

Little Scientists Foundation - Facts and Figures

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Since 2006, the non-profit Little Scientists Foundation has been committed to improving education for children between the ages of three and ten in the domains of science, technology, computer science, and mathematics. With a nationwide continuing professional development programme, the Foundation supports primary school teachers and early childhood educators in nurturing children's spirit of discovery and in facilitating their exploration and inquiry activities in a qualified way. The education initiative thus makes an important contribution to improving educational opportunities, fostering the next generation of professionals in the STEM fields, and professionalising pedagogical staff.

Overview



Embedded in a network structure comprising **194** local network partners, the education initiative's continuing professional development programme to **84 percent** of all early childhood education and care centres, **90 percent** of all after-school centres, and **77 percent** of all primary schools in Germany.



About **89,000** early childhood educators and primary teachers from more than **36,400** early childhood education and care centres, after-school centres, and primary schools have participated in the initiative's continuing professional development programme. About **3.1 million** children attend the participating institutions.



Around **6,200** early childhood education and care centres, after-school centres, and primary schools have been certified by the Little Scientists Foundation.

GEFÖRDERT VOM

PARTNER



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

Siemens Stiftung

Dietmar Hopp Stiftung

Dieter Schwarz Stiftung



Map: Regions in Germany with Little Scientists Foundation networks

Figures in detail (differentiated according to early childhood education and care centres¹, after-school centres, and primary schools)



About **89,000** early childhood educators and primary teachers from more than **36,400** early childhood education and care centres, after-school centres, and primary schools have already participated in the initiative's continuing professional development programme. About **3.1 million** children attend the participating institutions.

- Early childhood education and care centres: About **75,000** educators from more than **29,000** early childhood education and care centres have already participated in the Little Scientists Foundation's continuing professional development programme (this corresponds to 54 percent of all early childhood education and care centres in Germany). About **1.9 million** children attend the participating early childhood education and care centres.
- After-school centres and primary schools: About **14,000** educators and teachers from around **1,800** after-school centres and around **5,600** (all-day) primary schools have already participated in the initiative's continuing professional development programme (this corresponds to **46 percent** of all after-school centres and **36 percent** of all primary schools). About **1.2 million** children attend the participating after-school centres and primary schools.



Around **6,200** early childhood education and care centres, after-school centres, and primary schools have been certified by the Little Scientists Foundation.

- Early childhood education and care centres: Around **5,600** early childhood education and care centres throughout Germany have been certified by the Little Scientists Foundation.
- After-school centres and primary schools: Since autumn 2013, after-school centres and primary schools can also apply for certification. More than **200** after-school centres and more than **300** primary schools have already been certified by the Little Scientists Foundation.

¹ The term "early childhood education and care centre" covers Kindergärten, Kindertagesstätten, Kinderläden, and other preschool institutions in Germany that cater for children between the ages of three and six.

Activities of the Little Scientists Foundation

The main activities of the Berlin-based Little Scientists Foundation are:

- Developing and providing continuing professional development concepts and pedagogical resources for early childhood educators, primary teachers, children and all interested parties
- Training multipliers ("trainers") who deliver continuing professional development to early childhood educators and primary teachers locally
- Building and developing sustainable local networks with the help of local stakeholders; advising, and providing services to, the network partners
- Supporting the quality development of educational institutions by certifying them

Partners

The partners of the Little Scientists Foundation are the Siemens Stiftung, the Dietmar Hopp Stiftung, the Dieter Schwarz Stiftung and the Friede Springer Stiftung. The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research has supported the initiative since 2008.

As a nationwide education initiative, the Little Scientists Foundation on the commitment of diverse local partners – the local networks. The Foundation's network partners include municipalities and early childhood education and care providers, trade associations, science centres, museums, companies, foundations, associations, etc.

Individual federal states, trade associations, and other organisations also support the Little Scientists Foundation within the framework of numerous collaborations.

At the same time, the Little Scientists Foundation networks with interested stakeholders abroad to learn from one another and to share experiences.

Qualification Programme for Teachers and Educators

The Little Scientists Foundation is Germany's largest qualification programme in the field of early childhood education. With a continuing professional development programme and practical pedagogical resources, the education initiative supports early childhood educators and primary teachers in competently designing and implementing educational processes with children in the domains of science, technology, computer science, and mathematics.

The Little Scientists Foundation supports educational institutions in developing themselves further by establishing a science, technology, computer science, and/or mathematics focus and offering children favourable development and learning environments.

With its activities, the Foundation also supports the implementation of existing education plans in the domains of science, technology, computer science, and mathematics.

Pedagogic Approach

The Foundation's pedagogic approach focuses on the children's own resources and emphasises collaborative, dialogic, inquiry-based learning². When engaging in inquiry activities, children can develop problem-solving skills, find their own answers, and experience a sense of self-efficacy ("Yes, I can!"). The importance of these experiences and abilities for personality development and the subsequent professional biography extends far beyond childhood.

Accompanying Research and Monitoring

All activities of the education initiative are scientifically accompanied and evaluated on an ongoing basis. The Little Scientists Foundation engages in open dialogue with scientists and professional practitioners, and sees itself as a learning organisation. Besides continuous internal monitoring for the purposes of quality assurance and quality development, the work of the Foundation is professionally evaluated within the framework of long-term external accompanying research with renowned partners and in research projects³.

The Scientific Advisory Board, which is composed of independent scientific experts from various fields, advises the Foundation on continuous accompanying research and monitoring and on the further development of its offerings.

Outlook

In the long term, the Little Scientists Foundation aims to strengthen the educational opportunities of all children between the ages of three and ten in Germany. To achieve this ambitious objective, the Foundation

² "Haus der kleinen Forscher" Foundation (2016). Pedagogic Approach of the "Haus der kleinen Forscher" Foundation: A Guide to Facilitating Learning in Science, Mathematics, and Technology (5th ed.). Berlin: "Haus der kleinen Forscher" Foundation.

³ All results are available (in German) in PDF form at <https://www.stiftung-kinder-forschen.de/en/research-and-monitoring>

will intensify its collaboration with the federal and state governments, with companies, and with other partners and will strengthen the local networks.