

Press Release

Research Week at a Wesel Elementary School and Daycare Center: Children Develop Water Filters and Marble Runs

- ALTANA and BYK support the “Stiftung Kinder forschen” educational project in Wesel
- About 180 school and daycare children conduct experiments on environmental protection and kinetics
- Creative experiments spark a spirit of research and discovery

Wesel, March 25, 2026 – Sketching, building, trying things out – and testing their own inventions: In small groups, the children at the Konrad Duden Community Elementary School (GGS) and the DRK Abenteuerland Daycare Center developed ideas, discarded them, and continued tinkering. The goal: Invent a system that cleans polluted water. And design a track that keeps a marble moving for as long as possible.

To find solutions to these two challenges, the school and daycare children explored questions such as which materials are suitable for filtering coarse dirt and suspended particles out of the water, and what physical phenomena are at work. In the process, it became clear to everyone that a team can achieve more through good cooperation. Other groups built marble runs with different designs. The goal here was to maximize the marble’s rolling time and, in doing so, also develop an understanding of the principles of physics.

Today, some 180 young researchers proudly presented their experiments to parents and other interested visitors at the ALTANA Conference Center in Wesel. The specialty chemicals company supports Research Week as part of the “Stiftung Kinder forschen” project, which promotes early science education for children.

Sparking curiosity for STEM subjects

For a week, school and daycare children participated as young researchers in the “Stiftung Kinder forschen” educational project in Wesel. Supervisors from the elementary school, the daycare center, and BYK - a division of ALTANA AG - along with many parents, helped the children gain hands-on learning experiences in the so-called STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

“We are very proud that, in collaboration with the DRK Adventureland Daycare and the Konrad Duden Elementary School, we were once again able to create an experimental space for daycare children and first- and second-grade students that provides access to physical phenomena in a playful way,” says Dr. Jörg Hinnerwisch, Head of the BYK division. “Children’s enthusiasm greatly facilitates learning, and the technical questions related to the everyday topic of water and the marble run play structure were ideally suited to spark an initial interest in the natural sciences. “I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers, and I hope that our program has shown tomorrow’s researchers the first steps on their journey.”

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“When children explore, it becomes clear just how much curiosity, creativity, and inventiveness they possess”

The Konrad Duden Elementary School, the DRK Abenteuerland Daycare Center, and BYK in Wesel have been successfully collaborating on this early education project since 2011. They are network partners of the “Stiftung Kinder forschen” initiative, based in Berlin. The foundation aims to spark the interest of daycare and elementary school children in scientific concepts and, to this end, provides them with early, everyday opportunities to engage with mathematics, computer science, natural sciences, and technology. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research has been supporting this early education initiative in Germany since 2008.

“I am particularly pleased that our department can continue to support this important educational project - and that Kathrin Möllers, as the new project manager for BYK, is bringing fresh energy to the initiative,” says Alfred Dallarosa, Head of the Training & Education Department for Coatings Additives at BYK. Every year, Research Week demonstrates anew how valuable it is to inspire children’s enthusiasm for the natural sciences at an early age.”

“When children engage in research, it reveals just how much curiosity, creativity, and inventiveness they possess. Research Week highlights how children develop ideas as a team and playfully grasp their first STEM concepts. “I am very excited to take on primary responsibility for this project starting this year and to further strengthen their enthusiasm for discovery,” adds Kathrin Möllers, who works in the Training and Education department for coating additives at BYK.



Two children building a water filter



Examples of water filters made by the children.

About ALTANA:

ALTANA is a global leader in true specialty chemicals. The Group offers innovative solutions for coating manufacturers, paint and plastics processors, the printing and packaging industries, the cosmetics sector, and the electrical and electronics industry. The product range includes additives, specialty coatings and adhesives, effect pigments, sealants and compounds, impregnating resins and varnishes, and testing and measuring instruments. ALTANA’s four divisions, BYK, ECKART, ELANTAS, and ACTEGA, all occupy a leading position in their target markets with respect to quality, product solution expertise, innovation, and service.

Headquartered in Wesel, Germany, the ALTANA Group has 58 production facilities and 67 service and research laboratories

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worldwide. Throughout the Group, more than 8,000 people work to ensure the worldwide success of ALTANA. In 2025, ALTANA achieved sales of more than 3 billion euros. About 7 percent of the total sales is invested in research and development each year. Its high earning power and high growth rate make ALTANA one of the world's most innovative, fastest growing, and most profitable chemical companies.

www.altana.de

About BYK:

BYK is a leading global supplier of specialty chemicals. The company's innovative additives and differentiated solutions optimize product and material properties as well as production and application processes. Amongst other things, BYK additives improve scratch resistance and surface gloss, the mechanical strength or flow behavior of materials, and properties such as UV- and light stability or flame retardancy. In the field of quality assurance, BYK's measuring and testing instruments serve to effectively assess appearance and physical properties.

The company's customers include manufacturers of coatings and printing inks, plastics, adhesives and sealants, as well as cleaners, floor coatings, and lubricants. BYK additives are also successfully used in the construction chemistry, oil and gas, and foundry industries.

BYK has a global network of subsidiaries and operates production sites in Germany (Wesel, Kempen, Schkopau, Moosburg, Geretsried), the Netherlands (Deventer, Denekamp, Nijverdal), and the UK (Widnes), in the USA (Wallingford, Chester, Columbia, Earth City, Gonzales, Louisville, Pittsford), and in China (Shanghai, Tongling).

The company is part of the ALTANA Group and employs a workforce of more than 2,700 people worldwide.

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