

# An Open Concept of Daycare

"A Home for Children"



**Bio Kids I: Martinsried**

## **Foreword**

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## Foreword

### Bio Kids I

A daycare center for children between the ages of six months and six years of age. The daycare center has more than 77 positions available for children at the pre-school and kindergarten ages. Bio Kids can provide two of these positions for children who are handicapped or threatened by handicaps. The pedagogical work is based on an open support strategy. The work itself is done in two languages: German and English.

## 1. The Sponsor

The Kita Bio Regio e.V. non-profit organization is the sole sponsor of the Bio Kids Daycare Center. The organization was established in 2002 in order to provide for the increasing care provision needs on the BioTech and Life Sciences Campus in Martinsried. Businesses and institutes on the Martinsried campus, as well as interested individuals and partnerships, are members of the association. The goal of the organization is to enable women who have been employed in the BioTech and Life Sciences fields to re-enter their profession in a statutory manner.

## 2. Pedagogical Conception

This conception is intended to serve the following goals:

- Foundation for pedagogical education
- Orientation of the pedagogical staff
- Clarity in the pedagogical aims of the establishment
- Transparency in the establishment's profile and of the pedagogical approach for all interested parties
- Certificate for the implementation of the requirements of the Bavarian Educational and Developmental Plans for Children
- Integration of children who are handicapped or threatened by handicaps into a care provision environment appropriate to their age groups

### 2.1 View of the Child

Our view of the child is stamped by a humanistic view of mankind.

As adults, we understand ourselves to be the supporters of child development. The challenge that applies to the treatment of children is to find the right mixture of support, guidance and role model.

In order to develop ideally, children need a fruitful environment with a variety of diverse impressions and sensory experiences as well as the ability to be allowed to experiment and act freely.

The primary job of the care provision staff is to respect and support this, and to guide and responsibly steer childhood development through self-determined and self-conscious action attentively.

Fun, jokes and humor should constantly accompany children along their development and be a source of happiness and self-confirmation.

## 2.2 Working with Activity Areas

Our pedagogically open concept describes the spatially open structure of our establishment. All of the rooms have been assigned specific activities. From the earliest ages onwards, children can quickly and unerringly orient themselves in our building. This makes it possible for the children to make decisions according to their aptitudes, however also allows sufficient room to withdraw as well as for intimacy. The consistent combination of these activities with nests and activity areas and a clearly structured daily schedule with "rituals" is an excellent basis for ideal childhood development according to scientific insights.

## 2.3 Clearly Structured Daily Schedule

In order to be able to provide sufficient orientation and security to the children in a structurally open building, the daily schedule must be understandable, regular and reliable.

We achieve this by means of a consistent and clearly defined daily structure. This includes switching between free playtime and stimulus phases, movement and quiet phases, and excitement and relaxation. In this way, we achieve a very intense learning environment with content appropriate to the respective child's age through the intensive usage of the high attention phases. It also takes the natural biorhythm of the children into consideration. The child conference, called "KiKo" (from the German word, KInderKOnferenz), is a core point of the daily schedule. The course of the subsequent stimulus phases is discussed and designed with the children during the morning child conference in two groups divided by age. This gives the children a lot of room for ideas, and within the situation, the children learn very early to perceive their own needs, the needs of others, the ability to negotiate and be self-awareness and self-reliant because they are taken seriously.

## 2.4 The Rooms

The Bio Kids rooms have been modified to the special requirements of the age groups between six months and six years. Each room has its own assigned activity, which enables the children to familiarize themselves quickly with the building. The furnishings and equipment (such as the climbing area) are periodically inspected by our insurer in order to be able to ensure the highest possible level of safety.

The activity areas are:

The dining room: with enough different sitting options for everyone to be able to sit as they want to, because the furniture "grows up" with them,

The exercise room: with an installed exercise area at various heights, which includes options for withdrawing, which has also been adjusted to various needs for excitement and challenges,

The lab: which has been equipped with lab tables and materials (pipettes, magnifying glasses, microscopes, etc.) for research and discovery,

The workshop: with tools and work areas (benches) appropriate to children, the doll room for fantasies and role playing as well as options for reflecting on experiences,

The studio: for anything that has to do with design and for providing space for a multitude of creative options, both through guided and freestyle activities.

The crawling nest: the protected withdrawal area for our youngest kids, who are not yet so mobile,

In addition, there are the sleeping room, the combined cuddling & sleeping room and the construction room, whose name indicates its activity.

### 3. Pedagogical Philosophy

The primary guiding idea is the right of each child to cultivate their development and to develop into a self-responsible and socially capable personality (§ 1 P. 1 of Title 8 of the Social Security Code (SGB VIII)). This forms the frame of reference for the two most important general aims of education and child development: autonomy and bonding. The children should therefore be encouraged and supported in the development of self-determination. The daycare center provides the freedom to exercise and explore independent, self-reliant and self-initiated behavior.

The children, themselves, should be self-aware, think collaboratively, express their own opinions and be responsible. They make decisions, affect group decisions, learn to take responsibility for their decisions and experience their own self-effectiveness.

The encouragement of resilience is included among our basic preventative tasks. Resilience is understood to mean the physical resistance of children to developmental risks that enable them to adjust to acute or chronically stressful life situations effectively.

In order to experience themselves as self-effective and to be able to shape their world actively with others, children need to know about phenomena, world rules and interconnections, as well as cultural factors. Enjoyment of learning, motivated exploration of the world by retaining the child's natural curiosity and reinforcement of the child's motivation towards mastering challenges are necessary foundations for continuing to learn throughout the child's life.

#### 3.1 Issues

The following issues categorize our practical care provision work.

- Education and Stimuli: Children already have the ability to learn and to develop. Learning is a self-activated process, open to experiences and the search for solutions, which requires the active confrontation of environmental factors in understanding oneself and others. Children and toddlers are individuals who explore and learn actively.

They are curious, attentive, interested, motivated and feel a strong need to know. They want to make sense of the world around them. To do this, they will combine the experiences learned using all of their senses on their own. In addition, they synchronize courses of action against already existing insights or as meaningful experiences already undergone. Thus, children confront their world in a more comprehensive manner and develop increasingly complicated associations in their conscious minds. The result of this learning is recorded in the brain as a memory track.

Childhood educational processes presume reliable relationships and bonds with adults. Education is thus a self-activated process, which is completed by social interaction.

- Exercise: Children have a natural need to move. In addition, sufficient and diverse options for exercise are important for both the physical as well as mental development of every child.

Providing for the natural need for exercise and offering a number of different ways of exercising are important for this. In particular, the freely accessible exercise area incorporates this at Bio Kids, as well as the local area, which provides access to meadows, fields, a pond and a forest nearby. In this way, a balanced amount of exercise in combination with a balanced diet can become a positive part of the physical development of the children.

- Equal rights and democracy: Children should experience bonding and a feeling of belonging to support social skills in their development. They develop interest in others and form friendships. In this way, they learn to think, feel and understand the treatment of other people and respect them. By being together, the children practice the recognition of diversity and tolerance. They should learn to live together and be considerate of the interests of others. The free space of one child ends where the options of one child become limited by the first child. In this way, they learn to take responsibility for their actions.
- Integration: As part of the pedagogical work, we place special importance on integrating all of the children. The daycare center provides this opportunity as the foundation for the integration of both children with difficulties and limitations as well as of children from other cultures and other languages. Thanks to the special nature of the campus of Martinsried, Bio Kids always has a mixture of eight to ten different countries of origin, as well as a mixture of handicapped and non-handicapped children. The individual consideration for the special needs of these children is always the most important issue.
- Language: Language and speaking are both prerequisites and components of cognitive development and overall form a "gateway to the world". Through them, it becomes possible not just to think about circumstances but to share them with others as well and thereby to create room for shared experiences. Through language, children are encouraged to think abstractly, to think in terms of different contexts and to plan ahead. Furthermore, language has a huge influence on the child's world and self-image and makes the child into a member of the culture whose language the child learns.

In order to link integration and language, the Bio Kids daycare center is bilingual (German & English). The fundamental acquisition of English occurs through the so-called immersion method, meaning the constant presence of a native speaker of the language. Children up to age six can acquire effective pronunciation and intonation in their examples of languages due to their particularly impressionable ability to imitate sounds. Thus, even very young children can learn a second or third language, in addition to their native tongue.

Aside from this, the early acquisition of foreign languages makes a meaningful contribution to the cognitive development of the child. Children learn through playing, singing and enjoyable activities. They remember speech patterns, the "music" of the language, intonation, sentence structure, and the spoken punctuation of a language in a natural manner, and learn to use these skills over time. The following principle applies for this: "Understanding comes first, then usage".

The decisive factor is that during the entire care provision time, all of the people in the care provision environment consistently work in their native language. The "native speakers" speak the foreign language exclusively, in our case, English. Thus, the children do not learn through artificial examples of grammar and vocabulary, but rather intuitively according to their age through the usage of English occurring everyday in the care provision environment.

- Nature and the environment: At a very early age, children show a great deal of interest in their environment and often discover things and become aware of natural processes that adults no longer notice. For this reason, being in nature and the garden as much as possible in any type of weather is important, as is taking the time to confront the events and attractions that nature may have to offer. Experiencing nature also means watching animals, collecting its products and creating things with them, as well as learning about animals and plants.

Things that adults often consider to be disgusting or dirty are harmless to children, and even exciting and interesting, given proper consideration of basic hygiene. Life experience.

- Nutrition: According to experience, children are open to all taste experiences. Consistency and texture are less important for this. What is important is the type of preparation and the way the food is presented.

The eating and tasting preferences of a person are decisively affected during early childhood. For this reason, providing children with as many flavorful experiences as possible is important to us. This "educates" the sense of taste and children are then ready to try new things later in life.

The nutritional design of Bio Kids is strongly oriented on the nutritional principles of the DGE (German Association for Nutrition) for young children. An optimized mixture of foods is important for this.

Breakfast, lunch and snacks are prepared daily, fresh in the daycare center. The use of seasonal and regional products from ecological farming is taken into consideration. Likewise, the vitamin conserving preparation and reduction of salt, sugar and fat are important in order to achieve an ideal result. The meals are cooked separately and enriched so that the children can see the difference and taste it. Food allergies and any religious guidelines regarding food are also taken into consideration.

- Humor: Fun, happiness and humor are important building blocks for positive development. There is a reason for the saying, "nothing differentiates people as much as their sense of humor". Children must express their happiness and light heartedness and enjoy it to the fullest extent possible. Consistent rules without penalties are an important factor contributing to daily living. Resolving conflicts without blame, with a healthy portion of silliness and fun.

Research shows us that humor is one of the most complex mental activities that people can perform. The ability to express oneself using double entendre, to think at multiple levels and to be able to distinguish real situations from staged events through the observation of facial expressions and gestures contributes significantly to cognitive development.

All of these issues form junctions between people during the daily pedagogical work and require each other. Thus, they should not be considered in an isolated manner, but comprehensively.

### 3. The Role of the Care Provider

The task of the care provider is: to unlock the child's development stage for them through the empathic observation of the children, to create an environment exciting and stimulating for their senses that corresponds to their stage of development together with them and to be available to the children as an empathetic interactive partner so that they can guide them through their learning experiences and enrich them through stimuli.

The children are provided with the opportunity to recognize their current needs and interests, to formulate and negotiate, and thereby design their daily activities independently, democratically together with other children and the care provider and in a daily child conference using the question "what is your plan for today?".

For the care provider, this is an opportunity, in addition to their observational activities, to find a point of balance between independent learning and stimulating the learning process.

The children's issues are perceived seriously, taken up, stimulated and enriched, for example, through asking questions, contributing new information or challenging objects and materials. These challenges always at a level just above the children's' current development stimulate the acquisition of the abilities required for the challenge, without de-motivating them, as long as the challenge can be solved successfully.

### 3.3 Child Mentoring & Individuality

All care providers are assigned a child to mentor. As a rule, the care provider keeps one child to mentor, who they have familiarized with the daycare center. The children thus learn from the start that while they can speak to any of the adults in the establishment, one person pays special attention to them.

The care provider creates an atmosphere of warmth and security, reliability and appreciation as well as acknowledgement, which the children need in order to unfold freely, to be able to develop independently and to develop ideally.

The daily schedule in the establishment is designed such that opening a multitude of options for activities is more important than keeping the children active.

Because the content comes from the everyday life of the children, it supplies issues that are important for the child for the development their own interests. The children can stick to their own issues and interests, determine their own tempo and are guided by their own experiences.

At regular intervals, a developmental examination is performed for each child by the respective care provider using an acknowledged examination procedure. This is documented and serves to illustrate the child development.

### 3.4 Care Provider Activities

The care provision area is very important due to the age structure of the children in the daycare center.

The different areas are:

Nutrition: At mealtimes, the children learn to feed themselves and also to ration their food. They can freely decide how much they would like to eat. They are supported when they need help and will learn the proper use of cutlery.

Food: Milk or baby food is prepared for the youngest children. This is given to them according to their needs and in consultation with the parents.

Diapers: Several times each day, as needed, children's diapers are changed for those that need diapers. This is organized by the team so that the regular daily schedule of stimulation and freestyle playtime is not limited by it.

Cleanliness education: While the youngest children are encouraged to use the potty and the toilette through observation, many children (from the age of two) go to the toilette or potty during diaper changes. Special care is taken to not force the child to do so.

### 3.5 Stimuli

The stimuli that are prepared and presented by the care providers are oriented towards the interests of the children. Any apparent interest in a current issue is used to provide the children with access to an educational area. This issue wants to be taken seriously and be resolved suitably. It thus provides the people who support and guide the child in their development with ideal approaches to developmental needs.

For one thing, knowledge about the strengths and skills already acquired by a child provides an overview of developmental progress in various educational areas. It can thus serve the examination of their own work. For another thing, it also offers access options for the long-term planning of the child's environment as well as interaction with them. This should in turn provide encouragement for the children to build up their strengths, because special talents are important and a valuable enrichment of life. Likewise, they can also serve as resources, through which one can reach disliked or totally neglected educational areas with the children and challenge them. They provide a starting point for challenging children with issues, which are held to be important and proper, without having to forego their agreement. If the children find their place in the world through their own interests, the skills acquired thereby will be retained for the rest of their lives.

### **3.6 Interdisciplinary Work**

The Bio Kids daycare center works as an establishment supplementing families. As such, our job is to ensure the physical well being of the children, to stimulate their mental and spiritual development and to support the parents in their educational efforts. In order to be able to do this at a broad level, we also cooperate with external specialist services. These services include a resident pediatrician for medical questions and therapists for speech, exercise and remedial teachers for pedagogically therapeutic questions.

### **3.7 Integration**

Integration is a core component of working with children who are handicapped or threatened by handicaps. The individual consideration of the special needs as well as the planning of assistance is a central issue of the educational work. Specialist services from the disciplines of psychology, remedial and physical education and consultation guide the pedagogical work and support the team. This helps in the design of approaches to solutions.

### **4. Coordination with the Parents**

The coordination between the parents and the daycare center is an important part of the Bio Kids program. On the basis of shared understandings and mutual acceptance, open discussion and close collaboration between the care providers and the parents of a child are the foundations of good care provision.

The employees conduct regular consultations with the parents about the development of their child.

The employees inform the parents about changes in the establishment as they take effect. Furthermore, the parents are encouraged to discuss any questions directly with the employee or forward any suggestions and requests to the team through the parental council.

The parents of Bio Kids children elect a parental council once per year. The parental council is informed as quickly as possible about changes to the daycare center.

The goal is trustworthy collaboration for the well being of all of the children, the parents and employees.

The sponsor wants to work closely with the parents so that they are included and so that they can start and implement their own initiatives.

## 5. Acclimatization

We attach a level of importance to the familiarization phase of the children on the basis of the insights of bonding research as part of the open design and carefully plan the concept accordingly. Thereby, close cooperation and large amounts of support by the parents are essential.

Bonding is the special relationship between a child and the parents or the people who continuously guide the child.

Creating the close relationship to the selected mentor accompanied by intensive feelings is an independent basic human need. Only the presence of this bonded person, who represents a secure foundation, makes it possible for the child to confront their environment openly and with curiosity. The child acquires a feeling of self-worth through reliable, empathetic support and the required trust in their social environment.

The development of a bonding system in the establishment can only be successful through the guidance of parent or another trusted person. The person operates as a secure foundation that the child needs in the new environment for their well being until the child accepts the mentor as an agent for feelings of security, trust, support and comfort.

Normally, the children need between six and fourteen days for the development of such a relationship, but up to three weeks in some cases. The time frame is individually adjusted through consultations with the mentor. For this reason, the parents are obligated to schedule two weeks, during which time they bring their child to the daycare center during the working time of the associated mentor and ensure that one parent or another mentor for the child can be present during this time, in order to guide the child as needed and enable them to familiarize themselves with life in the daycare center. A successful integration phase ensures a solid basis for trustworthy collaboration with Bio Kids for many years to come.