

# Concept for the children's day-care facility Cologne Bumblebees e.V. International Bilingual Kindergarden

## 1. An English/German children's day-care facility for Cologne

Against the background of an increasing internationalisation and inter-cultural development of social structures, multilingualism is an important component in the rearing and development of our children. Scientific studies have proven that the human brain is constructed so as to enable multilingualism. The early acquisition of a language is, in contrast to learning foreign languages after the age of six, not dependent on any natural "talent for languages" and makes it easier in turn to learn other languages.

The basic idea behind our initiative was the setting up of a bilingual facility in Cologne for children between the ages of one and six to allow as many children as possible to learn more than one language. We are group of parents, their children and nursery teachers, who want to promote the bilingual concept and who wish to integrate it into the childcare needs of the city of Cologne for children between the ages of one and school-going age.

## 2. A tailor-made concept to fit family and profession

The central principles underlying our organisation are:

- Flexible opening hours
- Full day opening hours so that mother and father have the chance to have a family and continue with their professional careers.
- Good pedagogical quality

In one group consisting of 12 children between the ages of 1 and 6 years, a German and an English speaking nurse-teacher work for the collective good of our children in close cooperation with the parents.

## 3. The day-care facility as a complementary set-up to the family

Our Kita is our children's second home. As a parent initiative we wish to work together with all parents to offer our children a home in which they feel a sense of belonging and well-being.

We believe that every child is unique. Therefore we wish to encourage each child in his individual talents and skills. We want to offer the children a place where they are accepted with all their strengths and weaknesses. We strive to create an atmosphere of trust which enables the children to get along with each other and be tolerant and open.

The structure of the group which resembles that of the family offers the children security and continuity. Respect for others, helping each other, awareness of others and solidarity, as well as dealing with differentiation, criticism and conflict management skills, are all aspects of behaviour which are learnt, applied and reflected upon through the experience in our family type group situation.

## 4. The association „Cologne Bumblebees e.V“

The association "Cologne Bumblebees e.V." is the non-profit regulating organisation of the children's day-care facility "Cologne Bumblebees". All parents whose children are in the day-care facility are members of the association and actively participate in it.

## 5. Educational concept

### 6.1 General educational aims

Our KiTa is a social educational organisation in which the children are supported, brought up and taken care of during the day. The nursery teachers lead the way for the children through the highs and lows of everyday life. In a trusting and harmonious atmosphere the complete development of the child is realised. All activities are dictated by love and regard for the child.

The needs of children are interfused with educational aims. In a protected room, the nursery teachers and children create the togetherness. Age specific characteristics (e.g. motor functions, perseverance, stage of development) and interests must be considered in the organising of the day.

The unity of word and action make the interplay comprehensible for everyone. Values and norms such as tolerance, compassion and responding to others, are communicated through the example and behaviour of the reference person.

The rooms in the day-care facility offer a variety of possibilities for playing, learning, exploring and making contact with others.

Playing provides the most important learning form for children of pre-school age. For children playing means to conquer and process their environment. In free play children can acquire and test all the skills which they need for their physical, intellectual, and mental development.

Additionally children are offered a variety of learning, playing, movement and creative possibilities which are orientated towards the individual capabilities of the children in the different age groups.

For the children between 1 and 3 years:

- Observation and encouragement of the movement of the small child: hand movement, balancing, walking
- Fostering of an atmosphere which offers emotional support, help and security.
- Creation of an environment which constantly orientates and stimulates the children in their various activities. Its external order should shape the child's inner order. It should lead to the recognition of relationships.
- Intensive language encouragement through much speaking and singing in the German and English language corresponding to the hearing of the child and the listening of the adult.
- Coordination of movement, orientation and language.

Didactics: practise of practical life, movement games and exercises for the enhancement of the general and precise motor functions, language and singing games, a lot of speaking and reading, body contact and language as a way of expressing emotional affection.

Children between 3 and 6 years

- cultural activities: painting, drawing, moulding, building, musical and rhythmical practise, etc.
- playing in many ways, starting with mathematics, reading and writing
- practising both movement and silence as concentration exercises, extension of practical life learning

Each child is given consideration in creating a balanced relationship between controlled and spontaneous learning situations. It allows for the widening of the experience of the children through the communication of knowledge, leaving, at the same time, enough space for individual fantasies and activities.

We orientate ourselves in our work towards certain basic principles of the Montessori teaching method. We see the educational process fundamentally as a self educational process and stick to the guidelines of "Help me to do it myself".

The children have the freedom to pursue their own interests and learn in the process to organise themselves. They can move about freely in the whole kindergarten, play together, come into contact with each other and make friends.

Daily the children are offered a range of choices whereby they may pursue their own learning and play interests. Thereby, they contribute themselves to the organisation of their own day.

We want to accomplish our educational mission in constant contact with the parents and other parties responsible for the upbringing of the children and thereby especially:

1. to take into consideration the life situation of each child
2. to assist the child in achieving the greatest possible level of self-awareness and self-initiative, to stimulate and strengthen his joy in learning
3. to allow the child to build up his emotional strength
4. to encourage the creative strength of the child with an awareness of his individual tendencies and talents
5. to communicate to the child a basic knowledge of his body and to encourage his physical development.
6. To encourage the unfolding of the child's intellectual capabilities and to communicate elementary knowledge about the environment to him through a wide offering of experiences.

The general framework of our educational work has been established for our team of nursery teachers based on these points.

To realise the aims of our educational work, the plan is divided into different parts, e.g. according to the times of the year or projects (Water, light...). Each month there is a different theme on which the children work.

## 6.2 General aims of the educational work

1. social behaviour
2. everyday life experience
3. bilingualism
4. mathematical, geometrical and logical basic structures observation of nature and materials behaviour in traffic
7. training movement
8. visual creation
9. Music und rhythm

We want to make these areas of education comprehensible and true experiences using the most varied means and methods in communicating them through the following individual areas

### 1. Social behaviour

- 1.1. the child taking care of himself independently
- 1.2. feeling secure in dealing with other people
- 1.3. the ability to make decisions in activities
- 1.4. respect for others and tolerance
- 1.5. being prepared to offer and to accept help
- 1.6. overcoming tensions and conflicts
- 1.7. appropriate handling of play and learning material

### 2. Everyday life experience

- 2.1. taking care of the individual body
- 2.2. independent dressing and undressing
- 2.3. acquisition of hygienic measures
- 2.4. organising a room and keeping it clean
- 2.5. taking care of flowers and garden

### 3. Meals

Independent eating  
 Handling a knife and fork  
 Table rules  
 Helping with the preparation of the food  
 Getting to know new foods

### 4. Language - Bilingualism

A central wish of Bumblebees is to enable children to grow up bilingually. The respective family situation of each child will determine the way in which he will acquire two languages.

In contrast to foreign languages, first and second languages are acquired very early, that is, before the third year and are used daily as a way of communicating. The Bumblebees provide for this in that one nursery teacher, as a native

speaker, speaks English exclusively, while the German nursery teacher speaks only German. If both of the child's parents speak German at home the child will acquire English as a second language through his regular visits to the day-care centre. If one of the parents speaks English at home the child will grow up with both English and German as first languages, both of which are encouraged in the day-care centre.

In contrast to foreign languages which one appropriates through learning, first and second languages are naturally acquired, that means that the appropriation of the language is not controlled. A deciding factor here is the social context in which the language is spoken. The language behaviour in the surrounding environment is imitated. A targeted steering of this process is not necessary although it can support the process. Bumblebees offers children a social environment in which they can acquire a first and a second language.

When both parents speak German with their child, English, as the child's second language, will be the weaker language since the main language spoken in his environment is German. Even when one parent speaks English, it will still, in all likelihood, be the weaker language due to the German environment even when it is the second first language and not just a second language. How the individual German and English knowledge of the child develops cannot be broadly predicted since it does not just depend on the language acquirement in the day-care centre but also on the everyday language of the family home. Since the main language in the environment is German, the Bumblebees tries to emphasize English as much as is possible. The English-speaking nursery teacher speaks only English in the presence of the children, i.e., not just with the children but also with the other nursery teacher and any parents present. English and indeed bilingual children's books, songs and games support this process.

The most important reason for the childminder to only speak English is to follow the golden rule of multi-lingual upbringing "One person-one language". Children up to four years of age do not see language as an abstract concept. For them concrete persons exist who speak a certain language. They associate a language with a person whose language behaviour they imitate. While the childminders use one language consistently, the child has the free choice to choose. He should never feel forced to speak one or other of the languages.

4.1. Hearing: listening

4.2. understanding of various behaviours, situations,....

4.3. Speaking: free speech, controlled speech

4.4. reduction of speech difficulties (articulation)

4.5 awakening and encouraging the desire to speak

4.6 learning the alphabet

4.7 writing and reading

5. Mathematical, geometrical, logical basic structures

5.1. determining elements of a pre-set amount according to specific criteria

5.2. visual comprehension of amounts, forms and size

5.3. comprehension and description of spacial relations

5.4. understanding and verbally expressing the content of a symbol

5.5. understanding and using basic numbers and ordinal numbers (up to 10) on the basis of amount and number

6. Observing nature and materials

6.1. Observing objects, living things and processes in nature and technology as well as in daily life

6.2. Describing, comparing and judging the perception of objects according to characteristics

6.3. Exploring the material, its manufacture or origin and recognising its meaning and characteristic

6.4. ordering objects according to a generic term whereby the relationship between the parts and the whole is recognised.

6.5. being aware of important material characteristics of glass, material, wood, plastic and learning how to handle them with confidence

6.6. making connections between things through pictorial depictions

7. Behaviour in traffic

7.1. making the children familiar with traffic signs

7.2. making the children familiar with traffic rules

7.3. contact with the police

- 7.4. assessing the traffic situation and the paths in the immediate environment
- 7.5. memorizing their own address
- 7.6. individual and group behaviour in traffic

#### 8. Learning movement

- 8.1. walking and running
- 8.2. jumping
- 8.5. crawling
- 8.4. pulling
- 8.5. going upwards and climbing
- 8.6. balancing
- 8.7. Rolling
- 8.8. Throwing, catching and bouncing
- 8.9. Body awareness
- 8.10. balancing

#### 9. Visual creation

- 9.1. Drawing
- 9.2. painting and colouring
- 9.4. potato and brush printing
- 9.5. moulding
- 9.6. cutting and sticking
- 9.7. creating with "worthless" material
- 9.8. getting to know various creative techniques: printing technique, folding,
- 9.9. creating with everyday materials

#### 10. Music and rhythm

- 10.1. singing of children's and game songs in groups and individually
- 10.2. listening to and reacting to musical sequences
- 10.3. rhythmical improvisation
- listening to song works
- getting to know simple musical instruments
- making their own musical instruments
- creating songs as simple play figures
- voice training
- encouragement of aural perception
- composing short stories

#### 6.3 The rights of the children in our organisation

- To meet the requirements of the educational concept, our children have the following rights:
- the right to active, positive warmth and devotion
- the right to be left alone, to be able to retreat
- the right to learn the consequences of one's own behaviour and to deal with demands
- the right to one-to-one relations with adults
- the right to reliable consultation and relations with adults
- the right to explore and experiment
- the right to a creative environment
- the right to premises which are spacious and manageable and arranged according to children's needs.
- the right to spend time in any area of the kindergarten where he wishes, in light of the child's capabilities
- the right to have a lot of different experiences

These stated rights are basically recognised by us. However we can only implement some to a limited degree.

## Cooperation with the parents

Our organisation is a parent initiative.

The day-care facility and the parents work closely together. We, the nursery teachers, see our educational work as complementary to the child's familial upbringing which is why co-operation with the parents is an important part of our work. To create a trusting environment we offer one-to-one talks and group evenings. The possibility to visit the day-care facility and observe our nursery teachers at work offers parents the chance to experience our educational endeavours in practise.

Regular contact with the nursery teachers allows the parents to learn of events, particularities and activities of the day. The parents for their part report on their wishes and the peculiarities of their child. Thereby the nursery teachers and parents can respond to certain circumstances.

Notices and exhibits in the hall offer an overview of plans and offers and show parents the results of their children's work. They make it easier for parents to approach their children with the appropriate questions and conversation. They also provide a starting point for questions and discussions with the nursery teachers.

The parents are involved in organising parties and other group activities. There are common highlights in the year e.g. Summer party, Martins Day, hiking days etc  
They also have the possibility to plan and engage in activities themselves.

Each month a parents meeting is held during which issues of the association are decided upon and in which information is given on the current situation and topics relevant to the organisation.

For children visiting our day-care centre for the first time, it is desirable that the parents accompany their children during an adaptation phase. Thereby they support their children in getting used to new reference figures and to make it easier for them to adapt to their new environment. As nursery teachers we see this phase as extremely important for all participants so that complications are avoided later. The length of the adaptation phase should not last longer than two weeks however.

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