

Your child—
More than worthy of our best care

Out-of-school care [BSO] Pedagogic Policy

FOREWORD

You have in front of you the pedagogic policy (BSO version) of Zo BSO. This pedagogic policy outlines how we provide childcare at our out-of-school care facilities and why we take the approach that we do. It clarifies and provides insight into our work methods. There is also a version dedicated to day care for younger children.

Three questions have guided our formulation of the pedagogic policy. These are:

1. What do we do with the children?
2. How do we do that?
3. Why do we do that?

The pedagogic policy provides direction and support to the educational staff members in their interactions with the children as they take over the supervision and instruction of your child for the day. The educational staff members' version includes various work instructions and can be viewed at any time in any of the groups.

Our commitment to follow a pedagogic policy contributes to the security of the children as it offers both clarity and a regular structure for everyone.

For the parents, the pedagogic policy contributes to good communication between you and the out-of-school care educational staff members. This helps to harmonise the supervision and instruction the children receive at home and at out-of-school care as much as possible.

We set ourselves very high standards of quality and care for your child is central to our

efforts. Your child is your most precious possession and therefore more than worthy of our best care!

CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL CARE

Children attend out-of-school care in their free time. In order to give children the feeling that they are 'off,' we feel it is very important that they feel at home with us. While at out-of-school care, the idea is: lots of choices, no obligations. At our facility, the children have as much freedom as possible to determine what they would like to do for the afternoon. Individuals can choose an activity or help decide what activity the group will undertake. We try to consider different age groups as much as possible at the out-of-school care facility. For indoor activities, the educational staff members usually divide the children into two groups: those younger than seven and those older than seven.

Our out-of-school care facilities are divided into different areas. When the children first arrive after school, they gather in the main area to have a snack and a drink. It is important to have a moment of peace to transition into the afternoon while talking about the school day. That is why the educational staff members initiate a group discussion to recall the events of the day. Once everyone has regained their energy, the children select the activities they would like to undertake that afternoon.

The areas are set up so that children can independently choose what they feel like doing. That is why we included a quiet area where the children can relax, chat together, read or do homework. There is also a workstation where the children can participate in creative activities and an arts area where children can express themselves through dance, music and theatre. It is sort of a mini-theatre where we can regularly hold performances. There are also building, car and doll stations and a number of board games and books to entertain the children. There are also a few "secret" corners where the children can meet up in little groups.

When the weather is fine, the educational staff members make a point of going outdoors with the children. They consult with the children to determine if there is interest in an outdoor activity. It might be an activity that requires a trip with the facility's bus or public transport; it can also be within walking distance. The educational staff members also organise activities in nearby schoolyards, where the children can choose to participate with the group or play independently.

Childcare during school holidays

The educational staff members always make a schedule of fun activities that can be undertaken during the school holidays. As part of the program, the children regularly head out for excursions with the educational staff members. They may visit a playground, do a scavenger hunt in the woods or engage in a cultural activity such as attending a museum. In short, the time the children spend with us during school holidays are real holidays.

OUR PEDAGOGIC MISSION

Zo Kinderopvang & BSO's pedagogic mission is to provide childcare for children from zero to four years old and out-of-school care for children between the ages of four and twelve. This takes place in a safe environment that offers the children both protection and challenges. This allows for an individual child with unique characteristics to develop his or her personal and social skills and competencies fully.

Basic aims

Our pedagogic mission can be divided into four basic aims:

1. To offer the child a feeling of security (both emotional and physical)
2. To develop personal competencies
3. To develop social competencies
4. To contribute to the socialisation of the child: providing rules, norms and values

These four basic aims are elaborated further on in this document.

Basic pedagogic principles

These aims are founded on the following basic pedagogic principles:

- Respect for the individual development of each child
- Coordination with parents/carers in order to build a solid partnership
- Group childcare has added benefits for the individual development of each child
- Educational staff members serve as examples and play an active role in communicating social norms and values to the children.

Our vision for taking over the supervision and instruction of your child is formed by the pedagogic aims based on the basic principles.

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PEDAGOGIC AIMS

To offer the child a feeling of security

Offering security is essential as it contributes to a feeling of well-being for the children. Providing a safe environment is a prerequisite to achieving the other three basic aims. After all, a child that does not feel secure will exhibit little interest in his or her surroundings, will be unable to concentrate on play and will be tense when dealing with other children. Providing a safe environment allows a child to profit from the opportunities available to him or her in the out-of-school care centre.

Feeling of well-being

Well-being can be described as a generally positive state experienced by a child. Everyday expressions such as 'feeling good in your own skin' and 'having it your way' actually illustrate this concept best.

Educational staff members monitor the well-being of the children and strive to ensure that all of the children exhibit the positive characteristics of well-being. You can find the seven characteristics of well-being in the integral pedagogic policy available for perusal in the location manager's office.

Surroundings at the out-of-school care facility contribute to well-being

Without a doubt, the family each child grows up in has the greatest influence on his or her level of well-being. At a certain point, a child begins attending school and a number of children also attend out-of-school care after school and during the school holidays. So besides his or her parents, there are a number of adults influencing each child's development. As a place that the child regularly visits, the out-of-school care facility can also have an important effect on his or her well-being. The child's surroundings in the out-of-school care centre can be divided into four distinct areas:

1. General surroundings
2. Childcare
3. Educational staff members
4. Other children

The way in which these four areas are organised makes a big difference to how a child feels.

GENERAL SURROUNDINGS AND ORGANISATION OF THE PEDAGOGIC CLIMATE

What type of environment is necessary for children to feel safe and content so that they can develop their own potential? We strive to provide an environment that meets the basic needs of every child. These include:

1. Physical needs
2. The need for affection and warmth
3. The need for security, clarity and continuity
4. The need for acknowledgement and appreciation
5. The need for development and competition
6. The need to be a good person

Physical needs:

Physical needs of a primary-school age child that attends out-of-school care include such day-to-day items as nutrition, proper body temperature and exercise. In the appendix, you will find the daily routine for out-of-school care, both during school weeks and school holidays. Sleep is another important need, but in general, children who attend out-of-school care no longer need to sleep during the afternoon. We also assume that your child is toilet trained.

The need for affection and warmth:

Children require physical touch and a loving approach; they also enjoy opportunities to demonstrate affection. In order to meet these needs, the educational staff members use a positive and warm approach that is sensitive to each child's individual personality. They are adept at creating a cosy and pleasant atmosphere in the group.

The need for security, clarity and continuity:

Children need a more or less predictable environment and recognizable structure in their day. Stable staffing and attendance of other children helps to fulfil this need. We strive to avoid changes in educational staff members and the group composition as much as possible. That allows your child to form attachments and find support among familiar individuals. The daily routine and recurring rituals also aid in meeting this need.

The need for acknowledgement and appreciation:

Children develop a sense of individual worth when their behaviour is responded to positively by others. This helps them to develop a positive self-image. In order to meet this need, our educational staff members remain attuned to the positive side of each child's behaviour and demonstrate appreciation of the child.

The need for development and competition:

All children need to develop themselves, learn to master new skills and experience themselves as competent individuals. That is why they are always searching out new challenges. The educational staff members encourage each child to try something new, without forcing the issue. They respond to a child's curiosity by stimulating it further. The educational staff members also provide for enough variation in the classroom set up and the selection of toys.

The need to be a good person:

Children want to conform to expectations, norms and rules in place in their environment. Clear rules that are realistic for their developmental age fulfil this requirement. The educational staff members are good at empathising with each child. In their role as examples, they help a child to see if he or she has done something sweet, helpful or honest: for example if one child has helped or comforted another child. The fourth pedagogic aim also addresses this need: the socialisation of the child. Through socialisation, the educational staff members help a child to become a good person.

The physical characteristics of our out-of-school care facilities

Our facilities are located in buildings that are zoned for wellness, or have a zoning exemption. Often, they are located immediately adjacent or very close to one or more primary schools. The indoor and outdoor spaces at each location meet the requirements outlined in the Childcare Quality Policy Guidelines and the structural regulations outlined in the Building Code for Childcare Facilities.

Each group has a regular meeting area that can be closed off. There is at least 3.5 m² of play area available for each child inside the facility and at least 3 m² outside. The outside spaces are also regularly available to the children. Outside spaces, if not immediately adjacent, must be close to the facility and safely accessible.

Classrooms and furnishings

The classrooms in which the children are cared for are stocked with toys and necessary equipment that coordinates with the developmental age of the children in each group.

How the rooms are set up is also determined by how the different age groups experience playtime. In each group, various play stations have been set up to appeal to the children and allow them to play individually and in small groups, which helps develop social contacts. Special materials are used in furnishing the classrooms that help to reduce the noise level. Each classroom also has a quiet corner so that children can take a step back to rest from their various activities. The classrooms offer facilities that stimulate age-appropriate development for the children. This challenges and encourages them to experiment with their capabilities and potential. All toys are stored at child-height so that children can select for themselves the toys they would like to play with.

At the out-of-school care centre, there is a dining area with a number of large tables and chairs, a doll corner and kitchen, a playhouse, building corner, computer corner, board games area, quiet corner (for reading, writing and homework) TV/video corner, creative area (arts and crafts, woodworking, clay etc.), and an expressive arts area for dance, theatre and music.

Each child's personal effects are stored in a basket or box that has been assigned to them. Something from each child is integrated into the classroom furnishings and decorations in order to reinforce feelings of security for each child. This might include hanging up the children's photos and artwork, creating photo collages of special activities in the group or establishing a photo wall to display each child's living situation.

Every classroom has windows that look out onto the outside spaces and allow for sufficient daylight in the group. The classrooms also have sufficient ventilation. Furthermore, the floors are easy to clean without being slippery. The upholstery in the classrooms is in keeping with the organisation's house colours. Each classroom has its own entrance. Just outside the entrance there is a children's cloakroom including coat racks installed at child-height. Here the children can hang up their outside clothes on a personal coat rack.

Outside spaces and equipment

It is crucial to a child's health and development that he or she can regularly play outside and can experiment with natural elements such as greenery, sand and water. The outside spaces have been set up and equipped with this in mind. Each outside area incorporates some greenery such as a bit of grass, non-poisonous plants, a vegetable patch and/or trees that provide natural shade on hot days. The play equipment is safe and meets the requirements set by the Commodities Act; each item has appropriate certification.

The outside spaces usually include a football field, a jungle gym, swings and a spot for jumping rope and playing tag etc. Furthermore, each outside area includes a spacious and safe sandpit. In addition to the large play equipment, there are other outside toys such as children's bikes and cars, child-size benches and a range of balls and other small outdoor toys. In addition to the schoolyards, a number of out-of-school care facilities also have access to a large playing field in the vicinity.

During extreme weather, an alternative activity is offered. For example, children who attend out-of-school care at De Schans can make use of the school's gymnasium. Warm

weather is a great opportunity to organise outdoor activities for the children involving water.

Public spaces

Public spaces are not used as play areas without supervision from the educational staff members. This includes the entrance, hallways and stairs in the out-of-school care facility. These spaces are equipped with the necessary safety measures. Specific house rules that apply to each particular location are posted in the public areas. There is also a bulletin board with up-to-date childcare information for parents.

Bathrooms

All out-of-school care facilities have bathrooms equipped with at least two children's toilets and a sink and towels for washing hands at child-height. In order to increase children's self-resourcefulness, children are encouraged to visit the toilet independently after informing the educational staff members of their need.

If your child is not yet toilet trained, please inform the educational staff members so that they can take this into account and provide nappy changes when necessary and work together with you on the toilet training process.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL CARE CHARACTERISTICS

Ratio of children to educational staff members

The group size for each age group has been established in accordance with the Childcare Quality Policy Guidelines. The number of educational staff members to children (child-leader ratio) is always at least one educational staff member per 10 children ages four to the oldest primary school pupil. In out-of-school care it is usual for there to be two regular educational staff members appointed for each regular group. The maximum number of children per group is as follows: twenty children from four to twelve or no more than thirty children if the children are all older than eight years old. Children in out-of-school care are grouped by age: children ages four to seven and children ages seven to twelve. This is called a main group and children eat together with their main group after school. If there are not many children, groups can be merged together. Out-of-school care buildings are set up to facilitate the activities that children can engage in. The classrooms that host children in out-of-school care have names specific to the locations such as Het Groene Hart, De Schans, De Aanloop, Waalsdorp, Van Nijenrodestraat or de 2^e Sweelinckstraat.

Combining groups and locations during school holidays

It is possible that due to a low number of children, groups are merged together. Children from one location (e.g. BSO De Aanloop or BSO Het Groene Hart) are then brought to BSO De Schans. We do strive to ensure that at least one familiar educational staff member accompanies the children to the alternate location. For a child, it can be lots of fun to go to another location from time to time, meet new children and see what interesting new play opportunities are available there.

The daily routine

Regularity and continuity during the day provide recognisability, clarity and predictability. This can be achieved through maintaining a regular schedule for the daily routine as well as regular rules. This is more important for younger children than it is for older children, but even for primary school-age children, a certain rhythm to each day can be comforting. These aspects of childcare ensure that out-of-school care becomes a familiar place where a child feels safe and secure. The stability of a daily routine (sitting up to the table together after school) and any regular rituals (such as waiting until everyone has a sandwich) contribute positively to the children's well-being. This is due to the fact that the structured rhythm reduces any insecurity a child may feel and increases feelings of confidence.

Elements that occur each day at out-of-school care include lunch and sitting up to the table together after school to have a drink and a snack and then a group discussion. A specification of the nutritional and care products we offer can be found in the appendix.

Structure in the daily routine

Providing structure means ensuring that the children's situation is clear and that they know what is expected of them. The educational staff members strive to provide direction amidst a mix of structure and liberty. They do so by:

- Being clear and consistent
- Explaining what is going to happen
- Establishing rules and limits

Individual attention for each child

Within the structure of the daily routine, there is enough time for the educational staff members to chat with the children and ask how their day at school was and when needed, to cuddle with and provide individual attention to each child. Educational staff members also provide plenty of explanations and information during their daily interactions with the children so that the children understand what is going on. In doing so, they focus on the attention, activity and development level of the child they are speaking to. After all, talking with a twelve year old is much different than talking to a four year old.

Activities in the daily routine

As part of the regular daily schedule, the children are offered at least one stimulating activity. These special activities contribute to children's development as they cater to the children's development level, abilities and interests. The educational staff members are specialised in the group's development level and plan activities accordingly. Their approach takes development levels into account and further stimulates and challenges the children to explore their own abilities. Each child is encouraged individually during group activities when they exhibit the need to engage in the group process.

There is of course sufficient time for free play. Out-of-school care is free time for the children; they have already spent a number of hours at school. While at out-of-school care, they can, within limits, choose for themselves which activities they would like to engage in.

Organisation of activities

The educational staff members usually supervise groups of children aged four to seven

and children aged seven to twelve. If the maximum number of children are attending, the educational staff members divide them up into three groups: four and five year olds, six and seven year olds and the eight year olds and up. That way, each child can enjoy the company of their peers. The classrooms lend themselves to a number of different activities: arts and crafts, games, theatre, dance and music, playing with dolls, cars, and the train set or reading, watching videos and doing homework etc.

Workshops

At each out-of-school care location, we try to provide children with the opportunity to take workshops. The workshops they can sign up for include for example photography, mosaic making, book making or sewing, candle decoration, plaster work, sculpting, charcoal drawing and making Christmas centrepieces etc. We also like to ask the children what they are interested in and switch off the workshops every four weeks.

Annual festivities

These are special events that we celebrate enthusiastically with the children each and every year: the National Read-Aloud Marathon, Easter, Queen's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, *Prinsjesdag* [opening day of the Dutch parliament], Children's Book Week, World Animal Day, the four seasons, *Sinterklaas*, Christmas, weddings and births in the royal house. The activities organised focus on the theme of the festivity. We also mark the educational staff members' birthdays as well as the births of brothers and sisters by posting a festive announcement in the classroom.

The children's birthdays are tracked on a birthday calendar posted in the group. On his or her birthday, the birthday boy or girl receives a handmade party hat and we hang a festive announcement on the door or in the classroom. The occasion is celebrated once the children arrive at the facility after school. The celebration includes singing birthday songs and cheering for the birthday boy or girl. Any goody bags brought by the birthday boy or girl will be distributed into the children's baskets. The birthday boy or girl may also bring a treat to share, but in selecting something to bring, please keep in mind that we are very mindful of the children's oral health.

Twice a year, the centre organises a theme week that centres on a theme that has been formulated with a specific pedagogic aim in mind. During theme week, a new activity is offered each day. The activities organised during the week take various developmental areas into account and encourage the children to grow further in these areas.

School holidays

Childcare during the school holidays makes everyday a party. Each day the schedule is packed with a range of exciting activities. If the weather is nice, the children might have a scavenger hunt in the woods or visit a museum, playground or petting farm. Less clement weather brings the fun indoors with arts and crafts, games, cookie baking, perhaps a movie or a theatre performance.

Meals & snacks

Children all eat lunch together at the table. In the afternoon, they all sit down for fruit and

a cracker along with a drink. During this break, the children and the educational staff members talk about their day at school, as well as anything else that comes up. The educational staff members make sure that the children eat nicely and that the noise level does not get out of hand. Once the children are finished, they all help clearing away their dishes and cutlery.

Healthy eating habits

We want to stimulate the children to eat and drink conscientiously. We appreciate it when parents/carers consider this policy when helping their child select a birthday treat to share with other children. The children may of course have sweets at out-of-school care for special occasions such as *Sinterklaas*. Perhaps the children feel like baking pancakes for lunch with the educational staff members one day during the holidays. We feel that from time to time we can make certain exceptions to the rule.

Standard fare:

- Lunch hour: brown bread and milk, tea or thick juice, deli meats, cheese spread, vegetarian spread, or a slice of cheese on the first sandwich, afterwards the children may choose a sweeter sandwich filling.

If the children have already had fruit during the lunch hour, fruit is not served a second time in the afternoon. If the children have not had fruit at lunch, then they will be offered fruit after school.

- Out-of-school care: fruit, cracker and/or rice cracker along with diluted lemonade at about 15.45; raw veggies along with diluted lemonade at about 17.00.
- School holidays: biscuits along with diluted lemonade in the morning; brown bread, milk, tea or thick juice and for special occasions toasties or pancakes and chocolate milk or a yoghidrink for lunch; bread sticks, rice crackers or biscuits along with diluted lemonade for an afternoon snack; raw veggies along with diluted lemonade at about 17.00.

Health, hygiene and safety

In order to keep the children healthy, the groups are kept as hygienic as possible. There are a number of work procedures in place in order to ensure the best possible hygiene. These procedures address food preparation, personal hygiene, and cleanliness of the classroom and the toys. The educational staff members also make sure that the children wash their hands before they sit up to the table. Toys are cleaned regularly and floors and furnishings are cleaned daily. We also have contracts with a cleaning company that provides a thorough cleaning service each week. Dishes are washed in a dishwasher that has a disinfecting program.

Health and Safety Risk Evaluation

In order to guarantee a healthy, safe environment for the children, each year the location manager prepares a Health and Safety Risk Evaluation of the location. This covers the indoor and outdoor spaces the children use when they are at out-of-school care. This

evaluation and the action points it brings up form the basis of the health and safety policies implemented at each location. These policies may be requested for viewing by parents. Since it is critical that the children remain healthy, we have a strict vaccination and illness policy at each childcare location, including out-of-school care facilities. It may happen that the educational staff members call parents to come and collect their child due to illness. The wellbeing of the children is paramount. Educational staff members need to divide their attention between a number of children and cannot therefore give a sick child the attention that he or she needs. Parents are informed about this policy at the outset. If you have not received this information or have since misplaced it, you may request it from the location manager.

HKZ-certificate

Zo Kinderopvang & BSO is a certified childcare organisation. We have detailed protocols in place outlining how educational staff members should respond to diverse situations. In addition to the illness policy, we also have protocols addressing how to identify signs of child abuse, how to respond to the death of a parent and how to deal with any allergies a child may have.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EDUCATIONAL STAFF MEMBERS: PROVIDING A FEELING OF SECURITY

Criteria

The educational staff members who look after and instruct the children all have appropriate diplomas. We apply the training standards set forth by the Dutch Childcare Branch Collective Agreement. In order to benefit the bonding process with children in the group, our educational staff members are also screened for professional competence and selected based on characteristics such as dedication to and love of children, good communication skills, sensitivity, responsiveness, patience and consideration. In order to maintain the educational staff members' professionalism, we organise annual expertise training. Furthermore, all educational staff members have provided us with a current Character Witness issued by the appropriate government institution.

Bonding

In order to foster feelings of trust and security in each child and create a safe and warm environment it is important that the regular educational staff members establish a close bond with each child. This produces a relationship in which the child is taken seriously and learns that he or she can trust other people. This situation also produces a sense of security, which stimulates exploration through which a child can learn about him or herself, his or her surroundings and other children as well as learning to appreciate everyone's individuality. The educational staff members invest quite a lot of energy in establishing this secure foundation. The creation of this bond begins during the educational staff members' very first meeting with the child when he or she comes to the facility during the familiarisation period. During this period, the educational staff members follow a special procedure paying careful attention to familiarising the child with the new surroundings, new people and new impressions that he or she is encountering for the first time in his or her young life.

Sensitivity and responsiveness:

Providing emotional support

By emotional support, we mean that the educational staff members demonstrate to each child that he or she is concerned with how the child feels and what he or she is experiencing. Thus, the child starts to think: 'I can approach this person, this person understands me, this person takes me seriously and thinks I am worth the trouble.' Consistently responding positively to signals that children send out can involve providing comfort when a child is sad or laughing along with the child when he or she is having fun. Responses are often verbal, but can also be nonverbal.

Educational staff members interpret the child's behaviour and try to respond to it positively. In order to respond the correct way, it is necessary that the educational staff members are sensitive to the signals that the child is sending out. Subsequently responding to the child's signal completes the essential second phase of the communication process. This demonstrates to a child that if he or she indicates a need, as much as possible, the educational staff member will try to fill the child's need. Part of this process is approaching children in a warm and friendly manner, paying compliments and showing children that they are trusted. This also contributes to development of a positive self-image and trust in other people.

Parental divorce/death of a loved one

It is possible that a child's parents separate or that someone in his or her family or circle of friends passes away. We would like to be considerate of the emotions a child may have as a result of these circumstances. In order to support a child during difficult times, it is vital that parents inform educational staff members of any changes to a child's living situation or of a death in the family so that they can coordinate how best to approach the child. The educational staff member will ask the child if he or she would like to talk about it, and if so, if the child would prefer to do so in private or as part of a group. The educational staff members will also speak with the child's teacher in order to find out if the child is exhibiting signs of sadness or is burying his or her sadness; they can then discuss how to best approach the child. The child will receive extra attention from the educational staff members as they strive to provide as much assistance as possible during this difficult period.

Expressing emotions

Emotions are a part of life. Everybody feels angry, sad, disappointed, scared, tense or happy and cheerful at one time or another. All these emotions should be respected, also in children. Educational staff members stimulate children to express their emotions or to talk about them if they feel like it. It is a sign of respect if the educational staff member not only recognises a child's emotions but also acknowledges them.

Communication

To cultivate a pleasant atmosphere at out-of-school care, it is important for the educational staff members to be clear about what they expect from the children. This clarity provides children with emotional security.

Practical examples from the educational staff members' perspective:

- Use I-messages, as in: "I think your drawing is beautiful," or, "I would like you to help me straighten up the doll corner now." By using I-messages, you can make it clear to a child what YOU want from him or her.
- Identify specific behaviour that you would like to see and be clear about this. "I do not like it when you put five slices of cheese on your sandwich because then there is not enough for the other children; two slices is enough."
- Do not reject a child. You can reject a child's behaviour, but not the individual. So say, "I do not like it when you knock over your milk on purpose" as opposed to "You are an annoying child."
- Sometimes it's not even necessary to say anything. Just looking at a child can be enough to make him or her stop his or her unacceptable behaviour.
- Be consistent 1: something that is not allowed today is not allowed tomorrow either.
- If one child is allowed something, then the other children are also allowed etc. With exceptions: explain why the exception applies at this particular moment.
- Be consistent 2: If you warn a child not to do something twice (e.g. burping) on pain of a time out, then implement the time out if necessary and explain why you are doing so. A time out should not be more than a few minutes; do not focus any more attention on the incident.
- Do not make unreasonable threats; for example that a child may no longer attend out-of-school care if he or she does not immediately stop
- Provide a good example in interactions with children and colleagues; do not yell or interrupt. Children imitate adult behaviours faster than you might think.
- Walk over to the individual that you would like to speak to. Bend down to speak to young children so you can look them in the eyes. This demonstrates respect for the child.

DEVELOPING PERSONAL COMPETENCIES

Since most children have a natural urge to develop themselves, out-of-school care must cater to this urge. The materials that the educational staff members provide the children with are tailored to the various ages and interests of the children. For example, if a child is bored with a certain game or puzzle, the educational staff members will show the child the more difficult games or puzzles he or she can play with or challenge his or her creativity in making beautiful artwork.

In encouraging personal competencies, we look at the development of broad personal characteristics, such as:

- Resilience
- Independence
- Self-confidence
- Flexibility

These characteristics enable children to adequately resolve a range of problems and adapt

to changing circumstances. Additionally, the concept of 'personal competencies' includes children's competence in various developmental areas, namely:

- Motor development
- Language development
- Cognitive development
- Development of self-resourcefulness

Motor development

Children develop their personal competencies through their interactions with the material world around them. Varied types of movement and use of playground equipment stimulate development of gross motor skills and thereby the child's self-confidence. Use of different kinds of materials in various types of play (from building games to moments of make-believe) can encourage fine motor skills, creativity and several other aspects of cognitive development.

Language development

Dutch is the main language at out-of-school care. Educational staff members speak with the children continually and provide numerous explanations. The children also speak with each other a lot.

Cognitive development

In order to stimulate cognitive development, we offer special activities and toys such as Knexx. However, out-of-school care is free time for children and they may choose their own activities. Use of materials such as storybooks, picture books, construction materials, puzzles, shapes and colours and artistic materials such as paints and drawing materials, clay, paper, wood, puppets, music and instruments including CDs and TV can also stimulate cognitive development. This is however not a main goal; children learn all sorts of things at school.

Development of self-resourcefulness

Self-resourcefulness is an important part of developing personal competencies. This can be encouraged by:

- Assigning small tasks
- Providing opportunities to experiment
- Teaching children how to perform their own personal hygiene
- Allowing children to discover things for themselves rather than helping or interfering right away; this shows respect for a child's autonomy

Children's responsibility

Part of developing children's self-resourcefulness is developing their sense of responsibility. By stimulating this, educational staff members and parents demonstrate trust in a child's ability to carry out various tasks. This is good for a child's self-confidence. This is something we encounter at out-of-school care all the time.

Travelling to out-of-school care independently

Children age seven/eight and up are often independent enough to travel to out-of-school

care during the lunch hour and after school on their own steam. Younger children are collected from school by the educational staff members.

Going home independently

If you feel that your child is old enough and wise enough to return home at the end of the day and your child also feels confident doing so, then we are usually fine with that too. We do like to put the agreement in writing however. If this has not yet been done, then we will ask you to sign a special form stating that you agree to your child travelling home independently and we are no longer liable for his or her safety once he or she has left the facility.

Children who do not travel to out-of-school care independently are picked up by bus, by *bakfiets* or on foot, depending on the location of the facility.

Playing beyond the fence of the out-of-school care facility

The children can play football, tag, jump rope, hide and seek, or climb the jungle gym, swing and play in the sandpit at the out-of-school care facility. In addition, several facilities are located next to a large grass field with playground equipment. The children enjoy playing here too, but the educational staff members cannot always supervise their play. There is a view of the field from several classrooms, but not all. If a classroom does not have a direct line of sight, then the educational staff members regularly check to make sure the children are all right. We have found that this is a workable solution with children age eight and up.

Naturally, we will always consult with parents if it is acceptable for children to play beyond the facility fence without direct supervision (and depending on the location of the facility). This may depend on how often your child plays alone outside when not at out-of-school care. If you are fine with your child playing beyond the facility fence from time to time, please let the educational staff members know.

DEVELOPING SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

Although the ability to interact with others is also a personal competency that each individual child must develop, encouraging social competencies is nevertheless identified as a separate pedagogic aim. The reason being that children in out-of-school care meet with a large number of children both younger and older than they are as well as children who are the same age. At out-of-school care, there are more children around than any number of siblings a child may have at home. This provides them with extra opportunities to gain skills in dealing with others and in establishing relationships with other children. The concept of social competencies embraces a whole range of social knowledge and abilities such as putting oneself in another's shoes, communicating, sharing, respecting others, cooperating, helping others and resolving conflicts.

Activities that foster social-emotional development include:

- Free play
- Fantasy and role-playing games

- Opportunities for concentration and rest
- Caring for pets, plants and/or a garden
- Carrying out small tasks
- Group discussions

Materials that foster social-emotional development include:

- Items from the adult world
- Items with which to make-believe
- Dress-up clothes, fabrics, face paint
- Social toys such as board games

Friendships

Children can develop close friendships with other children at out-of-school care; perhaps some of their friends from school attend the same out-of-school care on the same days. The educational staff members stimulate children playing together not only because it can be so enjoyable for the children, but also because it helps children to gain experience in social interaction and builds necessary social skills.

Leaving out-of-school care with a friend from school

It may be that your child wants to go home with a friend from school after attending out-of-school care. This is fine, but we would like to be informed of these plans in advance by the parents.

Friends not enrolled in out-of-school care

Children who do not attend out-of-school care but enjoy playing with children who are enrolled often come to the facility playground to play with children in out-of-school care. Sometimes they all play beyond the facility fence, but only if you as a parent have given permission. If a child who is not enrolled in out-of-school care would like to look inside, that is entirely possible and perhaps a game can be organised for everyone to play.

Children's Council

We want the children to feel that they have a voice in how out-of-school care is organised. They spend a lot of time here and usually have certain preferences they would like to see considered. We would like to have the children contribute their ideas about our policies at each location. Older children can help establish positive house rules for everyone (we are kind to one another, rather than we are not allowed to hit). Children can also help to decide how the facility is set up and furnished. We are working on setting up children's councils at each location and you can ask your educational staff member for more information if you are interested in this topic.

Budding sexuality, intimate behaviour, puppy love

The educational staff members want to keep any eye out for children's budding sexuality and acknowledge their feelings. The children are still young, but one child is thinking about these issues earlier than another is, whether just by talking about it or experimenting physically. For example, children tend to make silly jokes about the opposite sex, or they may pair up with boyfriends or girlfriends. The educational staff members monitor this

type of contact to ensure that it remains pleasant for those involved and is healthy as opposed to an unhealthy relationship.

Gender specific behaviour

In general, children in primary school interact most with members of the same gender. You can see an example of this in the seating arrangement, which the children determine for themselves during the lunch hour. Boys tend to prefer physical activities such as football while girls enjoy sitting at the table doing arts and crafts or playing with barbies. Educational staff members do not consciously encourage or discourage this behaviour. Children should be free to be themselves and choose the activities that they are happiest doing.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE SOCIALISATION OF THE CHILD: PROVIDING RULES, NORMS AND VALUES

Learning about rules, norms and values

In order to function in the society of which children are a part, children must learn to adopt the rules, norms and values or 'culture' of that society. This process is called socialisation. From the moment of birth, children are socialised within their families. Through punishment and reward, explicit instructions and explanations and by demonstration, parents teach their children not only that there are rules for behaviour within the nuclear family, but that there are rules, norms and values which are important for a child to function well outside the family. Children are also socialised at out-of-school care. Here they not only learn the group rules, but also more general norms and values, both implicitly and explicitly. The group setting at out-of-school care, where children come into contact with other children and adults (perhaps even with a different social or cultural background), offers extra learning opportunities. Effective socialisation can be achieved at out-of-school care when:

- Socialisation is tailored to the child's development level
- Socialisation at out-of-school care is coordinated with socialisation at home (Van IJzendoorn, Tavecchio & Walraven, 2004)

By respecting each child's individual development level and providing a challenging environment that is suited to each child's continued development, socialisation can be tailored to each child's needs. After all, a twelve year old can understand a lot more than a child of four.

Children learn norms and values from each other and from a good example

In teaching social norms and values, such as eating nicely, sharing toys, and waiting your turn, the educational staff members strive to present the children with a good example.

- The educational staff members help children to experience themselves as good people by:
 - Involving children in comforting or helping another child
 - Assigning children small tasks
 - Explaining clearly what is expected of a child
 - Demonstrating that they (the educational staff members) are also human and can

- make mistakes
- Not setting standards that are too high for the children in order to avoid feelings of shame

Equality and respect

Each individual has equal worth though personalities and talents may differ. The educational staff members try to show the children that we are all fine as we are and that each individual deserves respect. They of course provide a good example to follow.

The educational staff members' respect for the children is vital. Children in out-of-school care can indicate which activities they are not interested in and which activities they would like to participate in. The educational staff members make a point of discussing preferences with the children. Conversely, in order to cultivate a positive atmosphere, the children must respect the educational staff members. If a educational staff member decides that something is not possible at the moment and provides the children with a clear explanation, then the children will have to accept his or her decision. The educational staff members are very conscientious about explaining clearly what is allowed and what is not allowed.

Rules at out-of-school care

To ensure a pleasant and positive atmosphere at out-of-school care, it is important that the children and educational staff members agree to certain rules. For example:

- After school, we go to the facility immediately if it is an out-of-school care day
- After school, first we sit at the table with everyone to have a drink and a chat
- If someone is talking, we let him or her finish without interrupting
- We eat and drink nicely at the table (no burping or talking with mouths full)
- We walk quietly in the hallways and classrooms
- We are allowed to run outside
- If we want to play beyond the fence, we must first ask a educational staff member
- Everyone must clean up their own things (toys, plates and cutlery) before beginning a new activity
- If we want to play on the computer, then we can for 20 minutes max
- We are nice to one another
- If we want to play with the same item at the same time, then we make an agreement to take turns
- We discuss which film we want to watch together etc.

Children are very good at establishing their own rules. Involving them in this process is a great way to stimulate a pleasant atmosphere at the facility. And if the children have helped to determine the rules, it is easier to remind them of their agreement to follow the rules when they have failed to do so.

Communication and media rules at out-of-school care

Computer and TV/video

Children cannot spend the whole afternoon playing computer games, surfing the internet, watching TV or movies. Partly because other children also want to use the computer or watch TV, but also because we feel it is important that children entertain themselves with

other activities and get to play outside from time to time. The educational staff members make agreements with the children about how long and when they may use the computer or watch TV (for example for 20 minutes when it is raining outside or only between 16.00 and 17.00).

Gameboy

If your child would like to bring a computer game from home, that is fine. However, we have rules about its use while at out-of-school care as children should not be playing with it the entire afternoon. We like to stimulate contact with other children and participation in activities such as board games, arts and crafts or outside play. Furthermore, we are not liable for items brought from home.

Internet

At some locations, children have access to the internet. We do not feel that internet access is an essential feature of out-of-school care, but if the location has a connection, then we are happy to make use of it. We do enforce certain safety standards to ensure that inappropriate websites (such as porno-sites) are not accessible.

Mobile phones

A number of children in the upper primary school classes have mobile phones. A number of phones have photo capabilities in addition to the standard call and text functions. We feel it is important to make agreements with children about this. As far as we can tell, it is harmless for children to show their friends holiday photos etc. but we do not want children to make calls or send texts during out-of-school care hours. Not all children are aware of the costs they incur when doing so. If you would like to speak with your child, then please call the location and if your child would really like to call you, then he or she may ask the educational staff member for permission, which will of course be granted.

MP3-players

While eating and during group activities, we do not want children listening to their MP3 players. We prefer to stimulate enjoyable contact with other children. At our facilities, we also have music players and a radio. However, if children would like to listen to music alone or with a friend after participating in a group activity, then we feel that this should be allowed.

Rewarding positive behaviour and giving compliments

Why is this so crucial?

- Children who receive positive attention from educational staff members feel more appreciated and it increases their self-confidence.
- Children with healthy self-confidence are more likely to exhibit positive behaviour in their interactions with educational staff members as well as other children.
- Compliments should be given using I-messages: "I think it's so great that you can tie your own shoelaces" (to a kindergartener).
- Everybody likes attention and paying attention to negative behaviour is a type of reward that brings the risk of the child exhibiting the negative behaviour more often since he or she is receiving attention.

- Focus attention on what you would like to see: good manners at the table, waiting your turn, sharing toys and allowing others to finish speaking. "I am so pleased that you remembered to clear away your plate after eating."
- Trust children and give them the space to choose/do things for themselves. Allow them to establish rules that they can hold themselves to.
- Children who have a restless nature and do not want to sit nicely at the table can be asked to bring something to the table or to clear something off so that they can use their energy for something positive. This should be rewarded enthusiastically.

Discipline

If a child cannot be reasoned with or is verbally or physically aggressive towards educational staff members or other children, the educational staff members can decide to set the child on a chair or bench just outside the classroom or in another room so that he or she can cool off. Depending on the (developmental) age of the child, the educational staff member can discuss the incident with the child. Educational staff members can also decide to ban a child from participation in a certain activity such as football in the schoolyard for five to ten minutes if the child does not follow the rules and is bothering other children with his or her behaviour. This approach is only used if a child pushes it too far. It is important that the educational staff members can speak with parents/carers about disciplining a child and when possible pull together so that standards are clear to the child.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARENT(S) AND COORDINATING PARENT/CARER REQUESTS

We strive to create a childcare situation that is an extension of the familiar atmosphere at home. As part of our efforts, we invest a lot of energy in cultivating open communication with parents. Educational staff members work hard on building a trusting relationship with parents through application of their professional expertise.

Daily communication

Daily communication takes place when parents come to collect the children. How did the day go, where and with whom did the child play, did he or she have a fight, can the child entertain him or herself? Do you as a parent have any suggestions about the care of your child? At this time, the educational staff members like to request information about the child. They are also anxious to hear if there are any special circumstances in the child's life that may affect his or her development, health and/or immediate surroundings.

Parent interviews

Each year, the educational staff members arrange parent interviews in order to provide parents with an opportunity to discuss their child with the educational staff members. The interviews are announced ahead of time so that the parents have a chance to consider subjects they would like to address. For instance: how are things going at out-of-school care, does the child enjoy attending or not? How is the child developing and interacting with others? Usually, interviews take place around 16.00 so that the child is still in his or her group and the conversation can be conducted in peace.

In addition, each location manager is ready and willing to make time for parents should

there be any need for a personal conversation. Twice a year, each location organises a small party. This is an enjoyable event for both parents and the Zo BSO team and an excellent opportunity to get to know one another better!

Parents' night

Another enjoyable annual event is the informative parents' night. Parent nights are coordinated to address parents' needs for substantive information, which are determined based on the results of the annual customer satisfaction survey. Topics might include language and social-emotional development or children's eating habits and are presented by knowledgeable guest speakers.

Parent representation

We place a great deal of value on parents' opinions. That is why there is a Parents' Committee active at each Zo location contributing input on management and daily policies. The Parents' Committee meets regularly each year in order to discuss matters with the location manager. The function of the Parents' Committee is outlined in the joint council regulations. These regulations include agreements that have been made with the management concerning the function and activities of the Parents' Committee. The special thing about our joint council arrangement is that joint control leads to real power for the parents. Representatives from each Parents' Committee meet together three times a year as members of the Central Parents' Committee and discuss with the management policies that affect the entire organisation.

Transition to primary school

It is possible to obtain a written transfer form for your child to take along to primary school. We would also like to maintain contact with your child's teachers at school. The transfer form will only be drafted with the parents' permission and is based on the primary school's transfer form. This transfer form is filled out under the supervision of the location manager and is therefore signed by the same. Parents will receive the transfer form once it is requested.

Complaint procedure

Despite our best efforts to supervise and instruct your child with care and attention, it is possible that you are less than perfectly satisfied about a certain issue. We invite you to communicate your dissatisfaction to us and we feel it is very important that your concerns are heard and addressed. You can find more information concerning the complaint procedure on our website.

ADDED DEVELOPMENTAL VALUE OF GROUP CHILDCARE

Contact with other children

As children get older, contact with other children takes on an increasingly important role. Peers that go to the same school and are in the same class and are perhaps going through the same developmental phases (including social development) meet a child's need for social contact. Educational staff members stimulate the development of friendships between the children. We strive to create a stable group environment. When transitioning

children into a new group, the stability of the group is closely monitored.

Although the educational staff member-child relationship remains the central focus of pedagogic aims in childcare, the fact that children are part of group is another interesting aspect of childrearing at out-of-school care. Being in a group together is a remarkable and constant characteristic of out-of-school care: the children look at each other, laugh at each other or together, play together, argue and comfort one another, etc. Interactions with other children, both within and outside of their own group, can be very stimulating. The educational staff members play an important part in this and make sure that the interactions between the children are as positive as possible.

The group perspective can therefore be an appealing source of inspiration for pedagogic leadership in out-of-school care and in providing advice to the leaders on how they can harness the group dynamic. Concluding this section, you can read a number of examples of how this can be done

The group dynamic as a source of inspiration for pedagogic leadership

Examples of behaviours and/or situations that educational staff members watch out for:

- Does a child receive and make use of opportunities to contribute to 'the whole'? (that is to say: a group creation, a game, a puzzle, or a turn during group discussions etc.)
- Children learn to share and respect one another. This occurs during activities and the mealtime ritual but also throughout the day as they have to share the attention of the educational staff members with each other. Prerequisite to this learning opportunity are sufficient toys and good coordination of the educational staff members' attention for the individuals in the group. During activities, each child's autonomy is respected and any limits they indicate are taken into account.
- Children learn a lot from one another and from how the educational staff members interact with the children. Other children and the educational staff members serve as examples to be imitated as children develop various skills and behaviours. There is sufficient opportunity to observe social behaviour and subsequently to practice it. For instance: children pass things to one another during mealtimes, comfort one another in times of sadness, help each other complete a difficult puzzle, put on jackets together before going outside and help during meal preparation. Responsibility for each other plays a role during each of these moments and emphasises a sense of community.
- Children can enjoy certain events and activities more as a group than they can as individuals. This is true for instance of festive activities such as birthdays and holidays. Birthdays are celebrated by presenting the birthday boy or girl with a special part hat and singing to him or her. Holidays such as *Sinterklaas*, Christmas, Easter and Carnival are also celebrated as a group with special activities on or around these special days.
- Dancing to music and theatre are expressive activities that children love to engage in together.

Conflicts

When conflicts arise during activities in which children have to share things with one another, socially accepted norms and values are transmitted to the children including: do not just take toys from one another, give back a toy that was taken, play together with an item and good sharing is rewarded with praise. In conflicts too, the children's autonomy is respected and educational staff members do not always intervene immediately so that the children have a chance to learn to resolve conflicts independently. This is actively encouraged by the educational staff members and helps children to become more resilient and creative in coming up with a harmonious solution.

If educational staff members see that the children are not able to work things out of if they begin to get physical or start swearing, then the educational staff members step in. He or she will explain how one child's behaviour affects the other child and vice versa. Educational staff members try to utilise children's ability to empathise when teaching norms and values.

Bullying

Children who are bullied often do not have much faith in themselves or other people. Bullies also lack self-confidence, but demonstrate this in another way: by trying to exercise power over others. Bullying can take many different forms: verbal abuse, physical violence, exclusion, hiding or damaging someone's things, ignoring someone etc. Educational staff members always act in these cases as the long-term consequences of bullying can be quite serious for a child. The educational staff members are aware of this fact and take the time to talk with each child separately. The children are always taken seriously. Educational staff members also ask who else may be a bully, what type of bullying he or she is engaged in, how it started and if the teachers know about it and what their reaction is. Educational staff members do not get angry with the bully or the child who has been bullied. Rather, they try to build both children's self-esteem so that they can feel more comfortable in their own skin. This also helps to increase a child's resilience so that he or she can learn to indicate his or her limits or (if the child is a bully) no longer feels the need to bully others. Mediation between a bully and a child who has been bullied is part of our function as supervisors. If a child is being bullied or is bullying other children, we will inform the parents/carers as well as the children's teachers. The teachers can respond to the situation in school as can parents at home.

If at a certain point bullying has become quite common, the out-of-school care facility will organise a theme week addressing the topic. The goal is to provide children with more insight into what bullying actually is and what types of tragic consequences it can have for bullied children. We have the children read aloud from a book about bullying and talk with them about what they think about it. We ask if the children can identify and how they feel if they are bullied or why they feel like bullying others.

PEDAGOGIC TRENDS

Our pedagogic policy in light of various pedagogic trends in childcare

There are a number of pedagogic philosophies that have been formulated by pedagogues with a specific approach to children and are based on diverse basic principles. They all

have one thing in common: the individual child is central. We are of the opinion that each philosophy and its unique tenants can help to inform our work methods and offer a positive contribution to the children in our care. That is why we have chosen to glean inspiration from several different sources that provide insight into child development. This means that Zo Kinderopvang & BSO has selected certain aspects from various trends and integrated these into the manner in which we provide childcare. The selection of these aspects is based on the interests of the children. By applying the best aspects from multiple philosophies and creating a solid theoretical background for how to best approach childcare, we can better anticipate the unique needs of each individual child. A brief explanation of the various pedagogic philosophies and our take on these trends can give you an idea as to how we draw from the sources of knowledge available to us in the childcare branch.

Freinet

Freinet discovered how children's inattention and disinterest evaporated like water on a hot day once they were taken outside. All at once, they wanted to know everything about what they observed in the natural world or experienced when walking down the street or visiting various workplaces. Freinet feels it is important for a child to maintain contact with the world around him or her.

Childcare according to Freinet's ideas does not consist of allowing them to grow up in the sheltered world of a child-friendly paradise, far from the dangerous world of grown-ups. Educational staff members regularly take the children outside to buy groceries or take a long walk. Children learn to handle real big-people materials rather than toy imitations. Furthermore, Freinet places much value on freedom of expression, which can be cultivated through theatre, dance, music and art. Freedom of expression is an excellent means through which children can show each other how they view the world they live in.

In our vision: Freedom of expression is good for children's development. That is why we regularly provide dance and musical activities. As the children get older, we offer more activities that encourage individual expression such as drama and theatre in out-of-school care. Children who attend out-of-school care also go outside to learn more about the world of grown-ups. Being able to develop through play is a very important aspect of our vision. That is why each group is stocked with toys suited to the ages of the children in that group. We try to bring a slightly modified version of the grown-up world inside for the children to enjoy through appropriate toys.

Rudolf Steiner

Steiner, the founder of anthroposophy, saw the life of the mind and education in the arts as the basis for intellectual development. A child is still completely open to the outside world and the people in it. By imitating this world, the child becomes acquainted with it and learns how to function as a part of it.

According to Steiner, it is critical to provide children with a secure foundation. Warm interest in the child, exposure to natural elements and a structured rhythm (like that of the seasons) are the most important aids in this endeavour. Nature takes on a significant role

in childrearing. That is why it is preferable to provide toys made of natural materials. Nature is emphasised when furnishing childcare facilities. There is a great deal of focus on expression and fantasy. Children learn to express their emotions through painting and enjoying other arts and crafts.

In our vision: We use natural elements as highlighted by anthroposophy. We have a range of wooden toys, but do not use wooden toys to the exclusion of all else. Our play areas incorporate various natural materials in order to emphasise nature, but this is based on specific safety parameters. We focus on seasons because this is an important aspect of general development for children, but seasons are not the basis on which a child's world should be structured.

Maria Montessori

According to Montessori, children should be given the space to explore and do things for themselves. A child's development progresses in phases and in a tempo that varies from child to child. In each phase, a child is receptive to a certain material (Montessori speaks of materials rather than toys). It is essential that a teacher observe a child closely in order to be able to offer the right material at the right time. If the child is no longer stimulated by the material, a new material is selected.

If the child's environment is orderly and neat, with a proper place for everything, then children do not need an adult's help to find the materials they need. Most Montessori-childcare facilities have created a very inventive environment: a child-friendly environment in which children can do things themselves as much as possible.

In our vision: In laying out our classrooms, we strive to create a space where children can enjoy independent activities and are able to get up to the table themselves, for example. This goes back to ideas from the Montessori philosophy. Also based on Montessori ideas is the fact that we view children as self-activating and self-developing individuals. We allow the children space to explore and respect each child in his or her development. However, we do not exclusively observe the children, proffer materials and provide stimulation if necessary. Children who are more passive or need more structure can start to feel overwhelmed and lost as a result of this type of daily routine. These children require a different approach. That is why also offer specific group activities that benefit a child's social-emotional development. This approach is at odds with the Montessori philosophy.

Janusz Korczak

Respect, trust and forgiveness are three words central to Korczak's childrearing theories. You must have faith in the natural goodness and sincerity of children without pressuring them. It is also vital to accept children as they are and show understanding for the rate at which they develop. Children should not be raised with an eye to the future as they are very good at living in the here and now and should enjoy this phase. If a child makes a mistake, it should be forgiven. Troublemakers need love and attention rather than punishment. Teachers should come across as counsellors and a source of comfort.

Korczak is also of the opinion that children cannot grow up in complete freedom since

they need to be protected from dangers that they are not even aware of. But in offering this protection, teachers should not smother the individual characteristics of each child. Children cannot be protected from every little thing because they also need to be able to learn about risks and making mistakes in order to develop defensiveness and independence.

In our vision: We feel that it is important that children learn to be independent and sometimes they have to learn about the consequences of their decisions through trial and error. We are aware of each individual child and his or her abilities. Certain elements of Korczak's philosophy can be found in our policies, however we feel that a child does need to be raised with an eye to the future. After all, we prepare our children for each new step they will be undertaking. This starts as early as the baby group in day care. The children who have reached a certain stage in their development and are deemed 'ready' move on to the toddler group and eventually to the pre-schooler group. This continues as they move through the primary education system and is based on a child's personal and social competencies, which we try to stimulate. As far as discipline goes, rewarding good behaviour is always better than punishing bad behaviour. However, if a child has been warned not to hurt his or her playmates and continues to do so, the child will be disciplined, for example by being removed from the situation and being placed elsewhere in the group.

Thomas Gordon

The essence of Gordon's childrearing method can be stated as follows: observe children, listen to what they have to say and take it seriously. Do not immediately offer your own solutions in order to limit a child's frustration, rather allow him or her to come up with a solution independently. Gordon's philosophy is very popular in the Netherlands and the Effective Parenting course is based on his ideas.

Active listening is central to Gordon's method. You need to listen closely to what a child is trying to tell you, using both verbal and nonverbal communication, then verbalise and respond to what it is you think the child is trying to say. If you have decoded the child's message correctly, then the child's response to you will reflect your success. If you haven't got it in one go, then the child can continue trying to clarify his or her message until you have understood what is going on with the child. The child then feels understood and accepted, which contributes to a positive relationship with parents, teachers etc. This method also works with babies even though they cannot communicate verbally.

In our vision: We look at each child as an individual and respect his or her unique personality. This underlying thought means that we take each child seriously and listen to what he or she is trying to tell us. The same applies to our communication with the babies in our care. Reiterating a baby's feelings in words helps the child to feel understood and accepted, even though he or she cannot yet use language to communicate with the educational staff members. When a child is sad, he or she is immediately comforted because we feel that the important process of coming up with an independent solution in order to overcome sadness is a secondary priority. Safety and warmth come first.

Reggio Emilia

In the Italian city of Reggio Emilia, a very specific form of childcare has been in place for more than thirty years. Children are looked after in horizontal groups consisting of children of the same age. These groups remain together throughout their primary education. When the children move up to the next grade after the summer holidays, their teachers accompany them. The groups are therefore very close.

Each childcare centre has an in-house pedagogue and artist as education through the arts plays a central role in childcare. Reggio Emilia gives children space to develop their particular talents. Each facility features a central square or piazza where children from different groups can meet one another. Other features include a house of mirrors, a store and a dress-up area where children can explore and discover the world around them.

In our vision: We also place children in horizontal groups, but the educational staff members do not accompany the children as they transition up to the next out-of-school care group since the educational staff members are selected for their abilities to work with children of certain ages and supervise all related activities. The Reggio Emilia Approach also advocates an open-door policy. However, we feel that it is important to provide the children with a foundation of warmth and security when they attend out-of-school care. That is why we place the children in a main group. By organising activities in regular groups, we can achieve the structure, predictability and continuity that lead to children feeling safe and secure. Outside of these organised activities and the joint snack time at the table after school, children are free to visit other classrooms and participate in activities there. The various groups also meet up with one another in the outside spaces and this offers new challenges for the development of their social interaction skills. More space as a result of the open door policy does not necessarily mean more learning opportunities. Children who need more structure in their day tend to get the worst of it in such liberal situations. That is why we keep the children in their main groups for a number of group activities. Moreover, it is more difficult to approach children as individuals as they tend to become less visible amongst a mass of other children. Finally, we have high standards of safety and an open door policy would prevent us from providing childcare within these parameters. If a child wants to play beyond the facility fence, then he or she must ask permission from the educational staff member. It is important for the educational staff members to know which child's parents have granted permission for their child to play beyond the facility fence, so please inform them of your decision.

APPENDICES

Daily routine during school weeks

15.15: Children ages four through seven are collected from school by the educational staff

members;

Older children may travel to the out-of-school care facility on their own.

The educational staff members will coordinate this with the school; the arrangement is dependent on the individual child's degree of independence.

15.45: After school, we begin with a snack of fruit and crackers along with a drink at the table in the children's main groups (4 – 7 or 8 – 12 year olds).

16.15: Free play, children choose which activities they would like to undertake.

The educational staff members can help in this process and offer activities.

16.30: The first children are picked up.

17.00: Raw veggie snack and a drink at the table.

18.30: Out-of-school care closes.

Daily routine during school holidays

07.30: First children are dropped off. Free play.

09.15: All children should have arrived. Free play.

09.30: Biscuit and a drink at the table.

11.30: Lunch in the group.

12.30: Organised activity—may be on location or somewhere else. It is also possible that the activity begins in the morning if the children are going on an excursion. Parents are informed of excursions beforehand. When the children take excursions, they will eat lunch somewhere else.

15.00: Snack of fruit and crackers along with a drink at the table.

16.00: Free play, children choose which activities they would like to undertake.

16.30: The first children are picked up.

17.00: Return from any excursion, raw veggie snack and a drink at the table.

18.30: Out-of-school care closes.

Nutrition Appendix

General

The choice of nutritional products and the times at which they are eaten is based on advice from the *Consultatiebureau* and the guidelines provided by the *Voedingscentrum* in their "*schijf van vijf*" [five food groups] program.

Standard nutritional products:

- Fresh fruit in season and apples, bananas, pears and tangerines
- Light brown bread
- Semi-skimmed pasteurised milk
- Juice: *roosvicee* and thick juice
- Savoury sandwich filling: cheese spread, deli meats, vegetarian spread, sandwich spread and cheese slices
- Sweet sandwich filling: *appelstroop*, chocolate spread and peanut butter
- Snacks: crackers, rice crackers, bread sticks and biscuits

Dealing with allergies

During the intake interview, we will ask about any possible allergies that may need to be

considered when caring for your child. If a child has a food allergy and requires another type of food than what we provide as part of the standard selection, then the parents must supply the alternatives. The educational staff members will make sure that children with food allergies do not ingest any items that can trigger an allergic reaction. We avoid sausage spread as it contains too much Retinol A, which can cause thesaurismosis in young children, which can be very hazardous to their health.

Products brought by parents

If a child requires a different product than that which is provided in our standard selection, the parents are responsible for supplying an alternative. The educational staff members will keep an eye on the supply of alternative products and alert parents when it needs to be topped up. Nutritional products that need to be kept cold must be transported accordingly.

Nutrition

Group 1: Bread, potatoes, rice, pasta and legumes

This group provides starch, protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals

- Light brown bread is eaten at lunch.

Group 2: Fruits and vegetables

This group provides vitamin C and fibre

- Children eat a fruit snack in the afternoon. Each child is given a half to a whole piece of fruit.
- The children are given various types of seasonal fruit so that they can learn about different tastes.
- The fruit juice they drink also provides the children with vitamin C.
- Along with the afternoon snack of crackers, children are given a cup of juice.

Group 3: Dairy products, meat, chicken, fish, eggs and soy products

These items provide protein, vitamins, calcium and iron

- Children are given a cup of semi-skimmed milk or buttermilk at lunch.
- The first sandwich is made with a savoury filling such as cheese spread, vegetarian spread, sandwich spread, cold cuts or cheese slices.
- If a child would like a second sandwich, it can be spread with something sweet if he or she so desires.
- If parents have no objections, a child may eat up to four sandwiches (1 slice of bread each) at lunch.

Group 4: Margarine, low-fat margarine, cooking products and oil

These products provide fat and the fat-soluble vitamins A, D and E

- Sandwiches are spread with low-fat margarine to ensure that recommended amounts of fat and vitamins A, D and E are eaten.

Snacks:

Crackers with vegetarian spread, cheese spread, rice crackers and bread sticks. At the end of the day, children are occasionally given a special type of biscuit.

Basic nutrition: guideline daily amounts for children

Bread:	1-3 slices (35 –105 g)
Potatoes, rice, pasta & legumes:	1.5 potatoes or 1 scoop of rice/pasta/legumes (75 g)
Vegetables:	1-2 scoops of veggies (75 g)
Fruit:	1.5 pieces of fruit (150 g)
Dairy:	300 ml milk (or milk products)* and 10 grams of cheese
Meat, egg or meat replacements:	50 g
Margarine, cooking products etc:	15 g
Liquids:	0.8 litres

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Amounts quoted by weight apply to food products as they are eaten (i.e. cooked weight).

*The smallest amounts apply to the youngest children. For the older children in this age group, the amount is 450 ml for the girls and 600 ml for the boys.

Grooming/care Appendix

Standard grooming/care products:

- Sudocrème protective cream (for rough patches)
- Arniflor salve to relieve little bumps and scraps
- First aid kit stocked according to GGD guidelines
- High-SPF sunscreen for children

The grooming and care products have all been deemed safe in a TNO study (TNO-report: The Big Non-toxic Cosmetics Test, January 2005)