

Educational Concept



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Familienservice gGmbH at the Albert-Ludwigs-University of Freiburg

The supporting organisation of the Uni-Kita Murrelarten is Familienservice gGmbH at the Albert-Ludwigs- University:

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The goal of Familienservice gGmbH 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 university clinic and other research institutions in Freiburg as well. 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 university clinic or another research institution in Freiburg.

Guiding Vision

We offer working parents the opportunity to integrate family and career equally.

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 well with us.

We approach children with appreciation, empathy and authenticity.

We try to be a role model for children, and we teach them appreciation for their fellow human beings and the environment.

We support each child in developing at his or her own pace, and we teach him or her joy in exercise.

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 would like to give each child the opportunity to express individual interests and needs, help make decisions appropriately to his or her age and receive individual support.

Framework Conditions of Care

Child Groups

The Uni-Kita Wichtelgarten is an institution for small children between 1 and 3 years of age. The supervision of a child under one year of age is only possible in exceptional cases and after individual

consultation with the director. There are 10 full-day spots and 10 morning spots available. In both groups, up to ten children are supervised in a familiar atmosphere.

Personnel

Our team consists of a director, seven kindergarten teachers, and a person completing their voluntary social service year (FSJ).

In particular, the director's responsibilities include the educational leadership of the daycare centre, leadership and work scheduling for personnel, administrative work, cooperation with the supporting organisation and different institutions as well as the coordination of different responsibilities and areas of work for the team. A deputy director will represent her or him in times of absence.

For the full-day group, there are usually three teachers responsible, while two teachers are responsible for the half-day group.

They plan the educational activities for the groups, document the children's development and work together with the parents for the well-being of each child.

The person completing his/her voluntary social service year support the kindergarten teachers in their daily tasks. They are supervised by the teachers.

In addition, the team is supported by interns from different schools. The internship helps with career orientation. Interns are supervised by the kindergarten teachers and assume different tasks depending on their level of education and personal abilities.

Criteria for Acceptance

Daycare spots are allocated according to the allocation guidelines of the University of Freiburg. These can be viewed at the Family Service's homepage at:

<http://www.familienservice.uni-freiburg.de/bilderdateien/docs/alloctationguidelines>

Opening Hours

Full day group: Monday to Friday from 8:00 until 17:30.

Half day group: Monday to Friday from 8:00 until 13:00.

Drop-off and Pick-up Times

For the full day group:

Drop-off times: 8:00 until 8.30
9:00 until 9:30

Pick-up time: earliest pick-up time is 15:00, otherwise upon individual agreement

Please note: Children who eat breakfast in the daycare should be in the group by 8.30

For the half day group:

Drop-off time: 8:00 until 9:00
Pick-up time: 12:30 until 13:00

Days Closed

The daycare centre is typically closed 27 days per year, of which three weeks are in August (summer holidays), a few days in the Christmas holidays and a few days in the Easter holidays. In addition,

there are two cleaning days, on which furniture and toys are thoroughly cleaned, as well as two educational days dedicated to jointly planning the pedagogical work, to review and further develop our educational concept and to continue our professional education.

Principles and Areas of Focus of Educational Work

Attachment and Relationships

We consider continuity a significant marker of quality in the care, supervision and education of children. This especially applies 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 and consistency.

We provide a sense of attachment and belonging in our groups by way of fixed reference persons, rules 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.

Acclimatisation

The transition from the family to the at first unfamiliar daycare centre means a great challenge for each child. The child must 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 daycare centres therefore offer the families a binding, attachment-oriented acclimatisation 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 acclimatisation 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 individual child and the desired duration of stay in the daycare centre, an acclimatisation period of 3 weeks up to several months must be anticipated. It is thereby important that the parents plan enough time for acclimatisation.

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

The acclimatisation period is divided into three phases:

1st Phase:

At first, one parent accompanies the child and remains with him or her in the group for about one hour. The child, teacher and parents can thereby get to know one another better. While the mother or father is mostly passively present, 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 he or she can always return. Starting on the 4th day, the accompanying person may leave the room for a short time.

2nd 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.

3rd 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 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.

(Book recommendation: H.-J. Laewen, B. Andres, É. Hédervári: Ohne Eltern geht es nicht. Die Eingewöhnung von Kindern in Krippen und Tagespflegestellen. Berlin, Düsseldorf, Mannheim 2006.)

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. Our lunch is a warm meal delivered by a caterer.



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.

Eating together is important to us. It not only contributes to satiety, but also promotes the development of social skills and gives the children an opportunity to experience togetherness. Each meal is accompanied by certain rituals.

All our meals are being served at a set time. Each child has his or her own fixed place at the table and is encouraged by the teachers to practice mealtime manners. A calm and homely atmosphere is important to us during mealtimes.

- Parents bring tea bags and a breakfast as well as an afternoon snack.
- Lunch is a warm meal delivered by a caterin service.
- We serve drinks (tea and water) with the meals and whenever the children are thirsty.
- Meal times are:
For the full day group:
Breakfast: 8.30 – 9.00
Lunch: 11.30 – 12.00
Afternoon snack: 14.45 – 15.15

For the half day group:
Breakfast: 8.00 – 9.00
Lunch: 11.30 – 12.00

Since an age-appropriate, healthy and balanced diet is important to us, we kindly ask all parents to refrain from putting sweets in the children’s lunch boxes.

We celebrate a child’s birthday with a birthday cake that the child brings with her/him from home. Please note that due to hygienic regulations it is prohibited to serve cream and raw eggs to the children. Also, fudge/fondant is not allowed.

Sleep and Relaxation

Each child has his or her own sleep habits. The children should be able to rest and sleep sufficiently and undisturbed according to their own completely personal needs. For this reason, there is a separate sleeping room with a pleasant, calm atmosphere for each group. There, each child has his or her own sleeping spot with his or her own bedspread and cushion. Due to safety reasons, we use sleeping bags for children beneath one year of age. The sleeping bag in the correct size has to be provided by the parents. Parents are welcome to bring a trusted object for the child like a stuffed animal or blanket. In order to ensure a relaxed atmosphere for the children to fall asleep, we try to have several teachers present during this time.



According to the age and needs of each child, he or she will sleep on his or her own mattress or in a basket. The basket offers separation and comfort. On the mattresses adjacent to one another, the children can experience the calming closeness of other children. Both mattress and basket support the children in their desire for autonomy, as they can lie down and stand up again independently.

In the half day group, there is no set nap time. Instead, we emphasize relaxation time for each child individually until pick-up time, because the older children do not necessarily need a nap before noon any more. In our full day group, the nap after lunch is central to the day's structure. In this group, nap time at noon is important for the children to manage staying in the daycare until late afternoon.

During phases of free playtime, children are allowed and encouraged to take time off and retreat to our separate relaxation area whenever they feel the need to relax.

Playing / Free Playtime

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.

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.

Speech and Speech Development

Speech development is an important aspect in the development of social relationships. Even right after birth, children communicate with their fellow human beings by crying, laughing, gurgling etc.

In our daycare, we principally speak German with the children. We create an atmosphere suitable for picking up the language, whereby the teachers are role models for the children. This means, for example, that we don't engage in 'baby talk'. All actions, movements and activities are expressed verbally by the teachers while being acted out. Picture books, children's books, rhymes and singing as well as our toys promote visual cognition and the ability to name objects and activities correctly.

Our singing circle is a fixed activity in our daily schedule. Here, children are "bathed" in a rhythmic verbal surrounding that encourages them to participate. Connecting speech and movement is key to learning new words.

Moving around and Exercise

Each child has his or her own pace of development. The build up of muscles takes time, and crawling, walking, standing up and sitting down are only possible whenever the muscles are stabilised enough for these activities. This development occurs differently fast for each child.

It is the task of the Kindergarten teachers to watch each child closely and offer each child sufficient possibilities for moving around in an age-appropriate surrounding. This may include:

- A safe area for smaller children who aren't as mobile yet as the older ones
- A safe area for children who are able to crawl

- Sufficient space for those who are starting to walk
- Space for jumping, sliding, climbing and running for those who are already very mobile
- Various offers for movement by creating open spaces, inclined planes and steps
- Our toys also support moving around, e.g. swings, slopes, a Pikler-triangle, doll buggies, rockinghorse, bobby cars for inside the rooms as well as outside usage
- Going for walks: The children either walk on their own holding a teacher's hand or they sit in our wagon



The different materials we offer for encouraging moving around include:

- Baskets and cartons to climb inside,
- Buggies for holding onto and pushing
- Chairs and stools that are suitable for building, balancing and climbing over
- Mattresses for doing gymnastics, rollick about, and building play caves
- Blankets to transport things
- As soon as they are able to do so, children may climb the stairs leading up to the changing table by themselves
- Balls and balloons for throwing

Observation and Documentation

We observe the developmental stage of each individual child intently. These observations, as well as the documentations made about them, are our foundation of our educational activities together with knowledge in the field of developmental psychology.

In our documentation about the education and development of each child, called „Portfolio“, we document and structure the developmental stages, special skills, preferences, expressions of interest and talents of each child. In it, we also state any indications that may give point to a more specialized support in whatever field of development. For the documentation process, we take appropriate pictures and use a standardised observation procedure that is continually being updated.

We especially emphasize the speech development of each child. To this end, we use the standardized observation procedure called „Grenzsteine der Entwicklung“ (Laewen, H.-J. (2009): Grenzsteine der Entwicklung. Ein Frühwarnsystem für Risikolagen). Should we ever note any

developmental delay, we will contact the parents and determine together with them how to proceed, e.g. by contacting a pediatrician, a speech therapist or any other appropriate kind of advice centre.

During talks with parents, the portfolio is an important foundation for representing the child's development. At least once a year, we hold a planned consultation with the parents. The contents of the consultation are the progression of development and how to best support the future development of the child. At the end of the child's stay in our daycare, his or her portfolio will be handed over to the parents. The information in the educational and developmental documentation is only divulged to third parties after consultation with and written consent by the parents.

The Child in the Community

We strive to offer the individual child a high degree of individuality and individual opportunities for expression. At the same time, we set limits in order to provide security and orientation, avoid dangers and protect the interests of others. It is important to us to show the child acknowledgement of and appreciation for others and for differences. 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. At the same time, we actively promote equal opportunities for boys and girls.

Inclusion

In general, our uni daycare centre is open to all children. Children of all religions, all nationalities as well as children with health-related disabilities are welcome with us. All children should experience everyday life together and learn from one another at our daycare, irrespective of individual strengths and weaknesses. Difference is an enrichment for the entire group.

We can accept children with considerable developmental impediments or disabilities into the Uni-Kita Wichtelgarten as long as the teachers can ensure that a child's special care needs are met. Before we accept the child, an in-depth exchange must therefore take place with parents, and in some cases a special testing period will need to be agreed upon. Just as with all children, we also strive to pursue the development of individual possibilities and abilities with children with disabilities.

Daily Schedule

Our structured daily schedule provides the children with security, stability and orientation. It contains a sufficient amount of free time for playing on the one hand and of playtime input from the caregivers on the other.

The daily schedule in our child groups contains the following agenda:

- 8:00 – 8:30 arrival of children
- 8:30 – 9:00 breakfast
- 9:00 – 9:30 second drop-off time for children who eat breakfast at home
- 9:30 – 11:45 free playtime in the group room, the garden or on a playground in the area
- 11:15 – 11:30 singing circle
- 11:30 – 12:00 lunch
- 12:00 – 14:30 after-lunch nap
- 15:00 – 15:30 snack
- 15:30 – 17:30 free playtime in the group room or the garden
- 16:00 – 17:30 pick-up time

Care Partnership with Parents

We understand the cooperation with parents to be a care partnership. 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 the parents:

- Reliability, responsibility, commitment, professionalism
- Regular development talks for each child
- We strive for most transparency possible regarding our work
- Consultation as needed
- We continually reflect on our educational work and participate in necessary continuing education
- We think about each child and apply our professional knowledge
- We give our best possible effort for each child

We expect from parents:

- 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
- To support us when we need assistance with something

We pass information on to parents through:

- Our concept
- Talks, parent-teacher-meetings, parent letters)
- The opportunity to sit in
- Information on our information boards
- Our developmental documentation (portfolios) and our pictures
- The elected parent representatives, who are active as a link between the institution and the parents

Parents are encouraged to participate and co-determine:

- By joining the parents' committee
- By suggesting topics for the parents' evening – we are happy about lively discussions
- During parties and other events
- By supporting us in our various everyday activities

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 daycare life such as the acclimatisation 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 a dynamic one. 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 uni daycare 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 daycare life, this approach means that the starting point of the process is every single person involved in everyday daycare 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 daycare centre overall.

The quality dialogue takes place on different institutionalised levels. This includes weekly team meetings in the daycare centres, regularly held meetings between the four daycare 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 daycare 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 daycare 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).

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 to us to take the wishes and needs of the children into account and to consider them in every day decisions. To grant very young children an opportunity to co-determine means primarily to bring their competences into account, be open to their messages and respect their decisions as long as this doesn't come along with obvious endangerment of themselves or other children.

Co-determination Opportunities for Parents

The daycare director is responsible for actively informing the parents on their possibilities to voice suggestions as well as criticism. Parents are informed on the information board that the daycare director is open to receiving feedback and views criticism as a chance for further development. Also, a contact person of the Familienservice gGmbH is named on the information board and their contact data is given.

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.

Furthermore, the daycare director is in contact with the elected parent's committee and offers a meeting with them at least twice a year.

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).

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 daycare 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 daycare 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, 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 find a note on the information board that they may contact both daycare management and, if requested, a contact person from the supporting organisation if they suspect their child's well-being is endangered from within the daycare centre.

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Cooperation with Institutions

If needed, we will work together with specialists from other fields such as paediatricians, speech therapists, and physical therapists, for example.

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 daycare centres in Freiburg are continually developed and documented in writing. The daycare directors are also networked with other managing employees from other daycare 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 daycare life or upon new conceptual developments.

Daycare management also maintains an exchange with educational institutions, meaning 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 Daycare 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 daycare 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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Harald Neumann

As of: May 2016