

# Educational Concept



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

The supporting organisation of the University daycare centre Zaubergarten 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 University daycare centre Zaubergarten offers 50 fulltime places, of which 10 places are for children under three years of age and 40 places spread over two other groups for kindergarten-age children between three and six years.

## Buildings, Rooms and Outdoor Area

The Uni-Kita Zaubergarten is located in a building rented from the city of Freiburg and consists of the main building and an adjacent building. Between the two buildings lies the outdoor area with sandpits, bird's nest swing, playhouse, climbing facilities and beds for planting. In addition to the large group rooms with adjoining restrooms, bedrooms and child-friendly washrooms, there is a children's workshop, a gymnasium and a spacious hallway area where children are also allowed to play.

### Equipment of the group rooms:

In the group room for the 1 to 3 year olds 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. Looking at and reading aloud children's books takes place in a cozy corner. Furthermore, there is a dining table where the children can always find a place to eat their own snacks.

The group rooms for the 3 to 6 year olds consist of a large room with a kitchenette and a small adjoining room. The group rooms are divided into different areas. In each group room, there is a reading corner equipped with a sofa. The available books are selected and changed with the children every week. The reading corner is also a retreat to rest or to observe the group activities. Furthermore, there is a building corner where children can play with various construction materials and a role play area where children can dress up and imitate different roles. In addition, the children will find an area where they can be creative. A variety of materials encourage the children to shape things on their own. Games, puzzles and other activities on the open shelves can be picked up by the children to play a game on their own or together with others. At the dining tables, children can sit down at any time and eat the snack they brought from home.

## Criteria for Acceptance

The vacant place will be allocated according to the general allocation guideline of the daycare centre. These can be viewed at the Family Service's homepage at:

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

## Opening Hours / Holidays

The daycare centre is open from Monday to Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Fridays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 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.

During the summer holidays, the university's Family Service usually offers holiday child care for children of 3 – 6 years of age.

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

The following drop-off and pick-up times apply in the daycare centre:

Drop-off time: 7:30 to 9:15 a.m.

Pick-up time: from 2:00 p.m.

### **Daily Schedule**

#### Early and late group – 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. and from 4:30 p.m.

Starting at 7:30 a.m. we offer an early group. During this time, up to three teachers supervise all arriving children in the group room used by the "Sternengruppe". At 8:30 a.m. free playtime usually begins for all children in their own group rooms. At 4:30 p.m. we combine all remaining children into a late group if needed.

#### Time to arrive – 8:30 to 9:15 a.m.

Each child goes to his or her own group.

#### Free playtime – until approx. 10:15 a.m.

After the children arrive, the group rooms as well as the adjoining rooms, the hall and the gymnasium are available for all children to play in.

During free playtime, children may eat the breakfast or snacks they brought with them as soon as they become hungry.

#### Sitting circle – approx. 10:15 a.m.

After putting away the toys, a sitting circle takes place in each group as an important and fixed element in the daily schedule and the group activity. This is the place for different topics, experiences, group rules and organisational issues that are discussed with the entire group. However, the sitting circle also contributes to the group experience through group singing, finger and circle games and the celebration of birthdays of children and teachers.

#### Outdoor time – approx. 10:45 a.m.

After the sitting circle, all of the children go play in the outdoor area regardless of the weather. During this time, we prepare the group rooms for the lunch and after-lunch nap.

#### Lunch – 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Children and teachers eat lunch together in their group rooms.

#### After-lunch nap/after-lunch break – 1:00 p.m.

The break period after lunch is structured differently depending on age and the need for sleep among the children.

#### Playing/ Free Playtime – from 1.45 p.m.

The after-lunch nap is followed by another free playtime until the children are picked up by their parents.

#### Pick-up – from 2:00 p.m.

Each day in the morning, all parents write down the pick-up time for their child in a pick-up list. This helps the teachers to plan the day and gives the children orientation. During pick-up, the children put away the toys and materials they were using.

# Principles and Areas of Focus in Our Educational Work

## **Attachment and Relationships**

The pedagogical staff 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.

## **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**

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 daycare centre receives its lunch from a catering company. Water and tea are served at every meal.

For lunch all children sit at small tables and are supported by the professionals in eating independently and are encouraged to have aesthetic table manners. 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.

Please give your child a healthy breakfast to take with him or her. If your child remains in the daycare centre the whole day, he/she will also need an adequate snack for the afternoon.

Please do not bring sweets or candy to the daycare as they often lead to jealousy and resentment among the other children in the group.

### **Sleeping / Nap time**

#### Group of children under 3 years of age:

After lunch, the children are dressed in their sleeping clothes. Each teacher accompanies their reference children to their sleeping place in the sleeping room and sits with the children until they have fallen asleep. When all children are asleep, the monitoring device (baby monitor) is turned on and a teacher in the group room is ready to receive a waking child. Sometimes there are individual children in the group who no longer need a nap shortly before the end of their third year. These children are allowed to have nap time in the group room. They lie down on their mattress and are read a story or listen to a radio play/music.

### Groups with children over 3 years of age:

There are two resting options:

- Resting on the mattress with a story or audiobook
- Individual activity offer in the group

The children are allowed to decide for themselves which offer they would like to take part in. Children who fall asleep are not woken up.

### **Playing**

During free playtime, the children have the opportunity to decide for themselves about the content of the play, the play materials and the play partners. We support and accompany the children during this time in various ways:

- We give impulses and suggestions. We are available as contact persons and fellow players. We introduce play and creative materials, demonstrate and explain the handling of the various materials and ensure careful handling of play materials.
- We enable the children to have self-effective learning experiences and offer them a variety of activities that also encourage and challenge their independence.
- We support the children in their integration into the group or into small groups. We work out rules with the children and ensure that they are observed. We offer help when conflicts arise.
- We offer intragroup and intergroup activities and projects for large or small groups.
- We design and structure a stimulating environment.
- We take up the children's topics and offer impulses so that the child can continue to deal with his or her topic.

### **Observation and Documentation**

We observe the developmental stage of each child under the age of 3 years 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 under the age of 3 years, 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 the group of the 1 to 3 year olds, 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.

### **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 teacher and the child. It is important for us to handle these situations with care.



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. The children are changed when needed.

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 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**

A part of our daily activities takes place in the groups. The children are welcomed in their own group in the morning, and usually meet there for the sitting circle, for lunch and for the after-lunch nap. In addition, all children have access to the entire daycare centre as a place for experiences. We also organise offerings and projects that span more than one group, allowing new friendships to form. Depending on the level of interest among the children, as well as our personal circumstances, these projects include: Excursions, day trips to the woods, musical programmes, movement, research, art projects and much more.

We are happy to accept siblings into different groups in the daycare centre. This gives each child his or her own space as well as his or her own experiences and new perceptions. This way, both siblings can form different relationships and get to know new kinds of relationships.

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.

### **Inclusion**

In general, our daycare centre 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 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.

### **Education and development fields in the orientation plan of Baden-Württemberg**

#### Body

The Uni-Kita Zaubergarten has its own gymnasium and a large outdoor area. This gives the children the opportunity to pursue their urge to move at any time and to develop and train their motor skills in a variety of ways. On all mornings of the week, a different small group from the daycare centre has the opportunity to complete a movement unit in the gymnasium led by a teacher. Many different materials are available (e.g.: Hengstenberg ladders, a soft floor, a bench, a box, mattresses, balls of various sizes, cloths and large swing cloths, foam blocks, Pedalos, hola-hoops, wall bars, etc.). The large selection of available materials makes it possible to always offer the children new incentives to train their motor skills and to train their body awareness. During the times when there are no guided sessions, the children have the opportunity to play freely in small groups of their own choosing in the gym with their friends.

The spacious outdoor area also offers a variety of opportunities for movement. There is a climbing area, a hill with a slide that can be climbed via a path or two wooden stairs, two large sandpits, as well as various materials to play in the sand, but also vehicles such as tricycles and scooters. Low walls made of assembled stones invite the children to balance, jump and climb.

The children also have the opportunity to train their body awareness in the group rooms. In the group room where children aged one to three play, there is a individually designed mezzanine that encourages the youngest children to practice climbing stairs, crossing an integrated rung ladder and the subsequent descent from the plateau also challenges the youngest children to constantly expand their motor skills. In guided projects, the children are also repeatedly given the opportunity to expand their skills in art, dance and music.

### Senses

During the daily sitting or chair circle in each of our three groups, all children have the opportunity to train their senses by singing and dancing together. In addition, the training of the senses is integrated into everyday life, e.g. smelling the delicious food, and watching and listening to the birds in the garden.

### Language

To support language training, the Uni-Kita has a large children's book library. Each group has its own reading corner with its own small rolling bookcase. There is always a selection of books, which is renewed together by children and teachers in a weekly rhythm. "It has been proven that picture book reading is one of the most effective forms of language development in early childhood" (cf. Ulich 2003, p.89).

In addition to reading aloud, other ways are also used to provide everyday integrated language support for all children. Each child is greeted personally in the morning. Often, a conversation about the child's well-being takes place right then: "How are you? Did you sleep well? Did you get to daycare okay? What did you have for breakfast?" and similar questions encourage the child to talk and tell stories and thus to train and develop his or her skills. Conversations also take place in the sitting circle, in which the children tell about their weekend, the vacations, their birthday or many other occasions. The older children are often linguistic role models for the younger ones and the younger and quieter children also grow into the conversation culture. Lunch is also a good opportunity for storytelling and sharing about the morning's experiences or plans for the afternoon.

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. 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.

Children who have a low vocabulary in the German language, who use grammar incorrectly or who have other problems with the language, receive special support at the daycare centre. On the one hand, we create a variety of speech situations for these children in everyday life, and on the other hand, a trained teacher from the facility conducts special activities in small groups.

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")

### Thinking

From an early age, children are aware of their surroundings and recognize the connection between cause and effect (shaking a rattle produces a sound; if an object is pushed off the table, it falls down). Encouraging children to explore their environment requires an atmosphere in which they feel safe and secure and feel confident to explore their surroundings and expand their knowledge of the world in the process. Especially in moments of shared attention with other children or the caregiver, the exchange of different ideas and thoughts on a common topic challenges and trains the children's thinking.

### Feeling and Compassion

Constant caregivers are an important concern for us in our facility, because it is precisely through the relationship with an person outside their own family that children learn a lot about their own feelings, but also those of others. Already in infancy, children learn to interpret the emotions of their caregivers and acquire a basic understanding of the emotional state of their counterpart.

The mixed age group in the daycare centre often results in situations in which the children deal with their own feelings as well as the feelings of other children, e.g. when the six-year-olds help the younger children to get dressed in the wardrobe or when children comfort each other when a child has hurt himself while playing.

Belonging to a group and following common rituals and rules teaches children basic skills that are important for living together in a community. This includes sharing play materials with other children, waiting for one's turn in a gymnastics exercise or playing in a circle of chairs, and putting one's own needs aside for the good of the community.

Especially at the pre-linguistic age, attentive guidance by the professionals is of particular importance for the children in order to help them express their emotions non-verbally and without the use of violence. By living and playing in the partially open concept, the children learn to appreciate the security of their own group, but also repeatedly step out of this comfort zone and play in less familiar places with children they sometimes know only slightly, thereby expanding their experiential space.

### Meaning, values, religion

According to their age and their different experiences, children between the ages of one and six have many questions about the world in which they live. It is a matter of course for all teachers to respond to these questions and to help the children find answers to their questions.

The Christian culture also has an influence on living together in the Kita. Although the Kita has a non-denominational sponsor, religious festivals are thematized and celebrated with the children during the calendar year. For example, Advent is celebrated with an Advent wreath and Advent candles, St. Nicholas visits the daycare centre, and a Christmas party is held at the end of the year with the families of all the children in the daycare centre. At St. Martin's Day there is a lantern festival and at Easter there is a search for hidden Easter baskets. Children from other cultures with different religious backgrounds are lovingly included without obliging them to participate. The daycare centre and its staff are open to traditions from other cultures.

### **Sustainability**

With the children, we practice a conscious and sparing approach to the resources available to us. We separate garbage, we use materials for daily consumption, such as water and light, sparingly and sensibly and we treat nature with respect.

## Approach to Media

We use media for activities, to set impulses or to obtain information. Together with the children, we occasionally make audio or visual recordings in various situations. However, it is important for us to use all media sparingly and sensibly because at kindergarten age the holistic experience with all senses is in the foreground.

## Preparation for School

The transition to school is a demanding process for each child. In the Uni-Kita Zaubergarten, preparation for school begins upon entering kindergarten, as playing is the appropriate form of learning at this age. Personal motivation, examining and trying things out for oneself, experiencing one's own conflicts and learning from mistakes are the foundation for lifelong learning. We support each child individually in this process.



The second-last year before children enter school, school examinations take place at daycare, the so-called ESU examinations. Specialists from the Health Office review the physical development of the child, his or her vision and hearing, attentiveness, speech development and other abilities. If needed, we recommend targeted support of individual areas on the part of the parents, daycare centres or other specialists.

During the last year before a child enters school, cooperation takes place between the daycare centre and the elementary school. Our partner school for all children is the Lorzing Elementary School. The cooperation teacher visits the group of children starting school once a month. Through observation and small learning units that she conducts with the children, she assesses the school readiness of the individual children. In doing so, she is in close contact with the teachers at our facility. The school cooperation also offers parent meetings and a parent evening to help parents with the transition from kindergarten to elementary school. The goal of this cooperation is that the children get to know the school, and that the parents are given help in being better able to judge their children's ability in school.

For the performance of children in school, we consider the following points particularly important:

- Emotional stability: being able to provide for oneself, defend oneself, having the courage to express oneself in a group, convey one's needs, as well as the ability to repress one's own needs
- Social skills like the following: Assuming responsibility, being considerate, sharing, helping, being able to wait
- The ability to concentrate, resilience and personal motivation over an extended period
- Motor skills such as: dressing oneself independently, carrying the school satchel, handling pencils, scissors and other materials
- Good speech abilities: Vocabulary, grammar, enunciation

## Saying Goodbye

Just like acclimatisation, saying goodbye is important for all of us. The child leaving our daycare loses his or her trusted environment and trusted people. The children in the group will lose an important friend and play partner. We teachers will also feel the gap a child leaves behind, as we have generally built up a deep, warm relationship with him or her.

Before the child leaves, we celebrate goodbye by holding an overnight stay for children starting school together with the parents and pedagogical staff, followed by a "throw-out" the next morning. We would like to expressly encourage all children to visit us again in Zaubergarten after a few weeks and to tell us about their new experiences. If that isn't possible, we always look forward to a letter or email.

## Working Together 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.

In 2018, the specialists at the Zaubergarten University Daycare Centre dealt in detail with the topic of participation for children in an in-house training course lasting several days. This resulted in a preamble, which is available as a constitution in the Uni-Kita Zaubergarten and can be viewed by all parents and pedagogical staff. Our pedagogical actions, our dialogue with and for the child, are guided by this constitution, which is revised annually.

### **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

Daycare directors are responsible for actively communicating to parents the possibilities they have for voicing complaints and criticism. Among other things, the parents are informed via a note on the blackboard that the daycare director is open to complaints and that we view criticism as an opportunity for improvement. Daycare directors will also include a contact person from the supporting organisation, together with current contact information, on the blackboard with the note that this person will also review complaints if necessary. 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).

Complaints procedure at the Uni-Kita Zaubergarten:

- Open communication
- Complaint box
- Parents council
- Parents' evenings

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.



In addition, the daycare director maintains contact and exchange with the parents' committee, and offers a meeting with the Chair at least twice a year. Parent council meetings always take place with the entire parent council about three times per year.

## 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.

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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.

**Imprint:**

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**Photo credits:**

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