



**Little Daisies**  
Bilinguale Kindertagesstätte



# Curriculum for Little Daisies Kindergarten

According to BayKiBiG/BEP and the Finnish Curriculum

Updated January 2019

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Dear Parents and Interested Parties,

The following curriculum introduces you to our work in the Little Daisies Kindergarten. Our aim in this document is to give you a closer look at where we set our educational priorities as well as everyday kindergarten life at Little Daisies.

We know this curriculum is not set in stone. Changes may occur in the center's setup, in the application of new educational methods and theories or in legislation. Similarly, the lives of Little Daisies' families are constantly changing. For one or more of these reasons, we may need to and want to adapt what we do. That's why we regularly review our curriculum as part of the quality management measures at the center. Doing so also gives our staff a chance to understand and reflect on our curriculum's content, goals and methods. As representatives of Little Daisies' families, the parent board is also involved in our curriculum's evolution. We prioritize establishing trust between families and teachers, which we express through our continual dialogs, collaboration and joint reflection.

"The children come first" is our mission statement. It's only natural that the interests and needs of Little Daisies' children lay the foundation of our work. Each day we discover the world along with the children, in a hands-on and constructive way. The basis for this is trust, security and a loving environment that provides the children with a strong foundation for their growth and development.

Little Daisies Kindergarten accepts children 3 years and older, regardless of their parents' religion, belief system, nationality or social class. The children may stay at the kindergarten until they start first grade.

We wish your children a happy and enriching experience at the kindergarten and hope we live up to our guiding principles.

Munich, June 30, 2017



Cornelia Ottersbach

Owner

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# 1. Introduction

This educational concept serves as the basis for our educational work at the Little Daisies Kindergarten.

We follow the Bavarian Qualification and Education Plan (Bayerischer Bildungs- und Erziehungsplan or BEP). The Finnish Curriculum that is used as the basis of educational work in Finnish kindergartens and crèches is also included in our concept. Both the BEP and Finnish Curriculum state that the social context in which a child learns plays a primary role in that child's development. The Finnish approach enriches the Bavarian concept through its ideas on early introduction of a second language and its strong emphasis on the welfare of the group. The development and enrichment of the individual is an integral part of this process. Outlined in the following pages are how we work, what goals we are aiming for, and the organizational matters at Little Daisies.

## 2. Our Mission Statement

The children come first.

We offer them the opportunity to develop to their full potential in a safe, positive and creative environment. Every child will feel special at Little Daisies and will learn that they are a valuable part of the group.

In order to reach this goal, we strive to continually develop as individuals and as a team.

Our Mission Statement shows our commitment to the child and our pedagogical work:

“The children come first.” - The whole of our work and attention is centered on the children and their complete welfare. We shift our attention to other things only when we are certain that the children are being well looked after. Here, we follow the guiding principle that children and adults at Little Daisies are equal but don't have equal rights. In our approach, we pay attention to what makes each individual unique. We seek to be in touch with all children at Little Daisies, to understand them, accept them, and acknowledge them for who they are. By nature, children are curious and want to grow and develop. Little by little, children learn to be more responsible for themselves, to act independently and, later on, to act on behalf of others. However, adults are ultimately responsible for and have the power to decide about children's safety, the quality of relationships and general mood in the center. Adults also enable children to be creative and to reach their full potential. Teachers observe the children and, based on

each child's developmental stage, decide how much responsibility and decision-making power to give a child to keep it challenged without overwhelming him or her.

„We offer them the opportunity to develop to their full potential in a safe, positive and creative environment.” – The main purpose of kindergarten education is to give children new developmental and educational opportunities, which can only happen in a loving environment among people they trust. This supports and strengthens the children's physical, mental, social, cognitive and emotional development. This development along with the encouragement of caregivers fosters the children's confidence and independence. They can be creative and discover their environment and be keen to learn new things that expand and enrich their experiences. Through multifaceted, creative activities and learning materials, we offer the children the opportunity to realize their potential within their own learning style and speed. We also try to recognize any difficulties and find ways to support them.

“Every child will feel special at Little Daisies and will learn that they are a valuable part of the group.” – At Little Daises, we view each child as an individual, recognizing their uniqueness and personality. We support the children in their current developmental stage and show them that the world is open for them and they can trust their own abilities. At our center, we identify the children's individual needs and make them part of our teaching. Children are actively involved in the daily agenda and their activities. Equally important is each child's social development. The children learn they are social entities and that they need to abide by certain rules to be part of this community. Aware of bias, they learn how to deal with conflict, make friends, and accept children from other cultures, genders and abilities. By being part of a group, they see first-hand how many things are easier as a team and that each person can contribute their own strengths.

“To reach this goal, we strive to continually evolve as individuals and as a team.”

Working as educators committed to providing high-quality care, it is important for us, as individuals and as a team, to continually advance our know-how and skills. Our daily actions set an example for the children. We must be aware of this at all times and ensure our behavior is appropriate.

### 3. Guidelines and Framework

#### 3.1 *Hours of Operation and Booking Times*

The Little Daisies Kindergarten is open, Monday to Friday, from 8:00 to 17:30. Families have a choice of the following booking times: 3-4 hours, 4-5 hours, 5-6 hours, 6-7 hours, 7-8 hours, 8-9 hours and over 9 hours.

Every year the kindergarten is closed between December 23 and January 7, and between August 13 and 31. It is also closed on one day before and one day after the public Easter holidays. Additionally, Little Daisies is closed on Bavarian public holidays and on five additional days for team in-service and curriculum work.

Any other opening or closure dates will be set in agreement with the parent board.

### *3.2 Group Size, Teaching Staff and Staff Absences*

The group consists of 25 children, ages 3-6. It is cared by four qualified members of the teaching staff and an intern.

This ensures that even if one person is absent, there are enough staff people present to care for the children. Should multiple teachers be absent in parallel, we contact a substitute. We keep and update a list of substitutes that have worked for us time and again for many years, which means they are familiar with our routines and know the children.

### *3.3 Foreign Language Kindergarten*

From January 1, 2017 to December 21 2020, our center is participating in a national program entitled, “Foreign Language Crèche: Languages Are the Key to the World”. The program is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Families, Seniors, Women and Children. During this timeframe, the staff is supported and mentored by an additional part-time (19.5 hours/week) qualified team member and an external advisor.

Over the course of the program, the teaching staff learns to systematically observe **language development** of children as well as their own language use. From this, ideas are generated that can be applied to regular language education in the crèche.

Everyday situations are accompanied verbally, according to children’s development and age, and the children are given a variety of opportunities to speak up and to try out their own language skills. In addition to practical work, an additional specialist informs the team about

the other theoretical topics covered in the areas previously mentioned. Inclusive education and collaborating with families are also focal points.

When **working with families**, we seek to create from the outset an equal and valued educational partnership that focuses on a child's well-being. By asking certain questions, whether at the first parent evening or in the contract documents, we learn about parental expectations of the kindergarten. It is important for us to let parents participate in the educational process of their child. For instance, through intercultural parents cafés, multilingual offers in the morning circle and our music day. This allows us to get to know the knowledge level, skills and interests of the families, so we can expand the educational offerings of the center. If necessary, we support families with counseling and educational activities such as theme-based parent evenings on healthy nutrition and school enrolment. As successful educational partners, we regard all those involved, parents as well as teachers, as partners, experts, supporters, role models, people with feelings and individual life stories.

Being inclusive means, we view each child as an individual and treat them with respect, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural background, competences or other characteristics. All children have the same opportunity to participate in everyday life at the center, such as children's conferences, projects and activities. This helps us ensure equal educational opportunities long term.

### *3.4 Responsible Body and Publication of Information*

The responsible body of the center is Little Daisies GmbH. This curriculum as well as the monthly tuition, meal costs, deposit and admission fees are published on our website, [www.littledaisies.com](http://www.littledaisies.com).

### *3.5 Classroom Setup at Little Daisies*

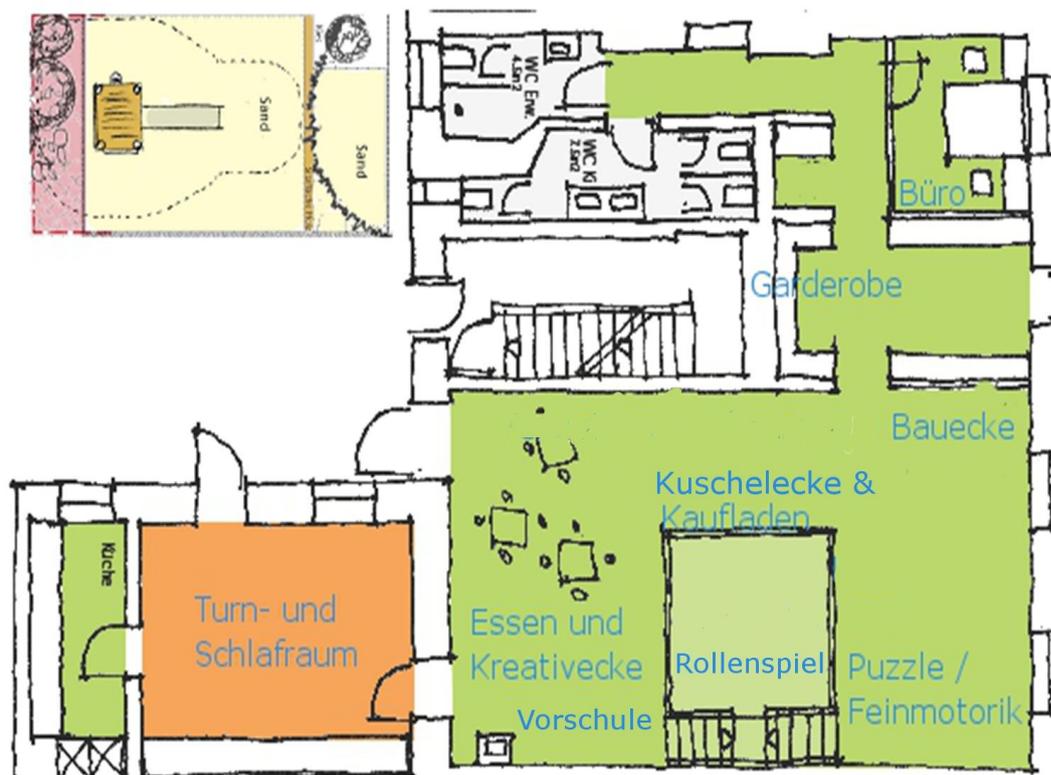
The large rooms of the kindergarten are divided into various spaces with different areas of educational focus for the children to explore. Throughout the center, the children's work (pictures, crafts, photos, etc.) is displayed, so they see traces of themselves reflected in their surroundings.

The areas of the kindergarten include:

- a large open space with a loft
- a quiet area

- an eating area/creative space
- a play kitchen area with dolls and a play store/dress up clothes
- a construction and car area
- a preschool room with a computer
- a reading area
- a playroom/nap room
- a kitchen
- a courtyard playground with a sandbox, climbing area and slide
- children toilets and separate adult toilet
- an office/staff room

In the courtyard, there's an approx. 40 m2 playing area for the children to use. It includes a climbing space, sand box and slide. The children also have access to around 70 m2 of additional space in the courtyard.



## 4. General Goals of our Education Program

### 4.1 General Educational Goals

On the one hand, the goals of kindergarten education reflect the unique developmental potential of each child and, on the other, the needs of society at large.

Children who attend our kindergarten for the first time learn that, aside from their families, there are other responsible adults they can bond with. They get to know other children, gradually identify themselves with the group and establish ~~their first~~ friendships. They discover new spaces in the rooms at Little Daisies and explore a new world of experiences.

The children's positive self-awareness and gender awareness strengthen continuously as they acquire new skills and proficiencies. Learning by playing is essential in this process.

The children begin to understand what is right and wrong. Their actions become increasingly responsible and they begin to follow rules and norms. They learn social interaction skills and the rules of the classroom. They understand positive social conventions and grasp their meaning in everyday life. They learn better self-control and how to deal with situations that come up regularly. They learn that while people are equal, they are also different and to start accepting these differences. In an age-appropriate way, they learn what is important for good health.

The children's linguistic and cultural identities are supported, and they are encouraged to express their capabilities in many different ways. The children are introduced to different forms of arts and crafts, music, regional and national culture and, to the extent possible, other cultures. The children develop interests in nature. They explore their environment in different ways and are encouraged to be enthusiastic about its beauty and diversity. They learn how their actions affect the environment. The foundation of math, reading and writing is laid in the kindergarten. Through the immersion method, they become familiar with English and German in their everyday environment; multilingualism is seen as a valuable resource. The children in the kindergarten also learn to use a range of media.

We give children the chance to develop the following fundamental capabilities and abilities:

#### Social and emotional skills

- Building bonds with others, learning how groups work
- Self-awareness, self-confidence and self-control
- Personal expression of needs, feelings and thoughts
- Decision-making and accepting responsibility for decisions made
- Conflict resolution
- Empathy and solidarity with others as well as respect for differences
- Playing alone and working together in a group
- Acceptance of boundaries set by adult and other children

- Patience
- Resilience

Physical and cognitive skills

- Intellectual, artistic, musical and gross and fine motor skills
- Personal hygiene and health
- Respect for the environment, environmental education
- Media competence
- Knowledge of a second language (English/German)
- Basics mathematical principles
- The foundations of reading and writing skills
- Learning how to learn

## 5. How the Educational Program Is Carried Out

### 5.1 *Gaining New Experiences*

The teachers involve the children in the process of gaining new experiences so that they actively expand their knowledge by building on what they already know. Gaining new experiences happens by interacting with materials and existing knowledge. During free play, the children have many toys at their disposal, such as bricks, cars, Legos and dolls as well as a play shop to immerse themselves in their own world.

The educators offer children of all ages new activities daily in the subjects of music, creativity, sports, language and experiments. In these, they try to pique the children's interests in a participation-based way. In addition, the teachers encourage the children and guide them to learn more, grow, and reach new developmental milestones. A main goal is becoming independent. The children learn to close zippers and buttons, to put on their shoes and to plan and implement organizational procedures.

The strong relationship between a child and primary caregiver evolves during the kindergarten period. The educators step increasingly into the background, becoming active observers, while the child's group of peers becomes more important. Kindergarten children constantly learn from and about each other by triggering development of their thoughts, imagination and social behavior. Our kindergarten children are in a mixed-age group. The older children learn to be considerate of the younger children, while the younger ones benefit from the experience of the older ones. They learn to communicate with each other and to play together. They express

their wants and share them with others. Respect for the other children in their group grows along with the acceptance of differences.

The children increasingly understand what it means to be responsible for their own behavior. They begin to foresee the consequences of their actions and change accordingly.

## 5.2 *Educational Environment*

The educational environment of the kindergarten is designed to correspond with the physical, psychological, social, cognitive and emotional environment in which all activities takes place.

Our well-thought-through surroundings arouse and stimulate a child's curiosity, interest, and motivation, and promote child-appropriate activity and a child's ability to become self-absorbed in an activity. Such an environment supports children in their development and learning process as well as in the assessment of their own abilities in many ways. It offers the children ample opportunity to play and do other activities as well as the option to withdraw from the group. It provides a space to and facilitates activities that promote communication and gives the children the opportunity to work on language development.

The prevailing atmosphere is cheerful, open, encouraging, loving and serene. All the materials are easily within children's reach. The health and safety of the children is assured in all areas, while maintaining an aesthetic balance wherever possible.

## 5.3 *Educational Approach*

### 5.3.1 Rituals, permanent offering and open concept

At Little Daisies, each child settles into the center with a primary care giver and a big brother or big sister (Patenkind). The group gives the child a sense of security and community and offers them a point of orientation. Daily group rituals like morning circle, book circle and lunch structure the children's daily routine. All children go together to the park or on field trips.

However, for the majority of the day the children can decide for themselves what they want to play and with whom. This 'open' time gives the children a chance to pursue their individual interests. We know that self-initiated, self-regulated, and self-directed choice in their activities, social interactions, and the areas in which they play are optimal for each child's personal

development in a given learning environment. When the classrooms are open, each team member is responsible for a specific area. They may use this time to offer an activity for the children to participate in, or they may act as an advisor, in particular to stimulate language, and observer while children engage in free play.

### 5.3.2 Mixed Age Groups and Separate Age Groups

At Little Daisies Kindergarten there is one mixed-age group of children. The younger children benefit from having older children as role models. They develop independence by observing older children and are exposed to numerous developmental stimuli. It is also important for the older children to learn to be careful around the younger children. Their self-awareness is strengthened through the presence of younger children. Mixed age groups promote cooperation and lessen competition, so there are fewer conflicts.

This makes it possible to offer activities specifically created for the individual classrooms and developmentally appropriate for that age group. We take field trips with the second and third year to forest, or to the zoo. We offer music classes and gross motor activities tailored to each age group separately. We also introduce age-appropriate learning opportunities with the younger or older children, such as using scissors.

On the other hand, throughout the day we offer activities that are only for certain age group(s) to meet the developmental needs of children in age-appropriate learning. Preschool children, for example, have four hours of preschool lessons per week. The older children also have sport in a nearby gym and the younger children have their own music course.

### 5.3.3 Stimulus-Based and Observational Teaching Methodology

Sometimes the teachers actively participate in activities with the children. Other times they are sideline observers, watching as the children play, explore and acquire information through interactions with other children and adults.

The Finnish method is a style in which adults seek to stimulate interest in children as well as have expectations of and set requirements for them. The teachers are responsible for establishing and upholding boundaries and creating a positive atmosphere at the center. The activities offered are child appropriate and take into consideration a child's skills, abilities, feelings, and knowledge. The goal of this process is to give children the opportunity to reach

their next developmental step. Activities offered to the children by a teacher are designed so that each child is neither over nor under challenged. No child is held back from achieving a developmental step or has expectations set too high for them. A child that does not want to take part in an activity is never forced to do so. The children always have the right to choose activities they want to take part in. The educational process is a co-constructive process in which both the child and the adults take part, with the child and his or her own ideas at the core. The teachers help the children to become aware of and contemplate their developmental steps and help them realize they are responsible for their own achievements. This helps their self-confidence and transmits important know-how about how they can learn.

Equally important to the stimulus style of teaching is the observational one in which a child is given time and space to be creative. During free play, the children explore their environment and have time to develop through their own experiences and imagination. The teachers prepare the rooms for this free play so the children can find materials and play areas in which they can let their creativity unfold freely. During free play, children learn how to socially interact with the other children. They make friends and feel more secure. The children also learn conflict resolution and communication, and respect for their own needs and the needs of others. During this time, the teacher takes on the role of a companion and observer of the activities.

#### 5.3.4 Participation in the Kindergarten

For us, participation means allowing the children, based on their age and development stage, to participate, co-create and be involved in decision-making. Children at Little Daisies can decide what and who they want to play with. They can also decide if they want to have quiet time or be active. The children may choose what rooms they want to spend time in at the center. They also decide how physically close or distant they want to be from others.

A child-teacher relationship based on trust is required for this form of participation to work. This involves loving communication, dependability, consolation, encouragement, and support.

Teachers acknowledge the needs of all children and respond to them with gentle care. Teachers also offer a secure environment in which the children can develop at their own pace. When children give off signals, the teachers try to react accordingly. Every reaction from a child (verbally or e.g. as crying, withdrawal, or hitting) is taken seriously, is accepted and

interpreted by the teachers nearby. The teacher reflects and then tries to remove the cause of this behavior and checks regularly with teammates if the presumed cause for this behavior has been removed.

The educators encourage the children to give feedback to them and the children's peers. For children to build good self-esteem and self-confidence, it's important for educators to constantly encourage the children to express their wants and interests. The children can influence, for instance, which projects or activities are offered, the appearance of the classroom and which rules to set for the group.

This must occur for the children to perceive Little Daisies as a place they can call their own and at which they are taken seriously. In the daily morning circle, the children are given the opportunity to tell stories. They also have the right not to participate. The children meet regularly for a children's conference. Here, children and teachers discuss topics of interest and which activities to pursue. The forum is also a chance to establish rules together, solve problems the children face in daily life, and lay the foundation for democratic thinking. In an annual children's survey, the children are encouraged to reflect on the past year and to share what they liked and disliked.

When children experience at a young age that their opinions and wishes are taken seriously, and they feel accepted and valued, and see they can act independently, they develop a healthy sense of stability that for life.

#### 5.4 *Daily Routine*

A well-thought-through, structured daily routine is the basis of every good education program. Of course, such a daily routine must also leave space for spontaneity and creativity, so that learning and experience processes are not interrupted.

The daily routine at Little Daisies is:

- Drop off time and free play
- Open breakfast
- Song circle
- Welcome, project work in small groups/free play
- Story time
- Lunch
- Nap/quiet time

- Preschool/free play
- Snack
- Free play/special activities/courtyard or playground
- Late afternoon snack
- End of kindergarten day

### 5.5 *Observing the Children*

During the settling in period, from September through October, it is extremely important that each new child has the opportunity to feel comfortable at the center and with the teachers. Every developmental milestone must be handled in a time appropriate manner. In the first few months of the school year, weekly settling in schedules will be created for each individual child. This schedule is agreed on and carried out with the cooperation of the families. A successful completion of the settling in period is necessary backbone for a child's time at the kindergarten.

As soon as the group's dynamic has been established, the children feel comfortable in their surroundings and in the group, and they are ready for new things, the teachers' task is to do group projects with the children that allow them to expand the knowledge they already have about a topic. Educational plans are created on a weekly basis, but they may be adapted flexible to reflect the interests of the children.

Each child's progress is observed continually and his or her development is discussed with the team. A formal observation of each child is carried out at least twice a year. We use Kompik's developmental checklist to monitor a child's developmental progress. In a portfolio for each child, we also document, in writing and images, learning experiences, valuable stories from everyday life at the kindergarten. The children always have access to their portfolio.

### 5.6 *Collaboration with Parents and Guardians*

Parents and guardians are chiefly responsible for their children's education. A relationship based on mutual trust, as co-educators, between the staff and parents or guardians is important for each child's happiness, development and progress.

Twice a year we hold parent-teacher conferences to discuss the development of each child. We use Kompik's observational checklist as well as the learning experiences we've documented. The first conference takes place about eight weeks into the kindergarten year. We discuss how the child is adjusting to the kindergarten, possible effects of the child's attendance on the family, and answer any other questions. The second parent-teacher conference is held in the spring. Other meetings can be scheduled upon request of parents or educators.

Should the teaching staff feel that a child has special needs, we work together with the parents to find suitable support from specialists. Our teaching staff is trained according to the German Schutzauftrag §8a SGB VIII (child endangerment laws) and takes a refresher course every two years. An emergency plan outlines the steps taken should teachers suspect child abuse and they will contact an ISEF specialist. Preventing child abuse is a topic at a parent evening every other year, to ensure parents have all the necessary information on the topic.

An additional parent evening covers how parents can help their child develop high self-esteem to avoid becoming a victim of abuse. The children can also attend a self-esteem course that is organized by the kindergarten.

Parent evenings take place three times a year and cover organizational topics, questions about education and the curriculum, and the plans for the months ahead. A monthly review of projects and activities is sent home once a month; each week, the families receive a weekly review of the past week, in the form of an email with a bulleted list. The whiteboard provides an overview of what happened that day.

Parents can opt to attend informational events at the kindergarten on topics like children's sexual development and first aid.

The parent board is the voice of the parents. It meets with the kindergarten's leadership team and owner every three months to discuss and solve key organizational, curriculum-related, educational and structural issues. Our annual parent survey, which asks questions about parent satisfaction and organizational aspects at the kindergarten and educational requests, is reviewed with the parent board.

## 6. Goals and Content of the Kindergarten Educational Program

In this chapter, we first look at the adjustment period for children new to Little Daisies Kindergarten. After that, we will focus on our seven main developmental areas, the areas that will be concentrated on after the adjustment period. These are as follows: language; math; arts & crafts, music and culture; nature and experiments, physical development, ethics and health. Finally, we cover preschool, which prepares children during their last year of kindergarten for the transition to first grade.

### 6.1 *Settling In*

The settling in process is a delicate time not only in the emotional life of a child, but also in his or her experience of bonding and trusting his or her parents. This is especially the case when a child is attending a center for the first time (never attended a crèche or other kindergarten). Parents and children need time to work through the mutual separation.

The settling in process is finished when the child accepts the teachers as trusted caregivers and the child can remain at the center from the time he or she is dropped off to pick up time, without undue stress. This process typically lasts one to three weeks. Every settling in period is different and based upon the needs of the child. Children who previously attended another childcare center usually have an easier time with the adjustment period.

Children that attended Little Daisies crèche are prepared during their time at the crèche for the transition to the kindergarten. On field trips, the teachers often pass by the kindergarten and explain the differences between the kindergarten and crèche. In spring and summer, the crèche children visit the kindergarten children and vice versa.

Parents can also learn a lot about the transition. On an information evening and at a get-to-know day, new parents and their future kindergartener get a taste of the center. A special parent evening about the settling in phase helps parents prepare for the switch.

Here is an overview of the settling in schedule in September:

Day 1, 9:30-11:30: The children eat breakfast at home, and eat lunch and nap at home.

Day 2, 9:30-12:30: The children eat breakfast at home, but eat lunch at the kindergarten.

Day 3, 9:00-12:30: The children may eat breakfast at the kindergarten and stay until after lunch.

Day 4, 9-12:30/14:30: Half the group (group 1) naps for the first time and stays until 14:30. Children in this group who don't take a nap may also stay until 14:30. The other group (group 2) stays until after lunch and goes home at 12:30.

Day 5, 9-14:30/15:30: Group 1 children stay until 15:30. Group 2 children nap for the first time and are picked up at 14:30.

Day 6: Same as day 5

Day 7, 9-15:30/until pick up: Group 1 may stay until pick up, group 2 until 15:30.

Day 8, until pick up: All children may stay until pick up time.

As mentioned above, settling in is different for every child and may take more or less time. To give the child time to adjust to the daily routine, parents should keep their work schedules flexible for three weeks.

## *6.2 Core Subject Areas*

After a new child has successfully settled in and the first two phases have passed, we turn our attention to the five core subject areas. Each week, we offer various activities and projects that cover the five core subject areas.

These are:

- Language and interaction
- Mathematics
- Nature and experiments
- Physical development and motor skills
- Arts and crafts, culture and music

Additional subjects we cover each day include:

- Ethics
- Health

## 6.2.1 Language and Interaction

Language is a means of thinking and expressing, and lays the foundation for communication. Children analyze their surroundings by using the words they have learned and thus form their own understanding of the world. Education in a kindergarten strongly supports using language to aid the development of a young child's thought and learning processes, social interactions, and emotions. Along with their families, we help children acquire language as a tool with which they can shape their image of the world.

Showing language skills by example, the teachers explain all actions to the children, talk to them about their emotions, and the reasons for their feelings and actions. In addition, teachers pay attention to the feelings, sounds, facial expressions and gestures of the children and, for children who cannot, help them put this into words. This helps increase the children's vocabulary while also encouraging them to speak about their feelings and thoughts, and to express their observations verbally. It is important to give the children the time they need to express themselves. The children are encouraged to become good listeners and storytellers. As part of a group, they get used to listening to other children and adults, taking part in conversations and, when necessary, waiting until it is their turn to talk.

In order to support language development, the group uses finger plays, rhymes, books and songs. Language and memory games in addition to books and songs also come into play. The language used to conduct morning circle alternates between English and German. Altogether, this ensures that language acquisition accompanies children throughout each day, at all times. We focus on children's interests, which teachers pick up on and follow empathetically. Learning language is integrated into daily life in an appreciated and enjoyable way.

The teachers see constantly reflecting on and improving how they educate the children as a necessity.

Our educational program lays the foundation for learning reading and writing skills. Reading aloud and looking at books are not the only things that support this; the way we have labeled chairs, drawers and coat hooks with words and pictures also supports the process. By connecting images, objects, and the written words, the cornerstones are laid for learning reading and writing later on. A further basis for the beginning of literacy is that children hear and listen, know that they are listened to, are allowed to talk and be talked to, be part of

conversations, ask questions, and get answers. Having experienced an environment that provides this basis, the children have developed their communication skills and can easily acquire their reading and writing skills. All creative activities we offer (finger painting, coloring, cutting with scissors, etc.) teach the eye-hand coordination also necessary for writing. Creative activities using pens and paper, paint and clay help the children develop fine motor skills. This lays the foundation for learning to write later on. The older children in the kindergarten start matching sounds with letters, if they show interest, learn to write the alphabet. Some start reading their first words. We read aloud books on subjects that are of interest to the children. All this piques children's interest in reading and writing.

We are a bilingual (German-English) kindergarten and the children are exposed to both languages all day long. To us, multilingualism is a valuable resource for the children's personal and social development. Our teaching staff is made up of fluent English speakers as well as fluent German speakers. The fluent English speakers are able to speak and understand German and vice versa, which means the children can always make themselves understood, and also enables all teachers to communicate in one of the two languages with the parents.

The children are exposed to the new language through the immersion method. Immersion is the most successful method of language learning.

The immersion concept works as follows:

- Each teacher speaks exclusively one language with the children (one person, one language).
- The children learn the second language the way they learn their first language. We don't teach it through vocabulary lessons, but rather they learn it through osmosis as we play and interact with them in it. The teachers speak about what they are doing and what things are called ("I'm picking up the ball") and over time and through repetition, the children understand and can use the second language.
- The children are allowed to speak and answer in the language of their choice. They are not forced to use the second language.

At the end of the second to last year of kindergarten the children's level of German is tested using Seldak and Sismik assessments. The Seldak assessment is specially designed for children of non-German parents. Children who lack certain German know-how are enrolled in a special language course called Vorkurs Deutsch. The lessons are equally shared between a nearby grade school and Little Daisies. The course focuses on improving a child's awareness of sounds. It helps them identify formal characteristics of spoken German. Methods used include identifying words that rhyme (house-mouse, Haus-Maus), words in a sentence (stories are read

aloud and the children make a certain noise when they hear a certain sound), syllables as part of words (clapping), and individual sounds in the words that make up a sentence. During free storytelling time the children improve their speaking skills and lessen their inhibitions.

### 6.2.2 Mathematics

Our education program strives to lay the foundation for the future understanding of mathematics. The children are taught to see mathematical phenomena that turn up in everyday situations. Children's understanding of math can be enhanced in a natural way through role playing, stories, songs, sports, by imitating (counting plates aloud, for example) and providing lots of visual examples.

Small mathematical activities and exercises involving the children are done every day. This can be in the process of doing another activity like "How many cookies did you bake? Let's count" or through specific math activities. We regularly use the play-based program Numberland (German: Zahlenland) to introduce the children to the concept of numbers and quantities.

Moreover, by classifying, comparing, and sorting, children start exploring objects, creatures, bodies, figures, materials and phenomena in terms of form, quantity, color and other characteristics. The children learn basic addition and make their own number rods. They learn about time, weighing, and comparing and measuring quantities. This may involve measuring the classroom or our feet. We want children to learn early on how exciting math is and how much fun it can be.

### 6.2.3 Nature and Experiments

We aim to help the children understand their surroundings and strengthen their relationship to nature and the environment through experiences and emotional connections. In the kindergarten, the children learn about the difference between the natural world and the world created by humans, and the differences between peoples and cultures. They also learn to recognize the effects their own actions have on their immediate surroundings. Nature's biological diversity, beauty and pleasantness are pointed out to the children, as well as the need to take these into consideration when doing things and to be environmentally conscious. They learn about recycling and how valuable our natural resources are.

To give the children the chance to experience nature, we go outside with them on a daily basis, either in our garden, to a nearby playground, to the Isar or on a walk through Haidhausen. The children go on an outing to the forest every other week (Perlacher Forst).

In the garden, the kindergarten has exclusive use of a sand box with a slide (approx. 40 m<sup>2</sup>) and shared use of an additional fenced-in area of the courtyard (approx. 70 m<sup>2</sup>). Here the children are constantly supervised by at least one teacher who ensures before and during outdoor play that the garden doors/house entrances are closed and that the outdoor area can be used safely by the children. Due to its size, the courtyard cannot be used by the whole group at once. That's why we take the entire group to the nearby fenced-in Hypo playground, just a five-minute walk from the center. In addition to slides, sandboxes, climbing toys and swings, there is also a water area, football and basketball courts and grassy areas.

The kindergarten children take field trips related to projects in order to connect what they have learned in the kindergarten with the world they live in. They go to the zoo, museums or the lake, depending on the topic they are covering. For some excursions, we divide the group to respond better to certain ages. For instance, we take the preschool children on special outings.

We do various experiments with the children that reflect the children's interests and our subjects. In the spring, we plant seeds in our flowerbed and wait for them to grow into flowers. In the summer, we find out which objects float and which ones sink in water. The children observe how leaves fall from the trees in the fall. We make popsicles in the winter and dig in the ground to see what lives there. The children do experiments with colors, magnets, electricity and volcanoes they made themselves. We try to show the children how exciting the world is so they are enticed to think up their own experiments.

The experiments teach the children to identify connections and draw their own conclusions. After an experiment, we discuss the results and what we have learned. These experiments are usually conducted during small group time.

#### 6.2.4 Physical Development and Motor Skills

In children, daily physical activity is essential for balanced growth, development and health. Through play and physical activity, children improve their physical and motor aptitudes and

learn to control their movements and fundamental motor skills. Gross and fine motor skills as well as manual skills and hand-eye co-ordination are acquired in everyday activities. In addition to the activities offered by the teachers, the children are given time to choose physical activities and games themselves. Children are encouraged to learn to act in a self-sufficient, active, co-operative and courageous way. Physical exercise is important for the health and well-being of children, and we want them to learn to place a high value on it.

Each day, the children can romp around in our playroom and use the climbing platform and our sporting equipment (ladders, trampoline, balls). The children also have a supervised sports lesson every week to promote their physical development and motor skills. The three-year-olds playfully improve their gross motor skills in our playroom. The four- and five-year-olds take part in the sports program of the Kindersportschule München (KISS). Here they improve their fitness and coordination, learn the basics of different sports and practice playing fairly. Regular sport helps the children develop good self-esteem and is good for the relationship between the children and their teachers.

#### 6.2.5 Arts & Crafts, Music, Media and Culture

Music and other arts forms play an essential part in our educational program for the development of emotional, practical, and cognitive skills. Creativity, imagination, and self-expression in children are encouraged by painting, music, arts and crafts, theatre, dance and exercise. Through play and active experimenting with artistic activities, the children gather and process information about themselves and the things going on around them. They are encouraged to continue working on artistic projects over multiple days and to be proud of their work, as well as to show respect for the work of others. This supports their ability to empathize and perceive, and the sense of spatial orientation. Learning processes are thereby enhanced, and the children acquire competencies essential for everyday life as well as for mental processes and problem solving.

The children are shown how to explore the world of sounds and learn about the communicative effects of music. They are encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings verbally and using body language, such as verbal emphasis, tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and movement. The children are encouraged in our regular song circle to invent their own songs and to play with sounds and language. Learning English and German is also much easier through songs and music: language is learned through constant repetition and rhythm.

Once a week, a music teacher comes to teach the children early music education, rhythm and instruments. They also learn a lot of new songs.

In connection with our subjects, we encourage the children to create and express themselves in a wide range of ways, such as with colored pencils, crayons, and paints. The children can access the materials independently to experiment with, as they want.

The children also craft different objects for each topic and learn to use tools. They make things out of wood, nails and glue, under close supervision. It's a chance for the children to learn to work creatively with the most random things, often things they find, and to implement their own ideas.

Media competence is important for kindergarten children. The children learn how to deal with different media (CDs, cassettes, books, magazines, DVDs, computers) and to use them correctly, independently and responsibly. They understand how to learn through media, how the different media work and how to express themselves through it (photos, videos, email).

As a bilingual institution, our children come from different cultures and backgrounds. Strengthening a child's cultural identity and their understanding of their own cultural heritage is very important to us. In a range of projects, the children have the opportunity to introduce the cultures they know from home and make them familiar to the group. In the past, we've travelled throughout the Earth's continents and asked the parents to visit the kindergarten to tell the whole group about their homeland. At our parties, the parents bring along traditional food and we also celebrate festivals from other cultures, such as Halloween. The materials we have on hand help the children get to know different cultures and ethnicities (for example, dolls of different skin tones, books on different cultures, etc.). Our center is home to different languages and cultures, and our children respect and appreciate each other for their differences.

## 6.2.6 Ethics, Gender & Inclusion

### 6.2.6.1 Ethics

It is important for us to convey general societal values to the children. We begin by helping the children develop self-respect. We build upon that and teach them to respect others, to respect

society, and to respect the natural environment. Teaching values is integrated into every situation that comes up in the kindergarten. It is dealt with through discussions or in role-play, which helps promote ethical thinking in the children.

These values we aim to convey include: tolerance and mitigation, equality and fairness, politeness and courage, and the ability to maintain one's own identity while expressing kindness and care for others.

#### 6.2.6.2 Gender

Ethics in education also means that children of different genders recognize each other as equal and value each other's differences. Each child is unique, and we show our respect to them regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, cultural background, abilities or other individual characteristics.

We help the children develop their own identity, interests and self-awareness. To this end, we question traditional gender norms and traditions, get to know our own ideas and identity, learn to reflect on them and respect others. Diversity is the norm at Little Daisies.

Every day we give all children equal opportunities, resources, and space to express themselves. We encourage all children to be unbiased and open-minded, to reflect on prejudices and to respect themselves as well as others.

As educators, we make an effort to be aware of our own beliefs and behavior. We reflect on them as a team and question stereotypes, we encounter, including those related to gender.

#### 6.2.6.3 Inclusiveness

We acknowledge and respect the personality and individual abilities of each child, parent and team member. Everyone has the right to be accepted for who they are.

The similarities and, more importantly, differences between the children encourage them to learn from each other and are viewed as enriching.

All children have the same opportunities to participate in everyday life at the center, such as children's conferences, projects and activities. This helps us ensure equal educational opportunities long term.

Our team treats the children and families in an open, appreciative way.

### 6.2.7 Health

Our educational program is meant to enhance the children's physical, mental and social well-being, as well as their growth and development. Positive experiences and a variety of occasions for interaction are designed to help the children become aware of their relationship with others and the environment. The ability of the children to take responsibility for their health and well-being and to act accordingly is taught in normal everyday situations. They also learn the basics involved in their daily hygiene and health. The children learn to wash their hands before meals, and to brush their teeth after. They learn about good table manners and healthy eating. The children help prepare breakfast and snacks and set the table or cleaning up after meals. They become responsible and take over chores, a key step in becoming independent.

Learning about health includes the importance of healthy eating. The majority of our breakfast comes from the Ökokiste, an organic food service, and is prepared by the staff. We have different healthy products for breakfast every day. On Mondays we have yogurt and muesli; on Tuesdays bread with cream cheese and raw vegetables; on Wednesdays, bread with fruit and milk; on Thursdays, pretzels with cold cuts and fruit; and on Fridays, hard cooked eggs and fruit. Our lunch is delivered by the Kinderküche whose owner, nutritionist Susanne Klug, places emphasis on balanced nutrition and uses organic or high quality regional food in her cooking. In the afternoon two nutritious snack – fruit and bread or a rice waffle– come from the Ökokiste.

At Little Daisies, children learn to serve themselves the amount of food they can eat. They are encouraged to try all foods, but are not forced to eat something if they do not like it. At mealtimes, children sit together in small groups to create a family-like atmosphere at the table. They understand that mealtimes are a time to relax and socialize with others.

In addition, the children learn about manners social graces and are give the chance to practice them. This encourages the children to interact in a non-aggressive way and to develop positive emotional relationships with others.

### 6.3 *Small Group und Project Groups*

Throughout the week the teachers offer different activities during small group time that focus on the five core subject areas. Ethics and health are part of the daily routine. During small

group time in the morning and afternoon, the teachers set up different areas of the kindergarten so that the children can take part either in teacher-led activities or self-led ones. In addition to the free play areas, the garden, the play area and an experiment table also available, to name a few examples.

In addition to small group time, there are projects the children can participate in. The projects are designed to suit the children's scope of experiences and to build on topics that help the children to develop, and to analyze the world. During small group time and free play, topics often arise that the children are particularly moved by and want to know more about. They have the chance to do so in project groups.

This process requires that the teachers carefully observe the children. At the children's conference, potential topics for projects are brought up and a decision with the children happens about implementing it. In project groups, it's important that the children run the project and develop hypotheses. The teacher involved accompanies and observes them, possibly sparking new ideas if the children are stuck. Depending on the children's level of interest, the project lasts for a few weeks or several months. Ultimately the children determine the direction it takes as well as the intensity and duration. This means the curriculum varies from year to year in the kindergarten. Here is an example of how two project groups in parallel could run over the course of a kindergarten year:

#### September

- Get to know each other (introduce songs for morning circle, group name, family trees)

#### October

- Halloween
- Start children's conference, elect children's representatives
- Work together to define/introduce center rules
- Visit Maximilianeum

#### November

- St. Martin
- Project group 1: Fire / light and dark / visit fire department
- Project group 2: Food / What is healthy? / create recipe book

#### December

- St. Nikolaus Day, advent, Christmas

- Project group 1: hot and cold / how do we use fire?
- Project group 2: Christmas recipes / visit bakery

#### January

- Project group 1: water, ice, snow / where does weather come from?
- Project group 2: global cuisine / what are the continents?
- Go sledding / ice skating

#### February

- Carnival
- Project group 1: How is the weather in other countries?
- Project group 2: What animals are native to other countries?
- Visit puppet theater

#### March

- Project group 1: What is it like in other countries?
- Project group 2: What traditions are there in other countries?
- Email pen pals in other countries

#### April

- Easter and Easter egg hunt
- Easter breakfast with parents, include traditions from other countries
- Project groups 1 and 2: Parents visit center and tell about their home country/wear traditional dress, bring food, toys, etc.

#### May

- Project group 1: transportation / visit transportation museum
- Project group 2: my body

#### June

- Project group 1: boats
- Project group 2: my feelings / photo story about feelings
- Visit to the lake

#### July/August

- Project group 1: spaceships/ planets

- Project group 2: expressing emotions through dance / dance performance at summer parts
- Visit planetarium

In small group work the children are exposed to a wide variety of experiences during the week, many of them new, and stimulated in all areas. Each child finds something they are interested in. The project groups give the children a chance to learn about a topic in greater detail and to look at it from various perspectives. There is no limit to the children's creativity and it is amazing to see what results.

## 6.4 *Preschool Curriculum*

### 6.4.1 Transition From Kindergarten to First Grade

The kindergarten's role is to adequately prepare the children during their time at Little Daisies for first grade. We begin doing so on their first day here. Successfully preparing them for and seamlessly transitioning them to school requires close collaboration between parents, the center and the elementary school. In particular, Little Daisies works with the elementary schools in the Kirchenstraße and Flurstraße.

The Little Daisies preschool children visit one of the primary schools in the spring accompanied by their pre-school teacher. For children enrolled in school, school visits are important to get to know the new life of the school and possibly even their new caregivers at an early age.

Some children may need more intensive preparation before starting first grade. In this case, the kindergarten and grade school may have close contact during the last year of kindergarten. Parents of these children are asked in one-on-one talks for permission to allow these exchanges to take place as needed and after speaking to the parents.

### 6.4.1 Preparatory German Course: Vorkurs Deutsch

For children who are to participate in the preparatory German course Vorkurs Deutsch, with their parents' consent, permission for the center to discuss the course with the school is

requested at the end of the second to last kindergarten year. Children who speak German as a first or second language participate in Vorkurs Deutsch 240 to improve and foster their language know-how and development. Participating helps these children become more successful when they start school. The children's language skills are tested in the first half of the second to last kindergarten year. The preparatory lessons are split between the kindergarten and a local grade school.

#### 6.4.2 Objectives of Preschool

Our kindergarten curriculum aims to ensure that children leave here with all the skills, social and cognitive, they need to successfully start school. Our curriculum is designed to lay the foundation in kindergarten for a successful school career.

During their time at Little Daisies, children learn to deal with conflict properly, enjoy their success and work through failure. When necessary, they learn to ask for help, assume responsibility and become independent all while developing verbal and mental competencies.

The aim of preschool lessons is for the children to build on the competencies that are required to start first grade. We approach each child individually and at their level of development and encourage them to set their own goals and reach them. The children are encouraged to contribute their own preschool topics.

#### 6.4.3 How Preschool Learning Is Carried Out

Preschool lessons take place four times a week, twice in German, twice in English, by the respective teachers.

#### 6.4.4 Preschool Education Curriculum

The preschool education program is designed in close collaboration with the local grade schools. Topics it covers include:

- Language and fine motor skills
- Number comprehension
- Recognition of shapes and patterns and following processes
- Media competence

1) Language and fine motor skills:

The children should gain a feel for sounds. In different exercises for various sounds, they start to understand language. This is a prerequisite for learning to read and write at school later on. Often, the children can already write their first name. Still, we emphasize how to correctly pencil grip and good hand-eye coordination (making loops, thematic-based painting).

All children can enhance their language skills in language games, rhymes, jokes, poems and free storytelling.

In German preschool lessons, children with special needs in German receive intensive lessons from a native German speaker. To further encourage multilingual/German-speaking children's German skills, there is the possibility to register children for the Vorkurs Deutsch at the local grade school.

- 2) Number comprehension: By practicing numbers, the children learn to count and, if they want, to do simple arithmetic. They can also learn to recognize and write numbers.
- 3) Pattern recognition: In preschool lessons children also learn to put colors and shapes in a certain order and to recognize patterns. We also practice following instructions and organizational tasks, such as packing their backpacks for a field trip.
- 4) Media competence: In media education lessons, the children learn about computers and complete a computer permit. After obtaining this, they are allowed to try out basic educational programs on the computer.
- 5) The preschool children go on field trips related to each topic. This includes eating at a restaurant and the children order their own food, pay attention to their manners and pay for themselves. We go to the theater or a concert. At the end of the school year, we visit a local school to ensure the children feel comfortable about making the transition.

At the end of the school year, the preschool children have a sleepover at the kindergarten, and we celebrate the end of kindergarten with a big end-of-year party.

## 7. Quality Management

In order to constantly maintain and improve the quality of our work, we as an organization, as a team and as individuals never stop reflecting on our work or educating ourselves.

### *7.1 Staff Planning and Curriculum Days/ Development*

At least three times a year we have staff planning days. These are occasions for us to work on evolving our educational work and our curriculum. We introduce new pedagogical ideas, invite external trainers to join us or discuss organizational changes.

### *7.2 Reflection Rounds*

In a weekly meeting, the head of the center meets and discusses with the head of the group.

Once a year, the heads of the groups/the center conducts annual reviews with the staff. Every four months, the owner or a representative meets with the teachers to reflect and mutually give constructive feedback. Leadership of the center meets with the owner or management rep on a weekly basis.

### *7.3 Supervision*

Four times a year a supervisor pays us a visit. The supervisor is briefed on all topics that have come up within the team and discusses the children's development, when necessary, or offers support during challenging parent-teacher conferences.

### *7.4 Participation in Continuing Education Programs*

The team participates in a range of internal continuing education programs, for instance we recently completed a program about preventing addiction. Additionally, each team member can use up to three continuing education days to pursue topics in line with their own interests.