

Child Protection Concept Kinderland PLUS gGmbH



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1. Basics of the protection concept

Kinderland was founded to give children the space and opportunity to develop freely and according to their needs, regardless of age, origin, character and personal development. The protection and welfare of children is not only enshrined in law, but is in the interest of us all. As a supporting organization, we strive to ensure the well-being of the children and have therefore anchored measures for prevention and intervention in our protection concept.



As pedagogical staff, we respond to the children entrusted to us without allowing ourselves to be influenced by personal moods and events and give the children our full attention.

2. Children's rights and the participation of children (participation)

The participation of children in their everyday lives and in living together is not only a political requirement and an educational mandate, but also a matter of the heart. According to their age, children learn through participation to take responsibility for their actions, but also to take responsibility for others.

Participation can only succeed if the children have adults who accompany them in an appreciative, open and needs-oriented manner. Only when every opinion counts and every idea is valuable children can develop freely and form their own values.

Children grow up in a democracy that enables them to form and represent their own opinions so that they can live their lives as self-confident and responsible people.

Participation and democracy must be a firmly anchored means in everyday life with the children, which must be reviewed and changed again and again in order to meet the needs of the children.

Even a clear "no" counts as participation and must be taken seriously. Therefore, the children have various structured complaint options:

- Children's conferences and discussion groups
- Morning circle
- Children's surveys
- Design and selection of play opportunities, play partners and premises
- Participation in celebrations and recurring rituals

In addition to structured complaint procedures, children express their complaints in a variety of ways appropriate to their age, all of which must be taken equally seriously.

Younger children express themselves through body language, gestures, facial expressions and crying. Older children formulate their needs more and more clearly themselves. In the often stressful daily routine, there should always be moments, rituals and situations in which the children can turn to their caregivers with confidence.



3. Prevention

3.1. Hiring procedure

3.1.1. Job interview

In the job interview, the protection concept is presented as the basis of the pedagogical work.

3.1.2. Extended certificate of good conduct

A current extended certificate of good conduct (*erweitertes Führungszeugnis*) is a prerequisite for employment. This must be renewed regularly during the course of the employment.

3.1.3. On-the-job training

During the induction period, all employees are briefed on our child protection concept and receive child protection training from our own child protection specialist (*Kinderschutzfachkraft*), who is responsible for child protection issues at all our facilities.

3.2. Protection agreements for regular situations of special proximity

3.2.1. Professional relationship management

- We treat all children according to their needs and their stage of development and avoid preferential treatment.
- When organizing the daily routine, we make sure that the tasks change among the pedagogical staff. In this way, the children get to know different personalities, ways of acting and rituals and have opportunities for comparison.
- We do not pass on personal secrets to children and do not share secrets with the children entrusted to us.
- If we learn secrets from children that affect the child's development and protection, these are discussed with the management and possible further action steps are discussed.
- We do not privately care for children who are entrusted to us in the facility.
- We are transparent about private contacts with the children entrusted to us and their families.

3.2.2. Appropriate relationship between proximity and distance

- We offer the children emotional and physical attention and closeness as needed, whereby the children themselves decide whether and from whom they accept the offer of physical or emotional closeness.
- Physical contact is usually initiated by the children and is based on the children's stage of development.
- We pay attention to a professional organization of closeness and distance. For example, kissing the children is a transgression of the professional relationship.
- We do not give the children trivializing, abbreviatory pet names (such as sweetie, pumpkin, angel, cutie... etc.). We call children by their full first name.
- We show the children our boundaries for distancing behavior and preserve intimate areas.
- Children are taught to clearly communicate their physical and emotional boundaries and to accept the boundaries of others.
- We teach children to keep their distance from strange adults.
- We teach the children an appropriate relationship of closeness and distance in their arrangement of contacts.

3.2.3. Protection of privacy in care situations

- Grooming situations take place in protected, but visible rooms.
- Children are encouraged to change in the bathroom or other protected spaces.
- At a child's request, we will assist with dressing, undressing or changing.
- The children choose who they are changed by. In principle, the entire team is available for diapering. The child can choose between the colleagues available in the situation.
- New pedagogical staff members and yearlong interns do not change diapers until after a period of acclimation. We make an exception to this if a child expressly requests it. Short-term interns do not change diapers.
- We make the diapering situation pleasant and accompany it with language ("I'll clean your vagina/penis/butt..."), while naming the children's body parts correctly.
- We allow the children to visit the toilet without being disturbed.
- We announce ourselves before opening the restroom door or when entering.
- We make an offer of assistance to the children when going to the toilet. If possible, we take into account the children's desire for a specific caregiver.

3.2.4. Rest time / sleeping situations

- Rest breaks are a basic need of children and find a place in the daily routine.
- The children are dressed when they sleep.
- Each child has its own place to sleep.
- We sit or lie down with a child as needed, but respect the child's need for closeness and distance.
- At sleepovers, each child and caregiver has their own place to sleep.

3.2.5. Settling in / conflict and dangerous situations

- During the settling-in period, there are situations (e.g. during the first separations, when falling asleep...) in which we take a child in our arms, even if he or she does not want this at that moment. These situations take place in the presence of other pedagogical staff.
- In conflict and dangerous situations, it may sometimes be necessary to physically restrain children (e.g. by holding them). In these conflict situations, a second person is called in.
- Consequences are appropriate for children, age-appropriate and comprehensible to the children.
- Staff members can and should clearly state when they feel overwhelmed in a situation or in dealing with a child, so that colleagues can provide support. An appreciative reflection of the colleagues helps us to react well in stressful situations.



3.2.6. Language

- We value respectful verbal and non-verbal communication.
- We pay attention to a child-friendly, non-violent and child-oriented language. We do not tolerate derogatory remarks, exposure or sexualized language.
- We intervene when linguistic boundaries are crossed and point out alternatives.

3.2.7. Disciplinary measures

- The children in our facilities are neither punished nor disciplined.
- We show the children the consequences of their behavior, e.g. a child dumps out the sand, then the consequence is that he/she sweeps up this sand again.
- Consequences must be appropriate to the child's age at all times and understandable to the child.
- Agreed rules apply to all children; changes are discussed transparently and openly with the children.

3.2.8. Premises

3.2.8.1. Areas of highest intimacy: toilet and changing area

- These zones are protected areas, as children are fully or partially undressed here.
- The children must be protected from the gaze of others, yet the rooms can be seen and are not locked.
- Children are allowed undisturbed toileting and a protected diapering situation.
- If parents wish to change their child's diaper in the facility or accompany their child to the toilet, they should inform the staff.
- Workmen or similar persons are accompanied by us to the children's toilets and the children are not allowed access during this time.

3.2.8.2. Areas of medium intimacy: bedroom and adjoining rooms

- Parents are not allowed in the sleeping areas and cuddle corners without consulting the staff.
- If repairs are being made in these areas, they are closed to children.

3.2.8.3. Areas with low intimacy: group and functional rooms

- Parents and other persons visiting the facility are allowed to stay in these rooms in the presence of the staff.
- If repairs are carried out in these areas while children are present, pedagogical staff must be present

3.2.8.4. Areas without intimacy: entrance area, corridors, outdoor area

- Children must be appropriately dressed in these areas.
- The children should change in protected areas.
- In summer, children must be dressed in at least a bathing suit in the garden.
- Body explorations are not permitted in the outdoor area to protect the children from the gaze of outsiders.

4. Intervention

The well-being of children is a central concern in every social institution and thus the protection of children is also an essential area at Kinderland PLUS gGmbH. The guidelines contained in §8a of SGB VIII¹ very specifically bind the institution and thus every employee to the responsibility for prevention and intervention in the event of a risk to the welfare of children.

In order to fulfill this responsibility, it is important to present all steps and measures transparently and in a way that is easy for all employees to understand in a process flow that allows intervention to be documented and tracked quickly.

The exact procedure can be found in Kinderland's "Child Protection guidelines"².

Kinderland PLUS gGmbH works together with its own child protection specialist, so that rapid intervention and the quickest possible averting of child welfare risks is guaranteed. In addition, she is responsible for training employees in child protection and the protection concept.

5. Tasks of the *Insoweit erfahrenen Fachkraft (ISEF)*

The *Insofern erfahrende Fachkraft* (lit.: insofar experienced specialist) advises and supports the pedagogical staff of the day care centers in the clarification and assessment of a possible child welfare risk. The employees of day care centers have the legal right to advice in the prevention of child endangerment (§4 para. 2 BKiSchG³ and §8b SGB VIII⁴) and are at the same time legally obligated to consult them according to §8a SGB VIII before a report is made to the Youth Welfare Office (*Jugendamt*).



The ISEF accompanies the process of risk assessment and determines the resulting consequences for action to safeguard the child's well-being. The child protection specialist is responsible for the process of consultation; the specialist and the management remain responsible for the case and are also responsible for implementing the recommended and agreed course of action.

¹ SGB VIII = Sozialgesetzbuch VIII, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_8/

² Päd LF § 8a Schutzauftrag bei Kindeswohlgefährdung

³ BKiSchG = Bundeskinderschutzgesetz, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/kkg/_4.html

⁴ https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_8/_8b.html

6. Sex education

Children of all ages deal with themselves and their bodies. Later, also with the bodies of others and the emotional world of themselves and others.

It is therefore important to take these topics seriously and to address them in everyday life as well as in activities and projects. A natural approach to their own bodies and the topic of sexuality gives children a lot of self-confidence in this area and is an important prevention for sexual assault. Children decide for themselves about their bodies, only in this way do children develop a natural and self-evident approach to this topic.

In order to satisfy children's natural thirst for knowledge and curiosity, it is important that

- we name the individual body parts sensitively but clearly without trivializing them
- we take all questions and feelings seriously
- we use a positive approach and language in connection with sexual topics
- we make it clear to the children that everyone has control over their own body
- I am allowed to say "no" loudly when I do not want something
- children of the same age can, with mutual consent, withdraw to a place visible to the team and explore each other physically (in a non-invasive way) ("doctor games") as soon as a child shows signs that he or she no longer wants to do this, we must intervene in a regulating way and end the game sensitively if the child does not manage to do this himself or herself
- a child's "no" always remains a "no" and cannot be changed into a "maybe" through good coaxing or a request. Neither from other children nor from the pedagogues
- we teach the children a holistic sexual education, there are good and bad feelings, nice and not nice aspects of dealing with oneself, one's body and those of other people.

Only in this way can children learn that there is a wide range of sexuality that they can explore with confidence, strength and independent thought and action.

Without question, this topic continues to present us with great challenges. We have to find the balance between openness in dealing with sexuality and the necessary boundaries and privacy of the children and us pedagogues. Again and again, and always depending on the situation and the age of the children.

Sex education offers / materials

- Promotion of the senses and body perception
- Themed books and toys (doctor's kit,...)
- Dolls of all genders

7. Cooperations with parents

Cooperation with parents on a basis of trust is the foundation of our work with children. Parents entrust us with their children and we want to return this trust with professional and loving care and support for their children. We take the parents' concerns seriously and the exchange of information is very important to us. With the protection concept, we want to show parents that we are aware of possible dangers and deal with these issues professionally and preventively. Together with the parents, projects, book exhibitions, parents' evenings and much more can be created to work preventively with the children and parents on this extensive, but so important topic.

8. Continuing education and training

At the beginning of their work, the employees of our facilities are trained in the topics of child protection and the child protection concept by the child protection specialist (*Kinderschutzfachkraft*) of the organization. Ongoing workshops and training sessions are held for the management and the teams in this area so that they are always up to date, and our processes and our protection concept are also subject to ongoing review and revision.

9. Diversity

Needs-oriented, loving and professional pedagogical support does not depend on the gender of the educator. Important for this are the personal suitability, the professional knowledge and the handling of the children in everyday life.

Professionally acting pedagogues keep distance and closeness and do not cross borders. They respect a "no" from the children just as much as a request for help and support, whether it's getting dressed, changing diapers or daily play. No distinction is made here, just as with the children, according to origin, age or gender. All pedagogues have the same tasks and follow the same rules. We reject a fundamental prejudgement or preference of one gender. We work transparently, openly, sensitively and trustingly with parents and children and take all concerns and fears seriously.

10. Closing words

The protection and well-being of children is our most important asset. The child protection concept, together with other measures, serves to guarantee and ensure the implementation of this goal in all of our homes. Similar to the house concepts and our quality management, the protection concept is subject to constant control and review so that we can professionally and responsibly ensure the well-being and protection of the children and staff.

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