



Conceptual Framework



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PREAMBLE

BVZ GmbH originated from the merging of the Gesellschaft für Jugendarbeit und Bildungsplanung e.V. (“Registered Association for Youth Work and Educational Planning”), the Verein zur Unterstützung berufstätiger Eltern e.V. (“Reg. Assoc. for the Support of Working Parents”), the Gesellschaft zur Förderung betrieblicher und betriebsnaher Kindereinrichtungen e.V. (“Reg. Assoc. for the Sponsoring of Company-own and Childcare Facilities in the Vicinity”) and the Beratungs- und Verwaltungszentrum e.V. (“Reg. Centre for Counselling and Administration”), operating all 160 childcare facilities of those associations.

This concept is a joint development with the staff of those associations.

As to the contents of the Conceptual Framework: Chapter “Education, Upbringing and Care” describes our tasks regarding the work with children. The fundamentals of our cooperation with parents and the various institutions of our environment are outlined in the two following chapters.

The subsequent chapters set out relations between BVZ GmbH and the individual childcare facilities, BVZ GmbH’s support services for the facility and the demands on our staff members. In addition, agency functions of BVZ GmbH such as specialist counselling, expert and professional supervision, workshops, further upbringing, internal communication as well as quality development and assurance are described.

The Conceptual Framework presented by BVZ GmbH is supplemented by the childcare facilities’ own care concepts. These individual concepts, showcased in each facility, detail their pedagogic orientation and their respective emphasis.

Frankfurt/Main, November 2016

Michael Burbach
Managing Director BVZ GmbH



BVZ GMBH

BVZ GmbH is a free and independent non-profit agency within the public youth welfare organisation. Its principles and guidelines follow the Kinderladen and Eltern-initiative tradition of self-governing childcare centres, distancing the agency from any ideology or religion.

“The objectives of this agency include the provision of education, upbringing and youth welfare access to young individuals, in particular by operating its own childcare facilities, organizing lecture series and seminars and miscellaneous public relations work, over and above that cooperation with public and independent agencies in Youth and Education Work as well as support and counselling of free agencies in Youth and Education Work, especially by undertaking their administrative tasks.” (Articles of Association)

BVZ GmbH was founded in June 2015. As of January 1st 2016, the agency took over responsibility of the childcare facilities of the Gesellschaft für Jugendarbeit und Bildungsplanung e.V. (founded in 1969 as one of the first umbrella associations for independent childcare facilities and after-school student facilities in Frankfurt), of the Verein zur Unterstützung berufstätiger Eltern e.V. (founded in 1978 as a parents’ initiative) and of the Gesellschaft zur Förderung betrieblicher und betriebsnaher Kindereinrichtungen e.V. (founded in 1991 as agency association for childcare in the vicinity). The Progressive Education of the 1970s formed new pedagogic concepts in childcare, aiming to promote the education of autonomous individuals that are able to participate in a democratic society. Some Kinderläden have been operating since those initial years, minding today the offspring of those they took care of years ago.

BVZ GmbH operates 160 childcare facilities (crèches and nurseries, Kinderläden and Kindergartens, after-school care centres and Schülerläden) providing 6,256 day care places for children from 3 months up to 12 years of age. Employed are – including housekeepers and supplementary staff, split into 1,480 positions – a staff of 1,916, with 15% being male caregivers (as of January 2016).

The array of the childcare facilities ranges from small facilities with one group up to a diverse childcare facility caring for several groups.

Thus, each child will receive appropriate care: Crèches and nurseries for kids up to 3 years, Kinderläden and Kindergartens for kids ages 3-7, day care and Schülerläden for students aged 6-12, and Kinderhäuser caring for different age groups of kids from 1-7, 1-12 and 3-12 years.

In addition to operating childcare facilities, more than 30 associations and GmbHs (LLCs) active in Youth and Education Work are being counselled and supported.



EDUCATION, UPBRINGING AND CARE

PRINCIPLES FOR INTERACTION

Our childcare facilities are a place of education, upbringing and day care for children. Building self-confidence and trust in other people as well as recognizing and living the duality of freedom and responsibility – these are our principles for interaction. These principles determine the relationship between staff and children, the relationship between staff and parents, the relationships of the kids among themselves and the relationship among staff.

OBJECTIVE

It is our objective to support the children to become and remain confident, independent and tolerant individuals, capable to deal with conflicts, thinking and acting in a solidary and democratic manner.

APPROACHING CHILDREN

We consider children to be self-determined and independent personalities whose development we accompany and support. In our understanding, children will learn by voluntarily implementing objectives they have chosen by themselves. Children go their own way corresponding to their own view of the world. We can only be of help in this accompaniment when respecting the children's views and ways. Trust in the children's capabilities is thus a key prerequisite for our work.

Stable relations characterized by trust, respect and acceptance will allow the children to test their limits within stable settings and overcome them, bear conflicts and deal with or solve them in a constructive manner.

MAXIM

In our childcare centres, kids find the safety and emotional security to allow them to explore their ever-widening world, develop a positive and life-affirming attitude, and retain their joy in life and fun in activities.

SUPPORT, DEMAND AND STIMULATE

We support the self-development process of the children, so they can learn in contexts they chose for themselves while reviewing and expanding their view of the world.

We challenge the kids to deal with both familiar and unfamiliar topics. To promote this, we stimulate the children in all areas of education and competence required:

- Language, writing, communication
- Media usage
- Music, painting, handicrafts, dancing, acting
- Mathematics, Natural Science, information and communication technologies
- Personal and social development
- Inculcating values
- Exercise and health
- Natural and cultural environments
- Democracy and politics

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, PARTICIPATION AND COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Children are to participate in designing their facility's daily routine, starting with the principle of self-confidence and confidence in others. They learn to state and argue their opinion in verbal and non-verbal negotiation processes. They experience themselves as acting individuals, exercising their right to have their own decisions and responsibilities. This includes tolerating situations with "no adults interfering", where kids develop their own interaction and interplay by way of self-organization. Thus, children will learn to accept responsibility within the group. Dealing with opinions and viewpoints of others will challenge and strengthen their social-cognitive and communication competences.

Children learn that they have a right to complain, and they are supported in doing so. Appeals are not measured on a dissatisfaction's degree of legitimacy, but solely on subjective experience. The caregivers impart that they will deal with the complaints posed. There are clear guidelines on how complaints are processed, and our pedagogic staff will analyse them in terms of quantity and quality.

Actual legal requirements regarding child welfare, participation processes and training of specialists are implemented by the individual facility concepts as well as our agency-wide protection concept.

LANGUAGE

Children's identity formation is closely linked to the acquisition of language. Their native language is a key bonding element, crucial for their social and cultural development. Multilingualism enriches us. However, all kids should be able to communicate in German. Also, with their school enrolment yet to come, children should be adequately supported when learning the German language. We consider a language-stimulating and language-friendly environment important and put a focus on speech prompts during all activities.

GIRLS AND BOYS

It is of special importance in our work to take the different interests and requirements of girls and boys into consideration. Under the aspect of a gender-sensitive education, we thus develop special pedagogic offerings without ignoring the importance of a co-educative overall group.

Possibilities for acting outside traditional gender roles are a part of the facility's routine as a matter of course. Just like traditional gender-roles, we also critically reflect the idioms used every day in terms of gender equality.

SEXUALITY

Infantile sexuality is taken up and discussed as a children's topic. It is vital for a self-confident individual to ensure that sexuality is experienced positively in its early years. By dealing with their own body without fear and confidently, children learn to perceive their own and others' feelings and to respect feelings of shame of others. They learn to respect their own and other individuals' limits.

INEQUALITY

Our society is characterized by considerable social, material and cultural differences. These differences are also reflected by the day care facility. The day care facility is to deal openly and consciously with such differences, is must detect discrimination and compensate within their possibilities. All facilities accept the challenge of supporting the kids' requirements with special care.

DIFFERENT CULTURES

Kids from different cultures meet in our day care facilities. The agency and its facilities are open to all families and children, regardless of their origin. We accept and respect the cultural orientations and socioeconomic situations of their families as a matter of fact. The Conceptual Framework of BVZ GmbH and the individual concept of each day care facility illustrate the cultural, social and pedagogic orientation and positioning of the institution. To us, dealing consciously with standards and values from different cultures is a basic prerequisite for a peaceful coexistence within a multicultural society. Consequently, kids learn that their own native culture is one of many and that there is both common ground and differences between various cultures.

Our day care facilities' staff has been sensitized to the cultural experiences kids make and their ensuing interests. Talks with families and kids about different cultural orientations are always conducted in a constructive and problem-solving manner.

CHILDREN WITH AND WITHOUT IMPAIRMENT

We support all our children, both with and without impairment, in living and learning side by side. We strive to achieve joint education, upbringing and care of all kids up to their school enrolment or to the age 12, when they must leave our facilities.

Children with an impairment are being integrated into the daily routines of the child group, providing any therapeutic care required, to ensure the holistic development of all kids within a group. We aim to find a balance between individual development support and joint group processes.

COOPERATION WITH PARENTS

FAMILY AND DAY CARE CENTRE

Family is a child's primary world of living and experience. The day care facility represents a new, separate space of experience. It is our task to interlink these two worlds and to mediate accordingly.

The children's various family and social backgrounds enrich our daily work. By means of the cooperative relationship between educators and parents, the different ways of living become transparent and understandable for all involved. The day care facility thus supports and complements education and upbringing within the family.

PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS

Following our tradition of parent initiatives and self-help for parents, our facilities welcome parents participating in essential tasks of education, upbringing and childcare.

Concrete forms of participation range from work in the parents' advisory council, regular parents' meetings, themed parents' evenings to job shadowing, joint activities as well as festivities, excursions and parents' regulars.

COOPERATION

For our pedagogic staff, cooperating with parents is important for the support and development of individual kids as well as their group. Reciprocal cooperation and a constant exchange with the child's parents are vital to ensure a healthy environment.

Thus, regular parent meetings are an integral part of any facility's work. Discussing the development status of our children is fundamental to these meetings.

Of course, there will be different opinions and views between the educational staff and parents as well as within the parent group. In our facilities, such differences of opinion are being discussed in a cooperative and respectful manner.

In this sense, we understand critical feedback from parents as a way to improve and develop our work. Dissatisfied parents may complain. They will receive timely feedback and, if possible, they will be involved in the improvement processes. The complaints received are analysed on a regular basis so that we can better assess any qualitative measures necessary.

COMMUNITY WORK

URBAN DISTRICT, CITY, COMPANY

BVZ GmbH is characterized by a wide variety of facilities that differ by means of the respective acceptance criterion for a childcare place:

1. Orientation as per urban district: Children from the respective urban district

Day care centres focusing on kids from their respective urban district. Mostly, kids from the respective urban district are being accepted.

2. Orientation as per city: Kids from all of Frankfurt City

Day care centres providing a specific pedagogic program addressing all kids in one city. These day care centres are open to children from all of Frankfurt City.

3. Orientation as per company: Only for children of company staff

Some day care centres cooperate with a specific company, thus allocating their places only to children of that company's employees.

4. Orientation as per company and city: For kids of company staff and from the urban district

These day care centres are open to kids of staff from the cooperating company/ enterprise and for kids from the respective urban district.

ORIENTATION AS PER URBAN DISTRICT

All day care centres are rooted in their urban district. This plays an important role for all our kids' activities outside the day care centre. All facilities cooperate with their neighbourhood day care centres and participate in planning forums and urban district-related meetings.

Facilities referring to urban districts further engage in workshops of their respective urban districts. They are in dialogue with the children's welfare officer and participate in festivities and other activities in their urban district. They cooperate with the Social Welfare Offices, Educational Counselling Offices, Early Intervention Centres, urban district associations, local authorities and retail (also regarding Public Relations work).

COMMUNITY WORK

The day care facility is its own community, its effect exceeding the actual facility's by far. For children, the day care centre is often a place of first friendships, and for parents, it is a place of social exchange and communication with the pedagogic staff and other parents.

DESIGNING TRANSITIONS

All day care centres exercise a counselling function towards parents: They counsel and support the kids changing from crèche to Kindergarten and from Kindergarten to school or to after-school facility. For facilities with urban district orientation, counselling and support are more concise than for facilities with a specific education characterization.

COOPERATION WITH SCHOOLS

There are two ways for day care facilities to cooperate with elementary and secondary schools: The cooperation between Kindergarten and School as well as the cooperation between after-school facility and School.

For facilities with orientation to urban districts, regular contact to schools is important during children's transition to elementary school. Aside from specialists of each institution exchanging information, the kindergarten kids also pay an advanced visit to their respective school to become familiar with the new environment.

After-school facilities closely cooperate with schools and exchange information on the children's care situation. The institutions communicate about important issues such as homework and discuss joint projects.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGENCY AND FACILITIES

PRINCIPLE

The relationship between agency and facilities is based on two principles of our guidelines: Mutual trust and self-responsibility.

DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY AND INDEPENDENCE

The facility teams carry (within the different leadership forms) the basic responsibility for their day care centres. The facilities' work includes the followings tasks:

- The facilities develop the concept of their pedagogic work themselves – based on the agency's Conceptual Framework.
- The agency and the facilities jointly develop cost and financing plans.
- The facilities administer their own budget for equipment and consumables.
- Upon consulting with the agency, the facilities design their rooms and outdoor space themselves.
- They administer their duty rosters, holiday and stand-in plans.
- The facilities maintain their registration lists and make the decision about the acceptance of kids (except for facilities in the vicinity of a company, where the allocation of places is regulated differently as per contract).
- The facilities have a decisive vote on hiring personnel.
- When positions are newly filled, experienced teams will handle the application process.

SUPPORT AND CONTROL

BVZ GmbH as agency is responsible for all facilities.

It undertakes the functions and tasks of specialist and professional supervision and supports and counsels the day care centres on issues of contents, organization and personnel.

REQUIREMENTS FROM EMPLOYEES

PRINCIPLE

Per our guidelines on independence, self-responsibility and mutual trust, our agency and facility concepts assign responsibility to the teams in those facilities.

For any facility to be able to adequately fulfil its tasks to educate, bring up and care for children, all competences and skills required must be retrievable from the team. Aside from professional qualifications, personal knowledge, aptitude and skills are to be contributed and acknowledged. Each team should possibly also be represented by male caregivers.

CONDITIONS

We expect the following qualifications of our staff as a matter of principle:

- A qualified pedagogic schooling
- Basic knowledge of general legal and pedagogic work conditions in day care facilities
- Specialist knowledge and methodological competence

If our facility employs enough specialists, based on a legally set key for specialists, we will also hire persons without pedagogic schooling to work with the kids group. However, they must provide sufficient personal and professional competence.

EXPECTATIONS

In addition, we place a high emphasis in certain character traits of our staff:

- A positive attitude
- Independence, conscientiousness, ability to work in a team and accept critique
- Identification with the agency
- Dedication, motivation, reflectivity
- Ability to work under stress, creativity, openness and organizational skills

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- Courage, curiosity, willingness to take risks and to undergo professional development
 - Professional competence for pedagogic planning, always considering the requirements of all participants
 - Focus on both child and group
 - A confident manner and willingness to cooperate with parents
 - Candidness towards the facility's environment
 - Willingness to participate in workshops and training seminars
 - Interest in new pedagogic developments and new tasks

DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONNEL AND TEAMS

The agency is responsible for the development of personnel and teams, fulfilling this assignment by means of regular discussions with the facility's personnel and team. It conducts internal and external coaching and renders professional expert opinions based on the Conceptual Framework. The individual facility's profile is always taken into consideration.

The agency also serves as specialist counsellor and specialist and professional supervisor to its personnel and teams. These personnel and team development tasks are in part delegated to the facilities. To further ensure personnel and team development, we generally assign a portion of 16% of the employees' total work hours as mandatory time spent at the facility.

Each facility is granted 1-2 concept days per year. These can be either organized and conducted by the facility staff members, by means of the agency's expert counselling or by external concept counsellors.

We expect each team to attend a supervision – taking place either as facility supervision or, in case of small facilities, it may also be organized across several facilities.

AGENCY FUNCTIONS

PRINCIPLE

Per our guidelines, the agency respects the facility's competence, self-responsibility and independence. Therefore, the agency's functions of specialist and professional supervision and specialist counselling are to be integrated into the Conceptual Framework.

Specialist and professional supervision and specialist counselling are a supporting function with view to the facility as an entirety. The facilities are to be supported to fulfil their tasks regarding their work with children.

SPECIALIST COUNSELLING

Specialist counselling covers the entire range of support services for teams and facilities from professional expertise via pedagogic orientation and its practical implementation to organizational and conflict counselling.

All specialist counsellors are alternating to stand in for each other. For special requirements, they may rely on the supporting network of their colleagues. The specialist counselling staff are further responsible for facilities with different key focuses (depending on the respective age group of the kids).

SPECIALIST SUPERVISION

The agency as specialist supervisor has three tasks: Firstly, it critically accompanies the development processes of the facilities. Secondly, it offers support and orientation based on legal requirements of the agency concept. And thirdly, it carries out a professional control function.

For the specialist supervision, the "four-eye principle", i.e. dual control, applies: Decisions and directions are always made by at least two responsible persons.

PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

Professional supervision monitors the realisation of work agreement regulations. It also warrants the proper implementation of job descriptions and the observation of duty rosters.

Professional supervision decisions are being made by top management in agreement with specialist supervision. Top management, being the agency's decision-making level, represents a controlling authority for both specialist counselling and specialist supervision.

WORKSHOPS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Additional and professional development are intended to fill the gap between qualification requirements and qualification status by providing new and improved knowledge.

Qualification measures such as internal and external professional development, concept days and the participation in various workshops stabilize and expand the quality of our pedagogic work.

The agency organizes workshops for managers and team spokespersons as well as one workshop each for the work with children under the age of 3, aged 3-7 and school kids. Moreover, it establishes theme-related workshops.

The internal professional development program continually provides new offers for further education. This includes courses to qualify for work with children under the age of 3 and under the age of 1 as well as training seminars to stimulate linguistic development.

Courses on scientific experimenting, media pedagogic and media competence may also be attended as well as seminars to acquire credentials as Integration, Administration or Computer Specialist. First-Aid training is also part of the program.

The agency further offers special training and qualification events on legal innovations regarding child welfare and participation and complaint proceedings for kids and parents.

DEVELOPMENT AND ASSURANCE OF QUALITY

Development and assurance of quality are integral parts of our activities within the facilities and within the agency. Development and assurance of quality for us means an ongoing process with all employees participating according to a concept of dialogue and based on our Conceptual Framework.

We have corresponding standards available ensuring the rights of children and adolescents in our facilities and protecting them from violence – even from staff. Current legal regulations are being implemented by means of our protection concept and the individual facilities' concepts.

ON AGENCY LEVEL

To ensure meeting Quality Development and Quality Assurance within itself, the agency fulfils the following tasks:

- The agency participates in city-wide workshops (under the auspices of the City School Authority or the Youth Welfare Office) and committees (Expert Committee Childcare).
- The agency networks with other non-profit organizations and participates in a meeting of agencies under the auspices of the “LandesArbeitsGemeinschaft Freie Kinderarbeit Hessen e.V.”
- The agency ensures feedback from educational institutions. To that effect, it cooperates with vocational schools and participates in the Advisory Board of Berta Jourdan School.
- The agency communicates internally according to the concept of dialogue.
- The agency warrants transparency of transactions and financing of BVZ GmbH towards facilities and staff.
- The agency supports an open communication structure favouring a non-hierarchical discussion and dispute culture.
- The agency shows great presence for the facilities (“There is always a contact available.”).
- The agency takes the peculiarities of the specific facility into consideration and thus permits mutual learning and support as well as exchange and critique.
- The agency participates in specific management training, specialized-policy events and specialist conferences.

The Facilities' quality is ensured by means of the following agency initiatives:

- The agency organizes workshops for management, teams and specialists.
- The agency undertakes responsibility for the Conceptual Framework, discussing its updating and its expansion.
- The agency ensures personnel development. Pertinent instruments are: Talks with staff, individually tailored training and measures for team development.
- The agency handles supervision by working with external consultants and developing individual day care concepts together with the facilities.
- The agency conducts its own training.
- The agency ensures a stable professional and spatial framework.
- The agency develops the website to optimize external and internal communication.

ON FACILITY LEVEL

On facility level, we maintain a network of Quality Officers. The Quality Officers are tasked with the development and assurance of quality in their own facility and in other cooperating facilities within the agency.

In addition, and in context with our professional development measures, the facilities continually work to consistently meet and update their conceptual assignment.

Each day care facility under our responsibility formulates a written concept. This concept is renewed and expanded during annually held concept days. We review the realization of these concepts by means of annual self-evaluation.

Facility concepts are published on our website.

IMPRINT

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