

General Educational Policy



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1. Introduction

Growing together through play

At all of our locations (daycare centers, early education childcare, preschool groups, after school care and in-home daycare) we offer children a safe, warm and challenging environment where they can discover the world and can grow through play. All in their own unique way and at their own pace. Children do this fueled by their own curiosity and creativity, and we seize the opportunities we see and creative opportunities where we can to help them in this process; our educational approach. In the group, children get to know themselves, others and their own talents. In this way we offer children opportunities to grow up trusting themselves and others. We see cooperation with parents and other professionals involved as an essential part of this.

In this General Educational Plan you can read more about our general educational vision and our vision on early education childcare.

Each location has its own [Educational Work Plan](#). This explains how we put our educational vision to use every day at that specific location. It includes information about hours of operation, which kids are assigned to which groups, and the role of the teachers. Each location also has a [Safety and Health Policy](#) with relevant information about safety, health and hygiene. The Educational Work Plan and Safety and Health Policy are evaluated annually.

The Municipal Health Department tests all locations on how they follow these mandatory requirements. Each location's manager discusses the outcome of the inspection with the staff and that location's parents' committee. All inspection reports can be found on our website.

At all of our locations we work with base groups. The base group space is the inside area where the group meets.

Kind & Co Ludens also offers in-home daycare. The in-home daycare providers also work according to this General Educational Policy. When we mention staff members or teachers, these childcare providers are also included.

2. Educational goals and principles

Kind & Co Ludens' educational policy is based on the four child raising goals as established by Professor Riksen-Walraven, which are also included in the Childcare Law. Children's development is central and our goals are to:

- Provide children with emotional safety
- Offer children opportunities to develop their personal skills
- Offer children opportunities to develop their social skills
- Give children the chance to learn and acquire our society's norms and values.

2.1 Interaction skills

The extent to which these goals are met is dependent on the quality of the interactions between the staff members and the children. Meaningful interaction between the teachers and children makes all the difference in children's wellbeing, involvement and general development. The staff members make use of the following interaction skills:

- Sensitive responsiveness (lovingly seeing and listening to the children)
- Respect for autonomy (respect for what each child wants and can do independently)
- Talking and explaining (using language to help children give meaning to their experiences)
- Stimulating development (seizing opportunities and creating opportunities)
- Providing structure and leadership (giving guidance and clarity)
- Supervising interactions between the children (guiding positive interactions in the group)

The interaction skills are marked in **green** in the text below.

2.2 The four child raising goals

2.2.1 Providing emotional safety

Every child needs a warm and safe environment in order to grow. We offer an emotionally safe space by responding to the children in an engaged, warm and positive way; **sensitive responsiveness**. This is one of our ways of contributing to the children's wellbeing and helping them to develop self-esteem. We are attentive to the children's initiatives and signals and respond positively and supportively so that they feel understood. We give the children positive personal attention. We talk calmly, make eye contact, call the children by their names, sit at child-height as much as possible, use I-language and listen actively to their feelings. We teach them to express their feelings in the same way. We show interest in children's emotions by accepting them and giving them words.

We provide children with emotional safety by giving **structure and leadership**. Growing children need a stable environment in order to develop. Structure, clarity and rituals are important and provide guidance and stability in letting children know what's expected of them. We steer children's behavior in a positive and effective way, depending on the children's and the group's abilities and needs. We provide consistent boundaries. If we let our own needs and boundaries be known, we explain why. This teaches children more than a simple 'no.' We help children in letting their boundaries be known.

We provide emotional safety by ensuring base groups and a fixed daily schedule so that children know what to expect. We make use of rituals and recognizable steps during tasks and transitional situations. We praise good behavior and give them as many examples as possible of what they are allowed to do instead of what is not allowed. We explain why we don't accept certain behavior and dismiss the behavior and not the child. We give a good example and demonstrate behavior that we want to see in the children. We say what we do and do what we say.

We provide emotional safety by trusting children because we believe that they are worthy. When the foundation of an environment is trust, children are more comfortable making mistakes. We encourage

them to be brave and active. Positive experiences increase self-esteem and strengthen their self-image. We regularly take a step back and admire what the children can do on their own.

As they grow, children can do more and more on their own and it is important for them to be given the chance to try things out. Children are regularly allowed to be alone, and we help and correct them only when needed. This increases their sense of self-worth.

2.2.2 Developing personal competence

Growing through play

Children get to know their environment through play. This is how they discover and experience how the world works. Children of all ages practice the social, emotional, cognitive, motor, moral and communication skills that they need through play. Each child develops these skills at his/her own pace, depending on personal talents and preferences.

We give children the opportunity to feel, taste, smell, hear and experience. As often as we can, we let them discover, experience and create on their own instead of offering ready-made solutions. This involves children in their play at a higher level. We follow children's intentions and interests and think in terms of possibilities instead of impossibilities. The teachers are responsive to the children. We call this the educational approach (*stimulating development*).

The layout of the space and an array of materials encourages optimal development, "creating opportunities." We might create opportunities by adding or removing something to/from the children's play, but also by involving the children in what we're doing and challenging them to go beyond their existing frameworks. We "seize opportunities" by focusing in the moment on what the children are interested in, which stimulates the zone of proximal development.

At our daycare centers and preschool groups we make use of programs that support children's development. In the Educational Work Plan you can read about which program your location uses.

We offer activities that encourage and enrich play by verbalizing what's happening. Physical activity helps children to explore their surroundings. We offer plenty of opportunities for movement and outside play each day. Our guiding principle is always protecting children from large risks and teaching them how to deal with small risks. Each location has a current Safety and Health Policy in which all large risks are listed. Assessing safety and health is a continuous process. Our staff members are aware of our vision and know the difference between acceptable risks and unsafe situations.

Children have different experiences outside than inside. Outside you can run, hear the wind blow, stomp in puddles, play in the sandbox, ride a bike or scooter, play with a ball, and much more. Outside play is a very important part of our daily schedule!

Honoring each child's individuality

In our interactions with the children it is important that we look at what they need in order to grow. These interactions are based on age and level of development. Our staff members truly see and listen to the children, trust in them, give a good example, communicate respectfully and connect with their interests at an appropriate developmental level. We motivate the children in a positive way and give meaningful feedback. It's important for children to receive a lot of positive attention and clear boundaries.

Talking and explaining

Language that supports their experiences and broadens their world helps children to develop. We verbalize the children's actions and explain what is happening. We read out loud often, using facial expressions, gestures and movements or by using objects that support the storytelling. We understand the importance of repetition in storytelling. We verbalize our actions, say what we are doing, and do what we are saying (*talking and explaining*). We 'philosophize' with the children, talk about plans for tomorrow and what happened yesterday, and we add information in small steps.

Encouraging independence

Children want to do as much as they can on their own, and **respect for autonomy** is an important condition for this. It's important that they experience this often. Children grow when given responsibilities like putting on their jacket, helping to pass out cups to the other kids, cleaning up their toys, biking to after school care alone, and deciding what they want on their sandwiches. Our educational approach increases children's self-esteem.

In a challenging environment

A space with a good layout invites children to experiment, play and discover; stimulating the five developmental areas (social-emotional, motor, creative, language, and pre-math skills). As much as possible, we choose open-ended materials that can be played with in a variety of ways. Our staff members set up the materials in an inviting way ("prepared space"). The layout of the space is based on age, interests and needs. We stimulate children to solve problems creatively, assess risks, challenge themselves, and be adventurous.

The layout of our spaces offers children the chance to discover, to play alone or with others, to familiarize themselves with an array of different materials, types of play, objects, types of toys and games. Our preschool groups have a building corner and a house corner, our after school care locations have a diverse array of materials specifically for school-age groups and developmental phases. The Educational Work Plan describes the layout of your location's space.

2.2.3 Developing social competence

Children's social lives start at a very young age, giving them the opportunity for play and development. Making friends, cooperating, learning to deal with conflict and finding solutions are important experiences for children in building awareness of their own behavior and its effect on others. We guide children in this process and create a safe and positive space (**supervising interactions**). Within the group, everyone has equal worth. We learn from each other, we pay attention to our differences and point out our similarities. We are considerate of children's feelings and wishes and help children to respect one another's boundaries. We provide play material that all children can identify with.

The children have a fixed group and we help them to connect with each other as a group. We do this by personally greeting each child every morning and saying goodbye at the end of the day. We call each other by our names, which helps children to feel seen and to get to know other. We have conversations with the children, teach them to listen to each other, and help them to verbalize their opinions and feelings. We let them help with tasks and stimulate friendships by regularly encouraging them to play in small groups. We pay extra attention to new children so that they feel at home as quickly as possible.

We give children the space to be themselves. I am me, you are you, and together we are a colorful group. Differences are okay and make us unique. Children are very aware of differences and similarities and we teach them to engage with others respectfully. We treat all the children with respect and model respectful behavior.

When children play together, conflicts arise. This is completely normal. We teach children to solve conflicts by talking and consider their own needs and the needs of the other (boundaries and wishes). If they can't (yet) do this, we help and stimulate them to find a solution that everyone can accept (win-win situation). When children discuss ways to solve a conflict, they experience that they have an active role. This increases their self-esteem.

2.2.4 Teaching our society's norms and values

We see our childcare groups as mini societies where children are heard, seen, and have a voice. They are exposed to children from different backgrounds with different beliefs. This gives them the chance to playfully learn about others and about social skills.

We prepare children as much as we can for participating in our (democratic) society. This means that we teach the children that there are differences and how to deal with them. We envision the children growing up to be responsible, caring, positive, socially involved adults. Aside from teaching the children how to treat others, we teach them that they are unique, strong, and have their own voice. We treat the children, our co-workers and the parents in a positive, respectful and open-minded way, and we are approachable and unbiased. We see everyone as equal and we are open to an array of different lifestyles.

Children enjoy helping and contributing ideas, this gives them the proud feeling of being important. We give children a voice by letting them choose and we respect their choices. Children are never too young to be important; we notice their needs and respond to them. We listen respectfully and value their contribution; there is space for practicing and making mistakes.

By teaching children to take care of each other, themselves, and the space and materials around them, we stimulate responsibility, which helps form their identity. A positive self-image, independence and taking responsibility are necessary for functioning optimally in our society. As a part of encouraging independence, the staff members guide children by giving them space and boundaries. In this way we stimulate the children's development.

3. The educational approach

In the Educational Work Plan we have established how we embody the educational policy in practice. At each Kind & Co Ludens location we work according to one of the following educational principles:

- The **Educational House** at all daycare centers, after school care locations, preschool groups and in-home daycare locations with the label KMN Kind & Co.
- The **Growth Meter** at all daycare centers, after school care locations and preschool groups with the label Ludens.
- An **Early Education Program** at all of our early education childcare groups.

3.1 Observing and tracking

We observe and track all children. This is documented according to a certain method. The method used at your location is noted in the Educational Work Plan. We also describe how we involve the parents and children of after school care age.

3.2 Direct communication

When children make the transition from daycare, preschool or in-home daycare to school and after school care, we write a report of our most recent observation. We think it's important to inform the school and after school care staff about our experiences with the child. You can read more about this per location in the Educational Work Plan.

3.3 If there's cause for worry

If we are worried about a child, have questions about his/her wellbeing or development, or if our staff members need extra tips, then we will request a parent-teacher conference. Each label has a set policy that we work according to. If we are seriously worried and the parents are not, we may proceed to the next step. We will alert parents of this. We might also share our concerns with the National Referral Index.

3.4 After school care-plus

We value inclusive childcare and want children who need extra support to be cared for in their own neighborhood. Kind & Co Ludens has a number of after school care-plus groups where all children can meet each other and be supported in a way that best helps their development. This is one way that we are involved in making an impact on society.

Our after school care-plus groups are run by professionals who have experience with and specific expertise on children with various types of behavioral problems. We work closely with parents, school, the neighborhood team and/or other healthcare professionals involved with the child/ family. This form of childcare is explicitly not a therapy treatment group.

3.5 Protocol child abuse and inappropriate behavior for childcare centers

We follow the protocol child abuse and inappropriate behavior for childcare centers if there are signs that might point to domestic violence or child abuse. All of our locations work with this uniform protocol.

4. Practical agreements

4.1 Fixed groups and staff members

Each group has fixed and trusted staff members with professional qualifications according to the Collective Employment Agreement. All employees are in possession of a valid certificate of conduct and are linked to Kind & Co Ludens via the "Persons Register Childcare". We work with fixed groups of children, the groups are either horizontal (all children are around the same age) or vertical (0-4 year-olds).

The maximum group size and the number of children cared for per staff member is determined by laws and regulations. We always follow this norm at Kind & Co Ludens. The Educational Work Plan states exactly how many children are allowed per group and how many staff members work which hours per location.

4.2 Familiar faces

For each baby (0-1 years of age) there are 2 (3*) permanent staff members. On the days the baby visits there is always 1 of these 2 (or 3) present. 1-4 year-olds know 3 permanent staff members of which at least 1 is always present on the days the child visits. Other staff members may be present as well.

*the number of familiar faces for babies under 1 year is dependent on the group size: a maximum of 2 familiar faces when the staff to child ratio is 1 or 2, and a maximum of 3 familiar faces when the staff ratio is 3 or more.

4.3 Getting to know each other and adjusting

It's important to take the time to adjust at the new daycare center, preschool group, after school care or in-home daycare. This is the time to lay the foundation for a trusting relationship between parents, children and staff. For parents it's important to know who they're leaving their child with, what a typical day looks like, and what to expect from the adjustment period. How each location deals with this is noted in the Educational Work Plan.

4.4 Mentor

Each child has his/her own mentor. During the introductory meeting it is explained who this is and what it means to have a mentor. From the beginning, the mentor cares for the child and is the main contact person for communication with parents, the child and co-workers. The mentor is the staff member who knows the child best and regularly tracks his/her wellbeing, development, play and involvement and discusses this information with co-workers, the location's manager and early education specialist. This ensures that we are aligned on the child's developmental needs. The mentor discusses this with the parents. If the mentor changes and/or the child switches groups or locations (including going to after school care), we send a report to the new mentor. Parents are always informed of this.

4.5 Daily schedule

We follow a regular daily schedule with the same predictable moments, rituals and activities. This feels safe for kids. We're flexible in this schedule as needed. If the children are enjoying their play, we may have lunch a bit later. And a child who is tired may of course go to bed early. Young babies follow their own eating, sleeping, diaper changing and playing schedule. We follow their schedule as much as possible. As they age, they slowly acclimate to the older children's schedule. This is explained in detail in the Educational Work Plan.

4.6 Sleep

For 0-4 year-olds we follow guidelines to keep children safe and healthy while sleeping. Napping rituals such as a pacifier, plush toy or security blanket are discussed with parents. A number of our daycare centers have outside beds. During the introductory meeting, parents can give written

permission (via the parents' portal) for the use of these. As babies get older and need less sleep they nap twice a day; in the mornings and after lunch. They slowly grow towards a one nap schedule. We regularly check on the children while they are sleeping, and a baby monitor is always on.

4.7 Diaper changing and potty training

Diaper changing is an important contact moment between the staff member and child, with time for a personal and positive interaction. Respect for the child and the way the staff member touches the child and explains what she is going to do creates trust. The rituals, repetitions and predictability of these moments are very important for the child's emotional safety: the child knows what's going to happen. Most children are ready to be potty trained between their second and third birthdays. They are then able to tell if they need to pee or poop and can wait to do so until they are on the toilet. If a child shows interest in this, we make sure (s)he has access to a potty or toilet. We always do this in cooperation with the parents. If a child regularly has a dry diaper, we ask the child if (s)he wants to sit on the potty or toilet. We support and encourage this process but do not force anything. Potty training usually happens on its own.

4.8 Celebrating birthdays, holidays and rituals

There are many special moments in a year: birthdays, children leaving the group, Saint Nicholas and other holidays such as Christmas, the end of Ramadan, Easter, etc. In each location's Educational Work Plan we describe how we celebrate holidays, birthdays and rituals together.

4.9 Exchanging days and extra days

Parents can request to exchange days or purchase extra days via the parents' portal. In a manual that parents receive with the contract, we explain how to go about this and how payment works. The extra day or exchange day can only be requested for the child's base group. The request is granted based on availability and a correct staff to child ratio. Parents can consult the parents' portal to see if the request is granted or denied.

Vacation childcare at after school care

For the label Ludens:

For vacation childcare at our after school care locations, parents have the option of "chosen days"; via the parents' portal parents can request the vacation days that they want to make use of.

For the label Kind & Co:

Parents who have an after school care school weeks package including all vacations are guaranteed a spot on their regular contract days. Parents who have an after school care school weeks package including 6 or 9 weeks of vacation are guaranteed a spot IF this is requested at least 4 weeks in advance via the parents' portal. Vacation credit is valid for one calendar year and can only be used on vacation days or teacher training days when school is closed.

5. Healthy childcare

5.1 Food and drink

Eating healthy is important for children's development. Getting nutrients from food is essential in order to play, move, think and grow. We give the children mostly water and tea and healthy snacks. We follow the advice of the Dutch Nutrition Center. Eating together is a daily social activity, the whole group sits together at the table. There's attention for each child and we create a positive atmosphere together. When we feed babies they receive our undivided attention. Babies get bottles of formula or pumped breast milk, whichever the parents choose. Parents tell the staff members of any allergies. We decide together what may and may not be given, and search for alternatives as needed. More details per location are available in the Educational Work Plan.

5.2 Physical Activity

We aim to offer growing children the physical activity that they need so that we contribute to developing a healthy lifestyle. Physical activity is important for children's physical and emotional development. Our staff members are aware of the importance of movement and stimulate children to participate in games, outside play, dancing to music, etc. The staff join in to give a good example. Physical activity is integrated in our daily routines; we also regularly organize movement games for the children. We strive for a challenging, safe environment where children's curiosity is stimulated and they have the opportunity each day to enjoy indoor and outdoor activities.

5.3 Sexual development

Sexual development is a part of growing up. It means more than just sexuality. It's about love, relationships, friendships, saying what you want and don't want and being proud of your body. It's important to us that children learn that it's okay to be themselves. We help them to grow aware of their feelings, boundaries, their own wishes and those of others.

6. Cooperation with parents

It's important to us to create a strong bond with parents, and this is something we invest in. Good cooperation between parents and staff members increases the children's wellbeing.

6.1 Daily contact

Most communication between parents and staff takes place at morning drop-off or evening pick-up. If there's not enough time then, parents can make an appointment to talk to the mentor. We are always open to parents' questions and comments and value cooperation.

6.2 Parent's portal

Most locations work with a digital parents' portal. We use this to share photos and updates so that parents get an idea of what their children are doing at our locations. The staff members regularly write group updates in the digital notebook. Parents can also send short messages to the staff members via the parents' portal.

6.3 Parent-teacher conferences

We offer parents the opportunity to make an appointment with the mentor to discuss their child's development. The Educational Work Plan explains how often this takes place and when.

6.4 Parents' participation and parents' committee

The Childcare Law states that each childcare center must have a parents' committee that has the right to advise on a number of subjects mandated by law. If a location has less than 50 children, the possibility exists to make use of parent consultations if, despite sufficient proven efforts, it is not possible to create a parents' committee. A parents' committee represents the parents of the relevant location and can advise on location-specific aspects of the following subjects:

- The implementation of the quality policy;
- Matters concerning food;
- Hours of Operation
- Whether to offer early education childcare;
- Changes in price

The parents' committee is also asked annually to advise on the way the educational policy is implemented. The parents' committee is also authorized to advise the manager without consultation on above-mentioned subjects. The parents' committee is a contact point for parents and conversation partner for the manager. Aside from general regulations, the parents' committee also devises household regulations that determine practical issues such as how often meetings take place. Parents' committee contact information can be found on the website or from the staff members or location manager.

Kind & Co Ludens also has a Central Parents' Committee that discusses subjects concerning all locations and advises on them. The parents' committees are asked to authorize the Central Parents' Committee to assume the right to advise concerning:

- a. The implementation of the general quality policy;
- b. The organization's general educational policy plan;
- c. The organization's general nutritional policy;
- d. The general policy concerning play and development;
- e. Hours of operation;
- f. Determining or changing a complaints regulation and appointing members of the complaints committee in accordance with the Complaint Act;
- g. Changes in price;

The central parents' committee has its own page on Kind & Co Ludens' website with information on members and contact info.

7. Employees

7.1 Teachers/in-home daycare providers

The teachers and in-home daycare providers are the pivotal figures in the caregiving, helping and guidance of the children. They implement the educational policy, bringing it to life daily. Each location can request substitute teachers when needed via Flexpool. The flexible staff members are assigned to the same groups as often as possible so that they become familiar with the children and the location. In emergency cases we make use of temping agencies.

7.2 On-the-job trainees and interns

Aside from the regular teachers, on-the-job trainees and interns also work at our locations. We follow rules and regulations and only allow on-the-job trainees and interns to perform tasks that they are legally allowed to at any given phase in their training. They are all in possession of a certificate of conduct and are registered and linked to us in via the "Persons Register Childcare".

Their tasks are:

- guiding children in a group setting and individually, always in accordance with our general educational plan
- daily caretaking of the children
- contact with parents when children are brought and picked up
- planning tasks and daily schedules with co-workers and actively communicating with parents and co-workers
- light housekeeping in the groups
- knowledge of current rules and regulations and knowing how to apply them in practice

On-the-job trainees and interns are mentored on location by a qualified staff member. Together with the school's training coordinator we maintain oversight of the working student's development during a number of conversations per year.

7.3 Helpers and volunteers

Some locations have helpers and volunteers who do activities under guidance from a staff member. This is stated in the Educational Work Plan. All helpers and volunteers are in possession of a certificate of conduct and are registered and linked to us in via the "Persons Register Childcare".

7.4 Coaches

7.4.1 Educational coach (IKK coach)

The educational coaches advise and coach the staff members at our daycare centers, after school care locations, preschool groups and in-home daycare locations on their educational approaches in practice. The guiding principle is the established educational policy with the goal to grow conscious awareness of actions. They inform the managers of the involved locations of their progress. Some educational coaches organize trainings and workshops.

7.4.2 Early Education Coach (VE coach)

The early education coaches focus mainly on monitoring the educational quality of the teachers at work and what is offered to the children referred for early education childcare. The goal is to strengthen the educational climate in the group. They inform the managers of their tasks. Some early education coaches organize trainings and workshops.

7.5 Specialists to consult with worries

7.5.1 Children in need of extra support

If our staff members are concerned about a child and/or his/her development, they discuss this with the parents. Kind & Co Ludens wants to facilitate the availability of childcare for children in need of extra support, this is a part of our policy. With parents' permission, the staff members can request from the department of Educational Quality (or a chain partner) that the child be observed in the group. The experiences and observations are discussed with the parents and staff, and determined together what the best way to support the child is, and if the location can provide that. If the child needs more than we can give, we discuss this with the parents and refer them to external specialists for further testing, support and help if needed.

7.5.2 Internal coordinators and special needs teachers (PMPK in Dutch) for early education childcare locations in Utrecht

An internal coordinator and special needs teacher are affiliated with our preschool groups. Together with the staff members, they offer extra support to children in need and discuss how to best foster their development. When needed they observe the child in the group. The results are discussed with the parents and together a plan is made on how to best help the child. We regularly update the parents on progress and adjust our tactics as needed. If the child needs more than we can give, the staff and internal coordinator or special needs teacher discusses this with the parents and refers them to external specialists for further testing, support and help if needed.

7.6 Educational policy advisors

The educational policy advisors develop policies and tools that align with current developments and (scientific) insights. Based on this, they formulate concrete guidelines for the educational approach we use at our locations. They monitor and evaluate the educational quality at the locations and use these observations to advise on improvements. They also develop and/or give trainings and can be consulted for advice.

8. Vision on early education preschool groups (VE)

8.1 Introduction

Kind & Co Ludens' early education preschool groups have an important role in tracking, identifying and supporting the development of young children with a VE referral, especially in the areas of language, early math, sensory and social-emotional development. The guiding principle is learning through play.

Preschoolers with a VE referral visit the group 16 hours a week. How the 16 hours are divided over the week is described in each location's Educational Work Plan. Our VE groups follow the schedule of elementary school vacations and are open 40 weeks per year. This means that children are offered 960 contact hours between 2 ½ and 4 years of age.

Children without a VE referral are also part of the group. They generally visit the location less than 16 hours per week, but are part of the group and participate in a number of activities. With these children (and their parents) we work according to our general educational vision and not following the below-mentioned VE vision.

8.2 Early education programs

Each of our VE groups works with a VE program such as Uk & Puk, Piramide, Startblokken, Peuterplein or Kaleidoscoop. These programs offer a structured way to stimulate the children's development. Which program is used and how it is implemented is described per location in the Educational Work Plan. Our teachers have been trained to work with these programs. The programs are used as a source to anticipate children's questions and needs within the theme plans.

8.3 Tracking and supporting development

We track each child's development through observations and registrations in the child tracking systems Uk & Puk, OVP or KIJK!. The child's mentor regularly discusses his/her development with the parents. The child tracking system analyses shows us what the group and individual children need. These observations focus on both the individual children and the group as a whole. The observation forms help the staff members to describe the child in his/her environment, the child in relationship to adults, and the child in relationship to other children. This aids them in tracking the wellbeing and development of the children and the group. Parents are also asked to describe their child and his/her experiences in the group.

8.4 Method

We have a fixed and predictable daily schedule. The play areas and cupboards with material are recognizable to the children, for example marked with images of suggestions for play or what is in a container.

8.4.1 Action-oriented or develop-oriented

We work action-oriented or develop-oriented. This means that we focus on the children's needs and adjust our behavior as needed, creating an appropriate learning goal. A fitting array of activities for the children means that there is a balance between structured play or activities, and free play or self-chosen activities.

Each morning or afternoon there is at least one structured and guided group activity with a learning goal in mind, or a challenging group task for all the children. This takes place in a small group or we follow the children's lead in their own play. The goals and themed activities are planned in advance based on the analyses of the individual observations.

8.4.2 Circle time

Because we believe that it's important for the children to get to know each other and to talk about the theme, we have a number of 'circle time moments' per day. We keep these moments short since

preschoolers can't sit still for long. Children who are new to Dutch or who feel nervous speaking in the group get extra individual attention and activities in smaller groups.

8.4.3 Large group – small group

We carefully track the development of children with a VE referral. After an introduction to the theme and the corresponding activities comes repetition or further learning on the subject. Depending on the type of activity and the children's interests, children work in the large group or smaller groups, or it is integrated into their play. If children need extra stimulation in strengthening certain developmental areas, we adjust our activities as needed.

8.4.4 Working with themes

Each period we decorate the group according to the theme so that it is clearly visible to the children and their parents. We make a theme table with books and other materials for the children and parents to familiarize themselves with the theme. We also use these materials during the activities.

Activities are included in the theme plan that stimulate children in: language development, discovery and research, fantasy and role playing, counting and measuring, moving and dancing, singing and music, and creativity.

Kind & Co Ludens respects the children's native languages. These languages form the cultural foundation in which the children are raised. Many children speak their home language, but have a delay in Dutch. Multilingualism is becoming more common. The VE groups form a language bridge between home and the children's future education. Language input is in constant use. We modify our use of language to better fit the children's abilities. We regularly verbalize what we are doing and what we see the children doing. By talking about concrete objects and actions we strengthen the children's vocabulary. Visual support is important, especially with abstract concepts. The concept of 'high' is easier to understand if you're building a tower with blocks. When enjoying play, a child is more likely to not only passively absorb language but also to actively use it. During interactive storytelling we stimulate language development by challenging the children to talk and think.

8.5 Parents: Developmentally stimulating activities for home and daycare

Parents, schools and childcare centers are partners in child raising. Each with a unique role in supporting and guiding the child, but also a shared, common responsibility. We believe that it's important that parents are involved in stimulating their children's development. That's why we motivate parents to do developmental activities.

8.5.1 Introductory meeting and parent-teacher conferences

When a child starts preschool, an introductory meeting takes place between the parents and mentor. We explain our method and inform parents on parent-teacher conferences, which are offered 3 times during the 1 ½ years that the child is with us. We use this opportunity to share the results of our observations from our child tracking system, discuss the child's development, and give tips on how to stimulate the development at home. Just before the child's fourth birthday, we invite the parents for a final meeting.

8.5.2 Involvement with theme

At the start of each theme we inform parents via the parents' portal or newsletter, via a theme book with theme-related words and song lyrics, and/or direct communication when we see parents.

8.5.3. Activities with parents and children

Some locations invite parents a couple of times a year to take part in group activities together with their children, for example: a visit to the library, a themed workshop, a summer festival, the end of Ramadan, Saint Nicholas or Christmas.

The VE groups in Utrecht host play mornings where parents can play with their children. Teachers show example behavior, show how to play with preschoolers and talk to parents about doing activities at home. Teachers give tips to parents about what they can do with their children at home.

Sometimes they give reading activity bags, books or toys to enjoy at home. This is described further in the Educational Work Plan.

8.5.4 Direct communication with elementary schools

The VE groups work closely with one or more nearby elementary schools. We believe it's important that the transition to school goes as smoothly as possible. Some of our VE groups are located inside elementary schools. In this case we discuss methods, programs, themes and activities with the school. Other locations are located in community centers or have an independent location. When possible, these locations also maintain a warm relationship with nearby schools.

8.6.1 Report for school

Our staff members have a final meeting with all parents before their child goes to school. In this conversation we discuss the child's development and let parents know that we wish to discuss their child with the school and how we go about doing this. If parents are opposed to this, we let the school know that they will not receive a report from us.

We send children off to school with help from the child tracking system Uk & Puk, OVP or KIJK! When possible we organize a meeting with the parents and the new elementary school teacher. We call this a warm transfer. We give the teacher relevant information on the child so that (s)he can understand the child's needs. Each location's Educational Work Plan describes how and with which schools we work.