



The School Year Equivalency Chart

Plus: 12 things families discover too late about moving to Madrid

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Which Year Will My Child Be In?

One of the first questions every relocating parent asks — and one of the hardest to answer quickly, because Madrid's international schools run four different systems side by side. Here's the comparison in one place.

Age	American Grade	British Year	IB Stage	Spanish System
3–4	Pre-K	Nursery	PYP	1º Infantil
4–5	Pre-K / K	Reception	PYP	2º Infantil
5–6	Kindergarten	Year 1	PYP	3º Infantil / 1º Primaria
6–7	Grade 1	Year 2	PYP	1º Primaria
7–8	Grade 2	Year 3	PYP	2º Primaria
8–9	Grade 3	Year 4	PYP	3º Primaria
9–10	Grade 4	Year 5	PYP	4º Primaria
10–11	Grade 5	Year 6	PYP	5º Primaria
11–12	Grade 6	Year 7	MYP	6º Primaria / 1º ESO
12–13	Grade 7	Year 8	MYP	1º ESO
13–14	Grade 8	Year 9	MYP	2º ESO
14–15	Grade 9	Year 10	MYP / start IGCSE	3º ESO
15–16	Grade 10	Year 11	IGCSE exams	4º ESO
16–17	Grade 11	Year 12	DP Year 1	1º Bachillerato
17–18	Grade 12	Year 13	DP Year 2	2º Bachillerato

BEFORE YOU USE THIS

Schools set their own cut-off dates, and a child born close to one can be placed a year either side. Treat this chart as your starting point for the conversation with admissions — not as a guarantee of placement.

Two Things That Surprise Almost Everyone

1. "International" doesn't mean "entirely in English"

By Spanish law, every school in Madrid — including American, British, and IB schools — must teach part of the curriculum in Spanish. Families arriving with no Spanish are often surprised to find a subject like social studies taught in Spanish at an English-medium school. Ask each school directly what percentage of the week is Spanish-medium, rather than assuming.

2. Switching curriculum systems can cost your child a year

Moving a child from an American system into a British one (or vice versa) mid-way through school can create real academic gaps, or mean repeating a year. Wherever possible, match the system your child is already in — it matters more than a school's reputation.

12 Things Families Discover Too Late

Every one of these came from a real family's experience of moving to Madrid. None are complicated — but almost none are obvious in advance.

- School location can matter more than school reputation — the cheapest home often becomes the most expensive commute.
- Ask what's extra before comparing school fees. The published number is rarely the full number.
- Test the school run at the time you'd actually travel, with your child, before signing a lease.
- Children need social repetition, not endless activities. One regular group beats five occasional ones.
- Learn the route to school before the first day, not on it.
- Empadronamiento (municipal registration) unlocks school enrollment, healthcare, and more — do it first, not last.
- Government appointment slots are scarce. Offices outside central Madrid often have far better availability for the exact same procedure.
- A screenshot is not proof. Save the official email or PDF for every application and confirmation.
- Children often seem fine at first, then struggle weeks later, once the novelty fades. Watch for it.
- A child who understands English may still need emotional support adjusting. Comprehension isn't comfort.
- Ask the school its preferred parent communication channel — email, app, and WhatsApp groups all vary by school.
- Make one local friend before you think you need one.



There's a Lot More Where This Came From

This is three pages from a 29-page guide.

The full Madrid Family Playbook covers the whole move, in the order it actually needs to happen: visas and legal status, a document vault system, NIE/TIE and empadronamiento, healthcare setup, the complete school search and enrollment process, housing, banking, transport, the first 30 days with your child, a Spanish phrase survival kit, a full 90-day checklist, and six printable planning templates.

Inside the full guide

- A school fit scorecard for comparing schools side by side
- The commute test — before you sign a lease you'll regret
- Verified Madrid transport fares for families (children travel free)
- What to do in your first 72 hours, and what can wait
- Printable templates: budget, comparison sheets, emergency cards

Get the full Playbook

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Ahlan Madrid helps families settle into life here — schools, healthcare, activities, and everyday life — in Arabic, English, Spanish, or French.