual enrolment process. All state schools are mixed-sex and pupils usually do not wear uniforms.

Private schools

Private schools (**escoles privades**) are owned and managed by private institutions or individuals. They may be secular or religious.

These schools are divided into two categories:

- **Concertada private schools**

A large majority of private schools in Catalonia receive subsidies from the Catalan Administration to cover part of the cost of tuition through an education agreement (*concert educatiu*), providing they meet certain regulations set by the education regulations. The rest of the cost is made up by fees paid by families.

Within this guide we use the term *concertada* private schools to refer to state-subsidised private schools (**escoles concertades**), to distinguish them from state schools and non-subsidised private schools, with which they share different features.

Around half of *concertada* private schools in Barcelona are run by religious organisations while others are secular teachers' co-operatives or other entities. They do not select their pupils, as they are integrated into the same annual enrolment process as state schools.

- **Fully private schools**

Private schools (**escoles privades**) which do not receive any public funding from the Catalan authorities are referred in this guide as fully private schools. The costs of tuition are either fully covered by fees paid by families or, occasionally, subsidised by the educational authorities of the school's country of origin. As a result, fees at these schools are usually higher than at *concertada* private schools.

Fully private schools may be religious or secular. They manage their own admissions process and may select pupils according to their own criteria.

Concertada private schools which are fully private at some educational stages

Be aware that some *concertada* private schools are effectively fully private schools for some stages of education. In most cases, *concertada private* schools receive a public subsidy for the pre-primary, primary and compulsory secondary education from 3 to 16 years of age.

Some of these schools may also receive a subsidy for the *Batxillerat* stage from 16 to 18 years of age, but this is not always the case, and many *concertada* private schools become fully private at this stage. The implication for families is that fees tend to be higher and there is a different application process. Some *concertada* private schools also offer nursery school places for children under three years old. This stage is not subsidised except for I2 (ages 2 to 3) and so is always fully private, even when other stages of education at the same school are subsidised.

1.5. STAGES OF EDUCATION

The following is an explanation of the stages of education from infancy through to higher education of the Catalan school system, as shown in **Figure 1**.

Below, in **Figure 2**, you can see a comparative chart showing the equivalences between the local school system and selected foreign school systems.

Nursery school

Nursery school (*primer cicle d'educació infantil*) is a **non-compulsory stage** of schooling. Children from 0 to 3 years of age can enter a nursery school when they are 4 months old at the start of the school year, in September.

In the city of Barcelona, the network of state nursery schools for children aged 0 to 3 is made up of the 5 *Llars d'infants* of the Department of Education, managed by the Barcelona Education Consortium, and the 103 *Escoles Bressol*, managed by the Municipal Institute of Education. In fact, Barcelona is the city with the most publicly owned nursery schools in Spain.

Places are allocated through an **annual application process** which uses a **points system**, where points are given for various criteria such as catchment area, family income and other circumstances. It is a separate process to the school application process (which is explained in Chapter 3) and takes place each April/May.

This stage is divided in **three year groups**: I0, I1, I2 (I means *Infantil*). For children in I0 and I1 (children from 4 months - 2 years old) the **fees** to be paid are calculated according to a social pricing system based on family income and other criteria. From I2 (2 - 3 year olds) **tuition is free**.

Provision of places in *llars d'infants* and *escoles bressol* is not universal (there is no guarantee of a place) so there are also many **private nurseries** catering to this age group. To enrol a child in a private nursery school you should contact them directly.

Figure 1

CATALAN SCHOOL SYSTEM: SIMPLIFIED CHART

Higher education

UNIVERSITY DEGREE
(*Estudis de grau*)

HIGHER VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING
(*Cicles formatius de grau superior*)

Upper secondary education

PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION
(*Batxillerat*)
16-18 years

INTERMEDIATE VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND TRAINING
(*Cicles formatius de grau mitjà*)

Basic Education

COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION
(*Educació secundària obligatòria, ESO*)
12-16 years

BASIC VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION AND
TRAINING
(*Cicles formatius de grau bàsic*)

PRIMARY SCHOOL
(*Educació primària*)
6-12 years

Preschool

PRE-PRIMARY
(*Educació infantil*)
3-6 years

NURSERY SCHOOL
(*Escola Bressol*)
0-3 years

↑ Conditional access

↑ Access test required

■ Compulsory

Source: Compiled internally based on information from the Catalan Department of Education.

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education (*segon cicle d'educació infantil*) is not compulsory but **provision is universal**, meaning all children are guaranteed a place. Places are assigned through an annual application process using a **points system**.

Most families enrol their children in this stage to begin in the September of the year they turn 3. The pre-primary stage is usually contained within a primary school, so entering this stage is when most children effectively start at the school they will attend until they are twelve years old (or beyond).

Children who attend the pre-primary stage are guaranteed a place at the same school when they move on to the primary stage.

Primary education

The Primary stage (*educació primària*) comprises the first six years of the ten years of compulsory education, and is divided into three two-year blocks. All children are entitled to a free school place at this stage.

Evaluation is by continuous assessment and measures pupils' acquisition of **basic competencies** in different areas of knowledge. The **curriculum** is focused on the development and application of abilities and knowledge in contextualised learning situations. **Written reports** are issued detailing pupils' progress and the degree of achievement in each area of knowledge.

Schools have the flexibility to develop their own **educational project**, so may differ slightly in their approach to, for example, homework and written examinations. Schools generally encourage good relationships with families and meetings can be arranged with the class teacher.

In state schools most children will have to change school after finishing primary education. However, each state primary school has an **assigned or affiliated secondary school**, which ensures educational continuity. Moreover, these centres are usually located nearby.

Secondary education

Pupils in most state schools move from their primary school (*escola*) to a separate secondary school (*institut*) for the compulsory secondary education (*educació secundària obligatòria*, ESO) stage. Fully private and *concertada* private schools may offer both primary and secondary education at the same school.

Pupils study a group of **compulsory core subjects**, and choose from **optional subjects** which may vary from school to school.

Independent learning is encouraged and **homework** is usually set from the first year. Pupils are evaluated by examinations, continuous assessment, and a research project in the final year.

After successfully completing this stage, pupils receive a **graduation certificate** - *Graduat en Educació Secundària Obligatòria* (GESO) - which enables them to go on to higher levels of study.

At this level, **basic vocational education and training (VET)** tracks (*cicles formatius de grau bàsic*) are also offered, providing an opportunity for students who are especially motivated to pursue professional learning. They are aimed at 15-year-old students who have completed the third year of compulsory secondary school (ESO) or, exceptionally, the second year, with the proposal or recommendation of the teaching team through a guidance council.

Upper secondary education

Following the completion of compulsory education, most young people move on to two years of upper secondary education. The main options are the **bacallaureate or intermediate vocational training**. Qualifying students are assured of a place and tuition is free in state schools.

The **bacallaureate (*batxillerat*)** is the academic track that leads, after further entrance exams, to university. Students choose to follow one of four specialisms; Arts (visual arts or dramatic arts track), Science and Technology, Humanities and Social Science and General (currently in a pilot phase). This two-year course can often be completed at the same institution where a student completed their secondary schooling. However, not all schools offer all the different *batxillerat* modules so students may choose to continue their studies at a different centre at this stage.

Students who take the **intermediate vocational education and training (VET)** track (*cicles formatius de grau mitjà*) choose courses from around 25 different professional areas and through a combination of classroom study and practical experience, obtain the qualification of technician in their chosen field. Upon completion of this two-year course they can enter the workforce, continue to higher vocational training, or take university entrance exams.

Higher Education

Students who continue on to higher education can take university entrance examinations (*prova d'accés a la universitat - PAU*) and apply directly for a degree course at **university**.

Alternatively, they can complete a further two years of **higher vocational education and training (VET)** (*cicles formatius de grau superior*), which qualifies them to apply for university degree courses (without taking the PAU exams).



Figure 2
SCHOOL SYSTEM EQUIVALENCES

Years old	Catalan		British		French			German		
0 - 3	Escola bressol		Preschool		Crèche			Krippe		
3 - 4	Educació infantil	P3	Early Years	Nursery	École primaire	École Maternelle	Petite Section	Kindergarten	1. Jahr	
4 - 5		P4		Reception			Moyenne Section		2. Jahr	
5 - 6		P5	Year 1	Grande Section			3. Jahr			
6 - 7	Educació primària	1r primària	Primary Education	Year 2		Enseignement secondaire	École Élémentaire	CP	Grundschule	1. Klasse
7 - 8		2n primària		Year 3				CE1		2. Klasse
8 - 9		3r primària		Year 4				CE2		3. Klasse
9 - 10		4t primària		Year 5				CM1		4. Klasse
10 - 11		5è primària		Year 6				CM2		5. Klasse
11 - 12		6è primària		Year 7				Sixième		6. Klasse
12 - 13	Educació secundària obligatòria (ESO)	1r ESO	Secondary Education	Year 8		Enseignement secondaire	Collège	Cinquième	Gymnasium	7. Klasse
13 - 14		2n ESO		Year 9	Quatrième			8. Klasse		
14 - 15		3r ESO		Year 10	Troisième			9. Klasse		
15 - 16		4t ESO		Year 11	Seconde			10. Klasse		
16 - 17	Batxillerat	1r batxillerat	Sixth Form	Year 12		Lycée	Première		11. Klasse	
17 - 18		2n batxillerat		Year 13			Terminale		12. Klasse	

Source: Compiled internally through internet research

Italian		Japanese		Swiss		US		Years old
Nido d'infanzia								0 - 3
Scuola dell'infanzia	Sezione 3 anni	Yochien	1st year	Kindergarten	1. Jahr	Early Childhood	Preschool (PK3)	3 - 4
	Sezione 4 anni		2nd year		2. Jahr		Pre-Kindergarten (PK4)	4 - 5
	Sezione 5 anni		3rd year		3. Jahr		Kindergarten (K5)	5 - 6
Scuola primaria	1ª Elementare	Shogakko	1st year	Primarstufe	1. Klasse	Elementary School	Grade 1	6 - 7
	2ª Elementare		2nd year		2. Klasse		Grade 2	7 - 8
	3ª Elementare		3rd year		3. Klasse		Grade 3	8 - 9
	4ª Elementare		4th year		4. Klasse		Grade 4	9 - 10
	5ª Elementare		5th year		5. Klasse		Grade 5	10 - 11
Scuola secondaria di 1º grado	1ª Media	Chugakko	6th year	Sekundarstufe I	6. Klasse	Middle School	Grade 6	11 - 12
	2ª Media		1st year		7. Klasse		Grade 7	12 - 13
	3ª Media		2nd year		8. Klasse		Grade 8	13 - 14
Liceo	1ª Liceo	Kotogakko	3rd year	Sekundarstufe II	9. Klasse	High School	Grade 9	14 - 15
	2ª Liceo		1st year		10. Klasse		Grade 10	15 - 16
	3ª Liceo		2nd year		11. Klasse		Grade 11	16 - 17
	4ª Liceo		3rd year		12. Klasse		Grade 12	17 - 18

1.6. SCHOOL LIFE

While the Catalan school system offers a consistent education programme across all its schools, individual schools in Barcelona will have their own character, reflecting the diversity of the city. Schools have some **flexibility and autonomy** to develop their own **educational project** and adapt their methodological approach to their circumstances.

The school environment is fairly **informal** in the sense that most schools do not have uniforms and pupils call their teacher by their first name. But all of them promote **tolerance and respect**.

Open communication is encouraged between schools and families and meetings can be arranged to discuss progress in more detail. In recent years, many schools have also adopted different **apps or technological platforms** to facilitate communication between the school and families.

Most primary schools plan a few **class outings** (*excursions*) during the year, and once a year there is a **school camp** (*colònies or convivències*) where the class spends a few days doing activities in the natural environment.

Physical education (PE) is part of the compulsory curriculum, but schools located in densely populated Barcelona may not have large sporting facilities. Most have an enclosed play area which is large enough for PE classes, and they may also make use of local sports centres for swimming lessons and other activities.

The school calendar

The **academic year** runs from September to June with long summer holidays of around 10-11 weeks.

There are **three terms** with no half-term breaks, although there are public holidays

(which may fall mid-week). There are also several holiday days that the school is free to take at any time during its own calendar (*dies de lliure disposició*).

The **autumn term** starts in the first week of September and runs until the start of the Christmas holidays (*Nadal*), a few days before the 25th of December. The Christmas holidays are about fifteen days long, with the **winter term** beginning after *Reis* (Three Kings Day, or Epiphany) which falls on the 6th of January. There are another ten days of holiday for Easter (*Setmana Santa*) which falls in March or April, depending on the year. Then the **spring term** runs until late June, finishing a few days before the festival of *Sant Joan* on the 26th of June.

Sending your children on **holiday activities** is very normal in Catalonia, especially in summer but also at Christmas or Easter. Most schools run day camps (*casals*) that involve sporting, educational, fun activities and excursions.

Furthermore, there are also **summer camps** (*campaments d'estiu*) that are held outside the participants' place of residence for 1-2 weeks, depending on the age group. These camps are normally organised by private and other non-governmental organisations.

The school day

The primary **school day** starts at 9.00am and finishes around 4.30pm in state schools and 5.00pm in many *concertada* private schools. Fully private schools are free to set their own timetables but most follow this pattern.

Pupils at the secondary education stage (ESO) generally start earlier at 8.00-8.30am and may finish at around 2.30pm on some days, and stay until 5.00pm on others.

Most schools offer before and after **school care** (*servei d'acollida*) for an hour on either

side of the regular school day. There are also after-school activities (*extraescolars*) such as dance, music, sport or art classes that can be signed up for.

Schools usually have a 30-minute **break** in the mid-morning, known as *pati* in Catalan. Children usually bring a small snack to eat at this time.

Until the end of Primary education there is usually a long break for lunch, typically between 1-3pm, when schools serve a high quality **cooked lunch** (charged separately from tuition). Many state schools have their own kitchen, while others use outside catering services. Everyone is served the same meal, although allergies and other food requirements are catered for (with documentation). It is unusual for state primary schools to allow children to bring packed lunches to school, but some children go home for lunch.

Parents associations

Most schools have a parents association called either the **AFA** (*l'Associació de Famílies d'Alumnes*) or formally **AMPA** (*l'Associació de mares i pares d'alumnes*).

These associations work towards improving school life in the interests of pupils, and foster a connection between school management and families. For example they may undertake fund-raising activities, organise after-school activities, or help to run the school canteen. AFAs vary in structure but there is usually a small **annual fee** for membership.

Bullying and harassment

School **bullying** involves a type of abuse sustained over time and is characterised by physical, verbal and/or social persecution, always psychological, in which one or more children or young people abuse power over

others. If the harassment is carried out through the use of technological tools, it takes the name of **cyberbullying**.

The Catalan education authorities and schools are very aware of how new digital technologies can have an impact on young people's social life, mental health and ability to learn in school. It is recognised that tackling bullying and harassment needs to take into account the online context in which young people interact.

There is a set of **protocols** for schools to follow to ensure that schools remain safe places for children to learn and ensure that teachers have the tools to help students manage these situations. Since it is understood that online bullying primarily happens outside of school hours, parents associations are often involved in the creation of schools' bullying and harassment policies.

Use of mobile phones

In Catalonia, schools have the autonomy to decide what use they make of digital technologies and in recent years there has been deep reflection on this issue.

While the incorporation of technologies and digital tools like tablets, digital whiteboards, or mobile phones in the educational setting can be highly beneficial, enhancing student engagement, there are also associated risks. The unchecked use of mobile phones, for instance, poses potential threats, potentially impacting academic performance and presenting challenges for teachers in classroom management, among other consequences.

That is why, after a long-running social debate, the Department of Education is to ban mobile phones in Catalan state primary schools and restrict them in secondary schools as from the 2024-2025 school year.

2.

Schooling in Barcelona as an international family

International families in Barcelona are fortunate to have a wide range of schooling options available.

The previous chapter laid out the structure of the Catalan school system and the differences between state schools and private schools (whether state-subsided or not). The children of the sizable international community in Barcelona can be found in all of these types of schools.

This chapter discusses the options families might want to consider when deciding which type of school will best suit their circumstances.



2.1. LOCAL EDUCATION

For the purposes of this booklet, local education is defined as schools which follow the Catalan curriculum and that use Catalan as the main language of instruction. The schools that provide a local education are primarily state schools and *concertada* private schools.

For families intending to stay in Catalonia long term, a local education can be a good option for a number of reasons. The Catalan school system provides a **good quality education with highly qualified teachers**, who are generally very motivated.

Attending a local school will help the whole family **integrate into the local community**, with both children and their parents having the opportunity to form new friendships with the other families at the school which should make settling into life in a new country much easier.

State schools, in particular, are very diverse and tend to reflect the character of the local neighbourhood. They are **accessible to and inclusive** of all children. To promote integration the local authorities implement measures to ensure that both state and *concertada* schools reflect all sections of society in the schools that they fully or partially subsidise.

Another advantage of choosing a local school is that it will be close to home, usually within easy walking distance.

Cost is another factor to consider. There are no tuition fees in state schools, although families have to pay for books and other school materials. The cost for attending *concertada* private schools are considerably less than in fully private schools.

Choosing a local education from a young age will ensure that the children of international families become fluent in both Catalan and Spanish, which can be a tremendous advantage for their future prospects. However, it should be noted that for older

children and adolescents becoming fluent in the local languages may take some time, which can have implications for their initial social integration and their education. Similarly, families with very young children and toddlers should consider whether they will be able to communicate with the child's teacher, if they have not yet mastered Spanish or Catalan.

The importance of successfully integrating children into a new language and culture has been recognised by the Catalan education authorities through an initiative called *aula d'acollida* (reception classroom).

Aula d'Acollida

The reception classroom or *aula d'acollida* support initiative is aimed at pupils who have recently arrived in Catalonia and do not yet speak Catalan.

Support can include help with learning Catalan, providing an adapted curriculum to make it easier to access the content being studied, and lessons on Catalan culture. The form this support takes will vary depending on the circumstances of the family and the resources available at the school. It is a good idea to ask a potential school what will be in place to help your child settle in.

Older children are given two years before they are expected to be fluent in Catalan, during which they cannot be held back a year if their grades are affected by language limitations.

2.2. LOCAL CURRICULUM WITH A MULTI- LANGUAGE FOCUS

Catalan has been the main language of instruction in the Catalan school system since the **language immersion project** was progressively introduced in the 1980s. This usually means that all subjects are taught in Catalan, except for language subjects. Spanish, and a foreign language (usually English), are taught as core subjects during the years of compulsory education from 6 to 16 years of age.

A number of schools in the Catalan school system choose to teach these additional languages above the minimum requirement. This might involve specific subjects being taught in another language (usually Spanish or English) or a project-based programme which allows flexibility in which languages are used.

For international families, this approach can combine the integration benefits of a local education with the languages which may suit the family's individual circumstances.

2.3. INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

For the purposes of this booklet, international education is defined as schools which use the curriculum of another country, or a **recognised international curriculum** such as the International Baccalaureate or Cambridge International programmes.

In Barcelona and its surrounding areas there are over 30 such schools which are accredited to teach an **international curriculum**. Although they are fully private schools, they also need to be accredited by

the Catalan education authorities, as well as the Spanish Ministry of Education.

These schools mainly offer **international qualifications**, sometimes alongside **local qualifications**. In most international schools it is also possible to have any studies officially recognised meaning students can also gain the local GESO (*Graduat en Educació Secundària Obligatòria*), as long as they have studied certain compulsory subjects, such as Spanish, Catalan and social studies.

Schools which teach an international curriculum generally teach in English or the language of their home country. Spanish and Catalan are taught as language subjects.

An international education can be a good option for families who only intend to stay in Barcelona for a short time, or whose children are older and already part-way through the process of gaining qualifications in another system. These schools can give children continuity in their education and make it easier to transition to a new country in the future. These schools are also used to integrating new pupils from other parts of the world, so they are well placed to help ease the transition.

Pupils at international schools will still have the chance to learn Catalan and Spanish in language classes but to a lesser degree than in local schools. Many local families also choose an international education for their children, so a large percentage of classmates may be native speakers of Catalan or Spanish. For this reason there may be separate Catalan and Spanish classes for students of different levels.

On the whole, these schools teach children from all over the world, which can create a very enriching environment with the opportunity to mix with people from different cultures. However, they may also be more transient, with families leaving when they move to a new country.

Schools offering an international education are privately owned and run, and manage their own admissions process. Therefore, they are able to select pupils according to their own criteria. Admissions tests, especially related to language, may be required. Furthermore, unlike state schools, they are not obliged to accept children with special educational needs, but they may do so at their discretion.

Cost is an important consideration, as schools offering an international education are the most expensive option for schooling in Barcelona. Some schools are subsidised by the education authorities in their home country, but generally the cost of education is covered by fees, and there may be additional costs such as uniforms.

Schools offering international education tend to be located outside the centre of Barcelona or in municipalities in the metropolitan area, so families need to consider transport options and bear in mind that children attending the school may not live nearby, which can make it difficult to meet up with friends after school.

However, the additional space such out of town locations provide, along with the financial resources that come from charging fees, can allow international schools to offer better sports and other facilities than local schools.

Also, since Barcelona is an attractive destination not only for international families, but also for teachers who wish to work abroad, international schools are able to attract highly qualified and experienced professionals.

Alternative Education Methodologies

In the last decade or so there has been a marked increase in schools in Barcelona offering alternative pedagogies, such as **Montessori and Waldorf/Steiner**, for example. Schools following one of these alternative education philosophies are accredited by the Catalan authorities like any other school and are fully private schools.

They may teach in Catalan, another language, or a combination of languages and vary greatly in their educational offer. These schools can be a good option for families who want continuity with the style of education they are used to, and which may be more in line with their social and educational priorities.

2.4. POST-COMPULSORY EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Within the local system, there are different educational paths available to students who have successfully completed compulsory education at the age of 16. Students either choose a vocational path with the *Formació Professional*, or alternatively complete one of the local baccalaureates (*batxillerats*) that pave the way to university.

Like international schools, many local schools recognise the benefit of broadening their student's educational horizons and offer not only the local courses and qualifications but also offer internationally recognised qualifications.

International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP)

The IBDP is a rigorous two-year programme for 16 to 19 year olds with an international focus. It is the best-known of the four educational programmes developed by the Geneva-based non-profit organisation **International Baccalaureate (IB)**.

Universities around the world accept the IBDP qualification, which is recognised as challenging both academically and in terms of personal development.

In Barcelona and its surrounding areas, there are more than 25 schools which offer the IBDP, including state schools (*instituts*) and *concertada* private schools, as well as fully private schools.

The IBDP is currently offered in English, Spanish, or French, with a few schools offering a bilingual programme (usually English and Spanish). It is therefore very important to check what the main teaching language is when considering potential schools, as this will be the language in which students sit their exams.

Batxibac

The Catalan Department of Education and the French Ministry of Education created the Batxibac (**Catalan Batxillerat plus French Baccalauréat**) programme in 2010. Students that successfully complete this course obtain the Catalan *Batxillerat* certificate and then, upon passing an additional external exam in French, the French *Baccalauréat*.

The programme follows a mixed curriculum, with one-third of class hours taught in French and following the French curriculum. There are also classes in French language, literature and history.

In order to be accepted on the Batxibac programme, students must demonstrate they have a basic level of French (equivalent to B1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). The Batxibac

pathway is widely available at both state schools (*instituts*) and *concertada* private schools. Fully private schools, which might not offer the Catalan *Batxillerat*, are less likely to offer the Batxibac.

Dual Diploma

The Dual Diploma was created and developed by **Academica**, a digital education publisher, in 2001. It allows students to obtain two qualifications at the same time; that of their own country and the **American High School Diploma**.

The Dual Diploma can be started in the 2nd, 3rd or 4th year of compulsory secondary education (ESO) or in the first year of pre-university education (*Batxillerat*). Students receive the same qualification as American students when they finish high school, recognised in all US states and most universities around the world.

The programme is delivered online and students study the additional subjects independently. Many schools in Barcelona, mainly *concertada* private schools, offer the Dual Diploma programme

Other international qualifications

In addition to the qualifications highlighted above, there are a range of other foreign qualifications offered in schools in Barcelona, such as **British A Levels**, the **American Advanced Placement** courses (APs) and **The International Baccalaureate Careers-Related Programme**.



2.5. WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A SCHOOL IN BARCELONA

Families are all different with varying circumstances, backgrounds, future plans and priorities. For this reason, there really is no single best solution for international families when choosing a school in Barcelona.

Checklist when selecting a school

Below are some questions that families should ask themselves when considering which type of school will best suit their particular needs.

Length of stay and family's values and priorities

- How long do you plan to stay in Barcelona?
- If you only plan to stay for the short term, which curriculum would be best for your child to help them with the next move? Would it be better to continue with the curriculum they were following before moving to Barcelona?
- Is integration into the local community important to you?
- How do you feel about religion being taught at school?
- What language(s) do you want your child to be schooled in? Will the school you choose be able to support them in learning this language (if needed)?

Location of your home

- Where do you plan to live? Would you prefer an inner-city location or would a more residential location suit your family better?
- How far would you be willing to travel to get your child to school in the morning? If you don't plan to live close to the school, will you need a school that offers a bus service?

Your child's learning needs

- Does your child have special educational needs and will you need a school that has specific expertise supporting your child's challenges?
- Would your child benefit from smaller class sizes?
- Does your child need one-to-one support? Will the school be able to offer this level of support or allow you to provide external support within the classroom?
- How do you think your child will adapt to a new school environment?
- If your child is older, are there specific qualifications that will be best suited to them?

Checklist when visiting schools

When selecting schools, you can consult the websites and it is advisable to visit and familiarise yourself with your preferred schools and meet their teams in person. Here are some things to consider when visiting schools.

Teaching and Learning

- What curriculum does the school follow?
- Does the school have a particular approach to teaching and learning (e.g., project-based, individual vs. group performance, frequent testing)?
- What qualifications does the school offer (if applicable)?
- Is there a team that supports children with special educational needs? What happens if children need extra support?
- Is there a homework policy? Does it match your expectations for how much homework your child should do?

Languages

- What is the primary language of instruction at the school? What other languages are offered?
- Will your child be offered extra support with languages, if needed? Will this cost extra?
- What is the language of communication between the school and the families?
- Can staff communicate with you in a language that you understand?

Assessment

- How are students monitored and assessed? How can you know how your child is doing at school?
- When and how often are teachers available for parent and student meetings? What channels are there for parents to communicate with teachers?

Policy

- Does the school have an anti-bullying policy? What is their process of dealing with anti-social behaviour?
- What is the schools' policy regarding time off during the school term?
- What is the school's policy regarding allergies or other medical conditions? What happens if your child is sick?
- Is there a school uniform?

Facilities

- How important are school facilities to you? What are your 'must haves' and 'nice-to-haves' in terms of facilities?
- What are the classrooms like? Are they light and inviting?
- How well equipped is the school and are the resources well looked after?
- Is there a kitchen onsite or does the school rely on caterers?
- What is the outside area like? Is there a good amount of space for the number of children at the school?

School life

- How many classes are there for each year group?

- How many children are in each class?
What is the ratio of staff to children in the different year groups?

- Who will be your child's class teacher?
Will there be other staff members supporting your child?

- What is the atmosphere at the school like during your visit?

- What is the school time table?

- Does the school offer extra-curricular activities?

The School Community

- How does the school encourage parental involvement?

- Is there a Parent Teacher Association or equivalent at the school?

- Are there other international families that attend the school?

- Do families generally live close by or does the school offer a number of bus routes throughout the city?

Costs

- If the school charges for tuition, what extra payments need to be made on top of these fees?



3.

Enrolling at local schools

This chapter provides an overview of the enrolment process for state schools and *concertada* private schools (both supported by funds from the Catalan Government).

It covers various stages, beginning with pre-primary education (*segon cicle d'educació infantil*), progressing through primary education (*educació primària*), and concluding with secondary education (*educació secundària obligatòria, ESO*).



A step-by-step guide to accessing State Education

The Procedures section of the **Barcelona International Welcome** website features a page titled 'Access to State Education,' offering a step-by-step guide outlining the process for preregistration and enrolment for the following stages:

- Nursery schools
- Pre-primary, primary and secondary education
- Schooling for newly arrived students
- Baccalaureate
- Intermediate vocational education and training

Access to fully private schools

Fully private schools do not form part of the enrolment process explained in this chapter. They manage their own admissions process, usually accepting new pupils throughout the year. To enrol at a fully private school, families need to contact the school directly.

3.1. ANNUAL ENROLMENT PROCESS: KEY INFORMATION AND TIPS

Overview and timeline

Generally, for the school year starting in September, the application process begins in early February with schools holding open days for prospective families. Preregistration is done online around March and families should list different schools in order of preference. In exceptional cases the application can be presented in person.

After the preregistration deadline, a process comprising of points allocation, appeals and confirmations takes place until the final allocation of places in June. After that, in mid to late June, families enrol at the school their child has been allocated. See Figure 3.

Tip number 1

It is important to check the exact dates every year for the registration and enrolment process.

preinscripcio.gencat.cat



Figure 3

ENROLMENT PROCESS TIMELINE

When?

What do you have to do?

February
-
March

Gather information and get ready

- Consider your family's need and priorities
- Understand the preregistration process
- Identify the schools in the catchment area
- Attend school open days
- Check available places and prioritise the options
- Prepare the documentation

March

Preregistration

- Submit the online application

April
-
June

Allocation of places

- Publication of lists of applications per school with provisional eligibility scores.
- Period for submitting appeals against the scores.
- Publication of lists with final scores after appeals have been processed.
- Tiebreak process.
- Publication of list of applications ordered by priority points and tiebreak score.
- Reopening of the application process for those who have not been assigned a place in the first round.
- Final offer of places, after all new schools requests have been considered.
- Publication of the admitted students and the waiting list, if there is one.

June

Enrolment

- Registering at the school you have been assigned

Early
September

School starts

Getting ready for preregistration

The first step for families is to consider the needs of their child and gather information about relevant schools.

A household's proximity to the school put as the preferred choice is one of the most important criteria for establishing the priority order to gain access to a local school. For this purpose, **catchment areas** (*àrees d'influència*) are established using the home address the family have used in the municipal register of residents (*empadronament*).



Tip number 2

Find out which schools are in your catchment area. A list can be generated by entering the street name and number of the child's home address on the **Barcelona Education Consortium website** in the city of Barcelona or at the municipal school office (*oficina municipal d'escolarització*) if you are in another city.

You can also apply for a school outside of your catchment area but this would affect the number of points your application receives and means a lower chance of securing entry into your school of choice.

Schools hold open days in February and early March which usually need to be signed up for in advance. Some schools encourage or require parents to attend without young children (for example those applying for I3 for children aged three) but older children can usually attend. Open days are a good opportunity to see the school facilities, meet the teachers and ask questions. The presentation will be delivered in local languages, normally Catalan, so for newly arrived families it can be helpful to take along someone who is fluent in the language.



Tip number 3

School open days help you to decide which schools to list as your top preferences on the application, so it is a good idea to visit as many as possible.

The lists of available places at each school are published in early March. This is useful to check because it might influence the order in which you choose to rank schools according to preference on your application form. Families can list up to ten schools on their application in order of preference and these can be a mixture of both state schools and private *concertada* schools.

How the allocation of school places works

Schools in the Catalan school system do not select their pupils. Instead, school places are allocated using a points system. In fact, only a very small number of schools in the Catalan School system do select pupils on the basis of admissions tests, such as specialist performing arts schools, but this is very exceptional.

In order to allocate places, applications are scored according to whether they meet certain criteria. The criteria and the number of points given for each one can vary from year to year, so the following is just a general guide to what is usually included.

There are two main categories of criteria, **priority** and **complementary**. Each criteria met by families grants a number of established points.

- **Priority criteria:**
 - Child has a sibling already at the school
 - Proximity to the school
 - Family qualifies for the guaranteed income scheme

• **Complementary criteria:**

- Disability of the student, parent, guardian or siblings
- The parent or legal guardian works at the school
- Registered as a large family (*títol de família nombrosa*)
- Registered as a single-parent family (*títol de família monoparental*)
- The child was part of a multiple birth (twins, etc.)
- The child is in foster care
- The applicant has the status of a victim of gender-based violence or terrorism

First, priority criteria are taken into account. Then, in the event of a tie, complementary criteria are used to allocate places. After that, if there are still applications tied on points, the remaining places are allocated by a public draw, using a tiebreak number.



Tip number 4

It is a good idea to list in the application form as many schools as possible (up to ten), as this means that you will have a greater say in which school your child is allocated to if they do not get a place at their preferred school.

The school ranked in first position in your application will determine the points score for the whole application process. Therefore, it is important for families to carefully consider the order they rank the schools on their list.

Affiliated schools

In the Catalan school system, each primary school (*escola*) is affiliated with a secondary school (*institut*). Applications for the first year of compulsory secondary education (ESO) from pupils at an affiliated primary school have priority over those from non-affiliated schools. In the case that there are more applicants than places from these affiliated primary schools, the priority points scale is then used to allocate places.

Specific educational support needs

All state schools and *concertada* private schools have a number of places per class reserved for children with specific educational support needs (*necessitats específiques de support educatiu, NESE*). These needs may be related to developmental delays, disorders or disabilities, or to a situation of social or economic vulnerability.

At the beginning of the application process each March, the number of places at each school is listed on the Barcelona Education Consortium website or at the municipal school offices, showing how many NESE places are available in addition to ordinary places (*places ordinàries*). During the application process and up until the start of the school year, NESE places can only be filled by students who meet certain criteria and have supporting documentation. If the NESE places are not filled by September, they are converted into ordinary places and can be taken by pupils on the waiting list.

Families wishing to be considered for a NESE place or a place in a special education centre (*centre d'educació especial*) should make the application, attaching all their relevant documentation.

Documentation needed

Families should ensure they have the correct documentation available to be submitted with the application, as all applicants must provide supporting documentation to verify the criteria.

All applications must prove the identity of the applicant (the child's parent or guardian) with their Spanish National Identity Document (DNI) or EU Member State identity card or foreign passport. It is also necessary to prove the applicant's relationship to the child, which is done with the Spanish family book (*llibre de família*) or foreign birth certificate. The child and applicant's residential address must be the same, which is verified by the cohabitation certificate (*volant de convivència del Padró habitants*) from the city register. The child's identity document is only required if they are over 14 years old.



Tip number 5

It is advisable to sign up to one of the digital ID verification systems or have a digital certificate available to residents of Catalonia, such as the IDCat or IDCAT Mòbil. Using a digital certificate enables the Catalan education authorities to automatically verify information such as identity, address, disability status, etc.

Using a digital certificate is not mandatory but it means that documents will not need to be attached to the application in most cases. In any case, it is a good idea to also have original documents (and digitally scanned copies) available for information that cannot be verified centrally for any reason.

Families will also need to present their documents when they eventually enrol their child at the school they have been allocated.

Translations of foreign documentation

Strictly speaking, documents in a foreign language presented with an application should be translated into any of the official local languages. In practice, this may not be necessary if the information on the document is easily understood by a Catalan or Spanish speaker because it is in a familiar language (for example, English or French). However, families should be aware that translations may be required and ought to check if they have any doubts. Documents in languages which use a non-Latin alphabet would always need to be officially translated.

Preregistration (*preinscripció*)

The application or preregistration (*sol·licitud de preinscripció*) is done online and can be accessed via the Barcelona Education Consortium website or the Department of Education website (details can be found in Chapter 5). Families who have special difficulties or do not have the necessary means can make an appointment and go to any of the education support offices to present the application.

The application period is open for between 7 - 10 days, depending on the educational stage the child is entering. It must be completed by the deadline.

When filling out the application, families indicate which priority and complementary criteria apply, and provide supporting documentation. When the application is processed, the information provided is verified and the overall point score of the application is determined.

Plaça d'ofici

On the application form there is the question: "Voleu plaça d'ofici?" (Do you want an officially assigned place?). Ticking this box indicates that, should you not get a place at any of your listed preferred schools, you would like to be assigned a place at an alternative school. This option applies by default for the first year of pre-primary (I3) and the first year of compulsory secondary education (ESO), as the system guarantees a place for everyone.

When the application has been submitted, families receive a confirmation email with a PDF attached. This is confirmation of the receipt of the application and includes the application number. This number is needed to access the application portal where errors in the points assigned and the progress of the application can be checked, and where the eventual result of the application is indicated. In this portal families will also be able to find their randomly assigned tiebreak number, which will be needed in the event of a tie on points.

Enrolment (matrícula)

Once the application deadline passes, a sorting process takes place from April to June, when the final results are published. During this time, families will receive updates by email and can check on their application at any time via the application portal using their application number.

Once the final results are published in June, families officially accept their place at the school they've been allocated by enrolling in person at the school.

During enrolment, schools check the original documents submitted with the application. They will ask to see the child's health card (*TSI-Targeta Sanitària Individual*) and details of any childhood

vaccinations. If older children are entering the Catalan system for the first time, families may be asked for reports from previous schools.

3.2. APPLYING FOR A SCHOOL PLACE OUTSIDE THE APPLICATION PERIOD

If you arrive in Barcelona outside of the application period, it is still possible to get a place at a school for your child.

The process is similar to the annual admissions process as detailed above. Applications can also be done **online** but it is also possible to go in person to the Barcelona Education Consortium office to get support or, in the case of schools outside of Barcelona, to the local municipal schools offices (*oficines municipals d'escolarització*).

If your child is new to the Catalan school system, the most important document to obtain is the cohabitation certificate (*volant de convivència*) to prove that you are registered in the city register. This will ensure a place is found as close to home as possible.

Generally, children who are already studying at a school in Catalonia cannot change their school mid-year. To move to a new school they would need to go through the annual application process in March, then, if they get a place, start the new school the following September. There are, however, some exceptions to this:

- If the family moves to a different district

- The child or parent has been a victim of gender violence or bullying that justifies a change of school
- There is a change of foster home

In these cases, a special commission will evaluate the circumstances, and supporting documentation will be required.

Tip number 6

In the Procedures section of the **Barcelona International Welcome** website you will find a step-by-step guide to enrolling as a newly arrived student.

4.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



1- Is it obligatory for children to start school when they turn three years old?

No. Compulsory education starts from the first year of primary school and lasts from 6 - 16 years old. However, all children have the right to a place in pre-primary education from the year they turn three and many families choose to send their child to school at this age.

2- How and when can I visit schools to see the facilities and learn about their projects?

State schools hold open days, usually around February. It might be necessary to reserve in advance, and it is not always possible to take small children.

Concertada private schools also often have open days early in the year. They may also offer private visits at other times of the year.

Fully private schools usually have an admissions department and can arrange private visits, although they may have open days too.

3- Can I apply for a state school or concertada private school anywhere in Barcelona?

Yes, but it could affect your chances of getting a place if you choose a school that is outside of your catchment area as your first choice. In the preregistration, you can list up to ten schools on the application, in order of preference. If the school you list as your first choice is in your catchment area, you get maximum points for proximity. This is important because if there are more applications than places for a school, applications with more points stand a better chance of getting a place at that school.

4- What happens if I don't get a place at any of the schools on my list?

This is very unlikely, especially if you list the maximum number of ten schools on your application. Should this happen, you will have the opportunity to select an alternative school that still has places available whilst being kept on the waiting list of all of the schools you have listed on your application form.

5- Will my child get support in learning Catalan at a local school?

Yes, there is a programme called *aula d'acollida* (reception classroom) which is designed to meet the needs of newly arrived students who don't yet speak Catalan. This support is available from the second year of compulsory education. (See Chapter 2).

6- Can I apply for a fully private school at the same time as applying for a state school?

Yes, you can make these applications simultaneously because the application processes are different. The annual application process explained in Chapter 3 applies to state schools and *concertada* private schools. It is not possible to list a fully private school as one of your preferred schools in this process.

However, a family can apply for a fully private school at the same time. Fully private schools run their own admissions process separately, each according to their own criteria. Families need to contact the individual schools directly to apply.

7- Are there schools teaching in languages other than Catalan, Spanish or English?

Yes. In Barcelona and the surrounding areas there are currently schools teaching all or part of their curriculum languages such as German, French, Japanese, Italian, Hebrew and Mandarin. These schools still teach Catalan and Spanish in addition to their main teaching language. All schools teaching in these languages are fully private schools. To find out which schools teach in these languages, go to the booklet **International Schools in Barcelona – And other multilingual schooling options**

8- Is it necessary to get my child's qualifications from our home country recognised?

For children entering school in Barcelona during the years of compulsory education from the ages of 6 to 16 years, it is not necessary to present a certificate of previous education from another country.

For upper secondary (post compulsory) education after the age of 16, it may be necessary, depending on the educational path the young person wishes to take. More information on the formalities for recognising or validating qualifications and studies can be found on the **Barcelona International Welcome website** (Procedures section).



9- How much does it cost to send your child to school in Barcelona?

Tuition is free in state schools. This applies to all stages of education from pre-primary through to upper secondary education.

Private *concertada* schools receive a state subsidy, and families also contribute by paying fees, which vary depending on the individual school. As a guide, fees for *concertada* private schools are usually in the range of approximately 100-400 euros per month.

Fully private schools do not receive any public subsidies from the Catalan authorities so tuition fees tend to be considerably higher than *concertada* private schools. Fully private school fees vary depending on the individual school and the stage of education. Tuition at a fully private school could be in the range of 600-2,500 euros per month.

In the case of all schools, it is important to consider costs over and above tuition fees, such as school meals, materials, transport, trips and camps, extra-curricular activities and, in some cases, uniforms. Private schools will usually have a joining fee. The cost of tuition itself depends on the type of school.

10- Do schools offer extracurricular activities?

Yes, almost all schools offer extra-curricular activities which take place at school outside of teaching hours. Most are scheduled after school but some schools have activities during the lunch break, too. These activities have an additional cost paid by families and are usually not included in the tuition fee.

5.

Resources and further information



Education Authorities

- **Barcelona Education Consortium** (*Consorci d'Educació de Barcelona*) has a comprehensive website where you will find up-to-date details about schools and the current application process. Enquiries can be made in person at the following office, usually with a pre-booked appointment.
 - Carrer de Roger de Llúria 1-3, 08010 Barcelona. There are other offices that offer support for the enrolment process.
 - Telephone: 93 551 1000
 - edubcn.cat
- **Catalan Department of Education** (*Departament d'Educació de la Generalitat de Catalunya*) has a website with extensive information about education in Catalonia. Three pages which might be of particular interest to international families are listed below:
 - Education in Catalonia: educacio.gencat.cat
 - Details of educational stages and opportunities in Catalonia: triaeducativa.gencat.cat
 - University study in Catalonia for international students: studyincatalonia.gencat.cat
- **Barcelona Municipal Education Institute** (*Institut Municipal d'Educació de Barcelona*) This body, which is part of the Barcelona City Council, has information on education, including nursery schools (*Escoles Bressol*). barcelona.cat/educacio
- **Spanish Ministry of Education:** educacionyfp.gob.es

School Associations

The following are associations of private and international schools:

- **Barcelona International Schools Association (BISA):** bisaschools.com
- **Escoles Privades independents de Catalunya (EPIC):** epicescoles.com
- **The National Association of British Schools in Spain (NABSS):** nabss.org

Curriculums and Qualifications

Information about pre-university qualifications:

- **Catalan Batxillerat:** triaeducativa.gencat.cat/ca/batxillerat
- **International Baccalaureate:** ibo.org/
- **Batxibac:** xtec.gencat.cat/ca/curriculum/batxillerat/baccalaureat/
- **Dual Diploma:** academica.school

Special Educational Needs

- **Intensive Support within Inclusive Schools (SIEI):** xtec.gencat.cat/ca/curriculum/diversitat-i-inclusio/mesures-i-suports/intensius/siei/
- **Child Development and Early Care Centers** (*Centres de desenvolupament infantil i atenció precoç - CDIAP*)
Catalan Department of Education:
https://dretssocials.gencat.cat/ca/ambits-tematics/infancia_i_adolescencia/atencio-precoc/centres_de_desenvolupament_infantil_i_atencio_precoc_cdiap/
- **Aprenem Autism** (Advocacy group for autistic children and their families)
aprenemautisme.org
- **Downs Syndrome Foundation of Catalonia** (*Fundació Catalana Síndrom Down*): fcsd.org

Useful resources for international families

- **Barcelona International Welcome** is a website portal from the City Council with practical information for anyone moving to the city. It offers guidance in many areas and a broad range of free activities to help newcomers settle in.
→ Specifically, in the Procedures section of this website you will find the page 'Access to State Education' with a step-by-step guide to the main formalities for school preregistration and enrolment.

barcelona.cat/internationalwelcome

- **Barcelona International Community Day** is a major annual meeting point for international people living in Barcelona and its surrounding area, organised by the City Council. It is an event packed with talks, workshops, roundtables, cultural and entertainment activities, as well as a fair to make contacts with organisations and professionals, and to share and exchange experiences. Open to all and free of charge.
barcelona.cat/internationalcommunityday
- **International Schools in Barcelona - And other multilingual school options:** this booklet provides a list of all the international schools in Barcelona and the qualifications they offer.

Barcelona is a welcoming city with a strategy that offers programmes and services aimed at international talent, to help them integrate into the community and take advantage of all the city has to offer.

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