

FREE TIME ACTIVITY GUIDE

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EVROPSKÁ UNIE
Evropské strukturální a investiční fondy
OP Praha – pól růstu ČR



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...META*~

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Dear parents and guardians,

When moving to a new country there are plenty of important things you have to figure out – including the school your child will attend, a job appropriate to your profession and providing a liveable wage, the documentation for your stay, but also the language skills you will need to communicate. Your personal situation may be complicated, and I'm sure you have your hands full with work, but remember: seemingly unimportant things such as free time activities and the community you live in, can be just as important as getting the correct documentation and other formal requirements.

As soon as your child starts going to school, becomes part of the school community, they can start learning the language not only during classes but also “on the go”, during break time and with their new friends. Learning the language and specifics of another culture and finding new friends is one of the most important things when arriving in a new country. **If a child is able to do things they enjoy and be happy, it will be easier for them to make friends with their peers and also learn the new language.** Sometimes this is even more effective than an academic language course. The ideal situation is of course to combine both formal and informal education. **We recommend finding appropriate free-time activities for your child immediately after signing them up for school.** This will allow them to develop in all areas and for example to continue with the activities they loved to do in their country of birth, or to learn something new, to naturally and subconsciously learn and imbibe the new language and culture.

In Czech society it is customary for children to attend various activity groups from a young age as part of general childhood education in the Czech Republic. If you do the same you'll find it helps your children integrate with their peers much quicker and easier.

The education and personal development of a child is of course much more than what they learn at school, it depends on all the stimuli received at home in the family, at school and wherever else they spend time. Education is not a separate and closed component, but should rather (ideally) be an integral part of the overall upbringing. And education includes both formal education, such as that compulsory by law (primary – 9th grade), as well as informal education (everything outside the school, however no less important).

Informal education includes any and all activities that take place during free time outside of compulsory school attendance. These activities may support **knowledge and skills developed at school** (for example in a nature club a child may learn more than is taught in school biology class, or an art club may develop alternative drawing, painting or other creative skills than regular school art classes) **or provide opportunities to learn something entirely new**, things the child will not come across at school (for example dancing lessons or a specific sport not included in physical education classes). More importantly however, free-time activities are also another environment where children can find new friends and learn to communicate better, solve conflicts, gain self-confidence, etc. It's especially important to involve children with language barriers in free-time activities, because there are a lot of things you can do without language skills or only basic knowledge, allowing them to feel more accepted in the group. They are not judged for their language skills, but rather based on what they can do or what they enjoy. Sometimes it is precisely these activities that allow natural language learning to take place, without stress or fear of using the wrong words and misspeaking. Because the child can do things they are skilled at or have a positive relation to, they will feel comfortable and gain a greater self-confidence. Last but not least, they can gain new Czech friends and quickly become part of a larger whole or group.

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Free-time Activities in the Czech Republic

Let's start with a few words about free-time activities in the context of Czech culture and history. The Czech Republic is a country where "free-time" has a long and celebrated history. There are groups here over one hundred years old. These include for example:

- **Sokol** – a group supporting sports activities established in 1862.
- **Scouts** – a global educational movement originating in Britain in the early 20th century. Their principles were soon brought to – at the time – Czechoslovakia and scouts camps have been set up here ever since. The Czech scouting organisation was also called Junák.
- **KČT – Klub českých turistů** or the Club of Czech Tourists followed up on the activities of Sokol, apart from physical exercise they organised walking trips. A separate organisation was created as early as the 19th century, which has continued to support hiking through the building of observation towers, cable cars, etc. The Czech system of tourist signage is known around the world.

These groups continue to be active in Czech society to this day, each of them offering a range of activities appropriate for children of various ages and interests, with something for the whole family. They say a lot about the popular activities within Czech culture – **hiking, walking, sports, nature stays**.



The Czech Republic also has a network of **art schools**, accessible to the broader public. These are the elementary art schools, which have a rich offer of clubs and art-focussed departments (music, painting, sometimes theatre and dance). The schools have a long tradition and are very affordable, making it sometimes difficult to find a free spot and so entrance exams are often required. They are available in every major town, in almost every Prague municipal district.

The widest range of free-time clubs is offered by the network of **DDM – dům dětí a mládeže or Children and Youth Centres**, offering clubs with various themes from sports to art, science-based activities and more. These are available in every town and in almost every Prague municipal district. The activities on offer are different at each DDM.

In recent history, these institutions and associations have been joined by a number of **private studios, family centres, clubs and workshops**. Several cultural and educational institutions also offer clubs or one-off workshops tailored to their programme (you can find free-time options for your children at museums, theatres and concert halls).



Specific Free-time Activities

LOCAL HISTORY

Do you like nature? Would like to get to know the country through its landscape? Then you're in the right place!



Walking trips are very popular in the Czech Republic. People like exploring their local area or the further surroundings. Trips can be for sightseeing or sports. Children can discover new places in their neighbourhood, whole town or across the country. Visiting historical monuments and the countryside is a good way to get to know your new country and build a stronger relationship with a new environment.

These trips are common at every school in the form of school outings. Then there are clubs and organisations offering trips and outings, sometimes including a broader programme. For example the Scouts or Brontosaurus explicitly include nature trips in their activities, but today even libraries or municipal districts themselves plan excursions into the local area.

What will your child get?

- **ties to the environment they live in**
- **understanding the context they live in**
- **better navigate the town or countryside**
- **walking exercise**
- **if they take part in a scout troop, they can learn survival basics, group cooperation, how to look after themselves and others**



SPORTS

Don't like just sitting at home all day? Want to spend your free time actively, moving about, developing physical skills and abilities? Hooray! This is a great place to do sports!

Sports activities in general of course support a broad range of children's skills and abilities – not only keeping the body fit and healthy, but also developing important personality traits from early childhood such as perseverance, patience, consistency, goal-orientation, but also solidarity, friendship, collective cooperation.

When children take part in sports, apart from honing universal abilities and the self-satisfaction of doing something they enjoy, they also gain access to an environment where someone's origin or the language they speak are less important, instead allowing them to measure up to their peers based on their skills at a sport. For healthy integration into a new group, team sports are clearly the best, where a child joining the group will have to communicate one way or another and subconsciously, naturally learn the language, including many cultural nuances.

While we recommend team sports, that doesn't mean children shouldn't or can't participate in any other kind of individual sport. For higher (competition) level sports there are various sports clubs in the Czech Republic, such as football, ice hockey, rugby, etc. There are also sports schools with more intense physical education programmes.

Sports clubs are available either directly in school or at your DDM, but also privately – private sports clubs, centres, training sessions.

Sports activities are also offered by free-time organisations such as the Scouts, etc. It's always a good idea to check out what's on offer at a particular organisation or institution, as this may change on a year-to-year basis.

What will your child get?

- **learn discipline and responsibility**
- **understand nothing is for free**
- **learn to exceed their expectations**
- **be happy about their efforts**
- **for team sports: learn to communicate, feel solidarity and friendship**
- **for individual sports: tenacity, strengthening their own personality, perseverance**



Specific Free-time Activities

ART

Do you have artistic talent and rather than running around outside, you'd prefer to play a musical instrument, sing or draw? There are plenty of art schools to choose from in the Czech Republic, where children can learn the basics and gain proficiency in music, art or theatre.

Creative activities are, just like sports, a beautiful example of an international and universal environment, where the lines between nationalities, cultures and language are blurred.

Most activities allow a child to express themselves in other ways than words, like with sports this can bring them a feeling of accomplishment, satisfaction and the ability to share something with their peers. These activities include music and art. But conversely, there are also activities that can help a child develop language skills and improve their knowledge of Czech. These are things like drama or singing classes.

In the Czech Republic there is a network of art schools (colloquially known as "people's schools" – "lidušky" or "zušky"), offering a broad range of these activities at very affordable prices. For most activities there will however be entrance exams, because the demand from children and parents is higher than capacity, so be sure to sign your child up sufficiently in advance.

Art classes are also offered by some schools, youth centres (DDMs) and there are of course many private schools on the market, studios, organisations offering music or art lessons, dancing, pottery or other creative classes.

Individual quality workshops are also offered by some well-established institutions such as NGP or DOX. Their programmes are usually intended for schools, but can also be booked for private groups.

What will your child get?

- **happy feelings from creative work**
- **the understanding that everything doesn't need a goal and the creative process is its own reward**
- **develop their fantasy and creativity**
- **a more open mind**
- **the ability to see the beauty around them**



SCIENCE

There's plenty of places for budding scientists to investigate.

There are special clubs and even whole institutions for our little science wizards.

These could be the Young Scientist Stations or Young Technician Stations that are part of a DDM. But they can also be clubs and workshops offered by large, renowned institutions such as the Prague ZOO, Technical Museum, Planetarium, etc.

Apart from regular museums, interactive centres such as Iqlandia or the Techmania Science Center are common in the Czech Republic.

What will your child get?

- **the feeling of discovering new worlds**
- **preserve their sense of curiosity**
- **increased patience**
- **try out basic scientific methods**
- **perhaps discover some information the regular school curriculum doesn't contain, moving them forward**



Specific Free-time Activities

New Non-traditional Activities

There are currently a **whole number of “new” activities**, belonging to our modern times and very popular with the kids. These include athletic activities such as **skating or parkour**. In the artistic realm they might be **graffiti, street art, design**. Various **IT technologies** allow for interesting activities such as programming, computer games or YouTubeing. Activities involving lego sets or other modern assembly toys are also very popular. These and many further activities are offered by individual organisations or private subjects. Just like the activities themselves, the offer of these clubs or classes isn't very stable. A lot of new modern studios or conversely traditional groups offer such activities, but one has to spend more time searching to see what's available. Your DDM can also provide them. Further, there are specific centres such as skate-parks (lessons with teachers) or parkour centres (lessons with teachers).

What will your child get? What will their parent get?

- **understanding that sports and modern activities are all around us, sometimes even on the streets**



A number of events and activities are free. There is no rule in this country saying “the more an activity costs, the better quality it'll be”. Many of the aforementioned organisations and associations offer free activities due to project or municipal funding.

The approach of Czech society towards free-time activities is very positive and open. Children have a lot of options for enjoyment and self-actualisation, without having to stress over results, success, ambition. You'll also find sports clubs, musical conservatories and other institutions that approach the activities in question professionally and with an eye for performance. It's a good idea to think things through and find what your child needs, depending on the desired goal.

Free-time Activities in Prague 3

In Prague 3 there are many of the free-time activities we have just described.

There is the youth centre **DDM Ulita**, an **elementary art school, art studios, family centres and low-threshold clubs**. At some **primary schools** there are **clubs** you can sign your children up for, even if they don't attend that school. At the number three (Trojka) they even have a **parkour hall**.

There's also quite a few great **children's playgrounds and parks**. In several parks (such as Parukářka, Rajská zahrada), you can find **ping-pong tables or disc-golf nets** – all free to use.

If you aren't sure, feel free to get in touch with **META o.p.s.**, where you can get advice on how to sign up for various free-time activities or where to look up more detailed information about them.

You can also head out to the **Free-time Activities Fair (Veletrh volnočasových aktivit)** organised by Prague 3 every year.

LIST of leisure-centers in Prague 3:

DDM Ulita

www.ulita.cz

Centre for leisure activities offers regular courses, hobby groups, events, open workshops, camps, holiday events, educational programs, competitions for schools in Prague 3.

(eg English lessons, 3D printing, athletics, badminton, flute, theatre, football, floorball, etc.)

DDM Prague 3 - Ulita

Na Balkáně 2866/17a

130 00 Prague 3

Atelier Kroužek

<https://atelierkrouzek.cz/>

They offer individual and group courses, preparations for talent exams, art suburban camps

Žerotínova 54, Prague 3 - Žižkov

facebook.com/atelierkrouzek

kurzy@atelierkrouzek.cz

774 484 810

IN MOTION ACADEMY

<https://imacademy.cz/>

They offer individual or group regular club rings, workshops and free parkour training

In Motion Academy s.r.o.

Na Jarově 2424/2

Prague 3, 130 00

Free-time Activities in Prague 3

Low-threshold club for children and youth „R-Mosty“

<http://www.r-mosty.cz/>

for children and young people from 10 to 21 years in a difficult life situation

Koněvova 2, 2nd entrance from Chlumova Street

„Uličník“

low-threshold, off-road club on the bus

on Tuesday it is on Jiřího z Poděbrad Square

Ponec – dance theatre

imaginary gate to Žižkov (theatre space on the border of Prague 3 and Prague 8)

Ponec junior offers a children's studio, activities for schools, interactive performances for children and young audiences.

<https://divadloponec.cz/cs/ponec-junior>

Husitská 899/24A

Prague 3

Education and Leisure Center „Duhové klubíčko“

<https://www.skola-jirak.cz/duhove-klubicko/krouzky/>

on the grounds of Jiří z Poděbrad primary school, there is a wide range of clubs with current offers such as floorball, pottery, yoga, preparation for entrance exams from math, English conversation, sports, flute for advanced

Jiří z Poděbrad Primary School

Jiřího z Poděbrad square 1685/7

Prague 3

„NOVÁ TROJKA“

<https://www.nova-trojka.cz/>

Large selection of clubs (exercises for parents with children, pottery, art, yoga for children, dance, DIY, architect or chef, etc.)

The offer of the Nová Trojka family centre includes, for example:

Studio of art techniques for the little ones

Nová Trojka

Jeseniova 519/19

Prague 3

Pionýr, z. s. - 117th pioneer group „Kalich“

<http://www.117.cz/index.php/pravidelna-innost>

They offer a section for children from 5 to 15 years old, a section of handicraft activities, events for parents with children



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