



Berlin's Early Years Programme

for early years centres
and family day-care

Information for parents

Dear parent,



As your child now attends an early years centre (Kita) or a family day-care centre (Kindertagespflege) in Berlin, I would like to introduce you to the educational practices that guide the services offered in early years centres in the city. Why are the initial experiences that your son or daughter will have in a children's group so important? What support will early childhood professionals provide to your child? Will your child receive enough encouragement and loving care for you to feel comfortable leaving your daughter or son at the centre?

Early years practitioners base their work on Berlin's Early Years Programme, which is also known as the BBP. This programme has to be implemented by all early years centres and family day-care providers in the city. The goal is to guide and nurture each child according to her or his needs and individual stage of development. The Early Years Programme focuses on the following issues:

- How do children learn during the first years of their life?
- What mandate do early years and family day-care centres have?
- How do children develop the skills that they will need later in life?
- In which areas do children receive support in early years centres and family day-care?
- What role do early childhood professionals play?
- How do children with and without disabilities play and learn together?
- What is important when it comes to working together with parents?
- How are children prepared for primary school?

Each early years or family day-care centre has to draw up a written plan. This document contains information about the centre's educational focus, its spatial environment, opening hours and much more. Please take the opportunity to read both this document and other relevant documents to learn more about the place where your child will spend (or is spending) much of their time over the coming years.

I hope you and your child will enjoy being part of your early years or family day-care centre (Kita or Kindertagespflege).

Yours sincerely,

Sandra Scheeres

Sandra Scheeres



WILHELM LIEBIG VERLAG
Waldhof
Tiere
Pflanzen
Farben
Zahlen
1 bis 10

7
sieben farbige
Herbstblätter



The work undertaken with parents at early years and family day-care centres

Coming together in conversation and continuing the discussion are key to cooperation between early childhood professionals and yourself as a parent. Your child should feel comfortable and be able to develop at her or his own pace. The staff want you to be informed about the progress that your child makes. We hope you will participate in daily life at the early years or family day-care centre and put forward your own ideas and suggestions. The staff will certainly welcome your support and feedback.

Every early years centre chooses a parent to represent your concerns. You can find further information about this at www.leak-berlin.de (in German). If you have any other queries concerning the services offered by early years centres, please contact the youth welfare service.

Why are early years and family day-care centres crucial to your child's development?

Early years centres supplement the care a child receives in the family. They are places where your child can discover many new and interesting things. Furthermore, the staff at early years centres attentively guide your child along the way and offer new incentives and help whenever your child needs support. Free play is an established part of the daily routine.



Of course, the friends your child makes at an early years or family day-care centre also form an important part of this process.

Disagreements sometimes occur during every-day life. However, disputes help children learn how to resolve issues and to respect the needs of others; this strengthens their social skills.

But what about language development? Children learn a language by speaking to other children, negotiating rules whilst playing, listening to others and flicking through the pages of books together. A child who feels at ease learns a language naturally – without thinking – during their daily experiences and involvement with others. Staff at early years centres encourage the children to speak, and they provide individual care to each child to strengthen their language development. Every language and culture is welcome. If you speak a language other than German at home, your child still has the chance to learn German at the early years or family day-care centre. This is essential if your child is to have a good start at primary school.

Shared education and care for children with and without disabilities

Children with and without disabilities attend early years and family day-care centres together. This benefits everyone.

Berlin has fostered this form of integration for many years and its Early Years Programme offers information and advice on integrated pedagogy.



Specially trained, expert practitioners are available in the early years centres to support children with disabilities. They devise educational plans that are uniquely suited to each individual and do so in close cooperation with the parents.

What is the difference between an early years and a family day-care centre (Kita and Kindertagespflege)?

Berlin's Early Years Programme also provides the foundation for the activities that are undertaken in family day-care centres. Whereas one adult may care for up to five children in a family day-care centre (up to ten children can be cared for by two practitioners), early years centres may have up to 250 children per facility. This fact alone leads to differences. Early years centres offer more varied educational activities and different age groups come into contact with one another. However, family day-care centres provide a more intimate setting, which is why they are particularly suited to younger children. You can choose the form of care that you feel provides the best opportunities for your child.

How do children learn?

Every day, parents observe how their children master their world through curiosity; this process occurs step-by-step and is driven by the child's inquisitiveness. Children explore and make sense of the world through experimentation and play. Berlin's Early Years Programme outlines the many areas in which early childhood professionals can support your child, including through better spatial planning, providing children with a diverse range of materials, encouraging them to play and much more.

Children already engage in a form of play while in the womb. Their play changes according to age and development. Small children tirelessly explore their environment and examine the objects that they view as interesting. Later functional play enters the picture, whereby children test out how things work. Children play 'dress up and pretend' and try out different roles. They bring things and situations to life, that only exist in their imagination, and this enables them to explore a wide range of experiences. Older children like games that follow set rules. All of these forms of play have a place in early years and family day-care centres (Kita and Kindertagespflege).

Focal points in young children's education **The six pillars of the Berlin Early Years Programme**

Health

Your child will learn a lot about health and their body. Topics such as personal hygiene are covered, along with healthy food and diet. The early childhood professionals also help children learn how to relax and to rest whenever they need to.

Social and cultural life

All children are welcome regardless of their family of origin, their cultural roots or the length of time that they have been in Germany. Traditions, cultures, values and languages are respected and explored as topics for learning. Children with and without disabilities play and learn together, which enables all of the children to gain valuable social experiences.

Communication: language, writing and cultural and media-based communication

In early years and family day-care centres, children are encouraged to speak during all of the activities that they engage in throughout the day. Language is developed while at play, while setting the table, eating, tidying up, reading books, during circle time and when talking to children and staff. Their growing curiosity about writing and numbers is also addressed and encouraged. The centres also explore the issue of how to deal with media.

The arts: visual design, music and theatre

The activities undertaken within this pillar are aimed at providing your child with various opportunities to creatively express their needs, emotions and interests. Creative forms of expression are especially important for children who are just getting used to German.

Mathematics

This pillar is not about learning equations or mathematics for school-aged children; rather, the aim is to introduce your child to numbers, space and time, the ability to sort things into a particular order and to learn to estimate and make comparisons. Through play, children come into contact with different patterns and sets of numbers and this can be used to develop a basis for mathematical thinking.

Nature, environment and technology

Children are very good observers. By developing hypotheses about the things that they have seen or experienced, by searching for explanations and by trying out lots of different things, they gain insights into nature and the environment. Through experimenting, children learn how things work and they learn how to ask questions and how to search for answers together with other children.

The benefits of these activities – an example of an everyday activity in an early years centre (Kita) :

The photo on page 9 illustrates an activity undertaken as part of the Nature, Environment and Technology pillar. The children are provided with an exciting learning environment that encourages them to experiment. By testing and observing, the girls in the picture reach their own conclusions and develop an understanding of the results that reflects their own particular stage of development. The early childhood practitioner helps from a distance, offering explanations, support, and motivation whenever needed.

What else are these children learning? The girls will ask questions, express enjoyment and describe what they have seen in words. The staff discuss these ideas with them, explain what is happening and support the children in expanding their linguistic knowledge and skills. They could also speak to the children about the different shapes and colours and discuss various materials and preferences.

The oldest girl is building a structure. In order to do so, she has to look at the different shapes, amounts, sizes and weights, compare them, and put the stones and tiles together. These activities serve as a basis for developing a basic understanding of mathematics and science.

The girls are watching each other, showing each other respect, and learning how good it feels to complete an activity by themselves.



They are also practising their fine motor skills by using their fingers to connect plugs and cables together. The girls are working towards a goal and are learning what they can make happen by themselves: 'When I put these two cables together, the lamp lights up.' Or: 'I can keep taking the connection apart and putting it back together.'

Young children learn holistically. This means that they perceive and learn with all of their senses. All of the educational pillars are interconnected. Early childhood professionals support the children in their learning. They know each individual child, understand where they are in their development, recognise the next developmental steps and encourage them to make progress.

Settling-in and childhood transitions

Children deal with many changes and transitions during their time in early years or family day-care centres. The first occurs when they join a new group and need some time to get used to their surroundings (the settling-in period). As time goes by, your child may change to another group, move to a different early years centre or from family day-care to an early years centre. The step up from an early years centre to primary school also represents a very important transitional period, each of which comes with its own challenges.

During the settling-in period, your child starts to build stable relationships with adults of both genders and with other children. However, you remain the most important person for your child. Your early years or family day-care centre will draw up a plan covering your child's first few days and weeks, and will discuss the individual steps with you. A member of staff will be appointed to look after your child. Your child will show you just how ready he or she is to accept the new environment. Gradually, you will be able to take a step back and concentrate on the other things that you need to do.

When and how does primary school preparation take place?

Your child will not only be prepared for primary school during their last year before school, but throughout their entire time at the early years or family day-care centre. Most children look forward to school and to becoming one of the 'big kids'. At times, these feelings can also be accompanied by worries and insecurities. Preparing for school is a journey into the unknown: children have no idea about what to expect.

Which skills will your child learn on this journey?

- **Self-confidence:** belief in their own abilities. Your child will develop self-confidence through many experiences of success, and through daily participation in activities and projects. He or she will come to realise that they are capable of learning lots of new things. As children grow older, they become more and more independent and skilled at mastering new situations. In the early years centres, children who are in the last year before primary school become one of the 'big kids', and this helps boost their self-confidence once more.
- **Social behaviour:** your child will learn what it means to be part of a group and to negotiate, but also to follow rules and to behave fairly towards other people.

- **Persistence:** your son or daughter will realise that it is worth trying to find a solution to a problem instead of giving up too soon when faced with difficulties.
- **Subject knowledge:** every day your child will expand their knowledge of the world that surrounds them. Children will learn to use and to express this knowledge in diverse ways, such as through language, pictures, building structures, singing, role-play and during projects. Their first experiences of the sciences at early years and family day-care centres will also help when it comes to learning at school and they provide a basis for your child to expand their knowledge.
- **Language:** your child will continuously develop their language skills. Children should be able to understand and use a broad range of vocabulary and proper sentence structures to express their needs and feelings in words, ask questions and describe what they are doing.
- **Motor skills:** your child will have many opportunities to move and to develop coordination skills. Children learn a wide range of fine motor skills (such as delicate hand movements), and these provide excellent preparation for the demands placed on children in school.

For further information, please visit the website of the Senate Administration for Education, Youth and Family:

<http://www.berlin.de/sen/bjf/>

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A large, bright orange plastic tunnel is the central focus of the top half of the page. Several young children are inside and around it. One child in a white shirt and pink shorts is lying on their back inside the tunnel, laughing joyfully. Other children are visible in the background, some sitting and some standing, all appearing to be in a playful, active environment. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Berliner Bildungsprogramm für Kitas und Kindertagespflege

Alle Kinder haben ein Recht auf Bildung — von Anfang an. Das aktualisierte Berliner Bildungsprogramm beschreibt, welche grundlegenden Kenntnisse, Fähigkeiten jedes Kind in seinen ersten sechs Lebensjahren braucht, um erfolgreich seinen weiteren Lebensweg beschreiten zu können, mit welchen Inhalten es bekannt gemacht werden soll und wie es entsprechend seinem Entwicklungsstand und seinen Neigungen gefördert werden kann.

Es bietet einen verbindlichen, wissenschaftlich begründeten und fachlich erprobten Orientierungsrahmen für die Arbeit aller Berliner Kindertageseinrichtungen und ist darüber hinaus in der Fachöffentlichkeit bundesweit und international auf große fachliche Zustimmung gestoßen.

Die aktualisierte Fassung des Berliner Bildungsprogramms nimmt die nun zehnjährigen Praxiserfahrungen mit der ersten Auflage des Bildungsprogramms auf und verknüpft sie mit neuen wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnissen bzw. bildungspolitischen Entwicklungen auf Bundesebene und in Berlin. Die grundlegenden Aussagen zum Bildungsverständnis, zu den Zielen der pädagogischen Arbeit und zu den pädagogischen Aufgaben der Pädagoginnen und Pädagogen bleiben erhalten. Sie sind vertieft und konkretisiert.

Schwerpunkte der Aktualisierung sind:

- Die Arbeit mit den jüngsten Kindern
- Die Entwicklung eines inklusiven Bildungssystems
- Die alltagsintegrierte sprachliche Bildung für alle — auch die mehrsprachig aufwachsenden — Kinder
- Der Zusammenhang von Bildung und Gesundheit
- Die Bedeutung von Übergängen in den Biographien der Kinder
- Die Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung
- Die Verantwortung von Leitung und Trägern für die Qualitätsentwicklung

Die Struktur des Bildungsprogramms ist beibehalten. Neu ist, dass das aktualisierte Berliner Bildungsprogramm sich ausdrücklich auch auf die Arbeit mit Kindern in Kindertagespflegestellen bezieht.



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