

Grüne Wolke e.V.

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Pedagogical Conception

Updated: October

2022

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1.1. Grüne Wolke as Name and Concept

The book „Die Grüne Wolke“ was published in Reinbek, Germany in 1973. It first appeared in London, in 1938, titled „The Last Man Alive: A Story for Children from the Age of Seven to Seventy“ by A.S. Neill. The contained stories were gathered from his work with schoolchildren in Summerhill. Naturally, „The Last Man Alive“ is not a fitting name for a Kinderladen, so we decided the German name was more suitable.

On the principles of A.S. Neill (1883-1973) we strive for a relationship between our children, parents and personnel of emotional well-being and a stable social and cognitive development. We want each child to be happy and satisfied. We believe successful learning and a fulfilled life are based on a confident and secure foundation. In order to achieve these goals to which we are dedicated, we have chosen to be independently managed.

Our teaching goals provide limits and standards that children (depending on their age) can readily accept. In this way, the influence of false authorities can be reduced by self- and co-determination, a democratic structure and education without fear.

1.2. Children's Democratic Participation

We wish that not only adults are responsible for fulfilling the children's needs. In daily practice, we encourage the children to help and guide themselves. Our Kinderladen offers a podium where children's needs can be heard—thus, learning to speak out about their own themes.

In Morning Circle, we practice the use of democratic structures, modelled on the idea of Freinet's „Children's Council“. They are encouraged to speak out about topics that interest them. The children learn : a) to respect one another, b) that no one is shut out, c) constructive criticism with positive remarks, d) to accept being center of attention, e) not only speaking but also listening attentively without disturbing.

The children can participate in establishing our rules and if necessary, also questioning them. They learn, in a constructive and self-determined manner, that parents and other adults can be replaced.

1.3. Education Without Fear

The child's interests are more important than those of the parents and educators. Fear can block the child's natural learning desire because in a fearful situation the urge to get away shuts off all other intellectual activity. Fear greatly damages the physical and psychic development of the child. „Fear causes stupidity“.

Children, as do all people, have the right to retain their physical and mental health. Our goal is to enable the children to develop their individual abilities. Therefore, no penalty nor punishment will be dispensed. Nevertheless, we will behave in a consequent manner towards the children. It is important for them to learn that individual behavior can cause unpleasant consequences; for example: if a child spills a glass of water, he/she must clean the spot and will not be reprimanded or sent to the corner.

1.4. Gender-conscious Education

The children are not educated in a gender-specific way. Boys and girls should be offered the same things in a non-judgmental manner. The self-confidence of the children of both sexes is to be strengthened. The children are offered the opportunity to find out and accept their strengths and weaknesses, regardless of gender. So everyone is allowed to be a princess. We allow children to try out their sexual identity independently of societal role constraints, e.g. in the form of doctor games, so that children's curiosity can be satisfied. Adults intervene only when older children persuade younger children to play, take advantage of them, or the play is against their will, creating a power imbalance.

As early as the second year of life, children begin to understand that there are two different sexes, and young children often play with themselves, lost in thought. They simply enjoy the good feeling.

The children learn about different ways and forms of living together. In the group structure, we emphasize a balanced gender mix. All children should be able to find themselves in picture books, dolls, Lego figures, etc., in order to support the children in developing a positive self-concept and to be able to better withstand and deal with the social pressure of racism.

1.5. Independence

The educators are the children's companions and will only interfere when necessary. We learn how to have fun. We learn by playing. Many different materials and methods show us the importance of experiencing something new. Touching and feeling means understanding („Learning by doing“). We discover our surroundings by climbing, running, smelling, tasting, splashing, etc.

Independence is encouraged because the child learns to help himself. „Help me to do it myself.“ (Maria Montessori)

The ability to get dressed on your own is encouraged according to individual ability. Assistance is offered when necessary. Furthermore, we encourage the children to assist each other. Buttons, zippers and shoelaces are hard to handle and this process requires a lot of practice. At the playground the educators will not assist children climbing up the equipment. Only the child who can manage by himself to climb up and down has demonstrated his ability to climb safely and fearless. Rightfully he/she can feel „as proud as a rooster“. Safety on the streets and in a traffic situation is another critical issue where children must learn to be self-confident: When do I cross at a traffic light? No playing when crossing the street. Children must be guided to develop confident and safe behavior in street traffic, especially important for their later independent school way. Self-confidence raises one's own self-esteem. „I can do this by myself; I don't need any help, and if necessary, I know how to get it.“

Therefore, it is also desirable that a self-confident behavior is encouraged at home. This makes it easier for the child to succeed in Kinderladen and school routines as well as developing an independent and confident adult life.

1.5.1. I-competence

Children must first learn to perceive themselves as independent persons. Among other things, this is characterized by the fact that they can say "I" as well as "yes" and "no" and are taken seriously in this. They learn to see themselves as part of a group and not as the center of it. Together we learn to recognize and respect our own limits and the limits of others. Only when we have recognized our own limits can we learn to set them successfully. (Berliner Bildungsprogramm, p. 26-27) We implement this in

our daily pedagogical routine as well as with appropriate offers and projects for self-awareness/awareness of others.

1.5.2 Social-emotional development

Being aware of one's own feelings as well as the feelings of others, being able to name and acknowledge them, is the basis for positive interaction and promotes stable, reliable relationships. This is what we try to promote in Grüne Wolke and we support the children in influencing their emotional impulses in order to regulate them.

A child is already emotionally shaped during pregnancy by genetic factors as well as external environmental influences. A stress-free and as relaxed as possible pregnancy favors a positive personality development.

In infancy, the experiences made with the reference person and the values and norms exemplified determine the individual circuits in the brain, so that the most positive possible self-image can be developed, which results in compassion, empathy and consequently pro social behavior. Within our pedagogical practice, the underlying needs of our children, which trigger the basic emotions (e.g. joy, sadness, anger, shame), can thus be discussed individually within the group of children, so that the individuals independently develop strategies to find solutions. The children learn self-efficacy, which strengthens self-confidence.

1.5.3. Child protection / Violence and Abuse Prevention

With growing self-confidence and self-esteem, we help the children to defend themselves against attacks by others. They learn to get help, to listen to their inner voice and to protect themselves. They learn to perceive their own feelings and to express them.

Adults should take these wishes of the children seriously and not simply ignore them because of some convention. (A kiss is not a must).

We work according to the following prevention principles:

- 1 - Your body belongs to you
- 2 - Your feelings are important
- 3 - There are pleasant and unpleasant touches
- 4 - There are good and bad secrets
- 5 - You have the right to say "No!"
- 6 - Get help
- 7 - You are not to blame

The child protection concept is available to all parents in a folder in the Kinderladen as well as on our homepage.

1.5.4. Sexual Education

Every child has its own pace, also in physical and psychosexual development, which is always developing and changing. Dealing with sexuality is learned from an early age. Adults serve as role models for this. We encourage adults not to leave children alone with questions about sexuality. Children's questions that are not answered provide room for troubling fantasies and fears. Children who feel emotionally accepted and have a positive feeling about their own bodies are better protected. It is important to clearly distinguish child sexuality from adult sexuality. Children have the same or similar physical reactions as adults (e.g., boys get an erection), but

ascribe a very different meaning to these experiences. The sexual parts or certain actions do not yet have a special meaning for the child. The child's approach to his or her body and needs is playful, spontaneous, curious and unbiased. (Brochure of the BzGA, p.6 ff).

According to Freud, there are three phases that children go through in their development.

The oral phase: the drive is satisfied through the mouth. The child feels pleasure while breastfeeding and exploring the environment through the mouth.

The anal phase: the child feels pleasure when defecating and when squelching.

The genital phase: The child feels pleasure when playing with his genitals, but does not have an orgasm. During this phase, the child learns to playfully get to know its body and to deal with itself in a natural way.

According to Wilhelm Reich, free development of pleasure is the basis for the mental health of the individual and thus also for society. Children experience their sexual organs as equal body parts for which they don't need to be ashamed. "Mr. X was completely wrong and his Peter was no better or worse than his nose or ears." (Neill; Theory and Practice of Antiauthoritarian Education, p.214)

To know one's own body is to know one's own self and to gain self-confidence and self-awareness about it. Children who do not know themselves are more likely to be fearful and disoriented, and are therefore preferred as victims of sexual abuse. Self-confident children are more likely to gain the ability to actively set themselves apart, defend themselves against assault, and articulate their own needs. Prohibitions inhibit healthy development and generate feelings of guilt. The suppression of drives produces "the fear of freedom with a simultaneous deep longing for freedom." (Quote: berndsenf.de/pdf/emotion4OrgonFunctionalism.pdf)

This corresponds to our educational mission to educate children to become self-confident people. .

1.6. „Berlin Educational Program“

The „Grüne Wolke“, as a Senate-sponsored institution adheres to the „Berlin Educational Program for the Education and Care of Children in Daycare up to the School Entry“ in our pedagogic work. The „Educational Program“ is obtainable in bookstores and can be viewed in our Kinderladen.

We understand this educational program as a dynamic framework within which we can offer the children awareness of their own interests and feelings as preparation for a satisfied, balanced and self-determined life in our society.

We orient our pedagogical work towards the six educational areas:

- Health
- Social and cultural life
- Communication: languages, written culture and media
- Art: Artistic creation, music, theatre play
- Mathematics
- Nature - Environment - Technology

1.7. Media Education

We prefer that our children perceive the real world with all their natural senses. The rapid film sequence is too strenuous for children and especially difficult for children under three years. In addition, increased media consumption can lead to health restrictions. Therefore, we will only choose films and theater pieces that are suitable for their sensitive souls. We

promote the child's competence by using various media devices (tablet, musicbox, digital camera) for the educational work and partly to enable the children to operate.

It is important for parents and children not to be distracted too often by digital devices. For example, 2 - 5 year olds who are allowed to use their parents' smartphone for 30 minutes a day show increased speech development disorders, motor hyperactivity, restlessness and distractibility. (Source: BLIKK Media Study 2018).

Increasingly, we see parents looking at their smartphone while picking up their child. Parents also do not supervise their children enough in other situations. The child is left with the impression that their cell phone is more important than they are. This can lead to attachment problems in the long term. (Source: Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Youth Welfare Office)

1.8. Nutrition

Our meals are vegetarian and derived from controlled, biological sources. We aim to reduce the amount of poisons in the body, eliminate antibiotic-treated meat and chemical additives (E numbers) which can cause hyperactive and aggressive behavior as proven by British research. Furthermore, antibiotic resistance is reduced. Our nutrition is also practically sugarfree in order to prevent dental decay and metabolic problems. Sweets are offered only on birthdays and special occasions. Children are allowed to eat with their fingers because it is simpler, although we also practice the use of cutlery and how to pour liquids.

Taking meals together is an essential part of daily life: important as a social meeting place, it strengthens togetherness and group identity. In this communicative atmosphere, we learn to enjoy our food. We experience that a balanced and vital nutrition keeps us healthy, fit and interested in learning.

We also encourage the children to drink often; during playtime they can always help themselves to drinking water. We serve mostly regional food products in order to protect the environment (unnecessary transportation increases CO2 exhaust).

During cooking projects we work together and also learn the names and origins of different food products.

1.9. Environmental Education

We sensitize the children to nature and encourage a sense of environmental consciousness. This process begins in everyday practice with energy and waste in Kinderladen. Overheated, poorly aired rooms cause energy waste as well as health problems. Nose membranes dry out, the children become sweaty and can then easily catch colds outside. Therefore, we air the rooms regularly, turn down the heating, also in winter, and request parents to dress their children in „onion style“. Possibly only stockings and house shoes can be worn inside and warmer clothing for outside. Whoever is still cold, in spite of inside physical activity and heating, can also put on an extra pullover.

We go outside to play every day so that the children feel the difference between inside and outside and learn to independently dress themselves according to weather. Sufficient exercise in the fresh air avoids colds and creates a habit in which the children will hopefully not waste heat energy later on. In the same manner we attempt to stimulate healthy eating habits and positive „throw away“ habits that will lead to a responsible environmental mentality.

City children have hardly any access to nature; we initiate this access with following activities: many forest excursions, visits to parks, natural areas and children's farms where they have close contact to plants and animals. They learn to play, observe, recognize and

respect nature, although there is little space for it within the city. Only the person who knows about the origin of food products, material for clothes, furniture, etc. will learn to understand that these processes are not to be taken for granted.

Environmental consciousness also encompasses a personal awareness of our dependence on natural processes. For children this consciousness begins with the immediate contact with nature.

Nature and environment themes are continually being presented in our projects. We also work with professional experts in these fields. Each year we strive to offer a trip for the complete Kinderladen, repeatedly to a farm in Uckermark. This farm is specially equipped for children's groups and encourages them to get close to European animals, touch them and understand their habits. The nearby forest offers many playtime activities.

1.10. Multilingual Practice and Access to Language by Immersion

English, Spanish and German are used as equal communicative languages. Bilingualism by Immersion means that the second language is learned in the same manner as the native language. This also applies for further languages. A Child is able to learn up to five languages on native level. For orientation purposes, the educators speak only one language and do not mix. Children can choose which language they prefer and are not forced to speak in one particular language. Mixing languages is a normal language development and will not be criticized. For the educators applies: If you begin a sentence in German, end it in German. Most important is the child's ability to communicate and to be understood, according to his age.

Although they are based on different origins, there is a dynamic connection between rational thought and speech that mutually develop due to a very complex, continual exchange. It is possible to have thought without speech, but speech without sensible thought is only empty sound. (ref. Wygotski...) „Therefore the relationship between thoughts and words is itself a product of human development.“ (ref. Wygotski...) Senseless correction by educators does not advance the child in his language development but can actually cause him to lose his learning enjoyment. Adults are language models and should only correct if necessary for understanding or for establishing proper language usage. (Ex.: I don't want you to scream at me „Drink“ if you desire something to drink!) Older children can learn to adopt a polite tone and all children can learn to politely speak out their wishes so that they can be gladly fulfilled. English, Spanish and German are integrated into our daily schedule, not instructed.

Songs, stories, directions, activities, work projects and games are presented in English, Spanish as well as German. Not all children speak German, Spanish and English at home - possibly only two languages or possibly a fourth and fifth language as well. Due to structural language differences (and other complex reasons) can the language development in different languages usually not advance at the same pace. Furthermore, different age groups usually cause a wide variety of language development ranging from simple syllable pronunciation to one- or two-word sentences to complex sentence forms with principal and subordinate clauses.

Immediate language learning occurs every day during Morning Circle (about 20 min.) We use language and finger games, acting role games, songs, books and poems to achieve language abilities in English, Spanish and German.

We attempt to enroll many children who speak all languages in our Kinderladen.

This practice should encourage a natural language environment. Ability to speak several languages should be emphasized, knowledge of languages will be increasingly important. Furthermore, trilingual children acquire more confidence when they experience their second/third language in a new context outside their family life.

1.11. Observation and documentation

Educators should observe each child objectively and regularly and develop concepts for action from the results. We observe the children in all everyday situations constantly in order to determine their state of health and, above all, their stage of development in the individual areas of development and to derive the appropriate support and encouragement. We make use of open/covered and participating/non-participating observation instruments ("Beobachtungsschnecke" according to Kornelia Schlaaf-Kirschner and Trierer Beobachtungs- und Förderbogen by Veronika Verbeek), which we consult or use as a basis for discussion with the parents after evaluation in the development discussions.

The language-learning diary, donated by the Berlin Senate, is intended as documentation of the child's language development. Upon request, this book can be viewed and used as study material. It will be passed on to the parents at graduation.

We also document everyday life, celebrations and excursions by means of photos and videos or in the form of posters that are displayed in the facility. Final products are presented together with the children on the walls and in our exhibition corner and later given to the parents to take home.

1.12. Intercultural/Cultural Awareness

„Grüne Wolke“ is intended to be an intercultural Kinderladen. Our trilingual concept and our location in Berlin (Friedrichshain) create a living and work situation with people from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Children and adults can become acquainted with a diversity of lifestyles and attitudes. Our goal is not the juxtaposition of cultures („Multi-culti“), rather an active, dynamic exchange between cultures. There is no culture which is completely homogenous; also in Germany the different cultures are varied and complex but not rigid and unchangeable. Prejudices and stereotyped thinking should be discouraged, in fact absolutely avoided. All children should be able to relate to the identities found in picture books, dolls, Lego figures, etc. Children should be assisted in developing a positive identity which is necessary in order to withstand social pressure, for example, in form of racism.

1.13. School Preparation

All learning in our Kinderladen is directed towards a preparation for life. Although school is a future part of their lives, we do not overlook the other important parts. For the following analysis we have divided the topic „learning“ into three interactive sections: social, affective and cognitive.

Social Learning: When a child starts school, he/she is confronted with a group of about thirty other children. There are usually one or two adult educators present who can offer assistance. Otherwise the child is on his own, possibly dependent on other children. This situation demands on his part a far-reaching social competence.

In „Grüne Wolke“ children learn to become part of the group and not the centre of attention. (see 1.4.1.). They become team members who learn to work together, for each other and not against each other. They accept other children as their learning, teaching and discussion partners. During Morning Circle we practice speaking ability, listening ability and not interrupting. They are encouraged to stick to their topic and to speak at the proper time. Furthermore, ability to sit quietly is practiced which is important for

concentrated work. They also learn to manage conflict situations and to accept frustration. Rules and rituals define the group structure and behavior.

Affective Learning: Feelings for one another should exist within the group. Children must learn to manage this situation so that they are not disturbed by frustrating feelings and can concentrate on learning. In „Grüne Wolke“ children learn to understand their feelings and to express them clearly for others. This is the first step towards mutual trust, which further permits enjoyment of learning and communicating. Creativity and fantasy are able to flourish. Research findings have proven the connection between body and eye contact and cognitive training. In „Grüne Wolke“ we create a caring atmosphere in which all are included. We offer a protective space for the children to freely explore and safely discover their possibilities.

Cognitive Learning: Mental development can only be achieved within an active body and if varied stimulus is given, beginning at an early stage. The brain needs a balanced combination of active and rest phases. Learning in „Grüne Wolke“ is designed as school preparation, not to be considered equal to school learning. For example, we practice fine motor skills: holding a pencil (or scissors), crumpling paper, tying shoes, buttoning, zippering, eating, drinking and pouring. These exercises are preparatory for the manual act of writing. The children also learn to experience the communicative concept of words through contact with books and their appreciation thereof.

Reading is communication with other people (and sometimes with oneself). We gather information and our mental capacity expands. If children expressly wish to learn to read, we willingly offer assistance. Otherwise, it is a subject for school.

A basic mathematical concept is supplied by following activities: counting, dice games, building (with Lego, blocks, trains, etc.), marbles, dividing of sport groups, pouring and comparing, measuring, and many more. Project work is holistic learning. An important element is the final sorting-out and clearing up of the used materials before a new activity can be started. Later on, the school materials must also be orderly managed.

“Kita Übergang Schule” (Transition Kindergarden > school):

We are familiar with the surrounding schools in the social space and participate in senate-funded program "Kita Übergang Schule". Therefore school and class visits take place with the "preschool children". We have an advisory activity and offer a special parent's evening (at the family center "Das Haus" at Bersarinplatz) if needed.

1.14. Inclusion of Children with Special Needs

The Grüne Wolke is an inclusive and integrative institution dedicated to making linguistic, religious, cultural or physical diversity visible. Inclusion means that the child with special needs is not adapted to the environment and group, but that the environment and group become more adaptive and tolerant towards the child. Involving children with disabilities equally, responding to their needs and protecting them from exclusion and discrimination requires an internal shift in thinking. We support the basic assumption that being different is "normal". Each child is valued in his or her uniqueness and we build on the resources and strengths of the children. We create an atmosphere in which there is space and time for the child to freely develop his or her personality. In small groups, we offer the children in need of support appropriate offers to support deficient areas of development.

The specialist for inclusion pedagogy draws up support plans and development reports at regular intervals, which serve as documentation and can be used as a template for parent, specialist or team discussions. Comprehensive coordination with the team, the responsible authorities and therapists as well as doctors is the basis for the field of activity of the specialist for inclusive education.

2. Kinderladen Procedure

2.1. Group Structure

Our Kinderladen exists of twenty children in age from one year to school entry. We aim for a balanced mix of age and sex. (see 1.4.) The decision to admit a child into our group can therefore depend on the proper age and sex of the child.

Following advantages of a mixed age group:

- The younger learn from the older.
- They learn the rules not only for Kinderladen but also for the community.
- They learn to request and accept help from the older ones.

Single children experience family-similar situations: not always to be the fastest, the best and the center of attention just because of being the youngest. Thus, learning to manage frustration is also achieved.

The older learn from the younger to help others, to take on responsibility, to recognize what they have learned, to be modest (even when one is „better“), to understand the other's weaknesses, to realize that younger ones can also have strengths.

All children learn to understand and accept different age groups.

2.2. Morning Circle

We are starting the day together in the morning circle, therefore it is important that all children arrived by then. It offers the opportunity to talk to the children and to understand their current situation as well as their individual needs. This allows us to respond to the current events every day in a new and situational way. All group members meet in a circle. Children have the opportunity to consciously perceive each other and to notice who is present or not. With this form of daily gathering, the group feeling is strengthened. Patience, the mutual consideration and the communication can be improved. We sing songs, tell stories, talk about experiences and interests of children, learn finger plays or rhymes and discuss new topics and projects. The morning circle offers the children an orientation for the day, while daily routine gives the younger children the necessary security. We reserve the right to offer separate morning circles, so that all age groups are individually addressed and encouraged.

In addition, the morning circle sees itself as a language-promoting instrument. Alternating in all three languages, it is important that children playfully expand their language learning skills. Movement games support the linking of listening, understanding and the active application of a language. Language supports the individual development of the four levels of competence in child and youth work (to be found in the Berlin Education Program).

2.3. Daily Schedule

8:00-8:20	First admittance
8:30-9:00	Breakfast together as day's beginning. No children will be admitted during this time!
9:00-9:20	Second admittance
9:20-9:30	Teethbrushing
9:30-10:00	Morning Circle changing daily in each of the three languages

- 10:00-10:15 Change diapers and toilet visit
- 10:15-10:30 Dressing
- 10:30-12:30 We go outside, to the theater, or outing in the forest, to a farm, swimming and other activities
- 12:50-13:15 Lunchtime. Older children can take their meal later.
- 13:15-13:20 Pick-up time for half-day children
- 13:15-13:30 Young children are prepared for nap-time. Diaper change
- 13:30-15:00 Nap-time for young children. No one will be forced to sleep; any of the older children can also rest, if so desired. We decide together with parents and child about duration of nap and necessity thereof.
- 13:30-15:00 Free play, board games, reading to children, outdoor activity, painting, crafts, ceramics, Spielmobil
- until 15:00 Young children gradually awake. They are helped dressing and „returning“ to real world
- 15:00-15:20 Pick-up time for part-time children who have been brought between 8AM and 9AM
- 15:20-15:45 Snack Time
- 15:45-16:00 Pick-up time for part-time children who have been brought between 9AM and 10AM
- 15:45-16:50 Pick-up time for full-day children. Supervised by late-duty personnel

Parents are asked to adhere as closely as possible to the drop-off and pick-up times and to observe the individually approved scope of childcare (part-time requirements = 5-7 hours, full-day requirements = 7-9 hours), as employees in early and late shifts may work alone and are only allowed to look after a certain number of children. Otherwise we are subjected to a major disturbance in our groups: parents coming and going, doorbell ringing, doors opening and closing. It is then not possible for a group to concentrate on an activity nor to enjoy a common breakfast, project work or peaceful playing. In the children's interests, bring and pick-up times should be kept as brief as possible. Especially for young children, a regular daily schedule is important for orientation within a certain time period. We lay great importance on togetherness at mealtime. These regular common mealtimes offer orientation, group identity and enjoyment.

2.4. Weekly Plan

Presently, „Grüne Wolke“ offers the following regular weekly program:

Mondays

The group is out in “Das Haus” for pottery class.

Tuesdays

Forest Day. The children who are well proven in traffic and transportation go to the forest bringing a lunch box provided by the parents. In the Kinderladen we offer singing and dancing for the young children directed and accompanied on piano by our colleague (music teacher from White Russia).

Wednesdays

At 2PM, older children participate in Sport and Motion games with Spielmobil at Petersburger Platz while younger children have nap-time. Spielmobil activities are closed during winter and therefore we offer group-/palour games or certain projects.

Thursdays

Djembe course and Rhythmic with Akinola in two different age groups

Fridays

Singing and dancing for the older children with our music teacher while younger children have an activity with their educator

The abovementioned weekly plan is flexible and not rigidly set. Spontaneous changes are possible and desirable.

We do not plan outings every week, but according to available staff. Possibly parents are requested to prepare a rucksack with small snack (no sweets or banana).

The remaining children meet for Morning Circle in a smaller, calmer group; then, either dispersing, crafts or a walk outside. These outings always cause high demands on our personnel and our finances. Sickness, holiday or financial straits can cause a possible cancellation of an outing.

Besides the offered activities, children are also given free time for their own playing and chosen activity. It is also possible that children choose to substitute a part of Morning Circle or „Sport“ with their own ideas or chosen activity, under the observation and assistance of the educator. Besides our offered program, children are also given opportunity to play independently and to relax. It can also occur that children decide to organize Morning Circle or „Sport“ for themselves whereby the educator observes and offers assistance.

2.5. Projects

Projects are directed, according to the pedagogic approach “Situationsansatz”, at the children's interests, but also in exchange with the group leader's interests. Both sides learn to gather new experiences and expand their awareness. Children recognize that adults can and must also broaden their experiences. We prefer to include people and places outside our Kinderladen in these projects. Children benefit from such projects and are able to grasp more complex processes because our projects are always planned for a long-time period and link different learning goals.

3. Rooms: Design and Function

The interior plan is not completed, but is intended to develop and change with the children's needs. This room space is flexible and can be changed as necessary. We need to be sure that new materials are stored in a safe and accessible place. Many materials are very expensive and need to be expertly stored so that they are available for a long time.

3.1. Materials

Safe materials should be accessible for the children so that they learn correct handling of different materials. Older children are allowed to independently use scissors, colors and brushes. It is important that used materials are first returned to their proper places before a new activity is started. We learn to respect that others after us also want to use the materials.

Offered Materials:

Montessori-materials

Learn- and play stations
Self-gathered natural materials
Colors in all varieties
Paper, glue
Usable „waste“
Clay, sand
Digging tools
Bicycles and scooters
Duplo, Lego
Store, dolls, cars
Music instruments
Dress-up articles, costumes
Material for cave building
Textiles, yarn
Learning bicycles (for inside), dolls' buggies
Screws, wood, tools

3.2. Play- and rollick room

This playroom is purposely designed to be open, spacious and empty. It is our specific place for bouncing around, rollicking, running, sport, dancing and motion.

This room also offers quiet places for relaxing periods. Children can take a rest and cuddle together or simply play their roles and feel at home. There is also a book corner for reading activities which increases the child's interest in language and communication. All books are sorted into subject areas and wooden boxes and are regularly exchanged. A displayed Phonetic Table can encourage children to ask questions about language sounds.

Further bookcases are stacked with building blocks, Duplo, wooden trains and cars for building and playing. Also, wood, screws, hammer and nails are available, under supervision. Children learn to handle tools. This assortment will be expanded and sometimes offered in a different arrangement.

3.3. Dining- and Hobbyroom (upper resting level)

The dining tables can also be used for painting/drawing, crafts, dispersing and building. The necessary materials are stored in the same room. If for space or safety reasons, materials are not to be reached by children, nevertheless, they are clearly organized on shelves openly present to the children. This arrangement increases their curiosity to request these materials. In this room the upper resting level has a door with lock that can exclude the under-three-year-olds. Here the older children can build (with Duplo, etc.) without interference from the younger. Also, children can withdraw to play, feeling themselves unobserved by adults and group or quietly rest or cuddle. The educators take care that this function of the resting level is maintained and that there are no assaults between the children.. Rollicking, throwing down objects and leaving the area in bad order are all strictly prohibited.

Under the plateau is the children's kitchen, built by a father himself, with household objects such as pots, pans, stirring devices or food made of wood and plush, which the children know from their everyday lives. Here, the children are able to try out everyday household activities and combine them in role play. Furthermore, the area under the stairs serves as a retreat for the smaller children. Next to the children's kitchen is a ball pool, which invites

them to romp and dig around, so that the gross motor development of the smaller children is promoted.

3.4. Sleeping and Resting Room

Every child who naps has his own mattress and bed covers. Health authorities order that mattresses be separately stored so as to avoid infection (lice and scabies) amongst the children. Parents are requested to bring bed covers for their children and to ensure that such are regularly changed and washed. Usually we gather for Morning Circle in the sleeping room because the children are not disturbed here.

Daily, after lunchtime, the mattresses are rolled out. Parents and staff decide together which children should sleep. Some children are free to decide for themselves if they want to sleep. Children that obviously need a nap are laid to bed. One of the staff watches until all children are asleep or have rested enough and brings the children who could not sleep back to the front rooms. In agreement with the parents, the children are awakened. If necessary, children can sleep until their pick-up time. When sleeping is over, the mattresses are rolled up and the sleeping room is available as an extra playroom.

4. Appropriation of the world

Healthy child's development is important to us and therefore we try to spend as much time in the nature as possible. It increases the sensual perception psychologically and physically. Furthermore the treasure trove of experience helps the growing child improve himself/herself.

4.1. Forest Day

Weekly we visit an un-forested area with the children who are well-proven in traffic and transportation, currently at the S-Bahn station Hegermühle. Here our children have the opportunity to follow the changing seasons. Through the familiar forest, they learn to orient themselves and to feel safe. In the nearby forestry we arrange selective training dates. This gives children and the educators professional knowledge. The variety of natural features of the forest offers our children the appropriate environment, without interference from adult free play because self-determined and imaginative to develop. Holistic all faculties of the single child are promoted and extended. Connections and functions are explored.

The author Richard Louv of "The Last Child in the Forest" states that civilization diseases are being counteracted. "Research suggests that nature can be used as a treatment modality in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)." P.130

In a stress-free forest atmosphere, the genetic program for physical and mental development can proceed undisturbed and at your own pace.

5. Parent Participation

Our Kinderladen is not only responsible for the development of children but also allows their parents, in most cases, pursuit of their jobs, educational training and similar activities. Therefore it is also our goal to relieve them from everyday, time-consuming duties as much as possible. Nevertheless, from time to time we have to ask for parental services when the team has to overcome staff shortage due to holidays and illness. Certain tasks such as cooking, cleaning, shopping and organizing are accomplished by our helpers and

educators. The pedagogical obligations should not suffer due to unfinished tasks. Nevertheless, our Kinderladen as EKT (Parent Initiative-Children's Day Care Unit) is more dependent on the parents' support than in other day care units. In shortage situations parent help can be required in above-mentioned tasks. In any case, our Kinderladen needs parents' ideas and helpful support. Parent participation opens up a constructive pathway towards achieving the ideal form of children's care.

5.1. Getting Accustomed Phase

We associate with the Berlin Model and aim for a „gentle“ beginning where parents are actively involved. The parent accompanies his child for a few days in our establishment in order to ensure a slow-paced, secure adjustment to the new surroundings, the group and educators and the different, strenuous daily procedure. Parent accompaniment gives the child a secure base from which he can confidently explore without fear of being abandoned. About three days later we start preparing the child for parting, after it is fully clear that every parting from the parent is followed by a new meeting. The time period that the child spends alone in Kinderladen, at first only five minutes, will be continuously extended. Exactly when the child reaches a normal daily schedule, possibly including naptime, depends entirely on the individual child, his parents and their relationship. Once an educator is able to soothe the child in painful, sad or angry situations, is the adjustment period for the most part accomplished.

We recommend the following literature: „Ohne Eltern geht es nicht: Die Eingewöhnung von Kindern in Krippen und Tagespflegestellen“ von Hans-Joachim Laewen (Autor), Beate Andres (Autor), Éva Hédervári-Heller.

5.2. Parents' Evenings

Parents' Evenings are held for regular organizing and pedagogic topics. We strongly request all parents to attend so that they are always informed. These evenings are viewed as discussion forums; also we have the possibility to inform and educate on pedagogic questions. Our experience is that the communicative exchange that occurs between parents and educators at an official meeting helps avoid unnecessary conflict, gossip and misunderstandings.

5.3. Parents' Representative

A Parents' Representative will be elected by the parent group to act as communicative agent between parents and educators. This person will also be responsible for information distribution between the two groups. Further responsibilities:

- Advisory function
- Prepares summons to parents' evenings (also the educators can summon a parents' meeting)
- Organization of parties and celebrations
- Opening a parents' cafe, if so desired by parents, within the rooms of Grüne Wolke (after educator approval).

5.4. Children's Development Discussions (Parents and Educators)

Educators offer parents discussions about their children's development at regular intervals. Interested parents can request an appointment; also the educators can suggest such an appointment once a year. The child should not be present at discussion because it could

be unpleasant for him/her hear adults discussing his/her private sphere. In this situation, children often react negatively. Therefore, we request parents to leave their child in someone else's care for this duration (grandparents, other Kinderladen parents, friends, etc.)

5.5. Yearly Cleaning and House Improvements

Once a year during two work-weekends, parents and staff attend to the complete cleaning and renovating of the rooms. This is not only an important financial aspect; such a common project also strengthens the community feeling of belonging to our group. Contrary to party preparation, we work here together in order to accomplish a work activity that will benefit the children. Furthermore, the renovation practically fulfills a group-dynamic function that is most obviously observed by the parents who were present since our founding period and also participated in EKT development. Not only children should experience that their surroundings can be constructively improved; also adults identify more closely with „their“ Kinderladen care unit.

6. Quality Management

As stated in the Quality Agreement of the Berlin Senate, we arrange at least two times a year the internal evaluation that will continue to accompany our pedagogic work. Qualitative self-discipline and directional method will serve to constantly improve our efforts. The above-mentioned agreement also provides for an external evaluation that will be conducted by a Senate-appointed committee every five years. Our last external evaluation took place in 2019.

If necessary we can request a supervisor to objectively advise us during our team meetings. It can occur that we need assistance for problems that we are unable to independently solve. We also cooperate with pedagogic establishments (ex. Wildwasser e.V.). In order to ensure the most possible transparency with our decisions and structures, we use Internet as Information forum and conduct Parents' Evenings and Members' Meetings regularly.

7. Complaint management

Children, parents and team are involved in decisions through the appropriate democratic or association structures and have the opportunity to complain.

Children: We discuss the children's wishes, feelings and also problems in discussion groups in the morning circle or in unplanned individual discussions during the day. On the basis of this, we discuss the degree of well-being and find ways to optimize or help. The children are informed about their rights according to their age.

Parents: We would like to expressly encourage parents to seek dialogue with us if they have suggestions for improvement, praise or even criticism, or to use our anonymous "complaint box" with appropriate feedback forms, which is available in the cloakroom. Furthermore, the parents' representatives and the parents' evenings are considered possible instruments.

Team: We meet weekly for a team meeting and reflect on the cooperation together or in individual discussions. Furthermore, internal and external evaluation serves as a self-checking instrument. There is also a regular exchange between the members of the board. Ex-

ternal cooperation partners, such as the "Dachverband für Kinder- und Schülerladen (Daks)") or the supervision specialist can also be called upon as support to clarify any internal conflicts. In case of serious problems or disagreements, it is also possible to call in external offices such as the youth welfare office.

It is very important for us to recognize and take up complaints from the children, parents or the team. Appropriate signals are interpreted and concretized individually. We discuss this with the children, parents and each other and reflect together on how all those involved can contribute to finding an adequate solution.