

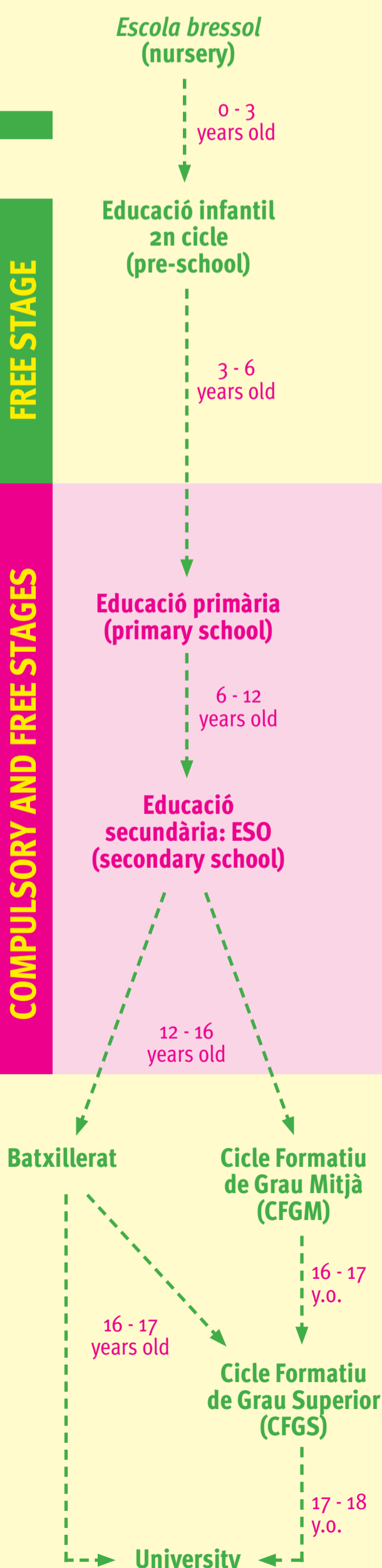
# The Catalan education System: A brief guide for **newly arrived families**

All children and adolescents arriving or living in Catalonia have the **right to attend school for free**, regardless of their status or that of their family. It is worth knowing that in Catalonia state schools offer a high-quality education, which is not necessarily the case in other education systems.

In order to get a place, it is necessary to go through an **application and registration process**, which can vary depending on the arrival date and the pupil's age. If you have just arrived in Catalonia, we advise you to **contact the Oficina Municipal d'Escolarització (OME)** of the town you are planning to live. It is important to remember always that, between the ages of **3 and 16 years old**, all children and adolescents have the right to a **free place in a non-religious state school**. That means that the **OME cannot oblige** your children to attend a private Catholic subsidized school.



## EDUCATIONAL STAGES



If you are responsible for **children below the age of 3**, we strongly advise you to take them to the *escola bressol* (**nursery**). At the moment, this stage of the education system **doesn't have universal status**, which means that there are not enough spaces for all children of that age, although local councils are increasing availability. Regarding the cost, all **places offered for the 2nd year of preschool (I2) are free**. We suggest that you check with an OME where you can find out about the registration process for this stage in your town.

If the child is **aged between 3 and 6**, the application should be done directly through the **primary school**, where they will be able to attend the three last years of preschool (I3, I4 and I5) free of charge.

From the age of 6, **education is compulsory**. This means that families must register their children in an education centre. In both primary and secondary school stages, the application period usually starts around March. If you arrive once the school year has started, please ask for more information at the OME.

**Please remember:** your children are entitled to go to school. **You cannot be denied a school place**, even if you are **not registered with the local authorities** or if you have an irregular legal status.

If you have any **problems with school registration**, we suggest you call **aFFaC** on this number **934357686** and we will be able to assist you **totally free of charge**.

Once they finish secondary school, it is **strongly advised that they carry on with their education** in order to be prepared for the world of work and to have a **wider range of options for a better future**.

Adolescents who want to carry on with their studies can decide whether to take a **university degree** or an **apprenticeship training cycle** (*cicle formatiu*), which is more focused on learning a profession. If they want to go to university, the fastest way is to take the two last years of *batxillerat* at secondary school. There is also the possibility of accessing university through a *Cicle Formatiu de Grau Mitjà* and a *Cicle Formatiu de Grau Superior*.

To apply to register a child or adolescent in the education system, you need to consider:

- 1 Families arriving **while the application period is open** (usually March-April) will have to follow the standard process in order to get a place. **If the standard application period is already closed**, you will have to contact the OME.
- 2 In both cases, the application must be done online. If you don't have access to an Internet connected device or computer, or if you don't know how to do it, you can **go to the aFFaC office (you need to book an appointment by phone) and we will help you.**
- 3 Not being registered with the local authority or having an irregular status **does not affect your child's right to access the education system.**
- 4 When registering your child in a state school, you can ask for **any of the following religions to be taught: Islam, Judaism, Evangelist or Catholicism.**

## OTHER EDUCATION SERVICES

Education centres also offer additional services. They are not free of charge, but some financial help is available.

- **Breakfast & after school club (*Servei d'acollida*):** Families can drop children at school approximately an hour before the school day starts and an hour after it finishes. Check with each school to know how it works and the timetable.
- **School transport:** Those children who cannot attend a school in the town where they live because there are no available places are entitled to free school transport.
- **School meals:** Most nurseries and primary schools (and some secondary schools too) offer meals for those pupils who are not able to go home for lunch.
- **Extra-curricular activities:** These consist of activities in areas such as sport, the arts and Information Technology amongst others, that take place once the school day finishes.
- **Holiday clubs:** Many education centres organise leisure activities during school holidays. This helps maintain a link between the child or adolescent and the school and at the same time helps families balance work and childcare.

## GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

There are some grants and scholarships available to help with school-related expenses. These are offered depending on the family's socio-economic situation, the child's town of residence and the child's needs. Some of them are:

- **Grant for school meals and transport:** Depending on the town, the request must be made at the local authority offices, at the OME or at the Consell Comarcal. Please ask the OME for more detailed information.
- **General scholarship for children with specific needs:** These are grants aimed at children with a specific need due to a disadvantaged financial situation. You can learn how to apply for this grant at any OME office.
- **Grant for books and school supplies:** You should check with the OME, your local authority or your local social services.
- **Social charging scheme for nurseries:** Some local authorities adapt nursery fees to the family's socio-economic situation. Please check with your local authority.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

If you have any questions or problems related to your children's or dependent minor's schooling in the Catalan education system, you can contact [aFFaC](mailto:affac@affac.cat) and we will offer you **assistance and support free of charge (934357686/[affac@affac.cat](mailto:affac@affac.cat))**.

The following organisations may be of assistance:

- **Servei d'Atenció a Immigrants, Emigrants i Refugiats (SAIER)**  
Carrer Tarragona, 141 (Barcelona). Tel.: 93 595 55 39
- **Comissió Catalana d'Ajuda al Refugiat (CCAR)**  
Rambla de Santa Mònica, 10, 1r pis (Barcelona). Tel.: 93 595 55 39
- **InteRED Catalunya. Por una Educación Transformadora**  
Tel.: 93 467 26 67
- **Associació de Cuidadores AMB CURA**  
Email: [info@ambcura.org](mailto:info@ambcura.org)

**If you are a newly arrived family and have trouble getting a school place for your children or dependent minor at any stage in the education system, please contact us:**

 **934357686**  **[affac@affac.cat](mailto:affac@affac.cat)**  **C/Cartagena, 245, àtic (Barcelona)**

**All children and adolescents living in Catalonia are entitled to an education in equal conditions and without any kind of discrimination, regardless of their country of origin or their family's legal status.**