



Your child lives in Denmark



To parents

This booklet is aimed at parents with an ethnic background other than Danish.

The aim of the booklet is to provide information on being parents in Denmark and to give parents the best opportunity to support their children.

The aim is also to prevent misunderstandings in co-operation with personnel in schools, kindergartens etc.

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The booklet is available in the following languages:

*Danish
Afghan
Arabic
English
Somali
Turkish
Urdu*

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Services offered by society

All families in Denmark receive an offer of a number of visits by a health visitor when a child is born. When a child attends a day care centre, kindergarten or school, the personnel will regularly call in parents for interviews and meetings. You are expected to attend.

This applies to all parents. It is not a check of whether you are good enough parents, but a service in which advice on being a parent is provided. Children are our joint future. There is therefore in Denmark a tradition that children are not just the parents' responsibility, but that society offers help and advice. This ensures children get the best opportunities in life.

You can receive good advice on bringing up your children from all employees at day care centres and schools. You can also obtain advice from health visitors or doctors.

Everyone has, in addition, a right to receive advice from the municipality's social services department without having to give their name and from PPR, which is the pedagogic psychological advice unit.

Parents and other adults around children can also ring ForældreTelefonen, which is an anonymous telephone advice line run by Børns Vilkår. The telephone number is 35 55 55 57.





Raising children in a different culture

Letting your children grow up in a foreign culture can mean that there are influences that you do not want your children to be exposed to. This (for example) could be that you think Danish children do not respect adults. You may also be afraid that your children will reject their own culture and religion if they are influenced by Danish culture. It can therefore be tempting to forbid your children from being together with Danish children in their free time and (for example) refuse them permission to take part in birthday parties and camps.

This is however not a good idea. When children live in Denmark, it is best that they become familiar with Danish conditions. Children will often be most interested in what is forbidden. They do not need to lose their own culture or religion because they have been presented with other ways of living. The best approach is therefore to talk openly with your children and explain why you think the way you do.

Parents will always be the most important people in a child's life and children will above all want to make their parents happy. Children also know that it is the parents who decide in the family. The best way to bring up your children is therefore to take responsibility for them and guide them.

You should, from when your children are quite small, explain to them what you expect from them and you should show them how to behave. You should show them care, you should know who they are together with and you should be interested in their lives.

It is forbidden in Denmark to hit your children. Parents who use physical violence break the law and risk punishment. You can bring up children just as easily without hitting them. Hitting a child damages the child. Parents who hit their children also damage their relationship with their children because they lose the child's trust and confidence. Parents, who hit their children, will lose complete control of them when they become older.

You should bring up your children by talking to them and telling them what they can and cannot do. You should also keep the promises you make to your children and you should display responsibility by (for example) always collecting them at the agreed time. If you do this from when the children are small, the children will continue to respect their parents.





Support schooling

We all would like to give our children the best possible future. This requires good schooling and an education. In Denmark, schools expect parents to help and support their children. The best way to help your children with schooling is by

- talking to your children about school
- taking an interest in what they learn
- telling them that school and education is important - and why
- supporting them in doing their homework
- ensuring that they have space and quiet for homework
- ensuring that they get enough sleep and that they eat breakfast, so that they are not tired in school
- teaching them that they are to be punctual
- helping them to make sure that their school bag and pencil case are ready for school
- looking for notes from the school in their bags and reading them
- supporting them in being with Danish friends, so that they learn Danish
- talking positively about the school, teachers, their friends and about Danish society. They will otherwise feel resistance towards school, which will reduce their opportunities to learn
- taking part in parent meetings and other events at the school, so they can see that you are interested and so that you receive the necessary information. You will receive, at both parent meetings and in parent interviews, information on your own child and on the subjects taught. But you also will receive information on practical matters such as food and clothes. It is therefore good that both parents participate in these meetings. You can ask the teachers about interpreter assistance if language is a problem.





The bigger children

You should take care of both the small children and the bigger children.

Bigger children and youths in general have a great deal of freedom in Denmark. Girls and boys have the right to do the same things and girls and boys are free and encouraged to take part in things together.

This does not mean that their parents do not care or that the children do not have any rules at home. Most Danish children have great freedom as long as they behave as they should and as long as they do as they have agreed with their parents.

When you have bigger children who live in Denmark, it is therefore important that you watch over them and that you make sure they behave well. You do this by spending time together with them and by making fixed agreements on when they are to be home. You also do this by keeping track of what they do in their free time and by supporting them in being a member of sports clubs or similar. It is also important that you know your children's friends and that you make sure that they attend school or other educational institute.





Good advice on bringing up children

- Talk to your children from when they are quite small and follow them in their lives.
- Show responsibility by always keeping the agreements you have with your children.
- Tell your children what they must and must not do. Begin while they are small. It is difficult to get respect if you begin to guide children when they are five or six years old.
- Give your children the freedom to be children. A child should not be an interpreter in adult issues and should not be involved in adult problems.
- Bring up your children without coaxing with rewards in the form of sweets and presents.
- Speak positively about the children's teachers and friends.
- Talk often with the children's teachers, about how things are going for the child.
- Keep an eye on your child. You should know what they are doing and who they are together with, as in Denmark there is no tradition for bringing up or watching over others children unless you are employed to do this in a kindergarten or school.
- You always have full permission to ask if there is something you are unsure about in day care, kindergarten or school. It is a bad idea to keep your children at home if you are unsure what should happen.