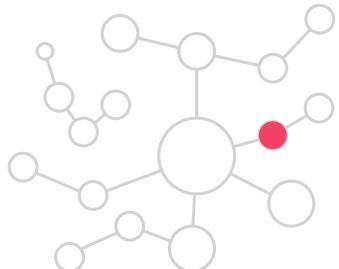


National Centre of Competence in Research

"Children & Cancer"



► Brief description

In Switzerland, on average, one child or adolescent is diagnosed with cancer every day – making it one of the leading causes of death in this age group. Childhood cancers differ fundamentally from adult cancers. While environmental factors and lifestyle play a role in adult cancers, paediatric tumours typically arise from faulty developmental processes in the body. The different types of childhood cancer represent distinct and unique situations and are better considered rare diseases, requiring a personalized approach. The most common cancer types in children are leukaemia, brain tumours, and lymphomas. Current diagnosis is complex, and treatment is equally challenging. Despite modern interventions such as chemotherapy, radiotherapy and other targeted therapies, the long-term consequences often remain severe: Many survivors later suffer from heart problems, infertility or secondary cancers.

The National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) "Children & Cancer" is dedicated to improving diagnostics and optimising treatment and care for children with cancer. Its goal is to establish a comprehensive national programme for research, innovation and advanced clinical care in paediatric oncology.

The NCCR aims to enhance access to cutting-edge diagnostics and personalised therapies, strengthen collaboration within Swiss paediatric oncology and generate new insights.

The NCCR brings together 32 research groups with a broad spectrum of expertise – spanning paediatrics, cancer research, data science, artificial intelligence, communication and nursing. Six work packages address key challenges, including the biological diversity of cancer cells, novel immunotherapies and the development of a national platform for childhood cancer diagnostics. The programme also explores public perceptions of childhood cancer in Switzerland to improve communication between researchers, doctors and society.

In the long term, NCCR "Children & Cancer" seeks to position Switzerland as an international hub for innovation and translational research in paediatric oncology. This centre will facilitate new partnerships, provide strong education and training opportunities for the next generation of professionals and produce innovative data analyses to strengthen the basis for improved therapies and patient care. This is the first National Research Programme dedicated to the well-being of children.

► Facts and figures

Total funding (2026–2029): CHF 33.97 million

Federal funding (2026–2029): CHF 16.99 million

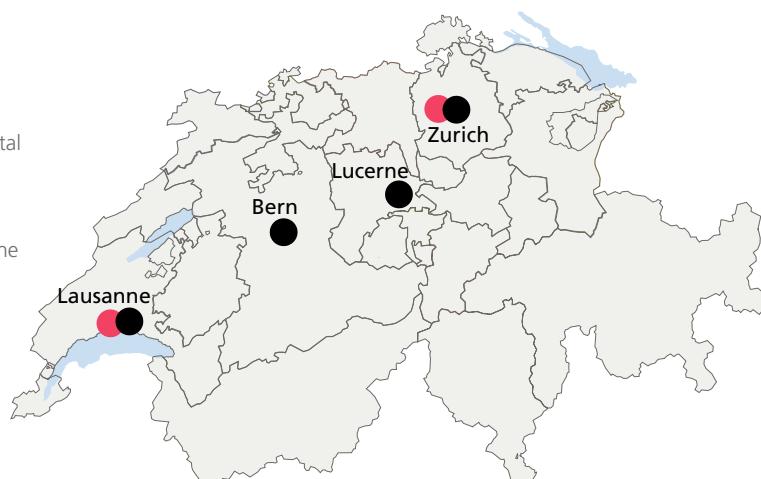
Host institutions: University of Zurich, University of Lausanne

Director: Prof. Jean-Pierre Bourquin, University Children's Hospital Zurich | jean-pierre.bourquin@kispi.uzh.ch

Co-Director: Prof. Raffaele Renella, University of Lausanne

Deputy Director: Prof. Bjoern Menze, University of Zurich

Deputy Co-Director: Prof. Tatiana Petrova, University of Lausanne



Further information
www.sbf.admin.ch/national-centres-of-competence-in-research

● Host institutions (number of groups)

- University of Zurich (6),
University Children's Hospital Zurich (6),
Balgrist University Hospital (1),
University Hospital Zurich (1)
- University of Lausanne (8),

● Network (number of groups)

- ETH Zurich (4)
- EPFL (4)
- Bern University Hospital (Inselspital)
- University of Lucerne (1)



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
**State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI**