

Your child—
more than worthy of our best care

Daycare Pedagogic Policy

FOREWORD

You have in front of you the pedagogic policy of Zo Kinderopvang. This pedagogic policy outlines how we provide childcare at our daycare facilities and why we take the approach that we do. It clarifies and provides insight into our work methods.

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 care and rearing 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 daycare centre. This helps to harmonise the care and rearing the children receive

at home and at daycare 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!

OUR PEDAGOGIC MISSION

Zo Kinderopvang's pedagogic mission is to provide daycare for children from zero to four years old and after-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
2. To develop personal competencies
3. To develop social competencies
4. To contribute to the socialisation of the child: providing rules, norms and values

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 care and rearing 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 daycare centre.

Feeling of well-being

Well-being can be described as a generally positive state experience 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 daycare 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. But as a place that the child regularly visits, the daycare facility can also have an important effect on his or her well-being. The child's surroundings in the daycare 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 a child 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 include such day-to-day items as nutrition, sleep, clean and dry clothing, body temperature and exercise. In the appendix, you will find the daily routine for all the age groups.

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. The younger a child is, the more difficult it is for him or her to retain an overview of event sequence in the present, in the future and in the past. 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 (see appendix) 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 daycare facilities

Our facilities are located in buildings that are zoned for wellness, or have a zoning exemption. The indoor and outdoor spaces at each location meet the requirements outlined in the Daycare Quality Policy Guidelines and the structural regulations outlined in the Building Code for Daycare Facilities.

Our daycare facilities are characterised by horizontal group organisation. This means that the classrooms and their furnishings match up with the developmental age of the children in that group.

The regular daycare classrooms are divided into the following categories:

- Baby groups (developmental age of 0 to about 18 months)
- Toddler groups (developmental age of 18 to about 30 months)
- Preschooler groups (developmental age of 30 to about 48 months)

The classrooms for after-school care for children attending primary school have location

specific names.

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.

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. In consideration of safety, all play equipment is surrounded by rubber tiles, sand or grass to cushion any falls. 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. Some toddler classrooms have their own balcony where the children can play.

During normal weather, the preschoolers and toddlers play outside at least once a day. During extreme weather, an alternative activity is offered. In good weather, the babies also regularly go out for fresh air, escorted by the regular educational staff members. Warm weather is a great opportunity to organise outdoor activities for the children involving water. If there is no natural shade, then we create shady areas with parasols and

other equipment.

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 daycare facility. These spaces are equipped with the necessary safety measures to protect children, including:

- Stair gates.
- Railings installed at child-height on the stairs.
- A child-safe closure at the front door in the form of a latch too high for children to reach. It is impossible for your child to leave the building and end up on the public road.

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.

Nap rooms

Since a child in daycare is exposed to so many stimuli, it is essential that the child also receive sufficient rest. Each classroom has a directly adjacent, completely enclosed and safe nap room where children can rest. The nap rooms are furnished with beds that meet European standards for safety, have sufficient ventilation and can be darkened during nap times. It is possible to monitor the nap rooms directly from the classroom. In the few instances in which this is not possible, the educational staff members make use of a baby monitor to keep tabs on the children. Fabrics in the nap rooms are easy to clean which also helps to reduce the presence of allergens.

Each child is assigned his or her own bed, which ensures that the sleeping situation becomes familiar and trusted within a short period of time. For hygiene purposes, each child is provided with his or her own bedding for example, a sleeping bag. The sheets are changed each week except in the case of visible soiling, in which case they are of course changed immediately. A Safe Sleeping Checklist is posted in each nap room. This checklist is followed each day when putting children to sleep in order to create the safest sleeping situation possible.

Bathrooms

In order to increase children's self-resourcefulness, each preschooler group has its own bathroom that has been fitted out especially for children. The bathrooms have at least two children's toilets and a sink and towels for washing hands at child-height. For children who do not yet use a toilet, there are also potties in the bathroom.

DAYCARE CHARACTERISTICS

Ratio of children to educational staff members

The group size for each age group has been established in accordance with the Daycare Quality Policy Guidelines. The number of educational staff members to children (child-leader ratio) is always at least:

- One educational staff member per 4 children ages 0 to 1 year

- One educational staff member per 5 children ages 1 to 2 years
- One educational staff member per 6 children ages 2 to 3 years
- One educational staff member per 8 children ages 3 to 4 years
- One educational staff member per 10 children ages 4 to the oldest primary school pupil

In daycare, it is usual for there to be two regular educational staff members appointed for each regular group. Therefore, the maximum number of children in each group is as follows*:

- Baby group: 9 children
- Toddler group: 11 children
- Preschooler group: 14 children

The daily routine

Elements of the daily routine that regularly recur are the feeding and care of the children. You can find a specification of the nutritional and grooming products on offer in the appendix. Here you can also read a full description of the feeding rituals.

So as not to disturb the sleeping, waking and feeding rhythm of young babies, their care is completely determined by the development of these very tiny little individuals. This means that a baby's rhythm at home will be replicated at the crèche. Older babies, toddlers and preschoolers are cared for according to a regular daily routine (see appendix).

*As long as the classroom has a minimum surface area of 3.5 m² per child, furnished accordingly.

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. These aspects of childcare ensure that daycare becomes a familiar place where a child feels safe and secure. The stability of the daily routine in each group and the regular rituals 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.

Rituals

For each activity in the daily routine, there is a ritual that is carried out in the group.

Daily routine board

At a central point in each group hangs a board that displays the daily routine and the group composition. We call this the daily routine board.

The daily routine refers to the schedule of recurring daily group activities taking place in the toddler and preschooler groups including: eating, sleeping/resting and nappy changes/toilet time. This daily routine forms the basis of the educational staff members' plan each day. It allows for sufficient time to schedule in activities and free playtime.

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.

For the older children, there is also time for free play throughout the course of the day. Group activities are also provided and may include playing music and singing. Furthermore, there is a wide selection of challenging toys and games to suit each developmental level.

Individual attention for each child

Within the structure of the daily routine, there is enough time for the educational staff members to cuddle with and provide individual attention to each child. For example, during moments of individual care, they speak with the children they are caring for. 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.

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 regular organization of the day (the daily routine) provides a clear structure and makes the day predictable for children. By actively providing additional structure, the educational staff members create an order that allows children to have a better grip on their surroundings. This plays an increasingly important role once a child is at least a year old. The child will then start discovering the wider world around him or her and will also have to learn about the rules that apply in that world. More attention is given to the proper rearing of the child. 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

Organisation of annual activities

Annual activities include the following: 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. Birthdays are celebrated either in the morning during fruit snack time or in the afternoon when the children eat crackers. The timing is determined by the educational staff members, depending on the number of children who are awake for the festivities. 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.

- We organise an annual Grandparent's Day at each location. You can ask the educational staff members what date it is.
- Twice a year, the daycare 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 encourages the children to grow further in these areas.

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. Toys that the children place in their mouths on a daily basis are cleaned on a daily basis. Floors and furniture are also cleaned daily. We also have contracts with a cleaning company that provides a thorough cleaning service each week. For hygiene purposes, each child is provided with his or her own bedding for example, a sleeping bag. The sheets are changed each week except in the case of visible soiling, in which case they are of course changed immediately. Dishes are washed in a dishwasher that has a disinfecting program. This ensures that the baby bottles and teats are carefully disinfected on a daily basis.

Since children in the baby group mostly crawl on the ground as opposed to walking, the educational staff members wear slippers and we ask parents to put booties over their shoes before entering the classroom in order to prevent germs from the street coming in on their shoes.

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 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. 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.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EDUCATIONAL STAFF MEMBERS

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 crèche 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.

When interacting with babies, the emphasis is on nonverbal responses since babies are themselves masters of nonverbal communication. This is the way in which they express themselves and how they can learn to understand others better and better. When providing babies with emotional support, the educational staff members have to train their eyes and ears to receive the nonverbal communication signals that babies send out. Once they have decoded a message, it is important that the educational staff members fulfil the baby's needs so that he or she feels understood and safe.

With children who can already speak, verbal communication methods are used much more prevalently than nonverbal methods. 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 children are sending out. Subsequently responding to the child's signal completes the essential second phase of the communication process.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OTHER CHILDREN

As children get older, their contact with other children takes on an increasingly important role. Time with peers who are going through the same social development phases is a good way for children to meet their need for social contact. Children start to make friends. That is why when it is time for children to move up to a new group we try to transition peers from the same group who attend on the same days around the same time so that they do not have to be separated. We strive to create a stable group environment. When transitioning children into a new group, the stability of the group is closely monitored.

Developing personal competencies

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 the daycare centre. Educational staff members speak with the children continually and provide numerous explanations. For young children, this dialogue is also paired with a number of gestures. Additionally, the children enjoy a daily read-aloud activity. Singing songs and practicing nursery rhymes also stimulates the children's language development.

Cognitive development

In order to stimulate cognitive development, various types of activities are offered that incorporate shapes, colours, numbers, letters, days, months and seasons.

The following materials are used to facilitate these activities:

- Story books, picture books, construction materials, puzzles, shapes and colours
- Artistic materials such as paints and drawing materials, clay, paper, wood, puppets, music and instruments including CDs and TV in after school care locations

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

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 daycare grow up among peers at a much younger age than children who are raised exclusively at home with family. 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

Contributing to the socialisation of the child:

Providing 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 daycare. Here they not only learn the group rules, but also more general norms and values, both implicitly and explicitly. The group setting at daycare, 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 daycare when:

- Socialisation is tailored to the child's development level
- Socialisation at daycare 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.

Children learn norms and values from each other and from 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

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 takes place when a parent drops off and/or picks up their child. The information parents provide to educational staff members is just as important as the information educational staff members provide to parents. In the morning, the educational staff members are interested to know if the child has slept and eaten well. 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.

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. 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 Kinderopvang team and an excellent opportunity to get to know one another better! 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 motor development or children's eating habits and are presented by knowledgeable guest speakers.

Notebooks

In the notebook belonging to your child, you will find information recorded for you by the educational staff members. Important, funny and exciting news items are noted down in the notebook that travels back and forth between home and daycare with your child. Educational staff members write in this notebook regularly. It is useful for parents to note down important messages such as if your child's nutritional needs have changed. In order to coordinate the situation at home as much as possible with the situation at the crèche, it is valuable to note down any particulars related to your child's experiences at home. This guarantees that the information is passed on and an added bonus is that the notebook becomes a treasured memento of your child's early years.

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. The educational staff members will remind you of this as your child approaches the age of four. 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 when their child leaves to attend primary school.

ADDED DEVELOPMENTAL VALUE OF GROUP CHILDCARE

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 daycare. Not all that long ago, children did not have a great deal of group interaction until they reached primary school. These days, more and more children attend daycare where they are (often from a young age) part of a group of other children for several days each week. Being in a group together is a remarkable and constant characteristic of daycare: 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 daycare 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, a turn at singing or during group discussions etc.)
- In the baby group, children gain early exposure to the basic principles of sharing and respecting 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.
- 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.
- 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. The daily routine lends itself well to this process. During the various rituals, there is sufficient opportunity to observe social behaviour and subsequently to practice it. For instance: children give each other food, pat each other to offer comfort when another is sad, 'help' each other when using the toilet, wash hands together, 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. For instance, this applies to festive activities such as birthdays and holidays. Birthdays are celebrated by singing to the birthday boy or girl while he or she stands on a chair wearing a special party hat. Holidays such as *Sinterklaas* are also celebrated as a group and the special activities are a real treat for the children.
- Story time is also a group social activity that children can enjoy together immensely, especially if the stories are interactive and the children can actively respond to the tale they are hearing. Dancing to music is an expressive activity that children love to engage in together. But even minor activities such as yelling aloud or foot stomping with the whole group can lead to pleasurable hilarity and gives the children a chance to expend some energy before moving on to a more sedate ritual (such as the mealtime ritual).

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 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 after school care. Children who attend after school care also go outside to learn more about the world of grown-ups. Daycare facilities are bound by certain parameters that aim to guarantee children's safety and therefore childcare is provided exclusively within the facility itself. Furthermore, we feel that big-people materials are not necessarily well-suited to providing children with great opportunities for play. 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 daycare 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. 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 preschooler 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 group since the educational staff members are selected for their abilities to work with children in a certain age group. 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 daycare. By organising activities in regular groups, we can achieve the structure, predictability and continuity that lead to children feeling safe and secure. The various groups do 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. 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.

Drs. Monique van Aken, Remedial educationalist (Dutch: orthopedagoog)

For questions or comments, please contact mvaken@zokinderopvang.nl

APPENDICES

Daily Routine Appendix

Baby group (from 4-6 months)

07.30 - 09.30: children are dropped off

09.30 - 10.00: fruit snack and juice

10.00 - 10.15: nappy changes, some children will nap

10.30 - 11.00: activities with children who are awake

11.30 - 12.00: lunch

12.00 - 12.30: nappy changes

12.30 - 14.30: nap time, nappy changes, activities with children who are awake

14.30 - 15.30: nap time, nappy changes, activities with children who are awake

15.45 - 16.00: snack time (cracker or rice cracker) and juice

16.00 - 18.30: children are picked up

Toddler group

07.30 – 09.30: children are dropped off

09.30 - 10.00: fruit snack and juice

10.00 - 10.15: nappy changes/potty time

10.30 - 11.00: activities

11.15 - 12.00: lunch

12.00 - 12.30: nappy changes and nap ritual

12.30 - 15.00: nap time

15.00 - 15.15: dress children

15.15 - 15.45: crackers and juice

16.00 - 16.15: nappy changes /potty time

16.00 - 17.00: activities, children can be picked up

17.00 - 17.30: raw veggie snack (not carrots)

17.30 - 18.30: activities, children can be picked up

Preschooler group

07.30 – 09.30: children are dropped off

09.30 - 10.00: fruit snack and juice

10.00 - 10.15: nappy changes/toilet time

10.30 - 11.00: activities

11.15 - 12.00: lunch
12.00 - 12.30: brush teeth, nappy changes and nap ritual
12.30 - 15.00: nap time
15.00 - 15.15: dress children
15.15 - 15.45: crackers and juice
16.00 - 16.15: nappy changes /toilet time
16.00 - 17.00: activities, children can be picked up
17.00 - 17.30: raw veggie snack
17.30 - 18.30: activities, children can be picked up

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. The current selection of nutritional products is based on years of experience using these products in the childcare branch.

Use of these products is made in consultation with the parents and in accordance with their wishes. It is therefore important that the educational staff members are informed of any changes in a child's eating habits at home so that they can act accordingly. The educational staff members will ask parents for updates on a regular basis. They will also regularly inquire about nutritional advice for the child as indicated by the *Consultatiebureau*.

Standard nutritional products:

- Formula: Nutrilon 1 and Nutrilon 2, rice flour
- Juice: *roosvicee* and thick juice
- Fresh fruit in season and apples, bananas, pears and tangerines
- Light brown bread
- Semi-skimmed pasteurised milk
- Savoury sandwich filling: cheese spread, deli meats, vegetarian spread, sandwich spread and cheese slices
- Sweet sandwich filling: *appelstroop*, chocolate spread
- 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 do not offer peanut butter as this can cause an allergic reaction in a large percentage of children. We also 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.

Nutrition for children up to 1 year

Babies up to 6 months

- Formula: Nutrilon I and Nutrilon II
- Breast milk (May not be handed over in frozen state!)
- Parents indicate which formula and at what time their baby should drink while at crèche
- If a baby is breastfeeding, you may feed him or her at the facility
- The other option is to supply us with enough breast milk for one day (for food safety purposes, any remaining breast milk will be discarded)
- The daycare centre uses standard quality bottles with various types of teats and Avent bottles with various types of teats; all are sterilised daily in a special dishwasher with a disinfecting program

Babies from 4-6 months:

- Fruit: babies learn to eat fruit through exposure to soft fruits with a mild taste. Babies are given approximately half a piece of fruit. After the fruit snack, babies are given 100 cc of juice in a sippy cup.
- Babies (with few or no teeth) who can eat small bites are given soft fruits cut up in little pieces.
- Light brown bread
- Babies are given savoury and sweet sandwich fillings in accordance with the parents' wishes. The choices are: cheese spread, vegetarian spread and *appelstroop*.

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. Formula must be brought in powdered form; formula prepared at home may not be given at the crèche, as this would violate the Daycare Hygiene Code. 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, but may not be frozen.

Nutrition for children older than 1 year

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 morning.
- Each child receives their own bowl of fruit, also if it is cut into little pieces.
- Each child is given a half to a whole piece of fruit.

- Fruit can be eaten with a fork.
- The children are given various types of seasonal fruit so that they can learn about different tastes.
- After the fruit snack, children are given 100 cc of juice in a bottle or a sippy cup.
- The fruit juice they drink also provides the children with vitamin C.
- Along with the afternoon snack of crackers, children are given 100 cc of juice in a bottle or a sippy cup.
- At the end of the day, children are given various raw veggies such as cucumbers and tomatoes.

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

These items provide protein, vitamins, calcium and iron

- Once a child turns one, he or she can consume regular dairy products. The switch to regular milk is made in consultation with parents. Once parents give permission, the child will be given semi-skimmed milk during lunch.
- Children are given a cup of semi-skimmed milk at lunch.
- The first sandwich is spread 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. We try to encourage *appelstroop* due to its high iron content.
- 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:

- Pampers nappies
- Sudocrèm nappy cream
- Pampers nappy wipes
- Arniflor salve to relieve little bumps and scraps
- First aid kit stocked according to GGD guidelines
- High-SPF sunscreen for children
- Kids' toothbrush

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

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