

CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION IN THE NETHERLANDS





0 TO 4 YEARS OLD – CHILDCARE OPTIONS

In the Netherlands children can start school on their 4th birthday. Before that, childcare options include:

- › “gasthouders” (registered childminders who take care of children in their own household)
- › “Kinderdagverblijf” (nursery/crèches for ages 3 months to 4 years)
- › hiring nannies privately

To cater for the multilingual families in the Hague, options include at least Dutch and English speaking childcare and some other language options (e.g. Kindergarten from 2.5 years at the German School of the Hague).

There are different care package options (including holidays, excluding them, full-time or fewer days per week). The precise options and costs vary per provider.

For those not looking for fulltime care, children can be taken to “peuterspelzalen” (mainly Dutch speaking playgroups for children from around 2-3, a couple of afternoons per week). From 0-4 children are regularly invited to appointments with the “consultatiebureau” (the health centre in which they check your child’s physical and cognitive development and do hearing/eye tests as well as vaccinations).

The expat websites keep regularly updated information e.g. expatica online or <https://access-nl.org> / but the rules can change fairly often e.g. max ceilings.

Childcare is not cheap in the Hague but the Government gives means-tested support – the “Kinderopvangtoeslag” to subsidise the costs (even of afterschool care. To seek this an application needs to be made for this benefit from the Dutch tax authorities (the “Belastingdienst”). Exactly how much you would get and whether you qualify varies according to your circumstances e.g. how many hours of childcare you use, income levels, cost of particular childcare provider. There are maximum hourly rates and a maximum number of subsidised hours.

Europol provides information to its employees about living in the Netherlands and assistance with claiming certain other benefits where applicable e.g. special car registration. They do not currently advise about the kinderopvangtoeslag but in practice there are many colleagues in a similar position and this process is manageable.

FROM 4 YEARS OLD – SCHOOL & AFTERSCHOOL CARE

In the Hague there are many different schooling options. Employees of European Agencies and institutions also have the rights to enrol their children in the [European School of the Hague](#). The “ESH” which covers the age range 4 to 17-18 years (spanning Early Years – Primary – Secondary). Europol employees have the right for their children to attend the European School. The fees (excluding trips, lunch supervision) are covered by Europol. The fact that a European School is available in the area means that a single child allowance is paid. Therefore if you choose one of the many other paid options (e.g. International School, British/German/French Schools) it is more expensive.



Under the European School system, during the first two years at school in “early years” children learn mainly through play. Primary School then lasts until around 10-11 years at which point the children move to secondary.

Up to the end of primary, afterschool care can be organised by parents/guardians either at the school location itself or with a range of registered providers who pick up children and take them to offsite afterschool locations. The European School also organises afterschool activities which usually take place immediately after the school day ends (at 15.00 except 12.45 on Wednesdays).

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