

Bilingual Parents' Initiative

Sparkling Diamonds e.V.

Pedagogical Concept

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1. Overall presentation

1.1 Who we are

We are a German-English kindergarten (parents' initiative) with 16 places. From the end of 2011 our aim is to have 20 places. We have two German teachers and two native English speakers caring for the children. The children are between 2-6 years old. Trainee teachers or helpers might also be employed.

Should the financial means suffice we are also considering taking in handicapped children. In this case we would have a max of 20 places, 3 of which would then go to children with special needs.

As we are a bilingual kindergarten, we take great care in choosing the right children for the group.

1.2 How we are organised

As a parents' initiative we are an officially registered non profit association. At least one parent from each family must be a member of this association. The board represents the parents' initiative to the outside world.

1.3 Where we are

The kindergarten is located in the area of Isar/Ludwigsvorstadt in Rupperstr. 24.

There is an arts and crafts room where various artistic activities take place. Next there is a large group room. Here the children find all sorts of different materials and can let their creativity run wild.

They can construct houses or dens, build structures of various materials, dress up, play music, have a go at shadow puppet theater and watch themselves in the mirror corner.

This is also the room where the children enjoy breakfast and lunch together. The older children also get together here for circle time in the morning. Circle time consists of games, songs, stories or other activities. In addition to this circle time is also where children and teachers have the chance to discuss topics which are important to them.

There is also a jungle gym with a climbing frame and large gym mats as well as various gym materials such as balls, ropes, hoola hoops, cloth etc. There are also bouncy animals as well as swing and sea saw elements. This room is also used for circle time for the younger children in the mornings. During quiet time this is also where the children who want to sleep have their nap.

Finally there is a smaller room with a book case full of books as well as big cushions. The children use this room to browse through books, read out loud, tell stories or simply to get some peace and quiet.

The environment surrounding the children is set up in a way that allows the children to move around freely, letting them find everything they need in order to satisfy their individual needs. In all the rooms everything has been arranged in a tidy and well organised manner in order for the children to quickly be able to find what they are looking for. This creates trust, a feeling of safety and also helps the orientation within the group.

1.4 Contact details

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We prefer to receive admission applications and queries via email or fax only. We hope you can appreciate that queries by phone or unscheduled visits to the kindergarten really disturb the daily routine for the children as well as keep the teachers from devoting all their attention to the children.

1.5 Opening hours

The kindergarten is open from Monday to Thursday from 8am to 5pm and Friday from 8am to 4pm.

The kindergarten is closed for two weeks during Christmas as well as the Summer holidays. We want to avoid being closed for more than two weeks at a time but during holidays a reduction of the activities on offer and the number of teachers present may occur.

1.6 Current daily routine

	Monday to Friday
8:00am to 9:00am	Welcome and free play
9:00am to 9:30am	Circle time
9:30am to 10:00am	Breakfast
10am to ca. 11:15am	Free or guided activities
Ca. 11:15am to 12:00pm	Playground *
Ca. 12:00pm to 1:00pm	Lunch *
1:00pm to 2:00pm	Nap time / Quiet time with stories and other quiet activities
2:00pm to 5:00pm / 4:00pm (Fridays) ca. 3:00pm	Free play / continuing activities from earlier Snacktime

* may vary depending on weather or project work

1.7 Booking times and prices

8:00 till 11:45 Uhr: 186.28 EUR

13:00 till 17:00 Uhr: 186.28 EUR

8:00 till 17:00 Uhr: 300 EUR

Lunch will be taken care of by a bio-catering service and will cost an additional **€70** per month.

The annual membership fee for the organization is **€25**. For each space in the kindergarden a deposit of two months fee is required.

This will be refunded on leaving or will be accounted against potential open demands.

1.8 Settling in period

We view the settling in period as very important and take great care in organising this. It is of vital importance that the parents are cooperative.

The settling in process is a very emotional experience. Feeling stressed, unsure and worried is a normal reaction for many parents when giving their child into the care of others. The child will pick up on this emotional strain.

It is our job to create a safe and protected environment in which the child feels accepted and seen. This safe environment makes it possible for the child to start building up a close relationship with one primary carer, something which is of immense importance in the settling in period.

When the parents experience that the child is doing well and enjoys attending the kindergarten, they are finally able to let "go". The initial anxiety turns into a feeling of being relaxed, and uncertainty turns into certainty. This feeling rubs off on the child and now parent and child are ready to let go of each other.

How the settling in period works in practise:

- First off there will be an information meeting with the parents. This is where to go into detail concerning various questions, wishes, expectations, previous experiences and so on.
- When at all possible, we schedule two trial days where the child and parent visit the kindergarten together for a couple of hours.
- During the first week the parent and child will stay at the kindergarten for 1-2 hours. During this time they will experience the teachers greeting the children in the morning, circle time and breakfast. One teacher will focus (almost) exclusively on the child so that they can start building up a relationship.
- In the second week the child and parent will stay for a bit longer. The child is encouraged to stay at the kindergarten for half an hour to an hour without the parent. This only takes place if the child feels ready though! In this case the parent should stay close by so that we can reach him / her quickly if necessary.
- In the next two weeks the time spent at the kindergarten will grow longer and longer, allowing the child to slowly grow familiar with the daily kindergarten routines. (good morning greeting, circle time, free play, playground, lunch, quiet time, pick up time..) Just like every child is different, the same goes for the settling in period. This means that there are children who will be fully intergrated within two weeks, whereas others might need two months. We support the parents during this time through short talks in order to let them know what has been happening during the day, give them information on activities as well as the child's development.

2. General kindergarten rules

2.1 Morning Circle

The children all participate in the morning circle. If they don't want to sit in the circle that is ok, they just have to stay in the room and must be quiet. We carry out the morning circle in two different groups; one for the older children and one for the younger. One morning circle will be in English and the other in German. The language of each group keeps changing so that all children participate in both English and German morning circles.

2.2 Playground

The children go to the playground every day, weather permitting. This decision is down to the teachers.

2.3 Safety on the way to the playground

The children are allowed to take their own bikes etc. to the playground. On the way to the playground these must be pushed along as otherwise it is impossible to keep the group together.

2.4 Safety at the kindergarten - clothes

Inside the kindergarten the children must wear either house shoes oder anti slip socks or go barefoot. Normal sock are too slippy. Apart from this rule we let the children decide what they want to wear, an example could be whether or not they want to wear a coat (of course only if deemed resonable by the staff)

2.5 Food

The children sit together when they have their meals. They are encouraged to try different foods by the teachers. When the children don't like the hot lunch on offer they are always offered frish fruit or veg. The children's own packed lunches are NOT AN ALTERNATIVE to the kindergraten lunch. Other than at lunch time, the children can eat from their packed lunch when hungry. We ask the parents not to include any sweets such as chocolates, sweet bisquits etc. Water and cups are available to the children all through the day.

2.6 Nap time/ quiet time

The younger children sleep and the older children engage in quiet activities (listening to stories, having a massage, relaxing exercises) Alternatively the teachers can choose to take the older children to the playground if several of them want to go.

2.7 Preschool

It is not possible for us to use the Wuppi Preschool programme on a regular basis. This would require the children to take part in every single lesson. This is not possible at our kindergarten because of the many international families who often go away for longer periods of time. Also the teachers do not want to force the kids to participate in this programme.

Our preschool programme is simply part of the daily activities and so integrated in the everyday kindergarten routine. This means that our younger children also get to participate in these activities which they learn a lot from. This would not be possible if the preschool programme was only offered to a certain age group.

2.8 Sport

We try to offer the children various sports activities. Presently one of our English teachers offers dancing classes.

2.9 Nudity / exploring one's sexuality.

That children explore their sexuality is a natural learning experience and an important part of their development. Our teachers keep a watchful eye on which games the children play as part of this exploration and they talk openly with the children about what is ok and what is not. Should any problems arise in this area the team will take it up with the parents immediately.

2.10 environmental awareness

We want to educate the children on nature and the world around us. What we do with our rubbish is quite concrete and something which is easy to understand. We sort our rubbish and save water.

2.11 Toys

The children can bring their own toys to the kindergarten, however they must then be prepared to share them. One exception from this being bikes etc, as the helmets might not fit the other children which could lead to dangerous situations.

2.12 nutrition / health

First of all we want to show the children that eating can be a pleasure. The children experience food with all their senses. Foods are being smelled, looked at, touched and finally sampled. In the same way that we make time to play, we also make time to enjoy our food.

We make sure that the children eat healthily. Breakfast as well as the afternoon snack consists mainly of fruit, vegetables, yoghurt, whole grain products, nuts, cheese, sausages and the likes. Our lunch comes from an organic caterer, a company which also takes great care to provide a healthy diet for the children.

Birthdays and goodbye parties are an exception as on these occasions the children are allowed to bring a cake or other sweet items.

To ensure a good health the following things are important:

- The children must wash their hands before each meal or before cooking and baking.
The same goes for every time they have been to the toilet.
- Wet or damp clothes must be changed.
- Nappies must be changed frequently.
- The children must wear appropriate outdoors clothing depending on the weather. This includes rain trousers, rain jacket and wellingtons on rainy days and warm clothes in winter, including hat, scarf, mittens and winter boots.
- In summer the children must wear sun block and sun hats.
- We do everything we can to prevent accidents and make sure our staff know how to respond

In case of an accident.

We are very aware of the dangers of the traffic when out and about with the kids.

2.13 Information about the child between parents and teachers.

The teachers document the development of the children. The parents always have the option to schedule an appointment with a teacher to find out more about how their child is developing.

3. General concept

3.1 Meeting individual needs

A Child comes into the world as a competent human being. Children take responsibility and participate actively in shaping their own development. They learn naturally and with great enthusiasm, all according to their natural pace of development, their personality and their intelligence. This is the best way for children to learn and they are at their most creative when they feel comfortable and when they are engaging in activities in a happy, passionate and fun manner. Our job is to create a suitable environment where this can take place.

Getting to know themselves and the world around them is something which children learn mainly through doing activities, tasks and solving problems together with other children and adults in various surroundings.

Competent teachers observe the individual likings and dislikes, interests and talents of each child. These observations are vital in ensuring pedagogical work of high standards.

Observations are the basis of a pedagogical effort of high standards

To ensure pedagogical work of high quality these observations are vital.

First off the teachers need to get to know the child well. Only then will they be able to offer a stimulating environment, in which the child can explore and learn through its likes and interests.

Due to the mixed age group structure, the children always succeed in finding a partner among the group. Younger children have role models who they emulate, who motivate them and who can help them out. On the other hand the older children benefit from being able to pass on what they've learnt to the younger ones. This consolidates and extends their own knowledge, which then in turn strengthens their self confidence and furthers their interest in learning new things.

Getting to grips with the complexity of the real world is something which children are able to do and want to do. They learn to look after themselves and to take on a responsibility for the group by being integrated in the daily routines. This boosts their feeling of self-worth and teaches them new skills.

As a general rule, the children have the opportunity to participate in the daily activities according to their skills and independent ideas. This supports and strengthens their self worth and independence.

4. Education Methods

4.2 Basic beliefs, how we reach our goals

Through their experiences, children themselves develop the structures necessary in order to examine and understand their own social and intellectual world. They do this through basic patterns of behaviour and processing. These patterns turn out differently. Through being around other people and through experiencing the world around them they broaden and change.

If you were to compare children's thought process to that of a computer, you could say that children (also) rely on a programme in order to solve simple self imposed problems. As they are solving these problems, however, they give this programme an overhaul and adapt it according to the new knowledge they have gained.

With this in mind, early childhood education is first of all self education and is gained through the observations and explorations which children make every day as they go through life. The most important knowledge of all is that of understanding the impact of any given experience or newly acquired skill. It is through the process of social interaction with others that children learn to assess the meaning of these.

(Schäfer 2003)

With this in mind, we as teachers see it as our job to recognise the particular interests and focus points of the children and then assisting them in developing these further. We open up possibilities and assist the child in thinking, learning and getting to grips with how to overcome problems. **This is always done in accordance with the child's needs.**

The basis of our concept is that of **emotional support** of the child. We remain convinced that the close contact to and trust in the carer is of uttermost importance. Together with set rules and rituals this gives the child the confidence necessary in order to develop independently and to be able to explore the world around it freely. The message conveyed being that whatever the personality of the child, it is perfectly alright and **it is accepted without reservations.**

The observation of the child serves as an important basis for a well targeted and individual pedagogical effort/performance. Based on these observations we can respond to the needs of the child both alone and in a group setting. Through these observations we learn many things such as: What the child is experiencing, what it ponders on, how it feels, what it dares, what frightens it, what it likes and dislikes, everything it can already do, what it dreams of, what ideas it harbours, how it deals with problems and conflicts, if and how it takes responsibility, if it considers things logically, if it dares approach the climbing frame on its own and so on.

We assess which learning processes the child is presently going through as well which ones it has completed before it came in our care.

These targeted observations have influence on our planning, the set up of our classrooms and which materials we choose.

For this reason the planning needs to stay flexible and is subject to change when necessary. The set up of our classrooms is done in a flexible manner so that it is always possible to alter the various play areas. The selection of materials is decided by ideas or newly discovered fields of interest by the children and teachers, either spontaneously or as an already planned way to stimulate and motivate.

Through observing the children, we as teachers are put in a situation where we constantly have to reflect on our professional approach and to re-evaluate this if necessary.

Regardless of the activity on offer, we always ensure that every learning aspect is integrated: understanding, feeling, connecting, processing, learning. Sense awareness is the basis of this process as it helps bring together physical, social and manual/technical skills. The more challenges the child's mind is met with, the more the awareness level of the senses will improve. Through this, experience turns to knowledge.

During all activities children often have the opportunity **to decide themselves**, what they would like to do and how they would like to do it. This for example means, that a child is free to decide whether it would like to take part in morning circle, eat the lunch menu or take fruit instead or join in an activity and leave this activity at its own will.

We convey to the child that its decisions and will are accepted and respected by us. Conflicts that could potentially arise from this are being followed by our teachers so that children's personalities are being emphatically supported.

At the same time it is crucial for us that children develop a **democratic understanding**. That they experience within their group that everyone has a valid opinion that can be represented, but also shows willingness for the benefit of the group to find mutually beneficial agreements.

Children and teacher address problems and conflicts openly and together seek for solutions to establish rules for the kindergarten.

The child learns to speak in front of the group and to utter opinions, suggestions or criticism, to listen to each other and to respect other opinions within the group.

This enables a debating culture that helps to look for mutually pleasing solutions. The children experience that they can actively shape the day-to-day structure at the kindergarten. Self-confidence, respect, tolerance as well as trust are being created through this open debate culture. Everyone has the same experience "We are all jointly responsible for this kindergarten – it is our kindergarten".

The topic selection and or/project themes can either be initiated by single children or decided by the majority.

Projects can vary in length (from one week to several months). Teachers do not have to have expertise in projects themes, but can seek support from the parents or other sources of information in order to acquire more profound information or to establish contact to the right person.

Projects often develop out of simple situations where questions or stories of the children arise. If the children loose interest in the project it should be finished quickly rather than prolonging it.

The actual research takes place during the execution of the project in which different aspects are being researched and looked at.

At first the children and the teachers look for common sources of information. Afterwards these sources are being used which results in different forms of activities. It is important that a holistic approach is being followed.

After the project is being finished, children are supposed to reflect the learning paths and methods so the can use their experience for their learning competencies.

Methodical learning competence is the foundation for conscious knowledge and building up competencies is the foundation for life long and self-directed learning.

Through dealing with the content, methodical learning competencies can be acquired.

4.1.1 To play is not to play around

To play is so to speak the main occupation/job of each and every child since children comprehend themselves, events and situations and the world around themselves through play.

Playing basically encompasses **three functions**:

First of all to play is of pivotal importance for the development of a child's personality, secondly play is the medium for obtaining necessary academic and occupational abilities and thirdly there is an evident correlation between play and academic ability.

4.1.2 Playing means – obtaining competencies

Everything that children see, hear, hold in their hands and comprehend will become part of playing.

Be it creating patterns in mashed potatoes, self-talk while getting dressed, pulling faces while washing in front of the mirror, picking and throwing a stone or climbing up a tree. There is an immediate game's story line involved with every action. It is a so-called actionable contention of the children with

their entire environment. Children want to explore, comprehend and grasp the laws and principles in order to familiarise themselves with unknown objects.

This is according to the motto – the unknown needs to be known, new things wait to be personally explored, the appealing needs to be experienced.

Not surprisingly, children's game researchers assume that children by the age of six will have (to have!) played up to 15,000 hours. This means 7-8 years of playing a day.

The children's developmental-psychological learning success has an effect in this matter. Initially there is a felt imbalance between perceiving something and to "experiencing something". Then children try to perform the provoked task by becoming active. Now their emotion gets into a state of tension and relaxation. Finally they begin to think about the past, the present and what can happen in the future. Single, meaningful experiences turn into insight, point of view and expectations that can be reapplied, abolished or changed in similar situations. In this way children find out their own standpoint, they learn to evaluate situations and objects, recognise objects/incidents and to put them into order according to their meaningfulness.

Research in the field of children's play has found out that children who play a frequently and intensively build up the four competencies that are essential for a successfully shaped life.

- a) **Emotional aspects:** recognising, experiencing, handling emotions, better handling of disappointments, failures, less aggression, more accentuated resilience, experiencing higher levels of satisfaction, an even relation between the basic emotions of fear, joy, sorrow and anger.
- b) **Social aspects:** better listening skills, less prone for prejudice, better cooperation skills, better awareness of injustice and more intense friendships
- c) **Dexterity aspects:** quicker reaction time, more harmonic dexterity in general, better eye-hand coordination, better body balance
- d) **Cognitive aspects:** children perform better at logical thinking, have higher concentration levels, better memorising performance, higher awareness, a more differentiated vocabulary, a better number, colour and form comprehension, a more vivid imagination and recognition of manipulation through others

That is why play is so important for children since they acquire exactly these abilities and skills through play. These skills are essential for living a self-determined and partly autonomous life, for shaping situations and for recognising the needs for social behaviour and to trade off own wishes and the needs of others. Astoundingly children's play supports their inner potential and makes children capable to develop skills that will be necessary for attending school.

4.1.3 Playing is learning

As long as the term "learning" is perceived as the accumulation of knowledge, that is how long the prejudice will remain claiming that learning is the result of specific exercises designed to extend knowledge. Maybe this is the reason learning is still evaluated as a product of the child's active work towards it. E.g. what songs and books the child is familiar with, if it can write its name or which geometrical shapes it can recognize.

This way of looking at learning and readiness for school is a thing of the past.

Children "learn" essential tasks "on the side" – without specifically targeted exercises. Learning is now viewed as an "extension and enlargement of behaviours and their internalizing". Playing thus offers a very rich spectrum.

Children act in a sense-connected way and thus develop the life skills that they need at present and in their future lives.

This depends on the condition that – and this is particularly noticeable in our day and age - they encounter a learning method at home and in the Kindergarten that facilitates all the possibilities of experience that playing offers. The teachers can experience this together with the child and use it in play such as: discovery and perception games, organization and skills games, construction and building games, stacking and strategy games, games of movement and music, finger and hand puppet games, shadow and marionette puppetry, representation and interaction games, aggression games to out-rave and calm meditation games, role play and games with emotions, imitation and exciting board games, fairy tales and mobility games. Everything is focused on helping the child actively and whole-heartedly to discover all these ways of playing thus initially extending and later expanding on the child's ability to play.

4.1.4 How this influences our general pedagogical approach.

The cornerstone of our general pedagogical approach is as follows; the ability to play in a child-centred, life-sustaining world of expression, experience and discovery. In this way children return to their original wealth of expressions and the connected ways of acquiring knowledge are made accessible again. Children do not need new learning programmes, there are even kindergartens free from toys. What children need is an open environment and matching conditions that let them play intensively with active teachers and parents as playmates. Playing encourages the joy and motivation to learn and thus also curiosity.

Nowadays we know that curiosity is the base of learning.

The well-known development psychologist Piaget says; "everything we teach the children they can't discover themselves anymore and really learn." Games don't just happen on command whilst sat down at a table. They come in to being where life is pulsating: in exciting projects, in caves and dens, in trees and on the floor, in self constructed huts, in the forest and in the meadow, in nooks and shrubbery, with a hammer and a saw, running and tumbling, finding hidden treasures, during lively parties and whilst secrets are whispered. That's where real life takes place.

(Taken from: Kindergarten pädagogik – Online Handbuch – Hrsg. M.R. Textor).

It is of utmost importance for us to clearly make the parents aware of the value of playing and its consequences in the child's development. Experience has taught us that this aspect is seldom comprehensible or clear to parents at the beginning.

4.2 Educational areas of particular importance.

Creativity, maths, language and communication, nature and environment, social learning, physical movement and exercise and music are all incorporated in our daily pedagogical work.

Many activities touch upon several areas simultaneously, e.g. baking a cake. We discuss what we need to buy, how we can "write" our shopping list, where we may find different ingredients, what it will cost, who is responsible for what, what quantities we need for the cake, how you handle and measure these quantities, what temperature the oven needs to have to bake the cake and how long it needs to stay in the oven, how many slices we need to cut it into so that all the children get a piece...

Looking at this example we can see that many areas of learning can be joined together.

4.2.1 Creativity

In everything the child does we support and challenge it's creativity. What does "creativity" mean in this sense? It entails arranging your abilities, combining the collected experiences in a new way. Creativity also involves portraying and changing concepts, looking for and/or finding new interests and ideas and striving for problem solving. This can be done alone by the individual but also as teamwork.

4.2.2 Maths

The children are given access to the world of numbers according to their age. Through simple games, exercises, stories, songs and situations in daily life the children acquire the numbers from zero to twenty and beyond. They learn how to deal with shapes, mass, space and weight.

All of this the child learns in a playful, individually appropriate way.

4.2.3 Language and communication

In an age of globalization and europeanization the worldwide communication amongst people from the most different cultures and languages is put forward. It is becoming increasingly important to master several languages.

The human language ability is programmed for polyglotism.

At the age between 3 and 8 years the child's brain is at its most susceptible when it comes to acquiring language. The submission to other languages during this time broadens the language structure of the brain and creates an invaluable base for later language acquisition.

In our Kindergarten the children can learn English and German in a playful way as the teachers almost solely speak to the children in their own mother tongue. The method "one person - one language", which is followed by English and German speaking teachers alike, enables the children to differentiate between the languages and acquire the two languages simultaneously. This way the children have the opportunity to expand their mother tongue and at the same time get to know the new one as it "appears" in normal, daily, goings on (immersion).

Especially at the beginning the teacher who is using the new language with the child will support the words with gestures and mimics to make it easier for the child to understand.

Children's songs, rhymes, simple games like finger games are used as bridges to quickly and easily introduce the new language to the child.

The transmission of language in its diversity is a crucial cornerstone in our pedagogical work. The language and speech ability are important parts for the mental, social and emotional development of the child.

Communication with others, the expression and processing of emotions, gaining knowledge and thoughts, it all happens with the medium of language.

In all activities we motivate the child to talk. Everything we do is accompanied by language.

Here are just a few examples:

- Greetings and taking leave
- Morning circle
- Looking at picture books / reading stories / inventing stories
- Setting and clearing the table
- Breakfast and lunch

- Free play / role play / initialized play
- Painting and arts and crafts activities
- The walk to and from the playground
- Construction and realisation of ideas
- Putting our clothes on and taking them off

4.2.4 Nature and environment

Children learn the concepts of natural science through investigating, examining, discovering and analyzing. Their environment offers them many opportunities to unfold their curiosity and their researcher urge.

Some examples from our Kindergarten:

On the way to the playground the children find a metal object. The whole group finds it interesting. What is it? What does it look like? What can you do with it? What was it used for? What can we do with it? What material is it?

At the playground there is a water pump. The water flows down on to different levels and on each level there are exits that lead the water in different directions. The children want the water to flow in one direction only. What do they have to do to make this happen? How fast can they close the exits and what with? What happens if they initially only close off one level?

Some of the walls in our main room have been painted with magnetic paint in order to display the childrens' drawings and artwork in a safe and flexible way at their eye level. The children experiment continuously. Where does my picture stay on the wall and where doesn't it? What type of paper stays put on the wall and what moves slowly downwards? Which magnets should I use for what object? Why are there places on the wall where the magnets don't stay?

One afternoon we go to an ice cream parlour with a small group. On our way there we see many shops. What can we see in the shop windows? What is sold here? What do we need it for? Who likes what best and why?

On our way back to the Kindergarten we walk a different route and chance upon some construction workers. We stop, observe and ask what they are doing. The craftsmen tell us about their work and their tools.

On our way to and from the ice cream parlour we've also, amongst other things, observed road signs and discussed for whom they are important and what they mean.

4.2.5 Social learning

Social learning happens everywhere where people interact with people. In the Kindergarten there are many occasions for the children to learn social behaviour. Our Morning circle is very typical for social learning. The children learn to express themselves, to listen to others and let them finish talking. They learn to value their own feelings as well as those of others and to deal with these accordingly. They learn that everybody doesn't always feel the same, that you can discuss things and also accept the differences in the end.

During the games in the circle the children learn that they can't always be first and that they have to wait for their turn.

The children often invent rules for games so that they can practise their communication, cooperation and conflict skills.

Other examples of social learning: greeting and saying goodbye, eating breakfast and lunch together, free or organized play, quiet time, tidying up, planning and developing activities or projects.

The different age groups of the structure also help the children to daily practise social behaviour. Children of different ages being together enables various social experiences. This makes it easier to integrate children with different development abilities.

4.2.6 Physical movement and exercise

Movement is one of the primary needs for children. It is an important condition for their physical, mental and also emotional development. Children crave the necessary space in which they can fulfil their need for movement and thus use their body and all their senses. Though physical and at the same time mental experiences comes action. In this the child forms an understanding of the meaning of cause and effect and will be able to further extend and expand on these realizations.

We support the childrens' need for physical movement through a flexible and changeable environment. The furniture can be used to build caves, ships, houses, aeroplanes and other objects of the childrens' imagination. We put ramps and landings at their disposal. There are bouncy animals, swings and roll boards in the facilities.

The Jungle Gym is equipped with climbing frames, suspensions for swings and hammocks and other objects designed for movement such as balls, obstacles, mats etc.

Regardless of the weather (up to a point) we spend at least an hour at the nearby playground that offers a lot of different opportunities for movement.

We encourage the children to live and express their motor abilities. They should make the connection that movement and physical exercise is part of a healthy lifestyle.

The children experience constant development in their motor skills and sense of space and their self-confidence grows accordingly.

4.2.7 Music

We sing, make music and dance with the children. This happens for example in our morning circle with singing and hand/finger games. We play with music through rhythm exercises with simple, partly self-made instruments as well as with our hands, feet, bodies and our voices.

We invent simple songs and move to them.

The children can at any point, when they so desire, play tapes or CDs in order to dance to the music.

We also have a piano in our main room that always invites the children to try the separate keys and to recognize their different tones. To find out how many fingers or hands can play together. To experience that the piano actually can play "on its' own".

5. Final Thoughts

The constant exchange between teachers and parents as well as amongst the parents themselves is very important for us. At regular intervals we have parents' evenings where important issues are aired and the contact between the team and parents is built upon. The parents should and must help carry, form and accompany the Kindergarten and actively take responsibility for the environment in which the care and development of their children take place. On the other hand they still need to let go of their children and trust the team's pedagogical competence. This is a difficult balancing act that needs a lot of mutual understanding and communication. Also in the daily running of the Kindergarten the staff takes time for a few words when the child is brought or picked up, we strive for a constant exchange.

During the parents' evenings points regarding the organization are cleared and current themes are talked about. The parents cover for staff if needs be and take care of all things that are to do with the organization of the Kindergarten. As it is presumed that most parents are working, they are not required to have anything to do with the daily running of the Kindergarten.