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# Early Language Support in Kindergartens

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# Content

- Audit Facts
- Organization of Kindergartens
- Early Language Support
- Article 15a of the Federal Constitutional Law
- Financial Development
- Effectivity of Early Language Support
- Pedagogical Concepts
- Special–purpose Subsidies
- Framework Conditions



## Audit Facts

**Aim of the audit:** assessing the implementation of two agreements pursuant to Article 15a of the Federal Constitutional Law concluded between the Federal Government and the provinces on early language support in kindergartens

**Subject of the audit:** pedagogical implementation and effectiveness, legal framework, care situation (Betreuungssituation), financial development, and quantity and quality of human-resource allocation for early language support in kindergartens

**Audited entities:** responsible federal ministries, provinces of Lower and Upper Austria, municipality of Schwechat, and City of Wels

**Audited period:** essentially spanned the years from 2016 through 2019

**Citizen engagement:** selection of this subject matter was also prompted in the framework of the ACA's annual citizen engagement initiative

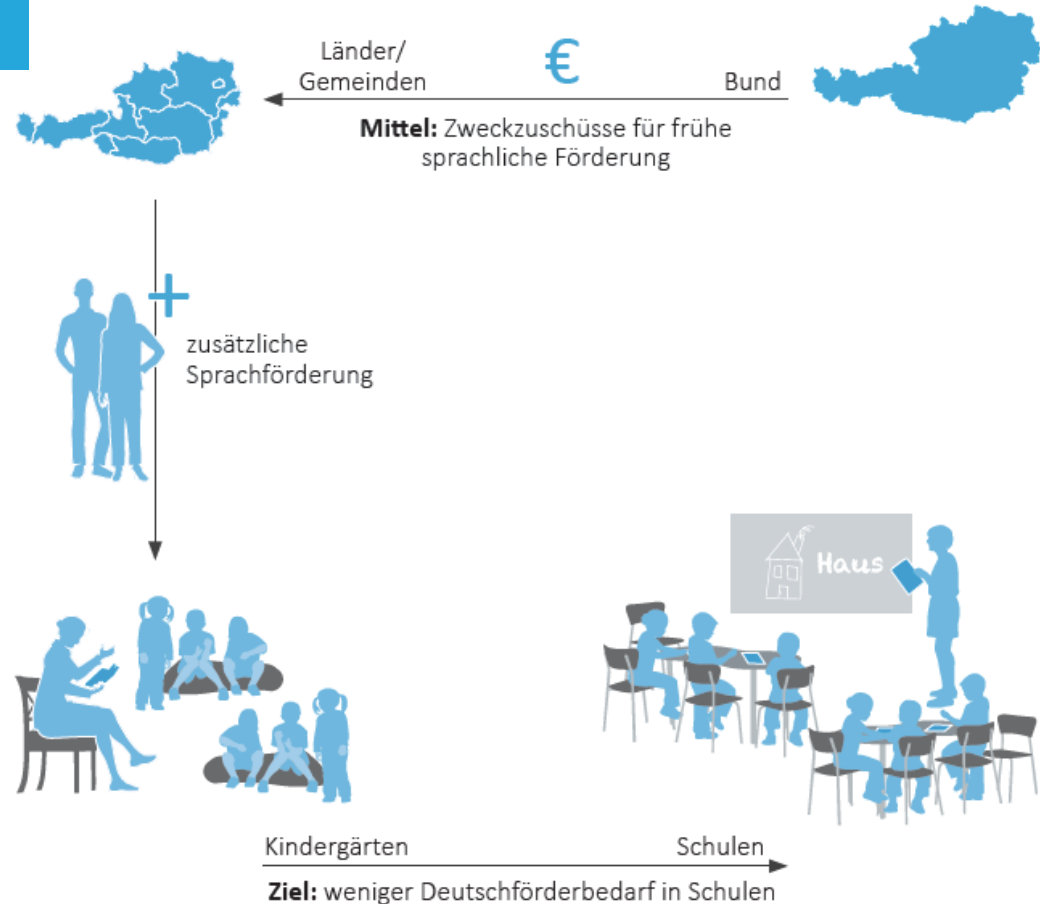
# Organization of Kindergartens

## Financing of Kindergartens

→ is primarily the responsibility of the provinces and municipalities

## Teaching at Schools

→ is the responsibility of the Federal Government





## Early Language Support

Learning the German language at a very early age is a milestone for a successful start to school.

As they provide early language support, kindergartens are hence essential for sustained educational success.

→ **Therefore: The Federal Government financially subsidises provinces in order to improve early language support in kindergartens, aiming to obtain equal opportunities for all children and to reduce the use of resources needed for promoting German language in primary schools.**



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**FRÜHE SPRACHLICHE FÖRDERUNG IN KINDERGÄRTEN**

*Empfehlung:*  
Bildungsministerium sollte sicherstellen,  
dass bei **allen Kindern verpflichtend**  
das **Sprachniveau festgestellt** wird.

RH

Foto: iStock.com/BraunS (2)

# Article 15a of the Federal Constitutional Law

	Geltungsdauer	Art. 15a B–VG Vereinbarung
1st Agreement:	2008 bis 2010	Vereinbarung gemäß Art. 15a B–VG über den Ausbau des institutionellen Kinderbetreuungsangebots und über die Einführung der verpflichtenden frühen sprachlichen Förderung in institutionellen Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen sowie Schaffung eines bundesweiten vorschulischen Bildungsplans, BGBl. II 478/2008
2nd Agreement:	2012 bis 2014	Vereinbarung zwischen dem Bund und den Ländern gemäß Art. 15a B–VG über die frühe sprachliche Förderung in institutionellen Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen, BGBl. II 258/2012
3rd Agreement:	2015/16 bis 2017/18	Vereinbarung gemäß Art. 15a B–VG über die frühe sprachliche Förderung in institutionellen Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen für die Kindergartenjahre 2015/16 bis 2017/18, BGBl. II 234/2015
4th Agreement:	2018/19 bis 2021/22	Vereinbarung gemäß Art. 15a B–VG zwischen dem Bund und den Ländern über die Elementarpädagogik für die Kindergartenjahre 2018/19 bis 2021/22, BGBl. I 103/2018
5th Agreement:	2022/23 bis 2026/27	Vereinbarung gemäß Art. 15a B–VG zwischen dem Bund und den Ländern über die Elementarpädagogik für die Kindergartenjahre 2022/23 bis 2026/27

# Financial Development

Jahr	2016	2017	2018	2019	Summe 2016 bis 2019
	in 1.000 EUR				
<b>Summe</b>	<b>20.070,00</b>	<b>20.070,00</b>	<b>18.833,59</b>	<b>18.377,36</b>	<b>77.350,95</b>
<i>davon</i>					
<i>BMBWF</i>	<i>70,00</i>	<i>70,00</i>	<i>83,59</i>	<i>13.377,36<sup>1, 2</sup></i>	<i>13.600,95</i>
<i>BKA (Familien)</i>	–	–	<i>6.250,00<sup>1, 2</sup></i>	–	<i>6.250,00</i>
<i>BMF</i>	–	–	<i>12.500,00<sup>1, 2</sup></i>	<i>5.000,00<sup>1, 2</sup></i>	<i>17.500,00</i>
<i>BMEIA<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>20.000,00</i>	<i>20.000,00</i>	–	–	<i>40.000,00</i>

BKA (Familien) = Bundesministerin für Frauen, Familien und Jugend im Bundeskanzleramt

BMBWF = Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung

BMEIA = Bundesministerium für Europa, Integration und Äußeres

BMF = Bundesministerium für Finanzen

# Effectivity of Early Language Support I

- Differing results regarding German language skills at the end of kindergarten and at the beginning of the first grade of primary school were not plausible

Kindergarten– bzw. Schuljahre	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	Anzahl			
<b>Niederösterreich</b>				
Kinder mit Förderbedarf am Ende des letzten Kindergartenjahres <sup>1</sup>	521	362	422	n.v.
außerordentliche Schülerinnen und Schüler, 1. Schulstufe <sup>2</sup>	1.409	1.440	1.808	1.599
<b>Oberösterreich</b>				
Kinder mit Förderbedarf am Ende des letzten Kindergartenjahres <sup>3</sup>	1.320	1.371	2.327	2.158
außerordentliche Schülerinnen und Schüler, 1. Schulstufe <sup>2</sup>	3.290	3.705	3.663	3.589

n.v. = nicht vorhanden

Quellen: BMBWF; ÖIF

<sup>1</sup> Niederösterreichischer Entwicklungsbogen

<sup>2</sup> Der außerordentliche Status wurde durch die pädagogische Einschätzung der jeweiligen Schulleitung festgestellt.

<sup>3</sup> Beobachtungsbogen zur Erfassung der Sprachkompetenz Oberösterreich

**Problem:** different tests assessing mastery of the German language in kindergartens and primary schools until 2018



## Effectivity of Early Language Support II

### **Central Recommendation:**

The ACA recommended the Federal Ministry of Education to connect future financial subsidies for early language support resulting in an increase in quality verified by measurable impact data.

### **Central Recommendation:**

The ACA recommended the Federal Ministry of Education to try out different models when carrying out language level tests at the beginning of primary school, including kindergarten teachers. Subsequently the application of the standardized assessment instrument “MIKA-D” at the beginning of primary school and additional models should be evaluated regarding their coherence with the results of language level tests carried out in the last year of kindergarten.

# Differing Pedagogical Concepts

Differences in design as well as extent of language promotion:

**Lower Austria:** German language support tends to be integrated into the children's everyday lives

**Upper Austria:** increased focus on individual, systematic German language support in small groups

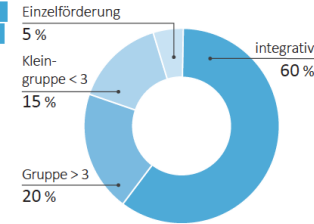
Frequency of language support was similar in both provinces

## Central Recommendation:

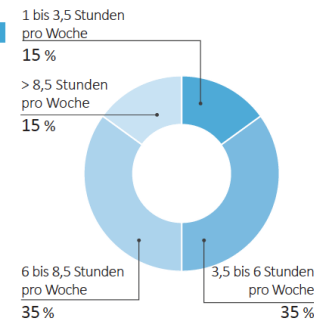
The ACA recommended the Federal Ministry of Education to consider the further development of early language support in consultation with the provinces and additional linguistic experts. Such a discussion should be initiated in order to bring about an agreement on nationwide uniform criteria in early language support.

Niederösterreich

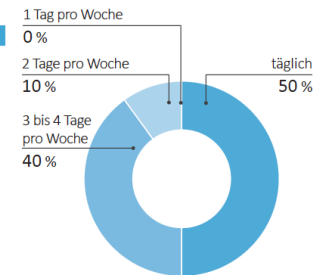
Konstellation der Sprachförderung



Ausmaß der Sprachförderung

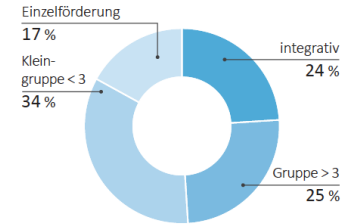


Häufigkeit der Sprachförderung

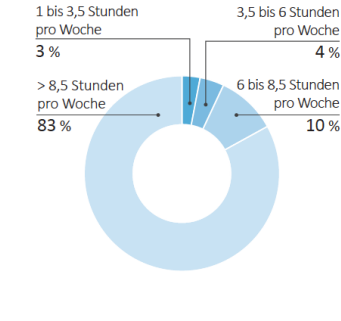


Oberösterreich

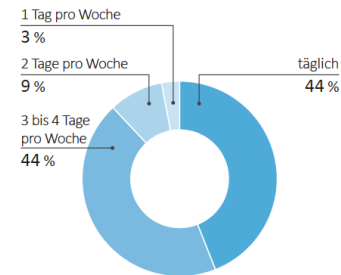
Konstellation der Sprachförderung



Ausmaß der Sprachförderung



Häufigkeit der Sprachförderung



## Special-purpose Subsidies

Bundesland	Burgen-land	Kärnten	Nieder-österreich	Ober-österreich	Salzburg	Steier-mark	Tirol	Vorarl-berg	Wien
Kindergartenjahr 2016/17	in %								
Anteil Zweckzuschüsse	3,4	5,6	19,3	16,3	6,0	10,9	8,4	4,9	25,3
Anteil Kinder mit Förderbedarf	4,6	6,0	21,7	17,5	7,3	4,1	8,4	6,4	23,9

### Central Recommendation:

Regarding future agreements pursuant to Article 15a of the Federal Constitutional Law, the Federal Ministry of Education should therefore ensure that the language level is bindingly determined for all children of the specified age in kindergartens.

The ACA also recommended the Federal Ministry of Education to distribute demand-oriented future subsidies for early language support to the provinces.

# Differing Framework Conditions

Differing framework conditions in the provinces for

- kindergarten staff
- children and their families

Differences in the following matters have become evident especially during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Opening times
- Regulations concerning group sizes
- Staffing
- Hygiene (e.g. the mandatory use of masks or the drop-off of children)

## Central Recommendation:

The ACA recommended the Federal Ministry of Education and the provinces to review different framework conditions, below the advisory committee for elementary education, in order to support and guide further development of kindergartens into educational institutions.



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**H**



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Thank you for your attention

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