

**Educational concept  
of the Outdoor group of Little Daisies Kindergarten**

Updated: January 2022

## Content

1.	Preliminary considerations and objectives .....	3
2.	Type and scope of the project.....	3
2.1	The group .....	3
2.2	Organizational matters and other educational offers.....	4
2.3	Cooperation „Indoor-Kiga“ .....	5
2.4	Rooms .....	5
3.	Care.....	5
3.1	Eating and drinking.....	5
3.2	Toileting and medical care.....	6
3.3	Clothing .....	6
3.4	Rest periods.....	6
3.5	Technical equipment.....	6
4.	Paths and places .....	7
5.	Educational offers .....	8
6.	Cooperation with parents.....	9

# 1. Preliminary considerations and objectives

Our goal is to make nature and the environment more tangible and understandable for children. Direct contact with nature is very important for little ones. Many who grow up in cities today are largely cut off from natural environments, such as streams, ponds, meadows and forests. Their world is dominated above all by buildings, streets and cars as well as a multitude of audiovisual media. Opportunities to experience nature more intensively in gardens, parks and green spaces are often not utilized. As early childhood educators with ample experience with children, we are increasingly aware of our desire to compensate for their sometimes very unfavorable environmental surroundings and living circumstances.

Our classroom is not limited to the premises of the daycare center, it also includes the surrounding area. Children as well as the adults get to know our neighborhood better and have the opportunity to discover and explore a wide range of outdoor areas. In addition, regular half-day or day-long field trips, for instance to Perlacher Forest that's easily reached directly by tram, take us somewhat further distances.

We prepare for all field trips by first exploring the area ourselves, looking for suitable paths and rest areas, and planning enough time for targeted and spontaneous activities for the children. Which paths to take or places to visit depends largely on the daily schedule and the weather. In addition, it must also ensure we keep a manageable daily schedule because a reliable kindergarten setup and familiar distances are very important for the children.

The children's safety is a priority on our excursions. We make sure our teachers search the area we are spending time in for broken glass, cigarettes and other items that could be dangerous for children, and dispose of them if necessary.

## 2. Type and scope of the project

### 2.1 *The group*

Our outdoor group includes 14 children aged 3 to 6 years and 3 caregivers (2 primary teachers and 1 intern). This group either goes on field trips every day from around 9:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. or stays at our outdoor center in the Hypopark.

If a child from the outdoor group comes late one day due to a doctor's visit / "Vorkurs"-German or other circumstance, there are two options:

1. After consulting with the educators, the parents may bring their child to the location where the group is spending the morning.
2. The child may spend the day in the kindergarten with the "indoor children".

## 2.2 Organizational matters and other educational offers

Children in the outdoor group are brought to the outdoor house in the morning by their parents or grandparents where they can have breakfast. Then a snack and tea are packed up. Before leaving, the children use the toilet, and depending on the weather, the group sets out at 9:30/10 a.m. to explore the neighborhood for around three hours, or takes a trip to the outskirts of the city.

Between approx. 11:45 and 12:15 p.m., children and caregivers typically return from their trip. The children eat lunch and rest in the outdoor house in the Hypopark. We find this relaxation phase necessary for children and adults in order to process the impressions of the morning and to relax. The house is equipped with tables and chairs, a bio-toilet and a heater to warm up on colder days. After lunch, the children can rest, look at books, paint, do crafts or play freely. The children with longer booking times spend the afternoon from around 3:15 p.m. in the indoor center at Kirchenstr. 38 or they meet with the children of the indoor group at various playgrounds.

One or two times a week, longer trips are planned, for instance to the Perlacher Forest. Weather permitting, we spend our lunch break in the Perlacher Forest on these days and have lunch there as well. On these days, the children can also participate in the indoor center program in the afternoon from 3:15 pm.

On several days, special activities are offered to the outdoor children:

For example, once a week there is a mindfulness lesson before pick-up and a weekly music lesson with our music teacher. Our art teacher visits once a month to draw with the children and experiment with colors. Our outdoor children are also artistically active several times a week in our outdoor house, which is equipped with crafting materials, paints and brushes.

Our preschool children take part in the following additional activities two to three times a week: the German preschool, the English preschool and, if necessary, the “Vorkurs German” (for children who need extra support in the German language).

Our weekly plan:

	Morning	Afternoon
Monday	Perlacher Forst/ Englischer Garten	Mindfulness with Paulina
Tuesday	Preschool / short excursions	Playground
Wednesday	Music with Julia / Freiland day	Indoor-center
Thursday	Preschool / short excursion	Playground
Friday	Excursion	Indoor-center

### *2.3 Cooperation with the Indoor-Kiga*

Every day from around 15:15, the outdoor group returns to the indoor facility or meets with the indoor children and teachers at one of the various playgrounds nearby. During pick-up time, a maximum of 39 children remains in the facility; by 4:00 p.m. at the latest, their number is reduced to a maximum of 25 children.

Preschool excursions for the preschool children are regularly organized from the groups together. At least once a month, the outdoor children get the opportunity to spend the morning in the indoor facility and the children from there come to the outdoor group. A caregiver from their own group accompanies the children for the rotation.

The team meets weekly from both groups, to exchange professional information, to plan parties together and much more.

### *2.4 Rooms*

For a project of this kind and for the children to be successfully incorporated into the group, familiar places, routes that recur over longer periods of time, a manageable daily routine and a predominantly fixed group composition with reliable caregivers are absolutely essential.

The outdoor house at Hypopark is used as a shelter for the morning drop-off and during lunchtime. Various materials are also stored there.

The rooms of our indoor center (Kirchenstraße 38) are used by the children with longer booking times (pick up times after 15.15pm) together with the children of the indoor group. Various materials are also stored in the indoor kindergarten. In the mornings, canisters are filled with water and are taken to the outdoor area, as there is no running water there.

Depending on the season and pedagogical considerations, various places in the immediate vicinity of our facility are visited as half-day and day destinations. The routes and places that come into question are explored beforehand by the caregivers and checked for their suitability.

The outdoor area in Hypopark is used in the afternoon from 3:30 p.m. by our cooperation partner AKA (Aktiv für interkulturellen Austausch e.V.) for their garden project. This project is independent of the outdoor group. The children of the outdoor group are already picked up at this time or are playing with their friends from the indoor group in the indoor center.

## **3. Care**

### *3.1 Eating and drinking*

After breakfast, the children can take a drink to-go; a morning snack is also provided as is warm tea when the weather is cold.

A larger meal usually takes place at noon in the Hypopark in the outdoor center. Children with longer booking times also receive a snack in the afternoon at the indoor kindergarten.

### *3.2 Toileting and medical care*

Before leaving in the morning, the children can use the washroom and toilets at our indoor center. They may wear diapers if necessary. The group's portable equipment includes drinking water and clean towels as well as a first aid kit.

The teachers have a mobile phone to ensure rapid help in the event of an emergency.

### *3.3 Clothing*

The choice of clothing for children and teachers must be adapted to the weather conditions. It should be wind- and waterproof as possible while also being breathable, warm or temperature regulating and offer sun protection. The clothing should also be comfortable and easy to change.

Research suggests that regular, continuous stay outdoors helps to strengthen and stabilize the immune system: The body (re-)learns how to adjust to different and changing temperatures.

### *3.4 Rest periods*

Tired or exhausted children can relax at the outdoor center in the Hypopark. Depending on the weather, the children can also rest outside. In summer, blankets and insulating mats are taken along, making longer trips possible.

### *3.5 Technical equipment*

It goes without saying that a group of (small) children that are on the go for a few hours every day needs certain equipment and materials. However, due to the educational concept of the outdoor group, it's not just about toys, but rather everyday materials for the basic care of children and for protection against certain events.

The group's equipment includes:

- Beverage bottles and food storage containers
- Diapering material, if necessary
- Some toys and activities such as (picture) books for reading aloud, etc.
- Sunscreen
- First aid kit
- Mobile phone
- Blankets and insulating mats in spring and summer
- Buggy to relax on longer trips

## 4. Paths and places

The following locations have been explored together with an expert during a curriculum day and the options and risks were discussed. On another day with the expert, we visited Perlacher Forest.

### *4.1 Johannesplatz, Wiener Platz and neighborhood streets*

- Location: in the immediate vicinity of the daycare center
- Accessibility: depending on the exact destination, up to a maximum of 15 minutes on foot with the children
- Type of site: predominantly densely-built, inner-city settlement with partially low-traffic streets, historically significant architecture
- Additional requirements: none

### *4.2 Hypo playground, Johannisspielplatz, green area Haidenau park (playground with tunnel slide) and pirate playground*

- Location: in the immediate vicinity of the daycare center
- Accessibility (Johannisplatz): about 10 minutes on foot with the children
- Type of site: small park with a designated children's playground, historically significant architecture, social meeting point for different population groups
- Additional requirements: none

### *4.3 Green areas along the Isar*

- Location: between the block perimeter development on the Inner Wienerstrasse and the Auer Mühlbach as well as in the vicinity of the Maximilianeum
- Accessibility: depending on the individual destination, up to a maximum of 25 minutes on foot with the children
- Type of site: landscaped gardens; various types of lawn and meadow as well as ruderal vegetation; partly on a slope

### *4.4 Perlacher Forest*

- Location: forest on the southern edge of Harlaching
- Accessibility: approx. 20 minutes by tram No. 15 and 25 from Johannesplatz (to Harlacher Krankenhaus station, Mengerschwaike or Großhesseloher Brücke); depending on the exact destination, up to 30 minutes by foot with the children
- Type of terrain: extensive forest with different tree/plants, meadows and smaller clearings

- Additional requirements: somewhat higher expenditure on meals; due to the distance from the daycare center, this is especially nice for stays of several hours; food delivery box at Großhesseloher Brücke lets our caterer deliver a hot lunch here

## 5. Educational offers

There are countless possibilities for organizing a day with children outdoors. The following are just a few examples to show how children can experience nature. In many cases, ideas arise spontaneously through the observations and actions of children and caregivers, shaping children's education.

### *5.1 Your body*

- Perceiving your own aptitudes and skills
- Challenging security of movement and sense of balance, especially on rough, unknown terrain and new/changing floors
- Experiencing how your body adapts to the season (temperature, light conditions...)

Example activities for a day:

Motion games; tactile and gripping exercises; using wood to build things; various games and experiments with light and shadow, heat and cold, proximity and distance.

### *5.2 Mental processes*

- Dealing with changing and surprising situations
- Experiencing behavior and reactions of others (including the teachers)
- Promoting a strong group feeling, in particular through the feeling of having achieved/experienced something together
- Experiencing and learning solidarity and helpfulness

Example activities for a day:

Observing (social) life in the neighborhood; finding animal traces; searching for and designing symbols; search and orientation games; observation of (small) animals.

### *5.3 Dealing with things*

- Finding and getting to know things and structures that also develop a life of their own and stimulate the children's curiosity and desire to try something out

- Discover properties and peculiarities of different (natural) materials, fine motoric and other challenges

Example activities for a day:

Building and designing together using objects they find; handling garbage; getting to know wild plants (poisonous plants/useful plants); nature experience games such as nature memory or olfactory and tactile games.

#### *5.4 Spatial and temporal perceptions*

- Promoting spatial and distance perception
- Being conscious about and experiencing different weather conditions
- Experiencing temporal dimensions of tension/effort versus relaxation
- Setting goals and trying to achieve them

Example activities for a day:

Working on long-term projects such as building a tepee out of logs; tracking and monitoring seasonal changes at certain selected points/locations; exploration of new paths and rediscovering previous locations.

## 6. Collaboration with parents

The parents of the children we care for are, of course, taken into considerations during the planning of the activities listed above. Their tips and suggestions enrich our educational concept and support its evolution. Regular exchanges of ideas are very important to us.

In addition to regular one-on-one meetings and conversations during bring and pick up time, parents also have the chance to participate in different group activities, e.g., in excursions or taking part in our morning circle. This, however, must be discussed in advance with the teachers. Like the parents, we are convinced of the value of the outdoor group and believe it offers children important and meaningful opportunities to develop and experience life.