

ACTIVITY


IN EUROPEAN DAYCARE CENTRES

Gefördert durch



Erasmus+
Schulbildung

**BROCHURE FOR THE ERASMUS PROJECT:
ACTIVITY - AND SPORTS CONCEPT
- INNOVATION & EUROPEAN EXCHANGE**



"ALL
TRUTH
COMES
ONLY
FROM THE
SENSES."

NIETZSCHE

This project is the result of a two-year strategic partnership project in the area of pre-school education. The project was funded by the ERASMUS+ mobility programme.

Project name: Motion and Sports Concept - Innovation & European Exchange

Project number: 2015-1-DE03-KA219-013796

Project period: 1 September 2015 - 31 August 2017

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Intro

We all share that natural impulse to move from the first breath we take, so creating an environment encouraging physical activity is an essential responsibility in any daycare centre.

This brochure is the result of two years of cooperation between education institutions from Germany, Luxembourg, the Czech Republic, and Austria. We talked about standards for promoting physical activity in each country, shared ideas and adapted them to the specific models for equipment and furnishings at regular meetings, thus improving the range of opportunities towards encouraging physical activity.

The aim of this brochure was to present the variety of physical activity opportunities in preschool environments, and the need to emphasise these opportunities. All of the participating daycare centres have gained thorough familiarity with the issues and ideas involved, and have sustainably integrated them into their own daycare strategies. We would also like to pass on these opportunities to other institutions to help future generations grow healthy and confident.

We are pleased to provide useful ideas in this brochure, and would welcome any further exchange and sharing of ideas and information.

FAIRbund





Group photo with project participants at the transnational meeting in Vienna, 3–4
April 2017

Front row, left to right: Linda Morgenstern, Kathrin Kunze, Susanne Lee, Manon
Block, Isabell Schiffer, Nadine Würzberger.

Back row, left to right: Susanne Rade, Laurent Zimmer, Cornelia-Carmen Zörner,
Siri Peiffer, Andrea Proniewicz

Summary

Kindertagesstätte Goyastraße, FAIRbund eV

Address: Goyastraße 8
04105 Leipzig, Germany
Tel.: +49 341 58613590
E-mail: nadine-wuerzberger@verein-fairbund.de
Web: www.verein-fairbund.de/projekte/kindertagesstaetten/kit-a-goyastrasse/

Contact: Nadine Würzberger

Opened: März 2014

Owner: FAIRbund eV

Opening times: Mon–Fri, 07:00–17:00h

Number of children: 45 toddlers, 120 daycare (including 6 integration places)

Staffing: Management, social educators, preschool educators, special-needs preschool educators, social education trainees, language educators, financial specialists

Strategy and focus: Open strategy focused on activity and language development

Indoor facilities: Seven function rooms, studio, activity room, children's kitchen, garden, woodlands

Activity materials: Parachutes, see-saw, roller boards, balls, go-carts, climbing wall, etc.

Innovation: Autumn festival on the activity theme, supervised activity programme development, procurement of materials towards encouraging physical activity, training, integrating activity into everyday life (such as in the morning circle), dance opportunities, woodland activity space development



Summary

Maison Relais Origer

Address: 11, rue Origer
4271 Esch Alzette, Luxembourg
Tel.: +352 27 54 8640
E-mail: siri.peiffer@villeesch.lu,
claudine.meisenburg@villeesch.lu
Web: www.esch.lu

Contact: Peiffer Siri, Meisenburg Claudine

Opened: 2011

Owner: Municipality of Esch

Opening times: Mon–Fri, 05:30–20:30h

Number of children: 49 toddlers

Staffing: Social educators, preschool educators, assistant preschool educators, assistant cook

Strategy and focus: Multifunction rooms, participation, activity and language

Indoor facilities – lower level: Main recreation room, two rooms for eating and sleeping; upper level: Three recreation rooms connected together; outdoors: Yard and garden, playgrounds in the immediate vicinity

Activity materials: Tunnels, tents, scooters, go-carts, trikes, ball pit, ropes, balls, frisbees, space hoppers, cross trainers, parachutes, gymnastics mats, gymnastics bars, number carpet

Innovation: Rebuilding group rooms into functional spaces, creating space in the rooms to provide more activity opportunities for the children



Summary

Maison Relais Spillhaus

Address: 51, rue Large
4204 Esch Alzette, Luxembourg
Tel.: +352 27 543066
E-mail: manon.block@villeesch.lu,
arani.martine@villeesch.lu
Web: www.esch.lu

Contact: Manon Block, Arani Martine

Opened: 1946

Owner: Municipality of Esch

Opening times: Mon–Fri, 06:30–19:00h

Number of children: 37 toddlers, 34 daycare

Staffing: Social educators, preschool educators, assistant preschool educators, assistant cook

Strategy and focus: Multifunction rooms, participation, activity and language

Facilities – lower level: Three group rooms with two utility rooms, bathroom with nappy-changing table, staff bathroom with shower, kitchen; upper level: Two group rooms, bathrooms, staff toilet, utility room with oven and refrigerator; outdoors: Park with playground and swimming pool

Activity materials: Tunnels, tents, scooters, go-carts, trikes, ball pit, ropes, balls, frisbees, space hoppers, cross trainers, parachutes, gymnastics mats, gymnastics bars, number carpet

Innovation: More space for unhindered physical activity, new material for indoors and outdoors, summer party with physical activity theme, raising awareness amongst staff and parents for more physical activity and a healthy diet



Summary

Německá škola v Praze s.r.o - Zahraniční škola a gymnázium

Address: Schwarzenberská 1/700
15800 Praha 5, Jinonice, Czech Republic
Tel.: +420 235 312776
Fax: +420 235 311 703
E-mail: cornelia.zoerner@dsp-praha.cz
Web: www.dsp-praha.cz

Contact: Cornelia-Carmen Zörner

Opened: 1990

Owner: Stiftung Deutsche Schule Prag (based
in Hamburg)

Opening times: Mon–Fri, 07:45–16:00h

Number of children: 65 daycare

Staffing: Trained professionals and a
housekeeper

Strategy and focus: Learn with your head,
hands and heart. Project work, German as a
foreign language, German as a second
language, language education, sport and
activity opportunities

Indoor facilities: Three group rooms, one
creative room, one activity room, kitchen,
bathroom, shared sports hall, gym room and
sports field at the German School in Prague,
ecologically designed outdoor area

Activity materials: Water pump, mud table,
indoor climbing frame, bird's nest swing, wide
slide, willow tunnel, trikes, sports equipment,
parachute and lots more

Innovation: We have gained awareness of the
possibilities for encouraging activity and
implementing them from sharing with other
preschool educators and the Erasmus project.
We will be expanding on the activity materials
we provide for indoors and outdoors.

One of our colleagues has embarked on a
training course as a physical educator, and the
whole team is interested in training and
further training in activities and sports.



Summary

riOriO Tanz- und Bewegungskindergarten

Address: Schottenfeldgasse 72/9-10

1070 Vienna, Austria

Tel.: +43 680 2314 352

E-mail: office@riorio.at, susi@riorio.at,
isabell@riorio.at

Web: www.riorio.at

Contact: Susanne Lee, Isabell Schiffer

Opened: June 2013

Owner: Verein arriOla – Sportverein zur
Förderung junger Tanztalente

Opening times: Mon – Thu, 07:00–17:00h, Fri
07:00–16:00h

Number of children: 44 daycare, 8
schoolchildren (afternoon care)

Staffing: Elementary-level preschool
educators, dancing preschool educators,
daycare assistants, cook

Strategy and focus: Open groups, activities and
dance

Indoor facilities: Two group rooms, laundry
room, staff toilet, kitchen, courtyard
(outdoors), arriOla dance studio (600 m²
directly underneath the daycare centre),
cloakroom

Activity materials: Pikler ladder, various
swings, climbing ropes, parachute, stilts, ropes,
roller boards, rocking and balancing board,
slide, large foam blocks, various mats,
balancing wall etc.

Innovation: The Erasmus project has changed
how we see children, and we have transformed
our group rooms after a long process to create
more space for physical activity. We also
provide rest and relaxation areas. The children
now have an opportunity to join four dance
classes a week. The children play on our new
materials such as a balancing bar, various
swings and a ladder and slide during the course
of the day.



Links to the curricula in the participating daycare centres

Kindertagesstätte Goyastraße, FAIRbund eV:

Saxon state curriculum: <http://www.kita-bildungsserver.de/praxis/publikationen/aktuelle-publikationen/begleithefte-zum-saechsischen-bildungsplan-elternbegleithefte-in-deutsch-und-anderen-sprachen/>

Maison Relais Origer & Spillhaus:

https://www.enfancejeunesse.lu/de/educational_practice_subs/downloads

Německá škola v Praze s.r.o - Zahraniční škola a gymnázium

Baden-Württemberg state curriculum, Germany: <http://www.km-bw.de/KINDERGAERTEN-BW,Lde/Startseite/Fruehe+Bildung/Koerper>

Czech Republic state curriculum: <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2004-561#cast2>

riOriO Tanz-und Bewegungskindergarten

Wien MA 10 curriculum: <https://www.wien.gv.at/bildung/kindergarten/pdf/bildungsplan.pdf>

Federal framework curriculum

https://www.bmb.gv.at/ministerium/vp/2009/bildungsrahmenplan_18698.pdf?5te6qh

Module for five-year-olds

<https://www.bmfj.gv.at/dam/jcr:0712dc77-f8f3.../Modul%20fuer%205-Jaehrige.pdf>



How we see children

Our educational efforts focus on children and their need for individual development. Our main emphasis lies on physical activity as an essentially human form of expression, and the importance of physical activity in the development of positive self-perception.

We place high priority on independence. Children are inquisitive and active with an urge to explore their world from birth. We support children in turning their ideas, fantasies and plans into reality by creating the necessary space and time while understanding the high value of free-play phases. Watching children as they play is essential in addressing their individual needs. Beginning with the interests and life situations we see, we develop project ideas to provide opportunities for comprehensive, conceptual learning at play. The individual education and development areas are naturally included in various educational programmes during the project. Activity always forms part of a project, and may serve as a starting point for topics and content.

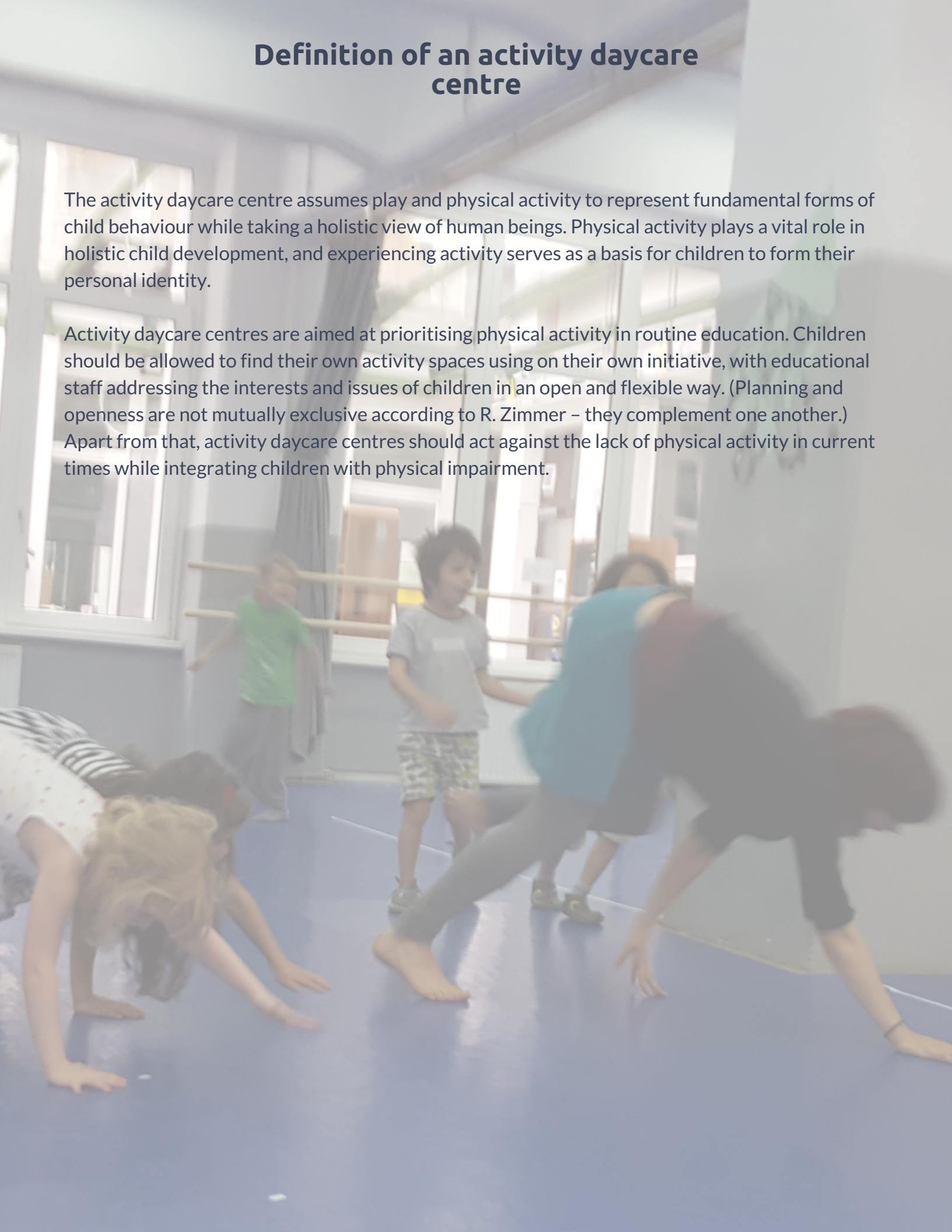
Stimulating indoor and outdoor areas provide space for independent exploration, playing and conceptual learning.



Definition of an activity daycare centre

The activity daycare centre assumes play and physical activity to represent fundamental forms of child behaviour while taking a holistic view of human beings. Physical activity plays a vital role in holistic child development, and experiencing activity serves as a basis for children to form their personal identity.

Activity daycare centres are aimed at prioritising physical activity in routine education. Children should be allowed to find their own activity spaces using on their own initiative, with educational staff addressing the interests and issues of children in an open and flexible way. (Planning and openness are not mutually exclusive according to R. Zimmer – they complement one another.) Apart from that, activity daycare centres should act against the lack of physical activity in current times while integrating children with physical impairment.



Criteria for an activity daycare centre

Daycare centres aiming towards activity daycare centre status may apply for certification from a certification institute. Certain criteria need to be fulfilled to be certified as an activity daycare centre; the exact criteria will depend on the certification institute.

We found the idea of gathering together common criteria very useful – this made it easier for us to agree on the definition of an activity daycare centre.

We named nine criteria that we see as essential for a daycare centre to be regarded as an activity daycare centre.

These are:

1. Free space for activity in natural surroundings
2. Role of preschool educators
3. Materials and equipment
4. Working with parents
5. Holistic approach
6. Variety and flexibility
7. Physical activity and relaxation
8. Supervised and free activity opportunities, time and frequency of physical activity
9. Diet

Criteria for an activity daycare centre – space for activity in natural surroundings

Children need enough space to spread out, move and play unhindered, and satisfy their natural urge to move. An activity daycare centre should have sufficient space equipped with a variety of child-friendly equipment and materials set aside for activities.

Places for activity cannot be limited to a gym or activity room in an activity daycare centre, however.

Activity rooms: There should always be sufficient rooms available or set aside for supervised activity in daycare centres focusing on physical activity. Activity rooms should provide enough space and fittings for varied opportunities suitable for the respective age group. Large and small equipment such as climbing walls, boxes, mats, benches, balance beams, and corresponding alteration options should be available. Hooks and rails on the ceiling are ideal, and always offer new ideas and variations for different equipment setups and the opportunities they provide.

Group rooms: The group rooms should also stimulate activity while remaining flexible in activity setup.

Corridors: All corridors, corners and other niches should provide an opportunity for physical activity while remaining flexible with a variety of materials. Rooms with sensory and activity opportunities should be properly integrated into the facilities for children in daycare centres where activity is positively encouraged.

Outdoor areas: Opportunities for physical activity are constantly shrinking with increasing construction development in urban areas. Creating a varied outdoor area or playground with hills, hollows, paths, walls, water, climbing, swings, slides and balancing activities plays an important role in daycare centres. Children create their own things and activity opportunities on playgrounds.

Woodlands: Excursions into woods or parks are an ideal addition to outdoor activities, giving children an ideal opportunity to balance, jump, swing or build things out of natural materials. Sharing activities with peers and assessing their own strengths and weaknesses raises children's self-perception. The tranquility of the woodland sharpens the senses as the children watch the course of nature. Keeping with the rules during such excursions shows respect for nature and its fauna and flora.

Criteria for an activity daycare centre – role of preschool educators

The relationship between preschool educators and children benefits from facilitating rather than directing individual activity, with respect, warmth and consideration, empathic non-judgmental understanding, authenticity and sincerity.

The children should be given the opportunity for activity during the day with encouragement, while allowing children to satisfy their urge to move outdoors in free play.

Children should be offered help, not have help forced on them.

Dealing with and encouraging children's urge to move in an educational way while responding to each child's individual needs: It never goes amiss to check your own behaviour as a preschool educator and reflect on it, asking yourself: "Can I allow this? Can I reconcile this with my conscience?" – This includes accepting and allowing your own insecurities. Preschool educators learn to watch over themselves from the respect they show the children, acquiring a positive emotional attitude towards themselves.

Growing awareness for what children are learning from activity.

Keeping parents informed and aware of physical education for children.

Working through the topic of activity with parents.

Public relations

Not only promoting physical activity during the day, but also practising what you preach – childcare specialists should also enjoy physical activity.

Providing the space and time – "Education and childcare should correspond to children's needs for sensory perception and activity."

Explore the area around the daycare centre with the children.

Doing activities together.

Any additional training should focus on physical education – dancing, motor training, sports, yoga and so on.

Criteria for an activity daycare centre – materials and equipment

Children need equipment and materials allowing independent, creative experimentation that appeals to the senses while supporting and encouraging their psychomotor skills.

The focus should be placed on individually experiencing and testing the equipment. This allows children to gain and improve their motor abilities and secure the skills they have already acquired, develop their imagination, and beyond that, gather experience in the physical attributes of the equipment.

Criteria for an activity daycare centre – working with parents

Working with parents involves an educational partnership between parents and education professionals mainly based on the education and development process in children. Mutual confidence is essential in this relationship.

The relationship with parents entails:

- Agreement on group activities
- Exchange of experience on the children's educational development stage
- Working on common educational targets
- Support in family education issues
- Improving the relationship between parents and daycare centre
- Networking between all of the institutions relevant to children and their parents

The indoor facilities should be designed for the parents to feel comfortable, encouraging a lively exchange such as using clear orientation, rooms for parents, and "talking walls."

Criteria for an activity daycare centre – holistic approach

A holistic view takes on a view of humanity that touches on every aspect that makes us human.

Learning is a holistic physical, mental and emotional development process in a constantly evolving interplay of sensory perceptions, cognitive abilities, activities and feelings.

Criteria for an activity daycare centre – variety and flexibility

The first step to meet the activity needs of children lies in rethinking the interior. A flexible interior design is essential in matching the room to its wide variety of purposes for activity or relaxation as needed depending on the time of day, the current situation and the child's personality.

Flexible use of space using walls and ceilings with rails allows ropes, cords, rings, or trapezes to be attached. Eyelets and hooks mounted on the rails should be adjustable in height.

The equipment and materials should be easy to set up and vary. The wide variety of setups allows for a wide range of play opportunities.

The versatility of equipment and materials allows younger and older, weaker and more powerful children to use them.

Criteria for an activity daycare centre – physical activity and relaxation

According to Renate Zimmer, physical activity and relaxation are elementary basic needs for children, which can be catered to by the following in a daycare centre:

- Satisfying the natural urge to move and experience the joy of physical activity
- Trying out a variety of part and whole-body activities
- Experiencing activity as a creative form of expression
- Exploring a variety of movements with different materials and devices
- Working into the sequences of movement and imitating them
- Testing possible movements in different positions
- Playing games with different materials and equipment, including provisional materials and furniture
- Encouraging sensory experiences and self-organised play through the interior design in group rooms, activity rooms, corridors, lobbies and so on
- Outdoor areas – climbing trees, roller boards, go-carts and so on
- Children's equipment for physical activities, games and sports
- Free activity opportunities (playgrounds and so on), or opportunities that emerge from free play
- Regular activity opportunities prepared and supervised by preschool educators
- Physical education sessions – organised games, dancing, opportunities to use equipment etc.;
- relaxation and rest – controlled multisensory environments etc.
- Public relations – presentations on childhood and activity, etc.
- Games and activities festival – festival of the senses, Olympics etc.
- Projects – forest days, sensory garden, etc.
- Psychomotor development – small groups, children with special needs, etc.
- Parental involvement – parent-staff meetings with activities, games days, etc.
- Joint arrangements with sports clubs
- Fundamental anthropological assumption: children as active beings – how we see children

An activity daycare centre should also be a temporary place of peace, tranquility, inner activity for self-reflection, concentration and relaxation – silent exercises, silent moments, breathing games, tension and relaxation, progressive muscle relaxation, improving perception, massage exercises, imaginary journeys, dream sessions, images of tranquility, relaxing stories

Criteria for an activity daycare centre – supervised and free activities

Planned activity programmes

Scheduled activity opportunities focusing on certain self-selected topics are part of the range of opportunities in an activity daycare centre. A wide variety of topics can be treated depending on priorities during each session – from activity stories explored in the activity area context to running and tag games, dance, rhythm and musical stories and singing games, to encouraging various motor skills such as coordination and balance. These regular scheduled sessions usually amount to 30–40 according to Zimmer. Preschool educators should make sure that they encourage and train children according to their age. Activity sessions do not follow a fixed schedule, but are usually composed of free play and activities supervised by the preschool educators towards extending the children's repertoire of activity. According to Zimmer, experience shows that activity sessions ideally begin with a high-activity game, then move on to a topic chosen by the children or deal with a topic prepared by the preschool educator, with dance or relaxation exercises to finish off the session.

Open opportunities for free physical activity

Activity opportunities allowing children to choose whether or not they wish to participate should be provided on a daily basis to satisfy the individual needs of children. This allows children to relax or romp around and burn off energy depending on their own needs at the time. Depending on the conditions available, there should be the opportunity to do this indoors or outdoors, whether on a playground or using the equipment and materials available outdoors. Other than that, the activity area should be accessible at certain times using certain arrangements for children to create their own activity area. Open activity opportunities should create the time and space for situational, spontaneous activity opportunities.

As early as in the 1930s, Emmi Pikler discovered that children can discover and train all kinds of physical activity on their own, given enough time. The children would only try out a new activity when they felt absolutely secure and were free to join in or leave at any time.

“Of course you can give your child incentives to try something new.”

Criteria for an activity daycare centre – diet and activity

A balanced age-appropriate diet and plenty of activity play a vital role in healthy development and well-being in children.

Children should be given the opportunity of learning with support by doing, imitating, interacting and communicating during the eating process. Eating should be fun, and should not be used in reward or punishment.

Fine and gross motor skills are especially distinguishable in infancy with movements growing in complexity and deliberation. The habits acquired at this age become ingrained into adult activity and eating behaviour.

Diet and exercise belong together. Children need energy for growth and activity, and a healthy diet provides all the essential nutrients and the necessary energy for daily activities, exercise and play. A healthy diet, plenty of exercise and resilience in stress situations are essential building blocks for healthy childhood development. All three factors interact with one another.

The following figure shows a recommendation for healthy and enjoyable eating and drinking (diet disc).



- [From the top, clockwise]
- Drinking water
- Eating fruit and veg
- Regular meals
- Plenty of variety
- Enjoyment through all the senses
- [in the middle]
- Keeping active

Survey in the daycare centre: What is activity?



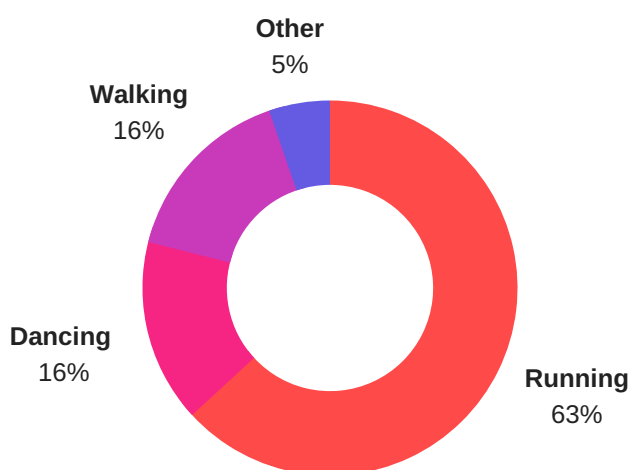
At our first meeting, we agreed that both the children and parents at participating kindergartens would be given a survey on the topic of “What is activity?” as this would involve them more closely into the project.

A children’s questionnaire was created together with the project partners at the first meeting in Leipzig. The aim of the survey was to find out the level of awareness as well as wishes and needs of children in terms of activity.

Independence and self-determination take priority in daycare centres, so it was especially important for us to give every child an opportunity to put forward their own opinion. Even the youngest were interviewed as far as possible with pantomime support. The questions were open with the help of additional supporting questions.

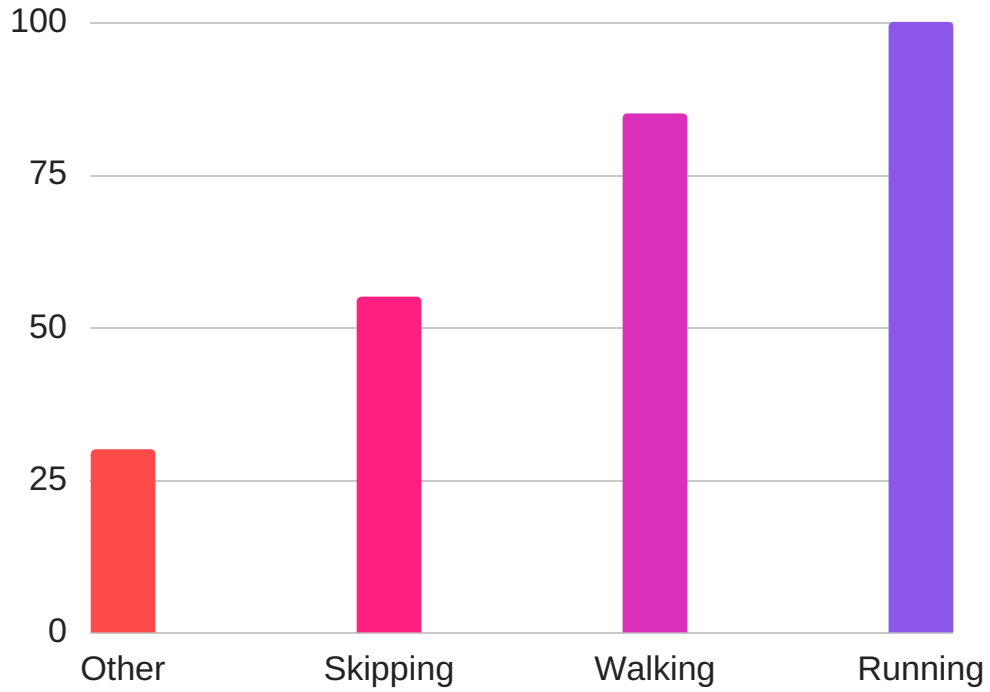
The parents in our daycare centres showed high levels of interest and motivation in conscientiously filling out the questionnaires. All of the questions could be answered without explanation except the single-choice question on examples of security in images – there were frequent questions as to the meaning of the images. This point became clear after a brief explanation.

The questionnaires used for children and parents are shown in the annex.

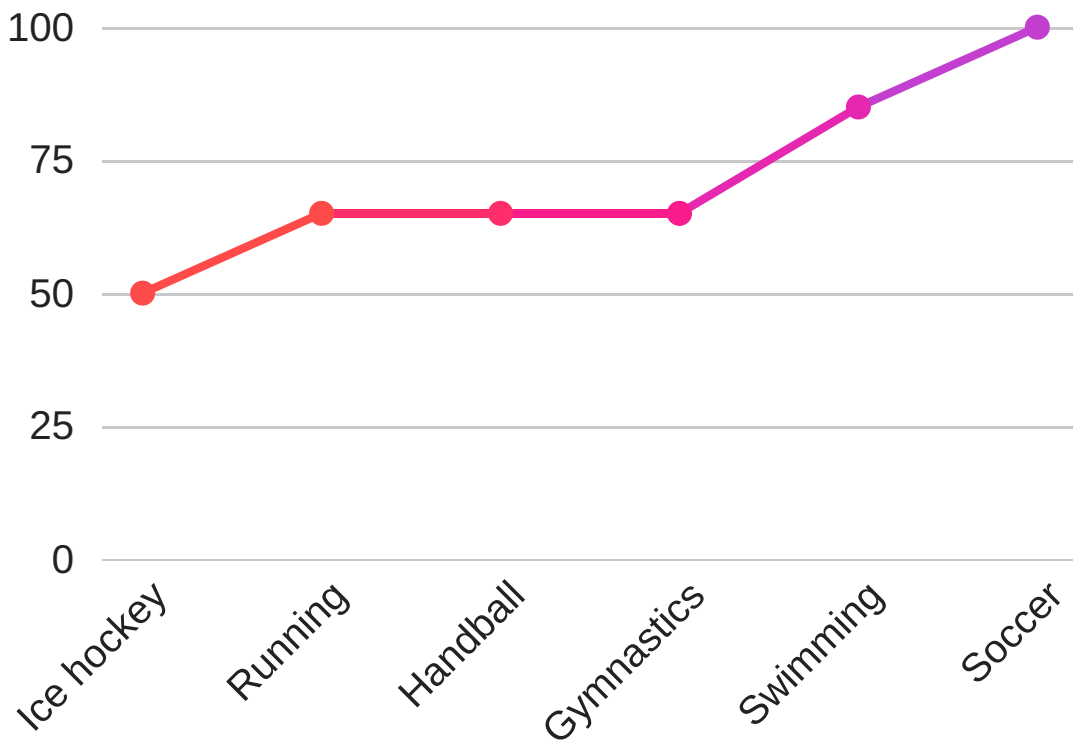


What types of activity do you know?

What types of activity do you know?



What types of sports do you know?



What does
activity mean to
you?

Makes me feel good

Playing football with my dad

Everything

My legs fall asleep if I'm not active!

Dancing

A bit of running

Space for activity

All kinds of rooms and spaces are suitable for physical activity. We have listed some important approaches and places that should serve as inspiration that activity can take place anywhere; the important point is that the rooms or spaces should be properly set up and used for the purpose.

Activity according to the RE approach

Origin of the Reggio Emilia approach:
Northern Italian city of Reggio Emilia

Founder of the Reggio Emilia approach: Loris Malaguzzi

Reggio Emilia approach = educational philosophy involving development through experimentation

Interaction between development of theory and practical experience

Child: Exploring, expression, designing (children need space to develop). Competent child: Exploring, developing, daring to experiment, keeping active dialogue, self-motivating

Preschool educators: Supporting, exploring, witnessing child development by listening and watching. Educators watch, augment, and simplify depending on the child's requirements and development stage.

Parents: Personal parental competence

Open model (Modello aperto) – relationship to environment

Aquarium (large windows remove visual barriers between indoors and outdoors)

Less is more – children do not have to be provided with everything at once. Children need space for activity.



Activity in the sense of:

Exploring the world; diverse activity experiences (especially in preschool) promote development and refinement in mental skills

Mobility, flexible furniture

Activity especially means thinking in three dimensions, whether indoors or outdoors.

Space for activity – psychomotor education

Coined in the last century, the term psychomotor education refers to the functional singularity of mental and physical processes, the close connection between the physical motor system and the mind and emotions.

Psychomotor education aims towards promoting a child's independence. Children should be encouraged to engage in new experiences and renew their own self-perception.

Psychomotor education covers physical and mental self-awareness as well as material and social experience.

The conditions for psychomotor education include:

- External conditions, such as activity rooms and equipment
- Time frame
- Group composition criteria
- Physical activity in content
- Relationship to educators and relationship amongst the children
- How activity games are experienced and how children are involved in their arrangement

Play as a means of processing of impressions, as an elementary form of expression and as a cleansing function, takes priority.

The most important rule is the child's own decision to participate; the initiative should come from the child, judgements should be avoided but limits should be laid down.



Space for activity

- woodland activity according to woodland nature learning

Children are able to deal more intensively with their surroundings and are more physically active in woodlands than in the daycare centre. Playing with natural materials increases their sense of independence, creativity and imagination while strengthening social skills through discussion, consultation and negotiation.

The “forest kindergarten” concept originated in Scandinavia. The first documented forest kindergarten opened in Denmark in 1951, and the first one in Germany opened in 1960.

Woodland nature learning involves experiencing woodland habitats, encouraging children to gain experiences with nature in a meaningful and holistic way. Childcare takes place in the great outdoors – there are no rooms and no borders. Children go out and about in the woodlands at any time of the year, with heated accommodation only available in heavy rain and storms.

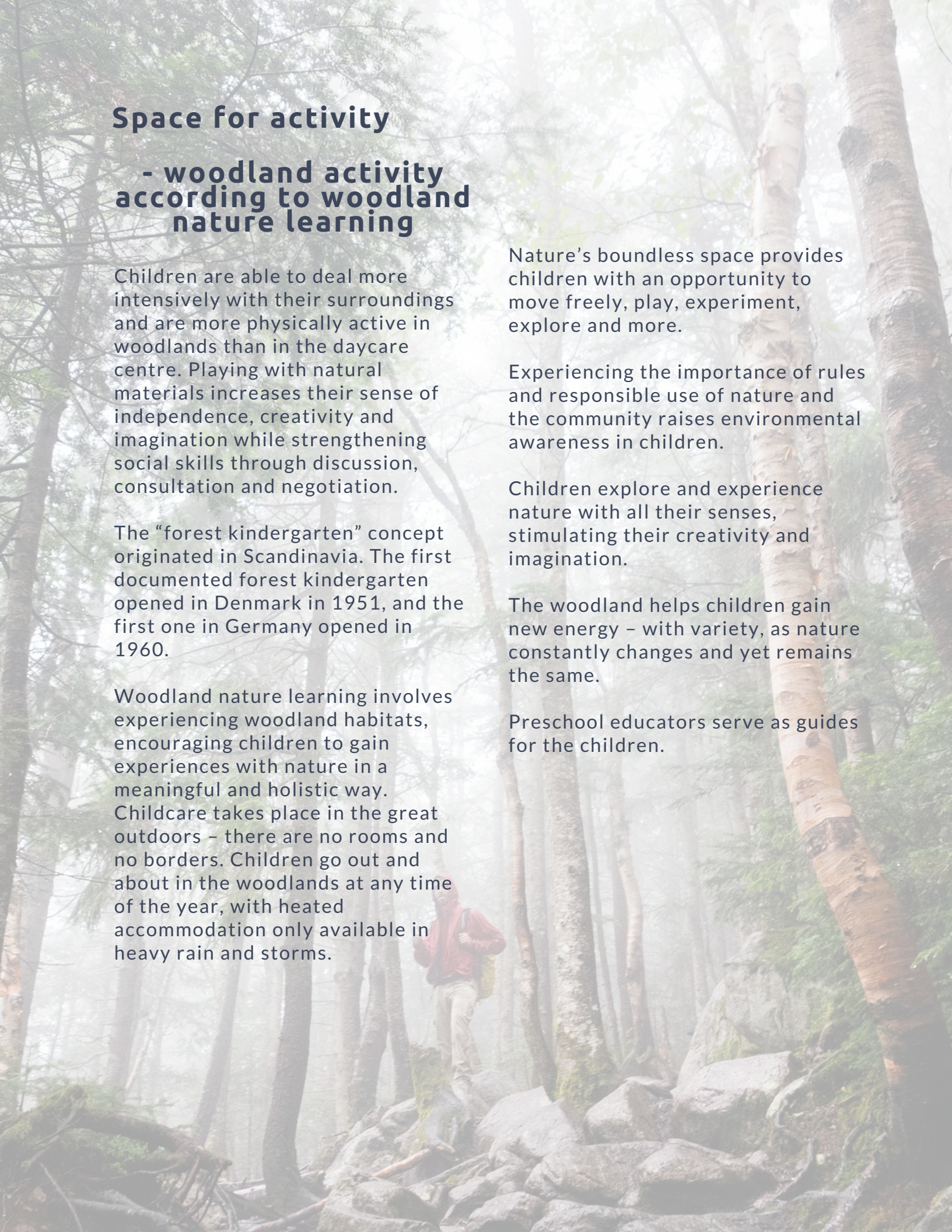
Nature’s boundless space provides children with an opportunity to move freely, play, experiment, explore and more.

Experiencing the importance of rules and responsible use of nature and the community raises environmental awareness in children.

Children explore and experience nature with all their senses, stimulating their creativity and imagination.

The woodland helps children gain new energy – with variety, as nature constantly changes and yet remains the same.

Preschool educators serve as guides for the children.





Space for activity - dance

Creative dance for children is based on the concept of holism, and promotes not only motor skills, but also emotional and social skills.

Open tasks stimulate creativity and imagination in children. Apart from that, creative dance helps provide an escape valve for children to express their emotions through physical activity towards encouraging cognitive processing.

Creative dance for children provides an ideal way of physically training and shaping the child while exercising all of the child's limbs.

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Space for activity - Pikler approach

Emmi Pikler saw every child as an individual personality developing and learning at its own pace. Children only take a step forwards in development when they are ready for it.

Children discover all types of activity on their own without the need of adult support. Child development relies on a high degree of self-development and a caring, emotionally supportive environment.

According to Pikler, child education begins at infancy where each child gathers its most important social experience through washing, nappy-changing, feeding and dressing. A respectful, loving approach is essential in child development.

The Pikler approach comprises three aspects:

1. Care: The quality of handling and touch in care situations play an important role in the development of a child's self-image and well-being.
2. Activity development: Every child needs to take its time for the next development step. The child should be allowed to rest or go back to something earlier to gain a sense of security.
3. Play: Children should be allowed to play in a free, unhindered, protected, and age-appropriate environment.

The childcare worker observes the child in its activity, deciphers the child's language and answers each child individually, creating a sense of trust while providing confidence, security, time and space.

The child's environment should be prepared for protection against major hazards while giving children the opportunity to become acquainted with minor hazards. The room should allow for a diverse range of activity as places of independent exploration and discovery for the child; this includes allowing children to choose between rest and activity, security and adventure. Play materials should have no particular function, but should allow free experimentation. The childcare worker's observations help provide the child with the right materials at the right time.

Space for activity

- Activity areas and playgrounds

Activity areas and playgrounds provide children with the space they need for independent, spontaneous activity.

Activity areas provide equipment and materials in different combinations; children make their own decisions on how to use the activity area.

Child carers take the role of observers and facilitators, and also provide support where help is needed for safety, mediating in conflicts and ensuring compliance with basic rules. The most important rule is to ensure that the slow child comes first.

The activity session begins with the child carer organising a group game, followed by a free activity phase. The session ends with another group game or awareness exercise.

Playgrounds on the other hand provide a wide variety of materials such as roller boards, ladders, ropes for the child to choose and use. The children are given the opportunity to tend to their own activity requirement with the carer's support. The activity equipment supplied may vary towards supporting the varying development processes and requirements.

A playground according to Miedzinski aims to provide space for children to shape their environment for activity themselves. Active engagement with equipment and components allows children to learn about their characteristics and how to handle them, while gaining lots of information about their own bodies through their activities.

Examples of activity

Six transnational meetings were held in our partnership project: Two in Leipzig and Vienna and one each in Prague and in Esch-sur-Alzette.

These meetings provided us with an opportunity to discuss the project, gain an impression as to how much progress the institutions had made with the planned tasks to meet country-specific activity programmes and educational concepts, visit the host partner institutions, and carry out various activity programmes with the children at the respective daycare centre.

Here are some of the programmes that children enjoyed the most according to our observations. These activities required little or no material and were easy to use at any of our daycare centres.



Examples of activities - Activity songs

Children enjoy simple melodies with repeating tunes and rhythms. Activity songs are interactive; the music is not only heard but actively experienced, encouraging children to join in. Activity songs provide an enjoyable way of promoting children in all of their perceptions while encouraging activity.

Maison Relais Origer:

Interactive song: If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands

Kindergarten Goyastraße, FAIRbund eV:

Dance song: "Brother come dance with me" (Brüderchen komm tanz' mit mir)

riOriO Tanz-und Bewegungskindergarten:

"The bouncy ball song" (das Flummilied)



Examples of activities - yoga for children

Yoga helps children grow healthy and relaxed. Countless studies have shown the uniquely beneficial effects of yoga for children aged three years and upwards, improving physical self-perception and senses while reducing anxiety and aggression and increasing self-esteem and focus.

riOriO “Morning greeting” (Morgengruß)

(Starts standing up)

Good morning flamingos (raising right leg) or penguins.

We want to say hello for us to enjoy our day.

Good morning sky

Good morning birds

Good morning earth

Good morning lions (flexing right leg back)

Good morning dolphins

Good morning cats (stretching out)

Good morning giraffes (raising right hand up)

Good morning snakes

Good morning dogs

(squatting and saying the sentence)

Now we want to awaken everyone because we're not snails.

(repeating movements with the left)

Are the dogs already up? Woof woof

Are the snakes already up? Ssssss

Are the giraffes are already up? (Left hand high) deep belly mhmhmhm

Are the cats already up? Meow meow

Are the dolphins already up? Calling EH

Are the Lions already up? (lifting rear left leg) Roar

Is the earth is already up? Knock on the ground

Are the birds are already up? Coo coo

Is the sky is already up? Wind sound: Shhhhh

Are the flamingos/penguins already up? (lifting left leg for flamingos)

Flamingo call: Clucking uh-uh gok-gok

Penguin noise: Veh-veh

What are we waiting for? Let's start together.

So let's watch out for one another so we all have a great day.

DER RIO RIO - MORGENGRUSS



HIMMEL

VOGEL

ERDE

LOWEN

DELPHIN

Guten morgen liebe Flamingos. Wir wollen uns betrauben um den Tag zu genießen !!



KATZEN

GIRAFFEN

SCHLANGEN

HUND

Jetzt wollen wir alle wachen, denn wir sind ja keine Schnecken!



Warum sollen wir noch wachen, lässt uns gemeinsam starten. Denn leben wir aufeinander. Acht damit der Tag auch Freude macht.

Examples of activities - yoga for children Morning greeting: Description of the individual elements

Morning greeting: Description of the individual elements

Sky: Stretching folded hands upwards

Birds: Opening hands sideways, flapping arms as wings, closing legs with knees held straight

Earth: Keeping legs in place, lowering torso to the ground

Lions: Laying hands onto the ground, lifting the right leg back as if to lunge

Dolphins: Moving left leg to the right, stretching the behind into the air, stretching arms and legs

Cats: Laying the knee onto the ground, alternately stretching and arching the back like a cat

Giraffes: Stretching the right hand up and facing upwards towards it

Snakes: Pushing the torso forward until the legs are stretched out and the waist lies on the ground. Pushing the torso off the floor and looking up

Dogs: Drawing back the torso until squatting, laying hands on the knees and panting, sticking out the tongue.

Now everything backwards making the sounds of the animals.

Make sure that movements are smooth – one flows into the next.

Examples of activities - relaxing story

Stories, mental images and descriptions of situations stimulate the imagination. These can play out in familiar real places such as on the beach or in imaginary worlds, such as on another star. There are two types of fantasy story.

The first type involves listening to the person only without becoming actively involved in the plot, whereas the second type actively involves the children in the story directly addressing them (such as: “You’re climbing into a boat”).

Listening and “experiencing” the story creates a sense of peace and tranquility. Children that love to listen to stories will be especially able to relax with this technique.



The photo shows children relaxing to the story “Strandspaziergang – Innere Ruhebilder entwickeln” (Walk on the beach – developing images of inner peace) from the book “Fühl die warmen Sonnenstrahlen - Fantasiereisen und Stillespielen für jeden Tag” by Sabine Kalwitzki (Loewe, 2004).

Examples of activities

- Waking up the toys – toy shop

Children love to imagine themselves in a story and identify with their respective roles. Try out the activity stories below as inspiration for you to wrap your and your children's world of discovery into playful form.

How to play:

Each child turns into a toy of their choice, and freezes on the spot. The shopkeeper goes to each toy and asks what it is. After that, the shopkeeper arranges the toys and locks up the shop (lights off, shopkeeper leaves the room).

That moment, the toys come to life and dance and run around the room.

The store owner comes back and the toys freeze again (lights on).

The shopkeeper acts shocked and stunned at what's happened, and starts to arrange the toys and clear up the chaos. The shopkeeper touches a toy and it comes alive. They run away – the shopkeeper catches them, switches them off and takes them back to their place.

All change – new shopkeeper, new round.

Children can also play shopkeepers in this game.

Important: The game is all the more exciting by completely submerging in the role while leaving the toys to run around on their own.





Examples of activities - Catching the dragon's tail

The children are split into two groups that should have six to eight players each.

Each group forms a chain – the “dragon” – with the “dragon’s head” up front. The others keep hold of the one in front by the hips. The last in the “dragon” puts a tissue in his belt or pocket, leaving it to hang out – this is the “dragon’s tail.”

The “dragon head” now has to grab the tail from the other “dragon” and tear it off, but the dragon has to stay together.

Once a dragon’s tail has been torn off, the dragon loses – the same applies if a dragon falls apart.

The game can easily be altered if there aren’t enough players for two dragons – with only one dragon, where the dragon’s head has to catch its own tail. Catching the dragon tail is best played outdoors.

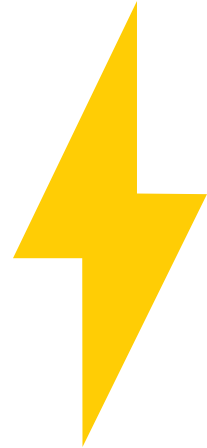
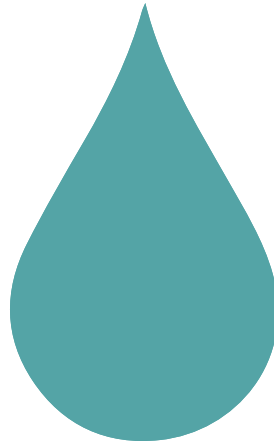
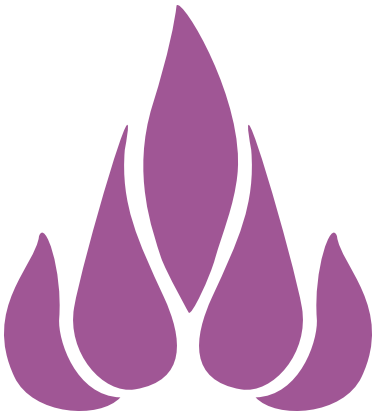
Try it in water for a change – a perfect game for romping around in the outdoor pool on a hot summer’s day.

Examples of activities - fire, water, storm – a variation

One drumbeat: Lay flat on the floor

Two drumbeats: Freeze

Three drumbeats: Climb up



Examples of activities - parachute

Other play materials are often required besides the parachute, such as balls, ropes, juggling scarves, gymnastics benches...

Obviously, the playworker needs to watch that the games are safe.

The playworker explains the games and is responsible for their safe course, but should avoid intervening as far as possible. The children should be left to learn by themselves and play together in a cooperative way – keeping with the spirit of fair play.

Examples of activities - Pen game

Two children move through the room together with a crayon between the palms of their hands.



Examples of activities - Colour games



A colour is called out and the children look for the colour in the room, and run up to it.

Examples of activities - Activity area

The activity area consists of simple components such as boxes, bars, ladders, soft-kits that can be put together like oversized building blocks.

The children develop, design and try out activity spaces that can be changed and rebuilt over and over again. This gives children activity and physical self-discovery in dealing with various types of materials, shapes and situations.

Playing with one another, building leads to a rewarding sense of accomplishment with landscapes developing to climb over and play on.



Examples of activities

- activity lab: Motopaedic play area at Zirkus kaOs

The motopaedic play area is a prepared environment with materials and exercise equipment for climbing, balancing, standing, sliding and so on to encourage children to try things out and experiment.

What are referred to as “open materials” – tyres, balls, baskets, boxes, cans, rings, lids, tubs, bowls, bottles, and cloths – provide children with a variety of things to do allowing the imagination free reign to develop.



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This project was funded with support from the European Commission. The author alone is responsible for the content of this publication; the Commission is not liable for any use of the information in this publication.

A photograph of three children playing in a blue water tub. The child in the foreground is wearing a white soccer jersey with a German flag patch and is splashing water. Two other children, one in a yellow shirt and one in a green shirt, are also in the tub. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

**“HUMANS DON’T
MOVE LESS
BECAUSE THEY’RE
GETTING OLD.
THEY GET OLD
FROM MOVING
LESS.
SO GET MOVING!”**

GUSTAV-ADOLF SCHUR