

# Language

Non-German-speaking residents of Canton Aargau are expected to learn German. Language skills are the essential requirement for successful integration into society and the job market.

## High German / Swiss German

Switzerland has four national languages: German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romance. German is the official language in Canton Aargau. There is a difference between High German (Hochdeutsch) and Swiss German (Schweizerdeutsch). High German is spoken at school and on certain radio and television programmes. In everyday life people speak Swiss German. Swiss German is a German dialect that is not always easy to understand, even for people with good German skills. It is not expected that foreigners speak Swiss German, but it is expected that they are eventually able to understand Swiss German. It is always acceptable to ask the Swiss to speak High German.

## German and Children

It is recommended that children who do not speak German meet German-speaking children as soon as possible. Ideal opportunities are playgroups or special programmes for parents and their children. Parents can support their children in their learning by talking, listening, and telling them stories. They should do so in the parent's strongest and most natural language.

## Translations

It cannot be expected that persons speak and understand German immediately upon their arrival. Nonetheless there are situations in which communication is essential. Many new arrivals ask family members or friends to interpret. In complicated, personal, or confidential conversations a professional interpreter may be called for. Intercultural interpreters specialise in taking cultural characteristics into consideration when interpreting. The typing service (Schreibdienst) made possible by the Swiss Red Cross (SRK) in Aarau or Baden offers help in understanding or writing letters or completing forms.

## Additional information (links, addresses, information sheets, brochures)

[www.merhaba-aargau.ch/en/language-and-integration/language](http://www.merhaba-aargau.ch/en/language-and-integration/language)