



Pedagogical principles of our daycare centres (brief version)

1. Key aspects

Our daycare centres follow the **principles promulgated by the Guideline framework for early years learning, care and education in Switzerland** (Wustmann & Simoni, 2012) (Orientierungsrahmen für frühkindliche Bildung, Betreuung und Erziehung in der Schweiz).

Our pedagogical work is based on the **infans concept of early childhood development** which thkt familienservice GmbH has adapted to the general conditions in Swiss daycare centres in close cooperation with the infans-Institut in Berlin (www.familienservice.ch/bildungskrippen).

2. Our approach to children

Children are naturally competent, active and curious. They use all their senses to discover and explore the world, each of them in their own individual way. Children grow up in different living environments and living conditions. We welcome and value this diversity and are committed to treating all children as equal.

3. Our approach to working with children

The well-being of our children is at the heart of all activities we perform at the daycare centres. Children need a safe, secure and reliable environment that promotes their healthy physical and psychological development.

Individual needs are the cornerstone of our work with the children. The more consistent and attentive we are in fostering the children's development, the more added value they take with them to their next stages in life.

4. The relevance of learning, care and education

Learning, care and education facilitate the children's development into self-dependent and socially competent individuals. Driven by their natural joy of learning, young children learn through a holistic process that involves all of their senses and arises from the activities and games they play.

Early learning depends on the children developing close relationships with the daycare staff and requires a stimulating and enabling environment that allows the children to make their own learning experiences.

Care entails empathy as well as fostering the physical and spiritual well-being of each individual child. At our daycare centres, adults treat children with regard and respect. The children's trust is built on attention and encouragement.

Education characterises the interaction between adults and children in our daycare centres and involves the provision of a stimulating, challenging and interesting environment.

5. Bonding is the basis

The first bonds young children develop with adults and other children are very important. Reliable, familiar and readily available carers are critical for the healthy development of children.

The settling-in process ensures that the children have the freedom and security to explore the daycare environment and benefit from their learning experiences. During the carefully planned settling-in period, children are given sufficient time to bond with a primary carer and become acquainted with their new surroundings. Parents should stay with their children until the child feels secure in the new environment.

The reliable daily routine and recurring rituals we follow at the daycare centres give the children support and security and help them develop a sense of time. Nevertheless, children have sufficient leeway to organise aspects of their day and follow their own initiative, concentrating on their own interests and developing independent problem-solving skills.

Our cross-group, (partially) open work concept serves to actively foster the gradual bonding between the individual children and several carers. This also allows all children to get to know and become friends with children outside their home group.

6. Cooperation with parents

The staff at our daycare centres are keen to work closely with the parents and establish successful pedagogical partnerships. Information on the children's experiences at the centre or at home is exchanged at bringing and collection times as well as during arranged meetings. At least once a year, parents are invited to a development review meeting. Regular events involve parents in the day-to-day life of the centres and promote interaction between families.

7. Cooperation within the daycare centres

It is our aim to run our daycare centres like **exploration workshops**. The staff engage in constant dialogue with the children to draw on their curiosity and joy of exploration and pick up on their particular topics of interest. Encouraging the children's inquisitiveness, they expand not only their children's horizon but also their own.

8. Key pedagogical values

8.1. Observing the children and documenting development and learning processes

Regular observation of each child forms the cornerstone of our pedagogical approach. It helps the staff perceive the children's interests and favourite topics. The teams discuss their observations and document the development of each child. Together, the team members look for incentives and materials suitable to support the children's areas of interest and encourage them to make further learning progress.

8.2. Formulating and reflecting upon pedagogical objectives and deriving goals for action

Our daycare centres aim to prepare the children for their future life. 'What will help our children master life's challenges as they grow up? What do they need?' These are the central questions the daycare centre teams aim to answer through formulating specific pedagogical objectives and deriving goals for action which are subject to regular review, enhancement or modification.

8.3. Designing the learning environment and prompting learning processes

Children already have a keen perception of their environment at a very young age. Manifold stimuli are required to promote healthy development. Our suitably furnished daycare centres offer diverse themes and multiple-use materials as well as suitable media and activities. Depending on their interests, the children can either engage in discovery, exploration, building, role play or creation.

8.4. Open and attentive communication and encouragement of varied linguistic expression

Children learn to speak, convey their thoughts, express their ideas and feelings, argue, negotiate, listen and ask about others while talking to adults and to each other. Open-ended questions encourage the children to freely express their thoughts and find their own answers.

8.5. Supporting the quest for personal and social identity

Children need the ability to negotiate their way through the abundance of impressions, experiences, requirements and encounters they face every day. The daycare centre teams help the children express their wishes, interests and needs as well as raising their awareness of the wishes, interests, needs and feelings of others. They respect the children's right of self-determination. The pedagogical experts at our daycare centres act as a reliable and exemplary authority, expressing their appreciation of everything the children have learnt and achieved.

8.6. Experiencing the fundamental laws of physics and acquiring cultural skills

Children approach natural science and physical phenomena through play and are naturally interested in letters and numbers. The daycare centre staff assist the children in their experiments, foster a sense of curiosity and help the children explore natural science phenomena.

8.7. Experiencing creative design, art and music

Creative and musical experiences are essential elements in a holistic approach to child development. The daycare centres offer a variety of creative forms of expression, such as two- and three-dimensional design, singing, making music, dancing, physical activities and role play, and introduces the children to adult works of art.

8.8. Providing opportunities for physical activity

Young children are naturally inclined to engage in physical activity. Our daycare centres therefore provide ample opportunities to explore their joy of movement and satisfy their thirst for experience, both inside and outside the centre and in the nearby surroundings (forests, parks, playgrounds, urban leisure areas, etc.).

8.9. Eating healthy food and enjoying meals together

At our daycare centres, we provide a healthy, balanced diet for children. Our joint meals consist of carefully prepared, balanced, varied and interesting food. Wherever possible, the children are involved in the preparation.

8.10. Paying particular attention to personal hygiene and respecting individual resting periods and sleeping times

Under our teams' devoted care, our children receive individual attention and a sense of security, especially the youngest among them. We take a natural and age-appropriate approach to helping the children increasingly look after their personal hygiene.

We recognise the children's need for quiet time, rest and sleep. Rituals, such as rhymes, songs or stories, help the children settle down and fall asleep. The furniture in the rest rooms has been chosen to ensure that the children feel secure, safe and protected.