



FAQ for Counsellors

Who is LEOlingo?

LEOlingo is a small, family-owned company founded in 2006 by Andrea Baer (baer@leo-lingo.de) and Sabine Goerner. LEOlingo Süddeutschland, based in Bavaria, southern Germany, offers both day and overnight English and French language camps to German children between the ages of 7 and 15. The camps are not about overloading the children with grammar and vocabulary, but about helping the children to speak and understand the language in everyday situations through games and fun activities lead in the target language.

How does the application process work?

The first step in the application process is to complete our detailed application form and send it back to Anne-Marie Albone (albone@leo-lingo.de) together with a photograph of yourself, by either email, fax or post. Added reference letters from former employers are always helpful. If we believe you would be a good fit for our LEOlingo programme, the next step is to complete a Skype interview. We aim to let all applicants know results of the interview within approximately 3 weeks.

Do we need a permit/visa and which other documents do we need to send in?

If you are successful, you will need to send us a copy of your passport, a police check (not older than one year), a valid first aid certificate, a copy of your visa or work permits (if you already have one), and a copy of your international health insurance. Once we have all the necessary documents from you, we will send you your contract for the summer, which will need to be signed and sent back to Anne-Marie Albone.

If you are a non-EU citizen (American, New Zealander, Australian, Canadian, ...) you will need to apply for a work permit, a working holiday visa or a residence permit with work permit ('Aufenthaltstitel'). In 2018, the cost for this was 56 Euro. LEOlingo is happy to cover half of this cost. As some consulates or employees abroad are not familiar with the necessary documents or the specific work/visa we require, we have come to an agreement with our local aliens office, in which we will prepare and hand in all necessary documents for the work permit before your arrival. Once you have arrived in Germany, we will go to the office together to show your original passport and to complete the registration. More detailed information will be provided once you have accepted your job offer.

British applicants should be aware that a work permit may be needed following Brexit in 2019.

What happens if I don't pass the training week?

Almost everybody passes the training week - you are there to learn our programme and how to deal with certain situations that may or may not arise. If you are willing to learn and to do the job and if we can see a development of your skills, there is absolutely no need to worry. Nevertheless, if you behave in an unacceptable way, if you are not able to take appropriate responsibility for the safety of the children, or if you confront us with a disruptive attitude, we cannot take the risk of employing you further. In this unlikely case, you would be responsible for covering the costs of board and lodging on your own for the rest of your time in Germany, as well as the costs for your trip home. We can, however, help you to organise a host family to stay with until your flight home. If you are dismissed directly after training, you will receive one week's salary of a Day Camp.



Are we insured?

As most counsellors have/require their own health insurance, we don't have a general health insurance policy for all counsellors. If you need a work permit (non-EU citizens), you are required to provide proof of health insurance for the duration of your stay in Germany. Even if health insurance is not required (EU citizens), we still recommend taking out extra coverage in case you need to see a doctor here, or if you have to go to a hospital, as the costs can be quite high.

LEOlingo has standard liability insurance for the campsites, which will cover things that get damaged. In the case of a child breaking something, the child's family normally has insurance for themselves and we use this insurance (as we have to pay a certain sum on our own).

What are the working hours?

The working hours for a day counsellor (at Day Camps and at Overnight Camps) are from 9am to 5pm, plus any time needed for preparation and cleaning up at the end of the day/camp.

If you are a night counsellor at an Overnight Camp, you are responsible for the children from 5pm to 9am the next day. Each evening, the night counsellor(s) runs a 2 ½ hour evening programme (7 - 9:30pm). During the rest of your working hours you are responsible for general supervision of the kids, getting them ready for bed/breakfast, caring for them in case of illness or homesickness, etc. Night counsellors are also responsible for organising meal times. Every counsellor is generally a night counsellor only once during each 6-week working period.

Preparation before and after the actual working hours will be necessary, as well as travel times to the next campsite. We also expect team members to help each other out when they are not working, especially at overnight camps.

Do we work every week?

In general, you will get one week (in special cases, two weeks) off during a working period of about six weeks. Many of the counsellors use this opportunity to travel. During this week off, you will not get paid and will have to organise your own accommodation and food. If you don't want to travel during that week and you have asked us in advance, it may be possible for you to stay with a host family.

The work can be very exhausting. At the start you may think that you don't need a week off but, from our past experience, the counsellors are happy after 3 or 4 intensive weeks to have a break. As we can never anticipate all changes/illnesses of counsellors that can happen during our holiday programme, we cannot give a definite answer in advance as to exactly which week you will have free. Best is when you tell us well in advance which week you would like free and we will do our best to accommodate your wishes. You can also tell us if you definitely would prefer not to have a week off and, again, we will see if that would be possible.

What information do I get before a camp starts?

Before you come to Germany, you will receive an arrival information pack (with all addresses, dates, telephone numbers, an organisational overview, etc) and a shortened version of our training handbook.



A few days before each camp each week, you will receive information on your exact place of work, lodging, travel plans from camp to camp, children's names, ages, etc. and an explanation of some mandatory tasks that will need to be done during the week, such as filling out the feedback forms, etc.

Where do the other counsellors come from?

They mostly come from English-speaking countries like USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, but also from French-speaking countries.

I am a French- native speaker. Can I work for the whole period?

We only offer French camps for two weeks. Those camps take place at the same time and campsite as the English camps. Before and after these French camp weeks, there will be only English camps. All French counsellors will have to be prepared to work as English counsellors before and after the two French weeks. Besides this, it should be noted that the training and the communication in the team will be in English.

Do we work at the weekend?

Normally you don't - although some Overnight Camps do start on Sunday afternoon/evening - but you will need time to travel to your next campsite and to prepare for the next camp. The campsites can be 1-2 hours away from each other. Travel due to work will normally be arranged by LEOlingo. This might be by car or by train, if there is public transport. If you have your own plans for the weekend you need to arrange your trip to the next campsite on your own.

During one weekend - generally after the first week - you may have to do a feedback training, this is mandatory.

Where do we stay at the weekends?

As many counsellors have preferred to travel somewhere at the weekend or meet up with the other counsellors, LEOlingo no longer provides accommodation over the weekend at any campsites. Each counsellor will now be responsible for arranging their own weekend accommodation (Friday evening to Sunday evening) and will be provided with 50 Euro per weekend to assist with the costs. A list of recommended accommodation options will be provided during the training week.

What is there to do in our free time?

There are beautiful towns and areas located around the campsites, such as Munich, Regensburg, Nuremberg, Salzburg, the "Fraenkische Schweiz", the "Fraenkische Seenland" (lake area) and many small, pretty medieval towns. Prague is also only approximately 3 hours away from Nuremberg by bus. It's important to be aware that some campsites are difficult to reach by public transport and it might be that you have to start or be there on Sunday already. Some counsellors spend the weekends with their previous host families. Others remain in the area where they are working, just 'hanging out' and others even go mountain climbing or head for the museums.

How old are the other counsellors?

The counsellors are generally between 20 and 29 years old.



Will I be working with the same people or do the teams change often?

Weekly changes between campsites, as well as work partners, can be expected. All counsellors, even those with no German abilities, are expected to be able to work completely alone with their group of 12 children - however we do try to place at least one German-speaker at each campsite in case of emergencies.

Which airport should we arrive at?

The closest airport to where the training will take place (Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz) is Nuernberg (Nuremberg), followed by Muenchen (Munich) and Frankfurt. You can also ask for flight and rail combination offers or connection flights from Frankfurt or Muenchen to Nuernberg.

Will we be picked up at the airport?

As every counsellor is arriving at different times and places, we are unfortunately not able to pick everyone up. You will receive information on how to arrive at the station where the training week will take place. Once you have arrived at the station, you will be picked up and brought to the training school by LEOlingo.

Are the flight costs covered?

No. We suggest that you take out flight insurance. In the case of accident, illness or death in the family, as well as unforeseen changes in plans, we cannot cover any tickets that have to be cancelled. Most counsellors "shop" around for their tickets. Many travel before they start to work and come via various routes. It can often be much cheaper to book a flight to London and then use Ryanair (www.ryanair.com) or Easyjet (www.easyjet.com) to fly to Germany.

How is the train travel?

The German train system is generally pretty good and reliable but it can be expensive. If you are planning on buying a ticket for the fast ICE trains, you should book in advance because they are a lot more expensive on the day (the website is www.bahn.de). There are however also special offers that run constantly and can be bought on the day. For example, in Bavaria the Bayern-Ticket can be used to travel anywhere within Bavaria on the regional trains and is valid for one day, any day of the week from 9am to 3am. It can be bought as a single ticket or for up to five people. A single ticket costs 22 Euros - each extra person costs an additional 4 Euro on top of that.

If you are travelling between the different states of Germany, there are two options. Firstly, the "Schoenes-Wochenende-Ticket", which is valid for all German states, on Saturday or Sunday for up to 5 people and costs 42 Euros. If you are travelling during the week, you can use the "Quer-Durchs-Land-Ticket". This is valid for one day, Monday to Friday, for up to 5 people and can be used throughout Germany. It costs 44 Euros for a single and 6 Euros for each extra person.

Where and how does the training take place?

Training in summer will take place in a school in Neumarkt (Oberpfalz). The first three days will be spent getting to know one another and doing some theoretical training. Then, for a few days, every counsellor will have the chance to take a group of about 14 kids from local schools in the morning. During breaks and in the afternoon, we will have time to discuss the morning and do more theoretical training.



During the training week you will stay with host families organised by the training school. They host you voluntarily and don't get any financial reimbursement.

What other meetings are required?

A follow-up feedback training may be required. If necessary, it takes place one Saturday after your first week of work and is mandatory. It is a general meeting of your training team, a good chance to clear up any problems that might have cropped up and a chance to keep in touch with each other.

How much will I get paid?

If you are responsible for the *day* programme, you will get 230 Euro per week (working hours at Day Camps and Overnight Camps: Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm plus preparation and clearing up and helping out if necessary) plus board and lodging. If you are responsible only for the *evening* programme at an Overnight Camp you will get 170 Euro (lunch duty, general responsibility for the kids -from 5pm to 9am, evening programme from about 7pm to 9.30pm). We try to let every counsellor do the evening programme just once. The training week is not paid but board and lodging is free. In case of starting earlier on a Sunday afternoon, each counsellor will get 30 Euro extra.

At Day Camps you will normally stay with a host family and get breakfast there. Most host families will have dinner with you as well, but they are not obliged to. You will get lunch or a packed lunch at the campsite.

At Overnight Camps you will get full board at the campsite, together with the kids.

Our board and lodging is valued at approximately 150-220 Euro per week.

Am I responsible for my own meals?

If you are not staying with a host family during a Day Camp (therefore, for example, in a guesthouse) and there is no possibility to order breakfast, you will receive extra compensation from us for the week. The host families are not responsible for your dinner, but most of them like to have dinner together with their guests. If they don't, you can buy your supplies and ask them politely if you could use their kitchen to prepare your own food (in this case, please make sure that everything is cleaned up and left how it was). At most Day Camps you and the kids will get lunch - or you will be able to prepare a packed lunch. It might be that you have to prepare tables, hand out food to the kids or clean dishes with the kids.

When you are doing an Overnight Camp, you will have full board and you will eat your meals together with the kids. In case you have specific dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, lactose-intolerant, etc.), please inform us in advance. Normally it is no problem for campsites/host families to prepare vegetarian or lactose-free meals for example, but please be aware that this may not always be the case and you may have to prepare your own meal once in a while.

On the weekends you are responsible for your own meals (unless you are still with your host family and they invite you).

When will I get paid?

Payment will be made after every week of work in cash (you don't need a bank account).

What happens if I cannot work for the whole duration of the German summer break?

It is possible to arrange an earlier departure date right from the beginning, but you should be aware that in general you are expected to be able to work until the end of the season (beginning of September). Our counsellor positions are sought after by many university students. We have had the experience that some have to return home by the end of August and nevertheless state that they will be able to work the full period. If suddenly 20% of the counsellors leave earlier than expected, the whole team would suffer. It is very difficult to find last minute replacements, expensive to cancel camps and it puts pressure on team members having to take over a double workload in the last week or work with an insufficient partner. In the case of a family emergency, illness etc. it is possible to leave earlier without any penalty.

Am I required to follow an exact programme?

LEOlingo has a set programme with certain core points/goals, which are mandatory. All counsellors will be provided with a detailed LEOlingo handbook full of activities and programme parts, which will all be taught and discussed in detail during training.

Do I have a choice as to where or with whom I work?

LEOlingo will try to take any personal preferences into account, but it is important to create teams with different skills - for example, one should be able to speak German, one should be male/female, one should be good with sports, etc. It takes a lot of time and thought to prepare the working schedules for the summer. We can't always put everyone with everyone. Some people are better with older children/younger children, some are better at sports/arts and crafts, some are better at overnight camps/day camps, etc. This is why it is not always possible to make last-minute changes or fulfil every counsellor's wish for every week. One change might lead to some others.

Can I choose between Day and Overnight Camps or between day and night programme?

You can tell us your preference. We will try to fulfil everybody's wishes as best we can, but the skills of our whole team need to be taken into consideration to create optimal teams. Everyone is required to work at least once as a night counsellor.

Can I choose my accommodation?

During the week LEOlingo organises this and generally we do so according to what is possible in the town where you will be working.

Counsellors are responsible for organising their own accommodation on the weekends.

What if I can't speak German?

For the camp itself, you don't need to speak German. However, LEOlingo will only accept counsellors who feel secure enough to 'survive' in a foreign country - alone and together with a group of children. In general, Germans speak some English.

What's different about Germans or Germany?

This is difficult to say as it depends on the person who is asking this question. There are some stereotypes that contain some truth. Examples:

- Germans are very punctual. For working conditions, German punctuality means at least 15-20 minutes in advance.
- For German host families and landlords, cleanliness is very important. They expect you to return rooms and things in the way they have given them to you. They won't understand if you don't and they would be very upset. The landlords might also check during the day how tidy you are. You should be sure to leave everything neat and tidy before you go outside or have a break.
- You will be expected to ask before using things of your host family family, eg. using their computer/phone or helping yourself to food and drink.
- Germans are very straightforward. Don't expect a German to swallow his criticism or to say it in a roundabout polite way. They will tell you straight and directly if they do not agree with something you are doing or saying. They will also tell you positive things when they really mean it.
- Germans are not used to and tend not to use extravagant compliments. They are at times more reserved and can appear cooler towards you, however you will also find that a German befriended is a friend for life and a very warm friendship can follow.
- Germans are not prudish. Open showers are normal. In schools, sports centres, swimming halls, there generally won't be a "view protection". Male and female sections are separated so that nobody of the other sex will see you naked.
- It is no problem to embrace a little kid and comfort them when they are hurt or crying. In Germany, people would be surprised if you did not comfort the kid in such a situation.
- Germans are very ecological and separate their garbage into many different categories. Please make sure you are respectful and do the same during your stay. If you are unsure, please ask either your host family or one of us to clarify how their rubbish system works. There are different rubbish bins; 1. for glass, 2. for paper, 3. for packaging and cartons with a certain sign (the "green point", almost every packing has this sign, so it is quite simple) 4. for organic rubbish, and 5. for materials that cannot be recycled (for example ashes, cigarettes).
- Germans are also energy conscious. Lights, heating and water are only turned on during use. Some examples: As soon as they exit the room or the house, lights, radios, TV etc. are turned off. They try to not leave the water running unnecessarily whilst they are showering or brushing their teeth, and they do not take long showers. In a traffic jam Germans often turn off the car motor. So please be aware and careful of what you are doing during your stay in Germany.