

# Educational Concept



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# Family Service at the Albert-Ludwigs-University of Freiburg

The supporting organisation of the University-Nursery(Kita) Blütengarten is the Family Service of the University of Freiburg:

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The aim of the family service is to create family-friendly conditions in order to promote the compatibility of career and family at the Albert-Ludwigs-University of Freiburg, as well as - to a lesser degree - at other universities, the medical centre of the university, and other research institutions in Freiburg. Accordingly, the daycare centres run by Familienservice gGmbH are open to children of whom at least one parent is a member of the University of Freiburg or is employed at another university, the medical centre of the university, or another research institution in Freiburg.

## Our View of the Child

Children are...

- ...independent human beings who learn about their world independently and with all of their senses.
- ...curious, active, persevering and able to learn on their own accord.
- ...competent human beings who think and decide with us, act and co-create.
- ...social human beings who need support.

## Guiding Vision

- We offer working parents the opportunity to combine work and family life.
- We accompany and supervise children, thereby promoting their education and growth, helping them to independently shape their lives now and in the future.
- We offer the children security, comfort and trust so that they feel comfortable with us.
- We approach children with appreciation, empathy and authenticity.
- We try to be a role model for the children, and we teach them appreciation for their fellow human beings and the environment.
- We support each child in developing at their own pace.
- We approach every child with regard to his or her individuality. The children come to us with their own potential, curiosity, desire to learn and enthusiasm.
- We give each child the opportunity to express individual interests and needs, to make decisions appropriately to his or her age, and to receive individual support.



# General Conditions

## Child Groups

The Uni-Kita Blütengarten is an establishment for small children up to the age of three. A total of ten fulltime places are available in this single-group day care centre. Two of these places are reserved for children under the age of one year. Admission is possible after individual consultation with the manager and if the right staff are available for the younger children and their needs.

## Buildings, Rooms and Outdoor Area

The day care centre is located on the grounds of the Faculty of Biology at the University of Freiburg, directly next to the Botanical Garden on the first floor of the old Bio II/III building.

The day care centre consists of seven rooms connected by a corridor: a large group room, a bedroom, a parents' room for parent talks and a lounge for parents during the settling-in period, a nappy-changing room with toilets and a housekeeping area, an office, a staff room and a kitchen with a dining area for communal meals.

In the spacious group room there is an individually designed mezzanine. It offers a variety of stimuli for movement and a wide range of haptic, visual and spatial impressions. Free play takes place in the group room, a pedagogically well thought-out selection of play materials is freely accessible to the children.

The group room and the bedroom offer retreat possibilities in the form of cosy corners, caves and mattresses. The walls of the care rooms are chosen in child-friendly and calming colours.

The bathroom is equipped with a large changing table, property cupboards, children's toilet and nappy bucket. The children's independence is supported by a staircase attached to the changing table, which allows them to enter the changing table independently.

The hallway is used as an extension of the group room to accommodate the children's love of movement. There, they run and ride the vehicles, among other things.

Our facility is located on the 1st floor of the building, we use the stairs to practise safe handling. The nursery can also be reached barrier-free by lift. This makes it possible for us to take the large 6-seater pram directly from the safe premises of the nursery for excursions and walks.

On the grounds of the Botanical Garden, the nursery has its own outdoor area with an earthen mound and slide, bird's nest swing, playhouse, sandpit, climbing facilities and beds for planting. The botanical garden itself is also available for the children of the day care centre to play, explore and discover.

## Criteria for Acceptance

One parent of the child must be employed as a scientist or an employee in the field of administration and technology with comparable working conditions at the Faculty of Biology of the University of Freiburg. The partner must also be employed or in a training programme.

If at any time there are no interested parties who meet the above criteria, the vacant place will be allocated according to the general allocation guideline of the nursery. These can be viewed at the Family Service's homepage at:

<https://www.familienservice.uni-freiburg.de/childcare-en/daycare/vergaberichtlinie>

## Opening Hours / Holidays

We are open from Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The day care centre is usually closed 27 days per year, of which three weeks are in August as summer holidays and a few days over Christmas and Easter. In addition, there are cleaning days, on which the

equipment is thoroughly cleaned, and educational days dedicated to planning the pedagogical work, to review and further develop our educational concept and to continue our professional education.

### **Drop-off and Pick-up Times**

To ensure a regular daily routine and to enable the children to start the day together, they should be at the day care centre at 9:00 a.m. and picked up by 5:50 p.m. at the latest. If possible, no child should be dropped off during breakfast (9:15 - 9:45). During the settling-in period, these core times will, of course, be variable. If your child is ill or cannot come to the day care centre for any other reason, or can only be brought in later, please let us know by 10 a.m. the latest. In general, we ask for binding agreements with the professionals of the day care centre.

### **Daily Schedule**

A structured daily routine and certain special occasions such as birthday celebrations and farewell ceremonies provide the children with security and support. At the same time, it includes sufficient time for the children's free play and planned activities.

The daily schedule for the group is arranged as follows:

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	arrival of children and free playtime
9:15 – 9:45 a.m.	breakfast
approx. 10:00 a.m.	free playtime (in the group room, outside, planned activities)
11:15 a.m.	clean up together and singing circle
11:45 a.m.	lunch
12:15 p.m.	after-lunch nap
approx. 2:30 p.m.	wake up and free playtime
3:30 p.m.	Snack, followed by free playtime indoors or outdoors
Before 5:50 p.m.	pick-up time

We ask parents not to pick up children during meal and rest times.

## **Principles and Areas of Focus of Educational Work**

### **Attachment and Relationships**

The pedagogical staff of the Uni-Kita Blütengarten considers continuity a significant aspect of quality in the care, education and upbringing of children. This applies especially to small children of only a few years of age. The personal relationship between caregivers and children is an important foundation for the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of the children, and is for this reason a substantial component of our educational work. A good and sustainable relationship is created through regular companionship, reliability, consistency and responsive behaviour of the professionals with the children, in the team and between professionals and parents.

We provide a sense of attachment and belonging in our groups by way of fixed reference persons, guidance and rituals. Children will find a family atmosphere in our care as well as a structured daily routine with enough time for free play. Relationships with other children and the adults of the group are close and provide a sense of security.

### **Role of Nursery Teachers, Carers and Manager**

Working with children under three years of age requires professional technical knowledge (inter alia developmental psychology, research on attachment theories, the brain and cognition as well as

knowledge on the learning behaviour of children) and being ready for lifelong learning. Working with children under three years of age contains, however, also an emotional component. It therefore requires a high degree of consciousness of responsibility, emotional availability and a continuous mental presence.

Positive relationships are a requirement for a healthy personality, therefore shaping a positive relationship with the children is the main task of the pedagogical staff. This relationship is marked by acceptance, respect and appreciation. This is evident in all everyday situations encountered by the children, such as nappy changing, sleeping, playtime or meal times.

Since the children generally cannot yet express themselves through speech, a high degree of sensitive attention is necessary to understand a child's signals. Only this way teachers can react appropriately to each situation so that the children feel understood and accepted. The responsiveness of the professionals is shown through warmth, humour and friendliness. The professionals mirror the child's emotions, movements and expressions. This enables the professionals to recognize and regulate emotional tensions and help the child reduce stress.

Sometimes teachers must set limits, but also support the child in all areas of development (independence, speech ability, gross and fine motor skills, social-emotional development, cognition, play activity, bodily hygiene, nature and environmental consciousness) and convey the feeling of acceptance, respect and appreciation through their overall behaviour.

### **Transition Period**

The transition from the family to the, at first, unfamiliar day care centre means a great challenge for each child. The child has to get to know a new environment and build up relationships with strangers. To do so, the child needs the support of his or her parents or other trusted reference persons. All of Familienservice gGmbH's day care centres therefore offer the families a binding, attachment-oriented transition concept that is based on the Infans concept from the field of early education at the Institute for Applied Socialisation Research / Early Childhood e.V.

Taking a child to childcare is also a new situation for the parents. If the parents' stance toward the institution is positive, the child can more easily overcome this challenge.

Good conditions for a successful transition are:

- Health/well-being of the child
- Continuity (avoiding absent days during acclimatisation)
- If possible, a single primary reference person

Depending on the behaviour of the child and the desired duration of stay in the day care centre, an transition period of 3 weeks up to several months must be anticipated. It is thereby important that the parents plan enough time for transition. After the child has established a secure bond with the professionals and can stay alone for a few hours, the presence of the legal guardians at the day care centre is no longer absolutely necessary. However, they should be able to be at the day care immediately if called upon.

Before each transition, a meeting with the parents takes place. Here, the parents are informed on all upcoming steps of the transition. It is important for us to respond to concerns and fears on the part of the parents and to react accordingly. After successful transition of the child, a concluding discussion with the parents takes place.

The transition period is divided into three phases:

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Phase:

At first, one parent accompanies the child and remains with him or her in the group for about one hour. The child, the allocated staff member and the parents can thereby get to know one another better. While the mother or father remain in the background, the teacher slowly builds up contact with the child. The

mere presence of the mother or father is enough to create a “safe harbour” for the child to which they can always return.

Starting on the 4th day, the accompanying person may leave the room for a short time (max. 30 min). Depending on the child's reaction, the further course of the acclimatisation process is then discussed with the reference teacher.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase:

Step by step, the reference teacher takes over providing for the child. The parents remain in reach and may be called if needed. The time in which the child remains in the group alone may slowly be raised from around 30 minutes to 2 to 3 hours.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Phase:

The child may now already remain alone in the daycare centre. At first, he or she will only be present for half a day. Lunch, after-lunch naps and full-day care may be offered as soon as the child is ready for this step. Acclimatisation is generally complete once the reference teacher is able to console and calm the child, and once the child has found his or her rhythm in the daily programme.

For each new child, for his or her parents, for the group and for the teachers, acclimatisation is an intense time. Children who experience an individual acclimatisation period oriented toward their needs will, however, feel secure and cared for, they will start to have fun playing and learning and they will develop courage and strength for overcoming difficult life situations.

For the transition period, the parents have access to our parent meeting room where they can spend time during the separation phases.

### **Mealtimes**

Eating together is important to us. Therefore, we have breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks together. The children sit at small tables and are supported by the professionals in eating independently and are encouraged to have aesthetic table manners. A quiet and comfortable atmosphere is important to us during meals. Eating together not only satisfies the children, but also helps them practice social skills and gives them the opportunity to experience togetherness. Each meal is accompanied by rituals such as a recurring table saying. Meals are also a daily training ground for the children's independence and fine motor skills.

A balanced diet is an important component for the promotion and maintenance of the children's health and well-being. We offer the children a child-adequate, healthy, balanced and biologically wholesome diet. The nursery receives its lunch from an organic catering company that processes regional organic products. Water and tea are served at every meal.

At the age of one year, the children eat these meals. The parents of the younger children bring in the meals (milk, baby food) for their child. Breakfast and afternoon snacks - preferably sugar-free - are brought from home.

We take the children seriously with regard to their different dietary needs. New, unfamiliar foods can unsettle, as they are seen as strange. We do not force the children to eat food they do not like. Instead, it is important to us to continually offer children new foods and encourage them to try them. Often, foods must be tried multiple times before the children like them.

### **Sleeping**

It is important to us that the children can rest and sleep sufficiently according to their own completely personal needs. For this reason, there is a separate sleeping room, which invites to rest and relax. Each child has its own place to sleep with its own blanket (or sleeping bag). Parents are welcome to bring a cuddly toy for the child like a stuffed animal or blanket. Younger children initially sleep in a wicker basket,

which provides boundaries and comfort. Later, the children switch to mattresses to help them get into and out of bed on their own. The children are accompanied by the staff members into the sleeping room and are snuggled up on their mattresses. Some children still need a little closeness, e.g. a hand to hold, in order to fall asleep quietly. If children are awake, the professionals check whether the child needs some more help to fall asleep or wants to get up already. Older children can get up on their own and leave the sleeping room. Every child has its own sleeping pattern when it starts in the day care centre. This sleep rhythm is taken into account as much as possible during the settling-in period; even after settling-in, the child can rest or sleep at any time. However, experience shows that the children get used to the nap time at the day care centre very quickly. Older children, who often no longer take a nap at home, are also grateful for the rest period at the day care centre to recharge their batteries and process stimuli.

## **Playing**

Play is of substantial significance for the overall development of a child's personality. Children bring extraordinarily great interest for their environment and a strong spirit of discovery with them into the world. Playing is the child's way of interacting with its environment, and contributes to the acquisition of social skills. During playtime, the development of all skills is promoted; in addition, interest, concentration, problem solving, endurance, consideration, patience and much more is trained.

Since the environment presents a many-shaped and interesting reality full of surprises for the child, he or she needs a lot of time to get to know it, to experience it and to shape it. This applies to each stage of development, to each level of developed forms of play and to any time children are playing. Playtime is therefore a highly valuable time, a time of well-being, of experience and of recognition that creates developmental opportunities and releases individual talents and potential. If a child only has little time to play, he or she can only develop his or her relationship with the world to a limited degree. For us, this means the responsibility to enable the children to play undisturbed.

During playtime, the children's stage of development shows itself. For teachers, playtime therefore means the opportunity for in-depth observation of both individual children and the group situation. Based on their observations, the professionals provide specific playtime input, e.g. with cloths, fabrics and other tissues for covering, wrapping, feeling, disguising, hiding or haptic experiences with plasticine, finger paint, mud and paste.

## **Observation and Documentation**

We observe the developmental stage of each individual child intently. For this purpose, we use the observation concept specially developed by the Uni-Kitas. The observations are recorded video-graphically and analysed together in the day care team. This serves as a basis for cooperation with the parents and for planning the pedagogical work. If we notice any abnormalities or developmental delays, we seek a discussion with the parents and, if necessary, recommend consultation with a paediatrician, speech therapist or counselling centre.

In addition, we create an individual development diary for each child, the portfolio. The portfolio is the documentation of experiences, celebrations, play interests and the development of the child in the day care centre. It is designed by the reference in a vivid way with many pictures.

At the end of the child's stay in our day-care, he or she receives this "book" and can keep it as a memory book. The information in the educational and developmental documentation will not be passed on to third parties.

At least once a year, we have a planned parent meeting with the parents in which we discuss the child's development and consider together how we can best support the child's future development.

As a rule, we hold parental interviews at the following times:



- Admission interview with the management
- Settling-in discussion: before the child is settled in
- Acclimatisation reflection: after acclimatisation (approx. 4 - 6 weeks after the start of care, as required)
- Annual meeting: on the child's birthday
- Final discussion: shortly before the end of care

### **Motor development**

Motor development takes place at different rates in each child. Muscle development takes time. Sitting, crawling, standing and walking are only possible when the muscles are stable enough. The task of the educational staff is to observe the children's motor development and to provide each child with appropriate opportunities for movement in an age-appropriate environment. For this purpose, areas are created in the group room where children of different age groups can try out their motor skills, for example:

- protected areas for younger children who are not yet mobile with room to move, so that the children can, for example, turn or prop themselves up.
- race tracks for children who are just starting to run
- climbing wall
- space for jumping, sliding, climbing and running for experienced runners
- open spaces, slopes and steps

Through different objects such as swings, slide boards, "Pikler Triangle", doll prams, rocking horses and slide vehicles, we provide regular opportunities for the children to practise different movements. The children are asked to push and transport objects, overcome obstacles, practise getting on and off, throwing, etc. On our walks, they can also train their stamina according to their age.

The objects we provide can be used in different ways by the children, allowing them to implement their own ideas. This stimulates the children's imagination and links it to motor development.

### **Personal hygiene and elimination autonomy**

Body care and hygiene are important for maintaining the child's health and well-being. Both are very individual and personal. The children should feel comfortable performing care activities and experience care as a regularly reoccurring rituals (e.g. washing hands after playing and changing nappies and before eating). Body care not only serves hygiene, but also deepens the relationship between the nursery teacher and the child. It is important for us to handle these situations with care. This includes that each child is only changed by people who are familiar to him or her.

We motivate the children to be as independent as possible, e.g. to climb the stairs to the changing table on their own or to wash their own hands. We also involve them in all activities, e.g. by letting them watch their mouths being wiped in the mirror and letting them have as much say as possible in which specialist is allowed to change their nappies.

There are two fixed changing times in the daily routine: before lunch and after nap time. If necessary, the children can of course be changed at other times.

If the child shows interest in its own elimination process or if other people go to the toilet, we take up this new developmental step of the child in consultation with the parents. Excretory autonomy is an important step in the child's development of independence and personality. Many aspects of development meet here, such as body awareness, body control, self-efficacy, self-confidence and sex education. That is why the close exchange between educational staff and parents is very important to us. Together with the parents, we discuss that the use of the toilet or the potty (potties are not allowed in the day care centre due to the regulations of the public health department) is offered parallel at home

and in the centre. It is offered continuously and under no circumstances forced, as this maturation process cannot be advanced or accelerated from the outside.

### **The Child in the Group**

We strive to offer the child a high degree of individuality and individual opportunities for expression. At the same time, we set limits in order to avoid dangers and protect the interests of others.

For the children, the beginning of the day care period is in most cases the first group experience they have in their lives. It is not an easy task to find their way as a small personality in a group and to develop a sense of belonging. This important process is especially supported by the professionals through:

- the welcoming rounds, where each child is greeted by name
- the daily shared meals,
- shared games, songs and outings
- the knowledge of the support provided by the professionals
- a manageable group size of 10 children

We encourage the children to perceive their own feelings and to express their needs. Only on this basis are behaviours such as empathy, consideration and tolerance possible.

It is important to us to show the child acknowledgement of and appreciation for the other children and adults in the day care centre. We support the children in understanding and accepting the needs of other children in a way appropriate to their age. We promote the development of the ability to deal with conflicts in an appropriate manner, with the aim that the children can resolve conflicts independently. In this learning process, the professionals support the children by moderating conflicts and mediating between different interests.

In order to create a safe environment for the children and to practice socially acceptable behaviour in a group, the professionals communicate clear boundaries. Since adhering to rules can also be frustrating for children, it is important that the professionals respond sensitively. The child's feelings are taken seriously.

### **Inclusion**

In general, our nursery is open to all children. Children of all nationalities, religions, as well as children with health-related disabilities are welcome. Each child is unique and enriches our community through his or her individuality. The staff perceives the uniqueness of each child and promotes their development entirely according to their individual needs. No child is treated differently or excluded because of his or her level of development or social, ethnic or cultural differences. All children should experience everyday life together and learn from one another at our day care, irrespective of individual strengths and weaknesses.

Inclusion involves all children. We want to offer support to children with disabilities or children who are at risk of a disability, as we do to every child, and strengthen them in their personal development. Children with health restrictions may require special care and support. Therefore, the first step is to check whether the personnel and material requirements are met and whether we can meet the special needs of the disabled child or child at risk of becoming disabled, e.g. in the context of double occupancy or an increase in personnel. If all these prerequisites are met, the supporting organisation and the nursery staff of the facility, in cooperation with the specialist agencies (e.g. Early Intervention Centre, Psychological Counselling Centre, Social Paediatric Centre), will clarify how high the personnel and material requirements are in each individual case and which support measures are necessary for the child. For a child with significant disabilities, there may be an additional need for integrative measures to participate in group activities beyond the existing resources of our day care centres. In view of this, we also make parents aware of the benefits of integration assistance and support parents in making applications. If a child's special needs are determined by the responsible office and integration assistance is granted, we ensure that the assistance is organized and provided. For this purpose, we

use a suitable specialist from our team or an external inclusion specialist, depending on the estimated assistance.

If a child who is already being cared for in one of our facilities shows abnormalities, the day care centre managers first talk to the parents about it. If there is a suspicion of health restrictions, we contact a specialist office together with the parents to clarify whether special care and support measures are necessary for the child. If necessary, we proceed as described in the previous paragraph.

Should discussions with the day care centre, the specialized agencies, and the parents reveal that another facility is better suited for the child or that our facilities cannot ensure the child's care and support needs regarding personnel or material requirements. We will be happy to help the parents find a facility that is geared to the child's needs. The decision for or against admission of the child in need of support is made with the involvement of all parties for the benefit of the child and the facility.

### **Diversity– How we deal with diversity and individuality**

At the Uni-Kitas, we are aware of and open to different cultures, religions, values and social norms. We see diversity as enrichment in everyday daycare life and in the interaction in the groups. The teachers strive to classify different needs and to take them into account in their daily work with the children. The children are strengthened in their individuality and the individual development of their personality is strived for free of discrimination. We encourage the children to understand other cultures and religions as something positive and to accept them as an enrichment of their own development. We ensure this by constantly reflecting on our pedagogical actions and dealing with prejudices and their effects.

Girls and boys have normative role models in our society. We want to counteract these attributions by compensating for role-specific disadvantages and offering equal development opportunities for girls and boys. In our work with children, this means that we take into account and promote the different interests and life situations of both genders equally. Accordingly, we consciously do not make any gender-specific separation in activities in our daily pedagogical routine. We always keep in mind that there is no such thing as a gender-neutral reality. For us, gender mainstream means that every girl and every boy may and should construct their own social gender role and thus find themselves in our midst. Fundamental to this is that the gender perspective is continuously reflected and taken into account in everyday life with the children and by the professionals. It is also important to promote self-confidence and a positive perception of the body, as well as to support the children's ability to perceive and express themselves emotionally. We provide the children with a variety of materials that give them the opportunity to constantly explore their bodies, their gender and their social roles. Male and female role models are available to the children through our teachers (Fachkräfte) as well as through the other colleagues of our socio-cultural institutions.

### **Language at the daycare centre**

We use language to express our thoughts, feelings and experiences. It is part of our cultural identity. In the first three years of life, children acquire basic language skills. Children learn these skills in everyday life, by listening to and trying out language every day. However, this learning process of first language acquisition is far from complete at the age of three; it extends into school age. Children need time and caregivers who adapt to the child's rhythm in the language learning process.

In the daycare centre, the professionals speak German with the children. An appropriate language environment is created in which the professionals serve as role models. This means, for example, that baby talk is avoided. Tasks, movements and activities in the daily routine are accompanied by the professionals linguistically. Through a variety of opportunities to speak in everyday life, the children come into contact with the spoken language at all times and can expand their linguistic abilities. A ritualized daily routine and repetition also provide security in language acquisition. Children with a

different mother tongue who come into contact with the German language for the first time at the daycare centre can orient themselves to rituals and structures.

Language-promoting situations in everyday life:

- Singing circle
- Movement songs
- Picture book viewing
- Reading aloud
- Finger games, table verses
- Storytelling rounds
- Conversations between specialist and child and among the children

The Uni-Kitas have successfully participated in the Freiburg qualification for everyday integrated language education with children under three years of age - „Auf dem Weg zur sprachförderlichen Kita“ ("On the way to a language-promoting daycare centre")

## Care Partnership with Parents

We understand the cooperation with parents to be a care partnership. To us, this means primarily that we become active together with the parents for the good of the child. Both the parents as well as we teachers need exchange, information, agreements, discussions and mutual respect.

### **We offer parents:**

- Reliability, responsibility, commitment, professionalism
- Continual reflection on our educational work
- The most transparency possible regarding our work
- Well-trained teachers who are willing to continually further their knowledge and education
- Daily information flow
- Regular development talks for each child
- Consultation as needed
- We think about each child, apply our knowledge and give our best possible effort for each child

### **We expect from parents:**

- Trust in our educational work
- To provide reliable information and an exchange on the child
- To uphold agreements and rules
- To support our educational concept
- To give us feedback on wishes, satisfaction, criticism

### **We pass information on to parents through:**

- Our concept
- Meetings, parent-teacher-meetings, parent letters (regularly by email)
- The opportunity to sit in
- Information on our information boards in the lower-floor hallway and next to each group door
- Our developmental documentation (portfolios) and our pictures
- The elected parent representatives, who are active as a link between the institution and the parents

# Quality Assurance

## Concept as a Work Foundation

We understand our concept to be a work foundation and a quality handbook that orients itself to key situations and processes in everyday day care life such as the transition of a new child or the educational partnership with the parents. The concept is a binding foundation of the behaviour of individual teachers in our institution. In addition, it is also binding for the supporting organisation, the parents and the children.

Individual topics and chapters of the concept are regularly discussed in team meetings. The implementation of educational goals in organisational and work processes is thereby discussed and resolved. These resolutions are recorded in writing as an explanation of the concept, and are made available to new employees. All teachers are responsible for ensuring the concept is implemented and upheld.

We do not understand the concept as a finished document, but rather as an ongoing process. It is continuously developed further and then written down, especially through the adoption of new educational research findings. On an Educational Day once a year, the concept is reviewed by the team together with regard to its currency, and resolved changes are worked into the concept.

## Quality Development

In 2016, all four university day care centres began an in-depth quality development process. This process is oriented towards the principles of the so-called "Dialogical Quality Development", which was developed by the "*Kronberg Group for Dialogical Quality Development e.V.*".

In "Dialogical Quality Development", the goals, structures and cultures of cooperative work are examined and further developed. The process works starting from the interests of the involved; accordingly, concepts for action are developed by the people involved and not from outside parties.

In the context of everyday day care life, this approach means that the starting point of the process is every single person involved in everyday day care life, starting on their position and with regards to their responsibilities - teachers, directors and employees of the supporting organisation alike. Regardless of his or her specific area of responsibility, each individual person brings his or her own ideas and motivation to the further development, both in his or her own work and with regard to the day care centre overall.

The quality dialogue takes place on different institutionalised levels. This includes weekly team meetings in the day care centres, regularly held meetings between the four day care directors and meetings between directors and the supporting organisation. The goal is always to consensually develop common standards and solutions.

In addition, there are theme-based quality development workshops, which are held for the staff of all four university day care centres on a certain topic. All colleagues who are interested in a topic and would like to discuss it may attend. The first workshop started with the topic of health promotion for kindergarten teachers.

The findings are compiled in the respective pedagogical concept of the day care centres. This is the central document in which findings from the different quality committees are written down. This way, they are kept in writing by all together and are transparent for anyone interested (e.g. parents and new colleagues).

## Continuing education and training

In order to incorporate current pedagogical knowledge into the daily work, all pedagogical specialists take part in further education courses. The specialized knowledge acquired at the course is passed on to the colleagues at one of the next team meetings. At longer intervals, training sessions for the entire daycare team take place on so-called pedagogical days or through in-house training. In addition, the daycare centre participates in research projects and supports bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses.



# Participation

## **Co-determination Opportunities for Children**

We involve children in making decisions in a manner appropriate to their age. It is the responsibility of the teachers to give the children these participation opportunities. We integrate the children in everyday tasks and their completion. The goal is that the children experience self-effectiveness as the shapers of their own lives from the very beginning.

We take children seriously as providers of ideas and criticism. The younger the children are, the more likely dissatisfaction is not expressed verbally, but instead through crying, reserved behaviour or aggression. We value expressions of this type as “complaints” and examine them closely.

It is equally important for us to perceive the children's wishes and needs and to take them into account when making everyday decisions. Giving very young children the opportunity for co-determination means, above all, taking their competencies into account and perceiving their messages, as well as asking about their wishes and respecting their decisions, as long as this is not accompanied by obvious risks to the children.

## **Co-determination Opportunities for Parents**

... is possible

- in the daily conversation with teachers
- in the parents' committee
- by suggesting topics for the parents' evening
- during parties and other events
- by supporting us in our various everyday activities

The parents receive all information from the day care centre on the information board in the entrance area and through a regular parent letter sent by email. All teachers and the day care management are ready to listen to ideas, tips, praise as well as criticism at any time.

The teachers maintain continuous contact with parents in the form of ad hoc talks as well as the regular parent meetings (see also the chapter on the care partnership with parents).

At regular intervals, the daycare centre management conducts an evaluation of parent satisfaction together with the supporting organization. The daycare centre management discusses the parents' requests for changes and their possible implementation with the supporting organization and provides feedback to the parents.

When a child leaves the institution, the parents receive the opportunity to reflect on their child's time with us. We will discuss this feedback with the supporting organisation as well as within our team, and will make changes if necessary.

# Protection of Child Well-being

The well-being and protection of the children we care for is of the highest priority in our work.

Should substantial signs be discovered that the well-being of one of the children is in danger, the educational personnel will examine them. The level of danger is determined with the help of the so-called “KiWo scale (KiTa)”. This is a scale to estimate the danger to child well-being according to § 8a SGB VIII in day care centres. It was developed by the Human Behavioural Biology (FVM) research group on behalf of the Municipal Association for Youth and Social Affairs (KVJS) of Baden-Württemberg. Teachers are to document their observations on any conspicuous details and inform day care

management. Management will assess the risk of danger together with an adequately experienced specialist. Such a specialist is available to the director and Kindergarten teachers in the “Early Help Freiburg” competence centre (Leisnerstr. 2, 79110 Freiburg, Email: [kompetenz@stadt.freiburg.de](mailto:kompetenz@stadt.freiburg.de), Tel.: 0761/201-8555) to support in risk management. At the same time, the director will inform the supporting organisation on what is taking place.

The parents as well as the child, if necessary, are to be consulted as long as this does not compromise the effective protection of the child.

The parents will be informed via a note on the information board on the lower floor that they may contact both day care management and, if requested, a contact person from the supporting organisation if they suspect their child’s well-being is endangered from within the day care centre. The contact information is located on the information board next to the hallway telephones.

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## Cooperation with Institutions

Familienservice gGmbH works together with the responsible public youth aid supporting organisations. At least one representative takes part in a working group of the free supporting organisations and the organisation for youth aid in accordance with § 78 SGB VII, in which the technical standards for day care centres in Freiburg are continually developed and documented in writing. The day care directors are also networked with other managing employees from other day care centres in the city of Freiburg, and they work together in the context of the “Freiburg Quality Dialogues – Strengthening Leadership Responsibility” working group initiated by the Freiburg Youth Office.

In addition, we actively utilise the technical consultation services offered by the Freiburg Youth Office with regard to questions arising in everyday day care life or upon new conceptual developments.

Day care management also maintains an exchange with other educational institutions. This means the technical colleges and universities, on the technical supervision of trainees during their internships, thus receiving insights into new educational instructional content. Further, the directors are networked in the context of the “Freiburg Südbaden Quality in Nursing Centres and in Day care Services” (QuiKK) forum. Through this network, which is coordinated by the Evangelical University, managers regularly receive information on new research findings, and have the opportunity to discuss these with other specialists.

This content-based exchange with the Youth Office and educational institutions is supplemented by regular internal meetings at the support organisation, in which all Familienservice gGmbH day care teachers and a representative of the supporting organisation take part. At these meetings, common quality standards are discussed and set, and possible problems are discussed and solved.

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**Photo credits:**

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