

IHEID Parent Guide



2019-2020

BROUGHT TO YOU BY **IHEID PARENT INITIATIVE**
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FROM IHEID PARENTS TO YOU

IHEID as a parent can feel daunting at first. Indeed, everything from food, to daycare, to child activities, are very expensive. The bureaucracy to maintain family life may also be a source of stress. However, a high quality of life, countless free activities for families, alternatives to help save money, and the rewarding environment at IHEID are what you can gain while living in Geneva. This pamphlet will offer honest tips about life in Geneva with kids. We hope that it helps, and remember-your family life matters!



FIGURES YOUR BUDGET SHOULD CONSIDER



The cost of living is high in Geneva

According to 'Geneva Lunch', a family of 4 requires an income of at least 7000 chf per month to maintain a modest lifestyle. Here's some important figures you should know:

- **Apartment** costs for a two bedroom apartment start around 2400 chf but are likely to cost closer to 2800 chf per month.
- **Transportation card:** 75 chf per month or 3.20 chf per single 60 min ticket.
- **Food costs are high.** A family of four in Geneva spends around 280 chf per week on grocery costs, if all food are made homemade. Money can be saved by shopping at Denner, Lidl, and Aldi.
- Shopping after 5pm can sometimes save a few francs on perishable items.



BUDGET CONTINUED

- **Insurance** can cost 450 chf per month per person. Low cost plans can save alot of money. Choosing the lowest cost insurance plan for a family of 4 comes out to 540 chf per month.
- **Babysitting** can be costly while you wait for a place in daycare for your children under 4 years old. Babysisting for 4 hours a day 5 times a week will cost you around 400 chf a week for example. It's important to come prepared with a budget set aside for this.
- **Daycare** for children under 4 can cost an average of 2000 chf per month, however there are subsidies for lower income families that can greatly reduce this cost. For the rates see here: <http://www.cagi.ch/uploads/pdf/tarifs-eve-et-creches-information-ville-de-geneve.pdf>

FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDENT PARENTS

- **Most students who receive financial aid from the Institute find that the scholarship does not cover the added expenses of children.**
- All students can submit a request for emergency funding in order to help cover the cost of attending.
- However, emergency aid is limited and not offered as a general source of support for student parents, but primarily for emergency situations. Still, if you know that you will be at a deficit and cannot cover your own expenses, you should submit for emergency aid as the process is quick and worth giving a shot!
- **For American student parents** who receive financial aid from the Institute and will also be taking out student loans, you can request an increase in loans by sending in your yearly budget before the start of the semester. The budget should show that you have a deficit and list what items still need funding (such as childcare, rent cost, insurance, books).

CHILDCARE FOR CHILDREN UNDER 4

There is a problem for a lot of parents in finding childcare for their children under 4.

TOP TIP: Pregnant parents can also register their child in advance, at 12 weeks pregnancy."

- For children under 4 (which is the compulsory school age for children in Geneva), daycare waiting lists are extremely long.
- Most families wait **12 months-2 years** to get their child into daycare. It's important to register your child as soon as their residence permit arrives. Please see the next page for links to access information on how to apply for childcare as well as information on children over 4.
- *Visit the central BIPE office personally, as this can sometimes help speed up the process.*
- The Institute does not offer aid for childcare costs for families, so it's also important to come with money for babysitting in the meantime.
- For people with children over 4, children are off of school on Wednesdays and go home for lunch from 1130-130 daily.



Long-term solutions, day care and school system in Geneva

Compulsory education begins at age 4 in Switzerland. All children 4 and older must be enrolled in school. Children under 4 can be enrolled in nurseries or daycare.

Parentville.ch has this excellent overview that breaks down the childcare and school system by age groups:

- <https://www.parentville.ch/geneva-child-care-system/>

For children under 4 you need to apply to be on the wait list for public daycare at BIPE. *Your application must be renewed every 6 months.* Here is the link for applying:

- <http://www.ville-geneve.ch/plan-ville/institutions-petite-enfance/bureau-information-petite-enfance/>

For more information about daycare for children under 4:

- <https://www.cagi.ch/en/practical-info/family-life.php?subcat=41>

Babysitting solutions (weblinks provided)

Shortly upon arriving you might need a babysitter until a long-term childcare solution is found.

- Reach out to GISA's welfare committee **gisa.welfare@graduateinstitute.ch** who will send you a regularly updated list of IHEID students willing to provide low cost babysitting.
- Otherwise these 4 companies are recognized by parents as being a reliable resource:
 1. <https://tatadam.com/>
 2. <http://kiddieclub.ch/nannies-and-babysitters/>
 3. <https://babysitting24.ch/en/babysitter/ge/genève>
 4. <https://www.croix-rouge-ge.ch/garde-denfants>

ON CAMPUS RESOURCES

- **The Graduate Institute has a room** – the “Salle de Repos,” located on Floor 0 of Petal 1 - designed to accommodate breastfeeding, pumping, and feeding/changing babies. You can request the key at the reception desk in Petal 1.
- **There is now a changing room in the petal 2, 1st floor handicap restroom.**
- *We are attempting to put high chairs in the Picciotto common room and cafeteria.*
- Soon, there will be toys that your children can freely play with in the Picciotto common room.
- **One Q&A session will be organized per year for IHEID parents**
- Toy swaps will be organized a least once a semester.

PREGNANCY AND INFANT CARE TIPS

- Most women in Geneva deliver their babies at the HUG maternity. You can also deliver at birthing houses, private clinics, or at home.
- The HUG website has an English section with helpful information on pregnancy, prenatal classes, and delivery: <https://www.hug-ge.ch/en/obstetrics>
- The Gynecology section also covers contraception, STDs, abortion, and other sexual/reproductive health concerns: <https://www.hug-ge.ch/en/gynecologie/reasons-consultations>.
- Most Swiss insurance plans cover a number of home visits from a midwife post-birth. The hospital can assign one or you can select your own by contacting the Arcade Sage-Femmes in advance: <http://www.arcade-sages-femmes.ch/>
- They have a number of midwives who speak English and other languages, and you can arrange a visit before the birth to meet. The Arcade also has regular breastfeeding consultations and an office with open hours for support.

There are also a number of websites that offer baby supplies at significant discounts:

- <https://shop.holle.ch/> (for Holle baby formula in bulk)
- <https://www.galaxus.ch/en/> (for diapers and other supplies in bulk)
- <https://www.baby-markt.ch/> and <https://www.babyjoe.ch/> (for general baby supplies)

GENEVA HOLIDAY DATES

Holidays you should know about, because everything including pharmacies are closed:

2019

| Date | Day | Holiday |
|--------|-----|-----------------|
| 1 Jan | Tue | New Year's Day |
| 19 Apr | Fri | Good Friday |
| 22 Apr | Mon | Easter Monday |
| 30 May | Thu | Ascension Day |
| 10 Jun | Mon | Whit Monday |
| 1 Aug | Thu | National Day |
| 5 Sep | Thu | Jeûne genevois |
| 25 Dec | Wed | Christmas Day |
| 31 Dec | Tue | Restoration Day |

2020

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FREE ACTIVITIES FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN



In between everyday life, you should take time to enjoy the city. Sure, everything is expensive, but under the surface of "well-known Geneva," are many free activities to do with your family. Please be sure to join some of the facebook groups on the last page of this guide as free or cheap family activities are regularly posted on these groups. Otherwise, here's a couple suggestions for you.



TOP TIP: A majority of the city's museums offer free entrance on the first Sunday of every month.



Pataugeoires (Wading pools): when the weather is warmer your children under 10 can enjoy these well maintained wading pools to cool off and splash. You can rent lawn chairs from the little house next to most wading pools so you can relax while the kids play. Follow this link for a map of locations: <http://www.ville-geneve.ch/themes/structures-accueil-enfance-activites-extrascolaires/lieux-loisirs/pataugeoires/>

Ludotheques: these are play centers where for free, your child (under 9 years old) can play and get some energy out (must be accompanied by an adult). Also, for a yearly fee of 30 chf you can borrow toys, games, and outdoor gear such as bikes. There are often several in each neighborhood. This pdf link displays the different ludotheques and their offerings:

http://www.ville-geneve.ch/fileadmin/public/Departement_5/Publications/2016/Guide-ludotheques-ville-geneve.pdf

LUDOTHEQUES AND PATAUGEOIRES





THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

The Muséum d'histoire naturelle is open Tuesday to Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm. **Admission is free for most of the museum.** The museum features stuffed animals of all types (see photo for example) and is a great resource to learn about different animals.

Tip: On weekdays, visiting during school lunch (11:30 am to 1:30 pm) or after 3:30 pm since school trips often go to the museum weekday mornings. Sunday and Saturday mornings are generally very quiet also. There's also a café on site with highchairs where you can grab lunch.

ETHNOGRAPHY MUSEUM GENEVA (MEG)

One of the largest collections of ethnography in Switzerland, MEG offers a lot. **Children can access the museum for free** and they currently have an exhibit on the history of fairy tales. There's also a cafe on site.



GENEVA'S PARKS



There are many parks that are an absolute joy to spend time as a family. Here's just a couple suggestions out of the dozens of parks in the city:

- Right near IHEID is the **Botanical Gardens of Geneva (Jardin Botanique)**: the gardens offer peace and beauty, an “enchanted forest” playground, sheep, goats and ducks, a café, Japanese garden, and several greenhouses open to the public. In the winter, the greenhouses are a lovely break away from the cold. In the warmer months, the gardens blossom with flowers and the vintage carousel is set up for children.
- **Boits de la Bâtie - Park & ZOO**, petting zoo and features 70 animals.
- **Parc de La Perle du Lac**: offers great playground and walking path that leads to the center of town.
- **Vermont Park**: offers fun sand area with water pumps and canals
- **Parc Bertrand**: huge playground with big slides!
- **Plage des-Eaux-Vives** – Big sandy beach with a large shaded section in the afternoon and a playground nearby. Great for babies/kids and free!

'INFOKIDS' APP BY HUG HOSPITAL WORTH DOWNLOADING



InfoKids is an app created by HUG hospital which helps determine if you should go to the doctor with your sick child. It's only in French, but it's worth having around to make life easier

The app can also tell you in real time how long the wait is at the hospital and inform the medical team that your child will be coming to the hospital.

For more information click here:
<https://www.hug-ge.ch/applications-mobiles/infokids>

You can also use their guide online at:
http://www.monenfantestmalade.ch/?_ga=2.17315065.1136778638.1567941336-695974374.1567941336



FACEBOOK GROUPS OF INTEREST

1. International Mothers Living in Switzerland
2. Geneva Moms
3. Kid'ing in Geneva
4. Geneva Expats
5. Parents in Geneva and neighbouring France
6. Baby & Child By Parentville.ch
7. Buy, sell, swap or give away in Switzerland and neighbouring areas
8. Breastfeeding Mamas in Switzerland

