



Concept

Die Rheinpiraten e.V.



Bilingual nursery and after-school care centre
With fun and comprehension into the future!

Member
of





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1. Foreword and History

Dear reader,

In 1997 our founders, Julius Busch and Dr. Susanne Stark faced the question: child or career? At that time in Hitdorf, there were no day care facilities for one-year-old children. With much dedication, they established Die Rheinpiraten e.V. As the owners of a factory building that formerly produced matches, they had the necessary space to realise their ambitious project and they are still assisting us today as dedicated consultants and understanding landlords. In the past years the premises have been converted and expanded time and again with the parents, children and the team to accommodate for changing requirements and needs in the day care centre. Die Rheinpiraten e.V is a parents' initiative association whose management is composed entirely of the nursery childrens' parents. As association members, all parents are afforded the option of being active partners in the development and design of our nursery.

Our nursery

Since founding the Rheinpiraten in 1997, working parents in Hitdorf now have the possibility of having a comfortable work and a family life. In the year 2000 the Rheinpiraten nursery group was expanded to include an after-school child care group. In 2004 the Rheinpiraten became a bilingual (English/German) child care centre. In 2011 the nursery was included in the city of Leverkusen's requirements planning and has since been receiving communal funding. The after-school child care group is still funded via parental funding.

This conception describes our service detailing goals, contents, methods and the general set-up and is the authoritative basis for our educational work. Parents and other interested parties are given an insight into our work and our objectives and provided an overview of the current state of our work.

We appreciate your feedback and ideas.

Die Rheinpiraten e.V.

March 2023



2. Presentation of the Facilities

2.1 Organisational Principle

We are a mixed age nursery and offer 17 children aged one to six years a full-time care (45 hours), a maximum of seven children are aged under three. In addition, we look after 15 primary school children. Interested parents can put their names on the waiting list after viewing the facilities. Admitting a child depends on the waiting list, and on the age structure. These criteria were adopted in accordance with the legal mandate in § 9a (6) of the Children's Education Law (KiBiz) by decision of the nursery council. In accordance with the KiBiz parents have the opportunity of co-determining opening times. At present these are:

Monday to Thursday	from 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.
Friday	from 7:30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

The children are to be brought to the nursery by 9.00 a.m. and can be picked-up at individual times by their parents. In the last three weeks of the summer holidays the establishment is closed, as well as between Christmas and New Year.

2.2 Rooms and Outdoor Areas

Our rooms are located in a 250 m² large part of a former match factory, which also includes a small internal garden. The proximity to the Rhine and to Hitdorfer grove allows us also to make the most of this area and to go into the Rhine meadows and the woods to explore. The centre includes three group rooms plus a studio, one bedroom, a kitchen, an office / staff room, a cloakroom / entrance area and toilets. The care centre for the primary school children is located on the same site in an especially converted large apartment.

2.3 Employees, Role of the Employees

Working with us are four German or English speaking pedagogical specialists (educators, social workers), an additional worker and rotating students, interns, volunteers and honorary workers who contribute many different skills (e.g. a professional teacher for nature and forest education, and a music teacher). We contribute to training future professionals by providing internships. To ensure stable relationships for the children, we generally only employ year-long interns, English speaking students completing a semester abroad and a maximum of one short-term school intern.

Our role is defined by our image of the child and our core areas. We believe that a relationship built on respect and loving care is the foundation and secure basis for education, upbringing and care. Therefore, we create a loving, respectful, insightful, child-orientated and stimulating environment for the children.

The role of our professional staff is also the co-constructive support to develop and create self-education opportunities. Our attitude is appreciative and promotes creativity. Another aim of ours is to be an all-round (educational) role model for the children and to teach them



Appreciative
supervision



rules but also offer of co-determining At the same time, partnership with developmental practical as and criticisms and We see ourselves role models, caregivers and companions of the children, as well as designers, experts and partners.

Co-construction

them boundaries whilst giving them the possibility their own boundaries, rules and possibilities. we complement the parental upbringing, work in parents and offer support in educational and processes - as low-threshold as possible - as necessary. We invite your questions, suggestions use these to improve our quality.

primarily as professional and active co-learning

Through constant further education we ensure and enhance the quality of our work.

2.4 Networking and Cooperation

The association Die Rheinpiraten e.V. is an active community that provides mutual support and diversity, where many different people meet. We see it as our duty to offer these people the best possible support through networking and cooperation.

collaboration

An important part of our work is the collaboration with the Villa Zündfunke and the Matchbox Theatre located with us under one roof. We have a cooperation agreement with the Hitdorf primary schools to facilitate the transfer of our children into school. There is also a close cooperation with the Leverkusen city youth welfare service and the Rhineland Regional Authority (Landschaftsverband Rheinland LVR), the Sozialraum-AG, the Joint Welfare Association NRW, the Paritätisches Jugendwerk (PJW), the Association for Early Multi-

lingualism in Day Care Centres and Schools (Verein für frühe Mehrsprachigkeit an Kitas und Schulen, FMKS), the National Association of maternity centres NRW, the health department, the police (traffic education), local clubs, doctors and companies. We see collaboration and cooperation as an enrichment of our pedagogical work.

2.5 Daily Routine

Below you will find an example of our daily routine. However, we occasionally deviate from these specified times and daily events. The needs of children vary and intensive play and experience phases should not be interrupted by schedules and timetables. It would hinder their development to not make time to play and to give time for the children's interests.

Time	Daily Events
8:00 - 9:00	Arrival of the children, joint breakfast, free play
9:00 - 9:30	Morning circle: - welcome and dialogue with the children (children's conference) - joint planning of the day with the kids



Time	Daily Events
9:30 - 11:30	Joint activities / group work / individual supervision / free play: - within the context of project work - outdoors
11:30 - 12:30	group lunch
12:30 - approx. 14:00	- brushing teeth - nap-time for young children - quiet-time for the older children - free play
14:00 - 17:15	Joint activities / group work / individual one-to-one-care / free play: - within the context of project work - outdoors

Children joining us in the coming year have the opportunity of playing as part of a playgroup with the U3 children once a week Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. from approximately May to July. This provides them the opportunity of getting to know the nursery's everyday life.

3. Educational Foundations

3.1 Mission statement

WITH FUN AND COMPREHENSION INTO THE FUTURE

What this means for us:

We see the day care centre as an early childhood education institution. However, our work differs considerably from work in schools. Our highest priority is an appreciative and loving care for our children - regardless of gender, nationality or ethnicity, religion or world view, disability, age, sexual orientation and identity. We are there for the children and give them security and recognition, as well as creating bonds and trust. In addition, we accompany, support and encourage their individual development, skills and strengths in suitable conditions for proper development and holistic care. With this in mind, we accompany and support our children in their development, sharing experiences and learning from each other.

With fun and
comprehension
into the future

3.2 Image of the Child

Our image of the child shapes the goals and principles of our educational work. We follow the scientifically and widely recognised image of the child, that they are an actor of their own development, an independent, active and self-forming being. Children explore their environment of their own accord and learn holistically with all their senses, minds and

Self-education



bodies. However, this is formed not only on their own initiative, but also accompanied by the help of professionals (co-construction) and the support of their peers.

Our holistic concept and our project work, that is linked to the living environment of the children, provides them with the best conditions for self-education. Following this image of the child, each child has the right to education, protection from physical, psychological and sexual violence, and care from birth. We stand up for the needs and rights of our children, and offer them a safe place to grow up happily. Equally, the children have the right to have a say and to participate in decision making wherever possible. We aim to make decisions with our children and not for them. Appreciating the children's participation is therefore another valued principle of our day care centre.

3.3 Educational Approach

The Rheinpiraten work according to their own concept which makes use of various educational approaches with our image of the child forming the basis. We pursue a holistic, experiential, self-educating, true-to-life and project-work oriented concept. It allows the children to learn with their hands, head and heart, catering to their individual level of development. Children must be stimulated according to their developmental status – only then education and learning work optimally. Holistic education provides all children with the best conditions for high quality education. The different playrooms are available to the children, when they are not taking part in small group activities for project work or other activities with the group. This is all done in a bilingual context and a creative learning environment.

Project work is particularly suited to holistic experiences. It ties in to the children's environment and teaches them important subjects in more detail. It is participatory; provides learning experiences in a combination of all levels of education; supports all basic skills and is community-orientated. The holistic experience is furthermore supported by the various methods that can be implemented. Project work's complexity and openness to the outside further offers many opportunities to experience the project subjects in nature or in a social context to a deeper extent. It is also particularly suitable for early childhood education because the children can deal with the project topic in their own way and according to their own abilities. In addition, project work helps the children interact with one another, which is also important for their development.



Project work



Playing

Playing is of great importance to children, therefore we provide the children with sufficient time and stimulating play materials. Here the children can blossom, learning and developing their skills. They learn personal responsibility and acting cooperatively.

We see education, raising and caring as a holistic process in which our professionals reflecting on their actions plays an important role, since children are influenced by our behaviour as role models. Structures and rituals create a framework that provides assurance and guidance to our children.

The basis of our educational work is regulated by the Children's Education Act (Kinderbildungsgesetz, KiBiz). In addition, we are guided by the educational standards of our state

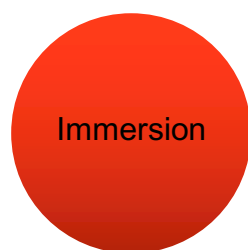


North Rhine-Westphalia and other legal foundations, such as SGB VIII and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is our overall educational framework and includes ecological, economic and social aspects. Our educational concept involves a holistic, situation-oriented, interactional and experience oriented approach. It promotes playful and creative forms of learning and at the same time, cooperation oriented living and learning. These are precisely the issues, which the federal-state Commission of ESD in childcare requires being implemented.

During the year we regularly inform parents of our educational work via notice boards, emails, project reports and exhibits. The work of our day care centre is presented in a professional and transparent manner. Twice a year we also organise a parents' evening to inform parents about educational topics and our work.

3.4 Key Aspects of the Establishment:

3.4.1. Bilingual Education



Growing globalisation makes multilingualism become increasingly important. In 2004, our parents had the courage to take the unusual step of introducing bilingual (English/German) supervision for the children. Ever since we have made an effort to always employ at least two native speakers. Thus, German- and English-speaking educators work with us together, so children are immersed in the new language and learn it playfully from the context in which it is used. The German

professionals always speak German and the English-speaking professionals speak always English to the children. Therefore, in addition to German, English is also a normal everyday language. To speak two languages is the norm for us. Multilingual growth requires much time being spent with the new language. As our children have a full-day in the day care centre, our childcare is the ideal place to take advantage of this possibility.



Language education - both German and English – is integrated into everyday life, according to the legal basis of language education (see KiBiz § 13 c (3)). Linguistic development is observed and documented at least annually by the method of "Accompanying everyday integrated language development monitoring" (begleitende alltagsintegrierte Sprachentwicklungsbeobachtung, BaSiK). It is a standardised process-oriented monitoring method, which especially takes the child's individual language development into account. It includes concrete suggestions for everyday integrated language education situations and is used to plan daily integrated language education. However, BaSiK simultaneously serves as an early warning system. In particularly striking discrepancies educators can recommend further diagnosis.

We use and create everyday life, intensive communication situations for daily integrated language education. Forming relationships and a trusting, respectful environment are as fundamental as the possibility of making personal experiences that are supported by a communicative dialogue with us. These are especially ritualised standard situations, play



and peer interactions and dialogue-based experiences, which are summarised under the term literacy. In everyday life, we talk a lot to the children, sing German and English songs, read many books in both languages and offer an environment that is challenging to the children, arouses their curiosity and supports them to actively explore their environment.



We are a member of

3.4.2. Discovering Nature



We believe that children need to experience and discover nature in order to be able to grow up happily and successfully. Therefore we regularly (at least once a week) go to the Hitdorfer forest or to the Rhine and some days we spend all day outdoors with the children where we explore the secrets of the forest and the Rhine



meadows. There is also enough time to splash in puddles, balance on tree trunks or to frolic with the spirits and fairies of the forest. In our outdoor area we plant and harvest vegetables, berries and herbs, experimenting on the water track, or playing with sand and clay. Nature is the perfect place for holistic learning and it is a varied and stimulating play and exercise space. Natural materials invite the children to participate in this imaginative, creative play.

Discovering nature also enables children to carry out environmental research and to establish scientific relationships. We support their scientific curiosity through observational materials, such as buckets, cups, shovels, magnifying glasses, tweezers and pipettes and

provide age-appropriate, non-fiction books on different subjects. Environmental education and conservation are now considered central issues and are an important part of education for sustainable development.

**Explore nature
with all senses!**

If children get to know and learn to love nature and the environment, they will strive to protect and preserve it in the future.

"What children experience and learn "outside" cannot be replaced by anything else. And if we see something in these experiences that is indispensable for healthy development, then we should do everything to create these opportunities [...]."



3.4.3. Creativity

In view of escalating ecological, economic and social challenges, creativity and problem solving capabilities are now in more demand than ever. After all, creativity does not only entail artistic activities. Children naturally have a high creative potential which we would like to keep and foster, in an effort to create optimal conditions for creative processes. Firstly, we do this by offering them the opportunity for various sensory experiences. These include an attractive room design; free access to diverse, modifiable games, crafts and everyday materials; opportunities for experimentation and participation in decision making. Infants' play is very important because it promotes and enables creative processes. Therefore, we consider it important to offer the children a lot of space for free play, so they can immerse themselves, absent-mindedly in their own imaginary worlds. Artistic activities especially lend themselves as a sensible methodical approach to the extrasensory perception as the starting point of childhood educational processes. Stencils and colouring pages alone do not correspond to our understanding of artistic activities. Our children are allowed to try out different materials in our studio and our workroom according



to their own individual interests and capabilities. In addition, there are possibilities to test and research new materials or to learn new techniques, and to implement these techniques creatively in the context of project work and projects with professional artists.



On the professional stage of the Matchboxtheatre the over four year olds are given the opportunity of learning new forms of expression. Again, their imagination is stimulated and they present to their parents, proudly and confidently, once or twice a year in a small play.

In 2011 Die Rheinpiraten were awarded the title of a day care centre with a special cultural profile. In the state competition "Kultur prägt! Artists Meet Children and Young People", the secretary of state for education Ute Schäfer, awarded innovative projects with children and young people on 14/12/2011.



3.5 U3-children and the Mixed Age Group

The educational work in mixed age groups is challenging because the needs of different aged children need to be considered and the spatial conditions must meet the needs of all children. However, we are happy to accept this challenge, as we are convinced that the age mix concept is beneficial. The children stay in the same group from the start enabling them to form permanent, intensive relationships with the staff and other children. The large age-mix and the proximity to our school children promotes social skills and individual development as the children can choose play materials from each age group to play with. Growing up and learning together gives younger children the opportunity of learning from



role models and older children can build their confidence and take responsibility. For many years, the children and parents have found this support structure to be very pleasant and beneficial.



We cater for the special needs of the U3 children as we provide an intensive individual acclimatisation concept (see chapter 5.1.1), which lays special emphasis on creating a loving, respectful relationship. We take the time for the care and welfare of our little ones and they have sufficient individual resting and sleeping times. We also provide areas of retreat for older and younger children and work in small groups with children of the same age.

3.6 Intercultural Education and Inclusion

We see intercultural and inclusive living and learning in early education as the only way to reduce social discrimination and provide greater educational justice, so all children can fully participate in society. We therefore welcome a diverse, eclectic mix of children from different backgrounds, with different skills and resources, with different cultures, languages and religions. We want to live in a diverse community together and learn from each other. We do not believe in a culture of adaptation, but one in which we grow together.

4. Other Aspects of our Work



In addition to the above presented educational foundations, a fundamental focus of our work in the nursery is to offer development opportunities to every child - according to their individual needs and abilities. The educational areas of the state NRW can be found in our educational everyday life and are linked together by us in our project work. In particular, we would like to give you an insight into the following educational areas and training principles:

4.1 Natural Science Education

How do cars drive? Where do rainbows come from? How does a lamp light up? Children are constantly coming up with questions and experimenting with their environment. Natural



scientific learning can take place in many everyday situations (while walking in the forest, during a game, while baking cookies) and experiments. Discovering and exploratory learning is our focus. For this we provide the children with an environment and opportunities that enable them experience and independently verify their hypotheses as part of their world exploration. We do not believe that children require scientific explanations. Nevertheless, we consider



experiments useful when they are based on the children's experiences and help to answer their questions. Therefore, we are part of the network "House of Little Scientists" ("Haus der kleinen Forscher") since 2010. Here we receive regular training and suggestions on how we can use simple means to carry out experiments with children and how we can investigate the many questions they have.

4.2 Exercise

Exercise is, just like sensual experiences, the foundation of child development and education. As part of our nature days and excursions to the Rhine meadows we offer the children a varied, extensive area with different exercise- and play-demands for each age group. Outdoors the available space for exercise is not the only appeal, but also the changing play and exercise incentives according to the different seasons. Tree trunks are tempting to balance on, trees, hollows and slopes are to be conquered and invite our children to play and run around. We also offer weekly-guided exercise activities in our rooms or in the gym of the local primary school. Collective sports games help the children develop a sense of team spirit and fairness and help them learn follow rules.



4.3 Music

Music can be a driver for many emotional, cognitive, physical and social learning processes. Children can develop their creative thinking and behavioural patterns by exploring musical perceptions and activities. Therefore, we regularly sing with the children and give them the opportunity to get to know various basic instruments. In addition, once a week, we benefit from the professional skills of an experienced music educator.



4.4 Pre-School



Our nursery children quickly want to be part of older circle thanks to the constant contact with our school children, who serve as role models and enjoy certain privileges. We support our pre-schoolers through intensive pre-school work – focussing on having fun while learning. Our goal is that the children start school being inquisitive and open-minded and develop knowledge about their environment and have the skills to make the most of this environment. Once a week the pre-school children meet for 45 minutes in our pre-school group. Here the children are additionally prepared in an age-matched group which holistically promotes their integration to school. We encourage the use of fine motor skills (e.g. drawing arcs, cutting); start to use numbers and quantity terms,



timing and orientation (calendar, left, right); practice language training (e.g. story telling) and social behaviour (being considerate, listening, being able to wait).

4.5 Digital Media

The use of digital media is rapidly increasing in children's everyday lives, and also plays an important role in our kindergarten, hence why a digital media concept was implemented at Die Rheinpiraten. We also understand that digital media education is a process that starts with the child. This education is the result of a child's exposure to media, and goes hand-in-hand with our above-mentioned image of the child.

The knowledge that develops from media education enables the children to deal with digital media in a self-confident and, most importantly, responsible manner which reduces the negative effects. We offer the children the opportunity to gain a wide variety of experiences with digital media in a protected environment. We talk about the effects of digital media on emotions, values, reality, knowledge and behaviour, and the discussion between the child and the supporting educator is of the highest importance. The educators provide guidance and support in processing and reflecting. We offer a wide range of options for implementing this concept in a social, creative and active way. Our focus is on the children using these digital devices as a tool for their creativity, and not as a medium of consumption. These devices are not intended to replace social processes, but to work alongside the pedagogical approaches. The use of apps, for example, should support learning, promote creativity, encourage children to be independent and promote co-operation with their peers. This is not possible without the functioning framework which we are constantly striving to develop and expand, as well as further training and qualifications for our educators so that they can guide the children in their media experiences in a confident and professional manner.

The most important areas of education for teaching media skills for us include:

Information education - At daycare age, we understand this skill to mean the ability to work with digital media and implement information. We encourage curiosity and motivation, and offer the children the opportunity to experiment with different media freely and in a controlled environment. The children also learn how to provide and generate information. For example, when the children ask: "Who is the person writing on the internet?", they learn how search engines work and how to interpret information from the internet. It is important for them to gain an understanding that this content sometimes has nothing to do with the truth they are looking for.

Technical competence - This means the understanding of technology. The children learn by trying things out for themselves. "How does a circuit work?" "How can I break a circuit?" "How can I made an LED bulb light up?" Once the children understand that they can build this machinery by themselves than can light up or move, they start experimenting.

Production skills - We explore the world around us using microscopes, endoscopes, cameras and apps. Programming for the first time can be easy: e.g. We recognise the patterns, abstract shapes and programme them into our "Bee-Bots" (Small robots in the



shape of a bee) so that they can draw pictures or walk through a self-built maze. Their own ideas are implemented and strengthen their self-confidence.

The digital world offers children many opportunities to construct and produce their own creative ideas. Anything that replaces social interaction however, or replaces learning in the real world, does not belong in our approach to digital media. With us, children are active learners and creative designers, we dabble and experiment. The children develop their own initiative, reflect on what they have learnt, weigh up their alternatives and find out new ways of solving problems, whilst putting them into action.

4.6 Religion, Ethics and Values

We believe that religious education, ethical orientation and an understanding of values are essential aspects of education. Therefore, we give our children the opportunity to get to know different ideologies, faiths and religions as well as festivals and rituals from their own and other cultures, to discover and pursue meaningful and significant issues.

It is also important to us that they get to know value systems and find their own views (particularly on issues such as respect, acceptance, tolerance, responsibility for themselves and others and for nature and the environment, solidarity).

4.7 Nutrition / Health Education

We prepare breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks for all children. Because we feel responsible for the children's diet, we want to offer all children the same healthy eating. We and our lunch caterer align our quality according to the criteria of the German Society for Nutrition e.V. (DGE) and the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO). We ensure a varied, balanced diet. Special dietary requirements (e.g. due to allergies) of individual children are considered, where possible. Fruit and / or vegetables are served with each meal (breakfast, lunch, afternoon snack). The food is set on the table in bowls and the children decide themselves what and how much they want to eat. They do not have to eat everything, but are encouraged mainly to eat vegetables or salad and try new foods. The children are allowed to drink when they want, there is sufficient water available. Sweets are an exception (e.g. on children's birthdays), they are not part of the daily diet.

We include the children in the daily routine, for example, cleaning the dinner table, preparing fruit, etc.. After a short time, even our one-year-olds tidy their plates independently. Through joint cooking activities we involve the children in the food preparation and introduce them to a healthy diet. Moreover, we aim to raise nutritional awareness by bringing it up in everyday life or through food projects.



For us, eating together is pleasure as well as an occasion to get together, talk and feel good, reflect and learn. Therefore, we appreciate a sociable and pleasant atmosphere. This also means that the children respect table manners, according to their individual level of development.



Nutrition, wellbeing and health are closely linked. We create an environment in which the children feel comfortable, we provide nutritional awareness and also embed health education in our daily events. This includes routine personal hygiene such as brushing teeth, washing hands, changing nappies and potty training, healthy eating (see chapter 4.6) and exercise (see chapter 4.2).

We provide age-appropriate expertise on the body and bodily functions. Sex education is a natural but not explicitly highlighted part of everyday life with the children. We are open to the children's questions and answer according to their age. Health education also means taking responsibility for the body. Sick children must have the opportunity to recover at home and get well (see chapter 5.1.5).

4.8 Child Protection



Protecting children from abuse and neglect is an important task for child care centres and is taken seriously by us for the good of children entrusted to us. We have entered into an agreement with the Youth Department of the City Leverkusen to ensure the protection from child welfare endangerment according to §8a Social Security Code VIII Children and Youth Services and created an internal child protection concept:

Our professionals are (firstly) asked to independently assess the risks and to recommend contacts for assistance. If there is any suspicion that a child's welfare may be endangered, the case is discussed with the team and the educational direction. The parents and, if possible, the child are involved to seek for a solution, should the risks be unclear or help be considered necessary. A child protection specialist is consulted to assess the risks and to agree on supporting measures if there is reasonable suspicion.

We are obligated to involve and pass on the child's data to the youth welfare services in urgent or serious child welfare endangerment cases or if the parents refuse to cooperate to assess the risks.

4.9 Educational Documentation (Nursery)

Focusing on
the child's
strengths

The results of regular observations regarding the development and educational process are recorded and the child's individual educational development is shown in our educational documentation. The emphasis is on the individuality of the child in with the strengths, interests, achievements and challenges being described in terms of his/her personal educational process. The parents' written consent is a prerequisite for the educational documentation. They have the right to obtain insight into the documentation at any time and to demand it be handed over. The data from our



educational documentation is not passed on to the school. Parents decide whether or not they want to forward the data to the school.

The educational documentation consists of the records of the observations and the subsequent discussions with parents (twice a year) and the child's portfolios (roughly once a month).

4.9.1 Observation

Daily monitoring found its way as an important foundation of pedagogical action into childcare a long time ago. Systematic observation is a relatively recent feature of German childcare. Determining the child's individual prerequisites as well as observing and evaluating his/her capabilities are an important basis to plan, implement and design individual learning and educational processes. Observation and documentation are now required by law for educational professionals.

4.9.2 Observation Methods

In addition to everyday observation, we regularly observe our nursery children every 6 months using our own observation method. Our method contains aspects of both open, perceptive observation (based on the model of Leuven) and a structured method with questions and possible answers to choose from, for observation and assessment. For the observation of language development, we use the "Accompanied daily integrated language development observation" method ("Begleitende alltagsintegrierte Sprachentwicklungsbeobachtung" - BaSiK) (See Chapter 3.4.1.).

4.9.3 Portfolios

The educational documentation is supplemented by portfolios. Portfolios are collections and compilations of products and records which are mainly created together with the children. The older and more competent the children become, the more we involve them in preparing their portfolios. They can help choosing accompanying materials such as pictures, photos of their creations or experiences, special things, interests and capabilities or we pick up on their comments regarding certain situations. The portfolios give the children the chance to engage with their own development, to reflect on experiences, perceive change and consciously deal with the development of their abilities. It is a document of the child's self-efficacy and keepsake for the children.

5. Collaboration

5.1 Partnership with Parents

A cooperative educational partnership is very close to our hearts. Good cooperation and an intensive exchange between us and the parents is very important because it has an impact on the development of their child. If children feel that their parents have trust in us



For the benefit
of the children

and our work, they have less separation anxiety and the transition into the new environment is easier for them. Together, we are responsible for the children's welfare.

While we provide the educational know-how, the parents have the personal experience in their child's development. We offer parents the chance to have breakfast together with their children and the team, or alternatively a coffee break with the team in the afternoon while the children are looked after by other members of the team. There is also an opportunity to shadow their everyday activities. In doing this, information can be exchanged, questions resolved and subjects discussed in an informal atmosphere - sometimes with or sometimes without the children. The parents are given advice regarding upbringing and put them in touch with offers for assistance if they are not available in the establishment.

5.1.1 Settling In

The time for settling in to the nursery is very significant in order to interfere with the child's development (based on the Berlin acclimatisation model). Children need safe, emotional ties to be able to approach new and unknown situations with openness and curiosity. Only when the child trusts the new caregivers and the establishment and has gotten to know the daily schedule and the team and other children, he/she can feel at home with us. Therefore, in our facility one parent must take part in group events as long as the child needs the security and support of his/her parents.

Building
relationships

Roughly one month before the child joins the nursery, a meeting with the parents is held to discuss how the settling-in process will proceed. In general, we expect an acclimatisation period of approximately 2 weeks, but this may vary for each case. During this time, the parents need to have a certain degree of flexibility. The form and number of settling-in appointments will be set according to prior arrangement with our management. The duration and frequency of these events may vary and depending on the child's needs. During the settling in days the parents stay at the nursery for a few hours giving the child time to get to know the facilities in peace. If the child accepts that their parent is not present for some time and he/she comes to us and can be calmed by us, we will increase the timeframe in which the parents need not attend the group events. During this time, the parents should stay at the nursery or be easily accessible to us. Regular meetings regarding the child's wellbeing are held and the results are included in the next steps.

5.1.2 Child Development Talks

We offer parents of the nursery children two appointments per year. We see these talks as the basis for a partnership between the parents and us. Together we speak about the status of the child's development - the results of our observations and the portfolios serve as a basis for these discussions. We also look into how we (the establishment and the



parents) can support the child in his/her future development. After the development talks we record the most important points.

Of course, we can always arrange an appointment outside these fixed dates. It is in the interest of the children that we take sufficient time and do not discuss them in passing talks.

In the schoolchild care, appointments are held depending on requirements.

5.1.3 Short conversations

The parents can have short, passing conversations (regarding eating and sleeping habits, health, pick up times) at any time during the dropping-off and collecting phase. For larger concerns or under special circumstances, however, we arrange appointments. The children's concerns should be discussed in detail and in peace; after all, we need to focus our attention on the children during the day.

5.1.4 Observation

According to prior agreement with the management, parents are welcome to observe the everyday running of the nursery beyond the scope of the settling-in period. The parents should be aware that their children often behave differently in their presence, since this is unfamiliar to the children in the nursery.

5.1.5 Health Care

The nursery must be informed of infectious diseases, such as mumps, chicken pox, diarrhoea, conjunctivitis or lice immediately. The treating physician or the health department can inform the parents when an infected or possibly infected but not yet sick child must be excluded from the nursery or after-school care. Together with the contract parent also receive a leaflet on the Infection Protection Act.

From the first day in the nursery, every child also needs to provide proof of health screening examinations corresponding to their age (by presenting the screening booklet for children or an appropriate medical certificate).

We understand that many parents are in conflict between child and career when their child falls ill. Nevertheless, this cannot be detrimental to the child, the other children and the team. Therefore, sick children are categorically exempt from attending nursery. Parents must arrange emergency substitute childcare early enough.

5.1.6 Data Protection

To fulfil tasks according to the Child Education Act (KiBiz) parents must pass on certain data. These are only made available by us to those persons needing to carry out tasks required under this Act. In addition, without any additional legal foundation, child-related data will exclusively be made available to the legal guardians. Of course, we handle all information confidentially, the staff is bound to professional discretion.



5.1.7 Involvement, Participation in the Association

Parents have the opportunity to take part in our parents' initiative's decision making and to actively participate in our events. When signing the contract, they are included in our association and have the opportunity of being elected to various subcommittees under the parents' committee and the general assembly and can help shape the everyday and concept of the parents' initiative.

The board, made up of elected members of the association, conducts the business of the association. Our parents can also cooperate another way: they can be elected at the annual parents' meeting to the parents' council in order to support the educational work of the nursery and promote cooperation between the nursery, parents and the supporting association.

All parents of our supervised children are required to annually spend 20 hours of their time helping to maintain and expand the association and its facilities. We see parents' services as less of a chore and more of an opportunity to actively participate in the design of the nursery, contribute their own skills and to communicate in a way that, for the children, establishes a sense of community that goes beyond a pure purpose community. Parents are welcome in our facility not only for festivals, we give them space to implement their own ideas. We also need the support of parents to spatially, personally and structurally maintain high quality standards.

Parental
initiative



5.1.8 Festivals and Celebrations

We appreciate it when parents or grandparents actively get involved in the planning and carrying out of festivals or other activities (summer festival, Christmas, St. Martin, etc.) and celebrate with us. Children, parents and team also take part at the Hitdorfer carnival parade together. Once a year the association organises a weekend retreat for all interested parents and children. The shared weekend is a lot of fun for the children and promotes a sense of community between the parents.



5.2 Teamwork

Appreciation, openness and trust are the keys to successful teamwork for us. Only with these qualities can we always rely on each other and give the children confidence and security while serve as a role model in our team. From our employees we ask commitment, ability to handle conflicts and constructive cooperation. We benefit from the different skills



and experience of our team members. Working in a partnership management style promotes the personal responsibility of the employees as well as communication and cooperation within the team. With a clear assignment of tasks, the management still gives the staff room for creativity and autonomous action.

Together!

In regularly scheduled team meetings and at least one educational day a year during which the nursery is closed, the team has the opportunity to reflect, exchange experiences and observations, discuss conflicts and jointly develop perspectives for the future educational work together.

5.3 Cooperation with the Supporting Association

The supporting association of our nursery and our after-school care centre is the association "Die Rheinpiraten e.V.". The board assumes the legal representation in an honorary capacity and runs the business of the association. It is thus responsible for staffing, managing and financial affairs. The board has delegated the organisational, administrative and representative responsibility to our office manager. Our educational management is responsible for the educational management of the facility and for complying to and implementing legal regulations. Supporting association, office management, management and employees together represent the organisation as an organised club level service company and regularly exchange information. The supporting association bears the overall responsibility.

6. Quality Management

Through the implementation of our concept in our daily work, we ensure the best possible holistic stimulation of the children, regardless of their social or cultural origin, gender or physical and mental capacity. We accept and allow diversity. In addition, expertise, employee satisfaction, staffing, spatial conditions and parental cooperation are essential criteria for our quality standards.

We use the parental surveys and received complaints to compare and discuss our perception of quality compared to that of the children and parents. Current laws, educational developments, decisions from children's conferences, information from training and from the Parity Welfare Association are integrated in our discussions and determine how the nursery and after-school care centre develop. This is always primarily oriented towards the welfare and needs of our children.

As part of our team meetings and team / support association discussions, we try to regularly question our actions, to change and improve, and we reflect on our relationships with each other and the parents.

To give us a better picture and evaluation of our quality, and for further development, we also work with the quality check program PQ-Sys®.



6.1 Further education

Training boosts professionalism. We see it as a duty and a necessity to continue to train and integrate new knowledge into practice - so that we maintain our quality standards and always stay up to date. The insights from further education and training are reflected in team meetings and thus benefit all employees. Our supporting association supports the employees' desire to qualify themselves, also via financial resources.

6.2 Complaints Management

"Our Max is not prepared here well enough to go to school." "Julia should do more arts and crafts, even if she does not feel like it!" "I can't get Louis' new jumper clean anymore, it is smeared with glue!" Complaints, suggestions and criticism are part of the nursery's daily routine. Conflicts between educators and parents may possibly arise due to the different perceptions of the children. The different observations of behaviour that parents have and that we have lead us to two perceptions of the child and therefore often lead to misunderstandings. Often a child's behaviour at home is also very different from that in the nursery. After all it may be regarded as difficult when realising the joint responsibility for the child's education by the parents and the nursery that there is no standard educational concept. Its absence on the one hand makes cooperation difficult and on the other hand challenges it. Recalling the common educational mission and perceiving the current situation in educator-parent cooperation as well reflecting the obstacles for cooperation are the first steps in reaching an improved experience. Complaints are often seen as unpleasant and disruptive. This makes it more important to spot conflicts, to deal with them in a professional manner and to view and take advantage of them as a social learning opportunity.

Our goal is to address conflicts and complaints professionally and to develop a positive attitude towards complaints, which is why we have developed this complaints concepts, and it is able to be viewed if there is interest. We are open to complaints and take them seriously. Feedback, requests and suggestions for improvement are the basis to optimise our work. Whenever parents would like to criticise, make suggestions or praise they should confide in our management. We also conduct parental surveys at regular intervals to assess the current climate and to see if any amendments need to be made.

Complaints are a contribution to continuous quality improvement and one of the forms of participation that is available to our parents and the children.

6.3 Public Relations

To survive under the growing pressure of competition one must evolve with outstanding quality; make themselves and their skills known and be able to communicate.

With their type of work, methods and contents of the parents' work, the nursery has an effect on the public. The goal is to convince our parents of our quality, because word of mouth is the best propaganda. We also want to interest future parents in the establishment; make a distinctive and positive image of the nursery known and motivate staff as well as inspire confidence in all target groups. Our internal public relations are therefore aimed



primarily at our own staff and our parents. Committed educators and enthusiastic parents who relate to us and our educational profile are also the best publicity. The external public relations are aimed at new parents, grandparents, citizens in Hitdorf and agencies. For this we have a website, write press articles, make flyers that inform citizens in Hitdorf in our display case and illustrate our profile in our conception for all who are interested.

Our conception is our flagship and established ties between the internal and the external public. It can be downloaded as a PDF from our website and is thus available to all interested parties.

Attachment: Animal Assisted Education



Attachment:

Animal Assisted Education


Die Rheinpiraten e.V.
- After School Child Care -

Introduction

The educational work with children can be enriched and supported by their contact with animals. Many children today have hardly any contact with animals, although most children would like to have a pet. The Leverkusen Health Department does not allow animals in daycare centres due to hygiene infection, but allows them to work with school children. Therefore, we decided to give the older children contact with a dog, a decision that was welcomed positively by both the children and parents.

Benefits of working with animals

We appreciate that children can very easily develop a relationship with a dog. Relationship building is an important aspect of our educational work. Dogs are particularly suitable because they have similar social behaviour to humans, forming a particularly close bond. They seek contact with others, exercise a high level of demands on children, and are empathetic and adaptable. Children who are often more reserved when interacting with others, particularly find it easier to make contact with dogs. The dog enables harmless physical contact, and gives the children a feeling of acceptance and security. It provides topics for conversation, which then promotes contact with other children. Responsibility and care for the animal enables social skills such as empathy, consideration, acceptance of boundaries, neglecting one's own needs and a sense of responsibility and duty. Physical-sensual perceptions with the dog and emotional and social experiences enable the children to learn by experience, which corresponds and enriches the understanding of education in early childhood.



Learning from
and with
the dog

General Conditions

Our animal-assisted pedagogy has been taking place in our after-school care facility since 2017. Our dog is particularly suitable for working with children, as he grew up with us and our children, and slowly got familiar dealing with his surroundings. He also attends a dog school and is trained to be a companion dog. His normal resting place is in the office, where he occasionally goes and visits the school children, accompanied by educators. Proper handling of dogs is





demonstrated and explained to the children. Every child has the opportunity to approach the dog at their own pace and to learn the dog's body language.

Legal and Hygienic Basics

Of course, it is essential to meet some basic conditions. This includes informing the supervisory authorities (Youth Welfare Office, LVR, Leverkusen Health Department, Veterinary office, Accident Insurance Fund) that training and further education of the team and dog takes place, and that health and legal aspects have been taken into account. This includes a special hygiene plan, regular veterinary care, comprehensive vaccination and treatment against parasites, to protect the children and employees. According to studies, early contact with animals can even prevent allergies. It is also worth mentioning that our dog is a poodle. This particular breed does not lose any hair and is generally considered allergy-friendly.

Compliance with the Animal Welfare Act must be observed, as we also have a responsibility towards the dog. He receives a healthy diet, regular veterinary checks, training, sufficient exercise and necessary rest periods. On the days when the dog is present in our after-school care centre, he is also given an opportunity to go for a walk in the morning and afternoon plus a 30-minute run during the lunch break. In addition to this, he accompanies the children on their way from school to the Rheinpiraten and during their visits to the Rhine or in the forest.