



Information for Parents

A successful start

Educational mission guidelines
in children's day-care institutions

For information:

A successful start
Information for parents about the
educational mission guidelines
for children's day-care institutions

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Greetings

Dear parents,

Your children go through a most intensive learning process. Be it in language, rules, cultural knowledge, body control or otherwise, they expand their competences daily. Already before starting school, they have gone through basic development steps that later learning is built on. It has been proved that a good education in early years of childhood in children's day-care institutions eases this path.

For this reason, we now regard children's day-care institutions as a part of our educational system. Educational professionals in these institutions are under a statutory mandate to provide education there. Their work is directed towards the "Educational Mission Guidelines in Children's Day-care Institutions in Schleswig-Holstein", which are regulated by the Children's Day-care Institutions Act (KitaG) of Schleswig-Holstein.

In their six educational areas, the "Guidelines" describe the whole range of what children should become acquainted with and should understand in this age group. The Guidelines are not a kind of a "teaching scheme" and play school should not be regarded as pre-school teaching. On the contrary, children should be motivated to unfold their natural curiosity as far as possible and to acquire new knowledge and skills actively.



Child care workers give the required motivation, on the basis of the "Guidelines". Together with the providers of children's day-care institutions, they deliver motivating structures for learning in early years of childhood.

If, after reading this brochure, you are interested in knowing how the educational guidelines are implemented in your children's day-care institution, have a chat with the educational professionals there. The teams in the institutions will be pleased to talk to you, because, in the final analysis, the best possible support for your child is based on good co-operation between parents and educational professionals.

You will find the educational guidelines under:
www.bildung.schleswig-holstein.de

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ute Engel-Ram".

*Minister of Education and
Women's Issues
of the Land Schleswig-Holstein*
Dear reader,

Education in children's day-care centres

the educational mission guidelines concern education in children's day-care institutions and its implementation. This brochure will give you an initial overview of the purpose and the content of the guidelines. We hope you find it interesting to read.

To the question "What educates children?", Hartmut von Hentig once answered: "Everything!"

Without parents, nothing works

When children come to children's day-care institutions, they will already have had many experiences, and have learnt a great deal. By means of their activity, children's day-care institutions build on the educational experience that children have had in their families. Thus, parents are important partners.

Every child has the right to education

Every child has the right to education. Education begins at the time of birth and is a lifelong process.

People never learn so much and so quickly as in the first years of life.

Education and the joy to continue developing yourself are central planks in the future sustainability of our society. With their independent mission of education, teaching and care, children's day-care institutions are of special importance at this stage. As the first institutions outside the family, they support the fundamental bases of further education. Educational professionals attend and support children and their parents in their educational efforts and expand the educational possibilities for all children.



The educational mission guidelines – an orientational framework

The educational mission guidelines support the educational professionals of the children's day-care centres in perceiving and shaping their educational mission.

They constitute a binding basis for the work of all children's day-care institutions. They offer a common, scientifically based and professionally tested, orientational framework.

They play a part in contributing to the fact that parents can trust that their child will be individually and professionally supported, regardless of which institution in Schleswig-Holstein their child attends and by what philosophy the institution works.

The guidelines

- explain the meaning of education and upbringing (educational insight, principles) and how educational guidance can succeed.
- name the aims of educational guidance and describe how children can be supported individually.
- describe cross-sectional dimensions that are always to be taken into consideration by the educational guidance.
- give suggestions to educational professionals to test and further develop their own practice.
- point out which subjects (educational areas) children should be able to be occupied with in the course of their time in playschool.
- give methodical, instructional advice to professionals.
- describe parents, schools, youth services and communities as important collaborative partners.



Education in children's day-care centres – principles

Education, upbringing and care are of equal importance and are **not** to be separated.

Education denotes the continuous human dispute between itself and the world.

Children perceive the world around them, with all their senses. By means of handling, they test the way to deal with people and things in their environment. They gain experience, integrated in social, cultural and community structures. They pick up and expand their knowledge, practise their skills and get an idea of the world. Children continually deal with themselves and the world, thereby educating themselves. They have to do this activity themselves.

Thus, education understood in this way is above all self-teaching.



Upbringing denotes the activity of adults that offers children the possibility of dealing intensively with the world, of exploring it, of understanding and of becoming capable of acting in it. Educational professionals support the educational efforts of the children. They create spaces and make materials available. They seize on the interests and questions of the children and offer them ongoing subjects. They also make available to them interesting situations outside the child day-care institution. The educational professionals attend the children within and outside the children day-care institution, with respect and appreciatively.



Adults follow educational goals. They help children to grow in society and to become acquainted with and respect the social behaviours, cultural know-how, values and norms necessary for this.

A trusting relationship and a secure connection between children and adults is the bridge between adult concerns, their aims, and the educational efforts of the children.

Care ensures that during the time that the child spends in the children day-care centre he or she is in good hands and is certain to be looked after, that his or her basic needs are met and that people (*reference persons*) are by his or her side, to give the security that he or she needs in order to investigate the world. Overlooking, insightful care is an important prerequisite for the (self) education of children.



Guiding principles and cross-sectional dimensions

Consideration and planning by adults are significantly formed through basic principles for everyday dealing with educational matters: democracy, sustainability and the consideration of differences are bases of education.

Democracy and sustainable development are guiding principles and, at the same time, goals of education. Active democracy assures the children of their rights and supports them in this, so they are able to take part autonomously, solidly and competently in the life of a democratic society.

The *Principle of sustainable development* is aimed at ensuring that humankind is aware of its responsibility. Children can experience their first taste of democratic and sustainable thinking and doing, and pick up skills, proficiencies and mindsets in order to be able to deal themselves with democracy and responsibility.

Cross-sectional dimensions describe the differences between the generations, the sexes, cultures, talents and impairments, circumstances and environments.

Every child is unique and no family is alike. Only if the nature of each individual child and his or her situation is observed, can the educational processes of each child be motivated individually and development be supported.

The basic principles of educational support apply to all age groups.

In the course of this, the individual educational processes run differently. At his or her own pace, every child delves into his or her own main focuses as to content. Depending on the stage of development and age, children occupy themselves with different contents and questioning. For this reason, the guidelines contain advice on the specific needs of children under 3 and children of school age.



Jointly bearing responsibility for education

Come to an agreement about educational ideas

Parents have wishes, hopes, aspirations and visions about how their children should be cared for and supported. Children's day-care institutions are under a statutory mandate (ss.4 and 5 Children's Day-care Institutions Act – KitaG) and have a professional understanding of education, upbringing and care. Important issues can be clarified in dialogue.

Organising transitions

Transitions play a special part in the lives of children, e.g. familiarisation in the playschool, transition to school. Parents can accompany their child together with the educational professionals at this important step.

Accompanying the start – building trust

Parents are the most important reference persons to their child. They know their child well, are aware of what matters and what pleases him or her, and can tell the educational professionals of these things.



It is necessary to allow time for familiarisation of one's own child. By means of accompanying their child on the first days, parents give him or her the security that he or she needs to be able to deal with all that is new and exciting in the group and to get involved with persons that are strangers to him or her.

When the child learns to know an educational professional from his or her group better, he or she can become a reference person for the child, accompany him or her and offer the security required.

The time that parents spend together with their child in the institution during the familiarisation phase allows all involved to create trust between each other.

In this way, parents, together with the educational professionals of the children's day-care institution, lay a firm basis for the education of their child.

Encouragement, accompaniment and support

The understanding of early education as self-education requires a change in perspective on the part of educational professionals. The issue is not what we may communicate to children, but the question:

“What conditions do children require in order to turn towards new and varied subjects, to pose questions themselves and to be able to find answers?”

Professional expertise consists of recognising the significance of subjects, concerns, issues, needs and developmental stages of children and giving constructive stimuli in all areas.



Purposes of educational guidance

The aim of educational guidance in early years of childhood is to be able to support each child in his or her development to an independent and socialising personality, able to take part in life autonomously, solidly and competently.

Children require skills, proficiencies, knowledge and competencies to be able to master their lives.

Children are inquisitive about the world. Anything can awaken their interest, e.g. a building worker on the roadside, an object, falling over, a substance that feels unusual, tools, colours, music, other people. Children thirst for knowledge, such as how something works, how people react and what they themselves can bring about.

Children act like explorers. They try things out, they repeat, they make changes, they don't allow failures to confuse them, and they persevere, until they are satisfied with their results.

In everyday situations, when solving problems, in play with other children, in dealings with people, subjects and substances, children pick up *self-competence*, *social competence*, *competence with things* and *methodical learning competence* and become capable of handling matters.

Educational Areas

Educational areas describe the variety of subjects that children deal with. They describe all that education can comprise.

Children encounter many topics in discovering and appropriating the world. Their actions and exploration is characterised by creativity, with which they connect elements of different educational areas together.



In games on the play mat e.g. the children organising a pretend landscape and adorning it with colourful stones and

fabrics (aesthetic sense), they reach understandings (language), they paint themselves traffic signs (symbols and lettering), they build houses from building blocks (statics, natural science, body and movement), they share out the existing cars fairly between themselves (mathematics, ethics), they discuss the rules of game(s) (society) and go on taking a vote during the game, on what should be next (communication).

Six educational areas are outlined in the educational guidelines. The outline shows what a wealth of subjects and contents there are in each individual area.

Each area itself emphasises one aspect of the integrated educational processes for children:

- experiencing artistic-aesthetic education and media or perception of the world with all their senses
- body, health and action or body and movement
- language(s), symbols/letters and communication or communicating with language and symbols
- discovering mathematics, natural sciences and technology or rules and natural laws
- experiencing culture, society and politics or community being able to be shaped
- religion, ethics and philosophy or asking questions about the purpose of things

Children educate themselves in various educational areas at the same time. These educational areas are not school subjects but help the educational professionals to appreciate the range of the possible contents and subjects and to integrate them in their planning. They enable a targeted observation and reflexion. During their time in playschool, children should receive the opportunity to deal intensively and excitingly with contents from all educational areas.

Didactical-methodical elements for accompanying educational processes

In the educational mission guidelines, accompanying and supporting education is described as reflecting and planned educational handling.

The initial point of education is to observe the handling, interests and worlds of experience of children and the dialogue between all involved in this process. Observation and recording accompany the process and are used over and over again for reflexion of that what has already taken place and for feedback for children and adults.

Exploring, planning, handling and reflecting form a cycle that includes observations, new ideas and changes and that may lead to new planning and handling steps.



Education and accompanying education

Considerations as to how children may be motivated, accompanied and supported by adults are defined by the following aspects:

Education takes place everywhere and always

The whole of everyday, from taking the child to the day-care centre up to picking him or her up is a field for experience, handling and practice. There are many things to be discovered not only in the children's day-care institution but also in the environment of play school.

Accompanying education allows different accesses

Children don't play in order to learn but learn when they play. Being able to "play freely" is as important to children as the dealing of the child with the offers prepared by the educational professionals. The offers allow children an expanded occupation with that what is known and new things. In jointly developed and created projects, children may occupy themselves with a subject intensively and from totally different perspectives over a longer period of time.

The educational professionals

Education requires a challenging environment and a self-defined time

Rooms may support or hinder education. Rooms with their structure, their possibilities for playing and their material offer have an enduring effect on the individual educational processes of the children. Along with the prepared offers, children need time to be able to use to play and explore the world at their own pace.

Education is individual

Each child has his or her own pace and his or her own way of dealing with things. It is necessary to understand, challenge and accompany each child in his or her individual development. In order to open accesses to a number of subjects for children, it is always necessary to pick up suggestions from the different educational areas.

Education needs participation

Education needs participation. Educational professionals and parents use their knowledge, their expertise and the interpretation of their observations to understand children in their actions and to set out impulses.

First, the behaviour of the children, whether they pick up an offer with interest and use it as their own possibility or not, give the adult the indication whether they have understood the child or not. Thus, it is sensible to involve and to let children participate in all steps.

The educational professionals shape everyday life in the children's day-care institution as space for life, experience and education. They are contact partners for children and parents. The educational understanding described in the educational guidelines presupposes high requirements on their professionalism.



The educational professionals require considerable time and expert support in order to be able to deal with subjects and requirements of the educational guidelines and to integrate the contents into everyday life. Professional advice, continuous education, advanced education, team days and work reviews support this process.

Education in co-operation



Children educate themselves in their families, in their local environment, in sport clubs, in children's day care institutions, in other words: education is a joint task. Children's day care institutions are part of the regional educational landscape. They seek links and co-operate with other educational partners on site.

These include:

- mothers and fathers
- teachers
- professionals with youth services
- other people who work primarily or in honorary basis in the community (e.g. politicians, administrative staff, people in associations)

Shape transitions – from the children's day-care institution to the school

The transition succeeds when parents, educational professionals of the children's day-care institutions and teachers work together. Co-operation between the children's day-care institution and the primary school is legally regulated (s. 3 (3) School Act, s. 5 (6) Children's Day-care Institutions Act – KitaG) and secures the success of the transition.

Schools and children's day-care institutions reach agreements, which are designed by teachers, educational professionals and parents in exchange with each other.



Co-operation with mothers and fathers – educational and upbringing partnerships

Remain in dialogue – talk regularly with each other

Exchange and information form the basis of good co-operation.

It helps children in their educational processes if the people who are important for them have a trusting exchange with each other. By taking or picking him or her up, there is always the possibility of a short talk, in which important information can be exchanged. Appointed reviews with the educational professionals offer the opportunity to talk calmly about the development of the child. The recording of the education of the child is a good basis for this.

Handling jointly

Because many things can be understood better through joint handling, co-operation with mothers and fathers is not limited to parents' evenings. Parents can take part in the educational work of the children day-care institution in different ways. There are many possibilities of participating or being active. In this way, parents may experience their children in situations different from those in the family and sometimes they are surprised at how independently their children can already handle situations.

Mothers and fathers may commit themselves as parent speaker(s) and in this way become influential with the educational professionals, making a good educational offer for all children in the children's day-care institution.



This information was handed over to you by

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