

FAMILY AND CHILDREN

Perfect! You moved into your hard-earned apartment, you decorated it, with all the trouble and time it took, juggling day-to-day life, the baby, warm meals for the overworked husband, meanwhile keeping in touch with family and friends from back home, AND you survived: CONGRATULATIONS!

But... now what? Now it is time to create a new routine for your new life. Having a child makes it more difficult to manoeuvre around an unknown place, but Lausanne will very soon reveal its true nature – one of the most welcoming and family-loving cities in Switzerland!

Lausanne – “Child Friendly City”, the UNICEF initiative.

The number of organizations and activities aimed for this group is amazing. It is also backed up with state programs for integration and can make for quite a dynamic and happy family life.

Although there is no recipe on how to start feeling “at home” or at least at ease while integrating your family life and your self into a new place, let us suggest some starting points:

Figure out the basics (daycare, school, doctors etc.)

- Be prepared, daycare in the region can be very expensive and you will likely face a long waiting list anywhere you apply. The key is to not get discouraged and to be persistent when following up on your wait-list status.
- Plan a visit to the BIP (bureau d’information aux parents), a specialized welcome center to inform and guide parents located at Place Chauderon 9, Floor T, 1002 Lausanne. They are open Mon-Fri 8h30-11h30 and 13h30-16h30. Here you can apply for a spot in daycare or school. Make sure to take all the info you will need; they usually speak English. More information can be found on [their website](#).
- In addition to the daycare centers run by the city there is also a service called “accueil familial de jour” formerly also called “maman de jour”, which is a family daycare. If you live in Lausanne, you can register for the waiting list at the BIP. For any other townships, ask at the city hall for the direct contact address.
- The school system starts with the age of 4. For more information about scholarship in Lausanne check [this web page](#). You need to enroll your child for kindergarten or school at the “Contrôle des habitants” or city hall of your town. If you arrive in the middle of a school year you should also check with the [“service des écoles primaires et secondaires”](#) directly.
- As the parent, you are free to select your child’s pediatrician, and you can easily replace them if your preference changes. There are several online lists of pediatricians such as www.doctorswiss.ch. One piece of advice is to try and find a doctor close to your home or easily accessible via public transportation.

Free fun: baby can play and mama can relax!

- There are many things to do FREE OF CHARGE, even though in the beginning everything seems so expensive! In summer time, there is no better place to be than outside, in one of the amazing spaces Lausanne has to offer. **Check out** all the phenomenal parks around town, they are not only children friendly, but a piece of art in a gardening way, with the old trees, water fountains and springs, and amazing views you get a feeling that the nature is surrounding the city, and not that concrete is surrounding a nature.

Organized activities

- It is very important to get out and meet people outside of EPFL. Don't be afraid to explore and check out what is there that this town/canton has to offer.

"La maison ouverte" is the perfect place to make new friends. Located at Rte Aloys-Fauquez 23, 1018 Lausanne, it is an indoor playground that is free of charge (symbolically you give 1CHF at the exit). The goal of this space is to make a possibility for mothers to meet, and for children to play safely and cozily together.

For details go to <http://www.vaudfamille.ch/maisonouverte>.

If you are tired of making up activities your self, don't hesitate to join some of the organized activities already in place. Some NGO's are making very nice programs for families or singles, like movie nights, pottery classes, hiking trips and visits to the zoo. Some of these activities can be found at:

<http://www.fasl.ch>

<http://www.maisondequartiersousgare.ch/>

<http://www.polesud.ch/>

And if you really want to get involved, there is even more on [the official Lausanne tourism website](#) which lists activities especially for kids.

Blogs, groups and forums

There are a couple really good local blogs that are updated regularly and in tune with the local atmosphere such as:

www.lausannemom.com

<http://www.moms-in-vaud.com/blog/home/>

You can also join the Yahoo group called "Lausanne Kids" and "Moms-in-Vaud" for more helpful information and activity ideas.

Darja, IS member from Serbia:

"Don't miss the chance to get to know one of the most family-friendly and children-loving cities! Get out, take a chance, and let this city put a smile on your face!"

Thinking twice about having a child and a career? Here it doesn't seem to be as much of an issue! The possibility of having flexible hours, with support from the city of Lausanne (look up in finding a job in Switzerland) along with the all-around family-friendly atmosphere makes for an easy decision. No need to panic, just make a solid plan and do it! Welcome to Switzerland!

Pets. Let's face it; some of us consider our pets our kids too! For more information on pets, please see the Welcome to Lausanne chapter.

Useful French phrases and vocabulary for family and Children in Lausanne:

garderie: daycare center accueil familial de jour / maman de jour: family day care
enfant: infant, child un fils: son une fille: daughter écoliers: schoolchildren
ludothèque: toy lending center naissance: birth crèche: nursery
jardin d'enfant / école enfantine: kindergarten



International
Spouses @ EPFL

If you have any suggestions to add to this topic or you want to share some of your own experiences, please email us at InternationalSpouses@epfl.ch and let us know!

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<http://acide.epfl.ch/InternationalSpouses>