

Framework Concept



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Train a child according to his way.

King Salomon, Jerusalem, 10th century BCE

“According to his way” means:

Every child must be raised as an individual.

Every shoe does not fit all feet.

Rabbi S.R. Hirsch, Frankfurt, 19th century



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1. Administration

1.1 Founder

The rainbowtrekkers Kita gGmbH is a Cologne-based provider of bilingual (English-German) kindergartens and was founded by Joel Mertens in 2006. The inspiration for its establishment came from the search for a place in a suitable kindergarten for his eldest daughter.

The *rainbow* stands for the variety of children who visit our kindergartens. *Trekkers*, as in 'trekking', suggests that education is a continual, fluid process - a journey into life on which we accompany the children in our kindergartens.

1.2 Locations

Rainbowtrekkers operates three kindergartens in Cologne at the following locations:

- Lindenthal (Dürener Str. 394, 50935 Cologne)
- Junkersdorf (Ulrich-Brisch-Weg 1, 50858 Cologne)
- Widdersdorf (Unter Linden/Auf der Vierzig 2, 50859 Cologne)

In all three institutions we look after children from one to six years of age. We accept both nursery children (1 to 3 years) and kindergarten children (3 to 6 years) including pre-school children.

Our CEO and administrative office are located at Dürener Straße 220, 50931 Cologne, Germany.

1.3 Structure

All three institutions are each managed by one principal. In the two larger institutions, Junkersdorf and Widdersdorf, the principals are supported by deputies. The principals lead teams consisting of recognised pedagogical professionals, support staff, assistants, trainees, interns and housekeeping staff.

The institutions are divided into pedagogical groups, which in turn are led by their own group leaders. The size of the pedagogical groups and the number of children and professionals per group depend on local conditions (such as room layout) and on the developmental stages of the children.

The principals are led by the administration, who also manages the institutions and assumes all employer-related responsibilities. The administration's team consists of four full-time positions: Managing director, personnel manager, secretary and pedagogical coordinator.

1.4 Self-organisation

To coordinate the pedagogical work, **team meetings** of all educational staff take place weekly or every 14 days in all three institutions.

In order to further develop teamwork, the individual teams undertake team-building measures as required. Several times a year, during the closing days of the institution, the administration and principals also organise educational **Team Days**, which can be both institution-related and interdisciplinary.

The leaders of our institutions meet monthly to exchange pedagogical information in the so-called **LM** ("Leader-Meeting").



Our so-called **MM** ("Management Meeting") also takes place monthly. Here, the educational managers from the institutions have the opportunity to get involved in the work of the administration and to help shape decision-making processes for the strategic orientation of rainbowtrekkers.

Our motto is: We are all rainbowtrekkers, but our institutions are individually shaped by the people who work in them. That's why each of our kindergartens has its own pedagogical concept, which describes the specifics of the respective location and which we would be happy to make available to you if you are interested.

2. Mission Statement

Our educational model is based on the assumption that children learn particularly well through direct practical encounters with people, objects, experiences and ideas. During this active learning process, we encourage children to explore the world around them in a playful way. Learning and development are anchored through trusting relationships with carers who support the children in their learning experiences.

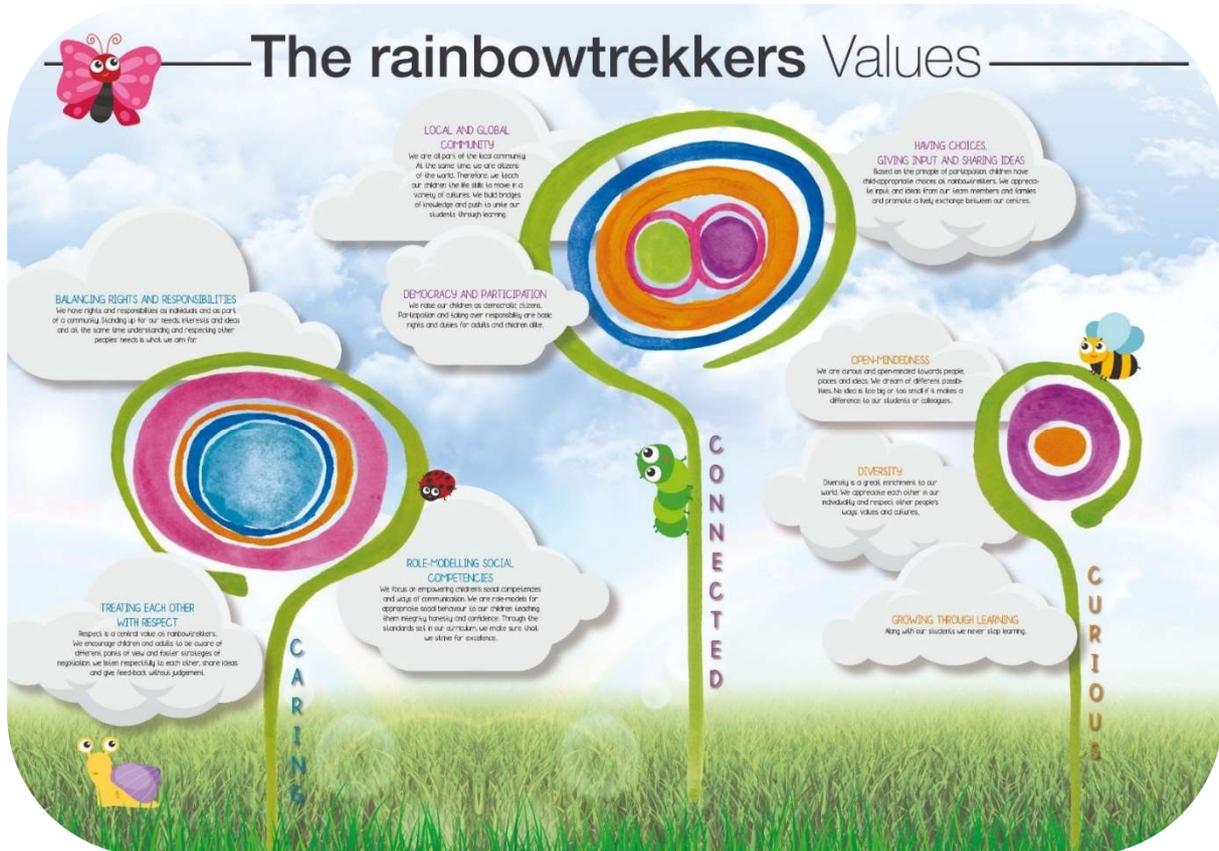
Rainbowtrekkers believes that every child is unique and people continue to learn throughout their lives. We create an environment that encourages children to live out their uniqueness so that they can internalize and embrace the feeling that "I am good as I am". At the same time, we want the children to develop an open attitude towards others.

Since the world is in a constant state of change, we want to strengthen the children's ability to successfully master their lives in this world. The children are to be strengthened in their personality and receive different strategies from us to be able to develop a relationship with other people. The human being is a social being and needs the community of other people in order to lead a happy and fulfilled life.



2.1 Values

People feel that their work makes the most sense the more their activity corresponds to their own personal values. In a joint process with all team members, we have therefore considered which values shape us most at rainbowtrekkers:



We have illustrated the results of this team process in the above presentation, which is displayed as a poster in our institutions. They read:

- **We are curious** and open to others. We respect the individuality of each individual and continue to develop.
- **We belong together**, because we are both a part of our small kindergarten community and citizens of this world. That is why children learn to move in a variety of cultures. We see social participation and the assumption of responsibility both as rights and duties for children and adults.
- **We are empathetic** by defending our needs, interests and ideas while respecting the needs of others. Rights and responsibility belong together. We expect adults to be aware of their responsibilities as role models. We give each other feedback and promote conflict resolution strategies.



2.2 Diversity

Since its foundation in 2006, rainbowtrekkers has stood for human diversity among children and employees, which is also expressed in the fact that we have included the rainbow as a sign of diversity in our choice of name. Long before it became fashionable in business to "show one's true colours," rainbowtrekkers had positioned itself as an employer that ensures equal opportunity for all employees regardless of their national, cultural, religious, sexual, or health background. Most recently, a 2019 sample showed that our approximately 50 employees come from 12 different countries of origin. The majority of the children cared for by us come from mainly monolingual German-speaking parents, but at least a large minority from mixed-language parents, including English, Turkish, Chinese, Arabic, Hebrew, Russian, Greek, Croatian or Hindi as another language.

For us, this human diversity is not a world view or an end in itself, but simply a fact to be valued. Diversity finds its limits where our values described above are not shared as a community or where they are reduced to absurdity in the name of diversity. No one should have a disadvantage or an advantage because they belong to a particular social group. Diversity also ends in our kindergartens where egalitarianism begins. We do not want to turn the other into a second "we".

For us, diversity is rather based on the dialogical principle of the German-Jewish philosopher of religion Martin Buber, according to which every human being needs a counterpart who is different from themselves, so that they can define themselves in contrast to one another. Without being different no true encounter is possible - or in the words of the Israeli author Ester Golan:

Encounter with the Other

Who do I meet if not the other?

We meet each other. But we meet in our otherness.

I need the other to see me.

I hope the other needs me so that they can be seen and see themselves in that way.

We need each other to perceive each other.

Each one must preserve their own self. Who am I if I am not me.



2.3 Pedagogical objectives

At rainbowtrekkers, the focus is on learning and growing up in a culturally diverse environment characterised by linguistic diversity. The aim is to promote children's open-mindedness and respect for others and to develop their own individual identity. The development of social skills and the awakening of the joy of lifelong learning are also important to us. At the same time, we strengthen the rights of the children and acknowledge them in their entirety.

We aim to teach children life skills that go beyond specialist knowledge. We also see each child in their entirety: emotionally, physically, relationally, intellectually, creatively and spiritually. The children should develop the courage to accept future challenges in life. In the sense of participation, they have the choice to take part in activities. The learning environment is well thought-out and well equipped so that the children can pursue their interests. We also pay attention to both types of communication (verbal and non-verbal). Since we are a multilingual institution, one of our main focuses is the promotion of the German and English language. We also attach great importance to promoting the children's sense of belonging and the right to make mistakes. Our experts support this process with an encouraging attitude towards the children.

2.4 Pedagogical approach

At rainbowtrekkers we have a so-called "eclectic" approach, i.e. our approach consists of different pedagogical action concepts from all over the world. Our pedagogical work is based on these ideas.

One of these pedagogical models is the approach of **Maria Montessori (1870-1952)**. Her teaching believes that children have the inner drive to develop through active interaction with their environment. From Montessori's point of view, the child is an active, highly motivated learner who starts learning at his own pace.

The **Reggio Approach** to education inspires our work in that teachers, children and families are an equal learning community. We believe that children learn in their own way and through the use of different materials and expressions such as music, visual arts, dramatic play, block play and more.

The curriculum of the **International Baccalaureate School** with its strong focus on promoting the feeling of being a responsible and creative world citizen also influences the philosophy and learning profile of rainbowtrekkers.

The concept of **Planting and Building in Education** by the German-Jewish educator Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe (1914-2005), which in turn is essentially based on Democracy and Education by the US reform educator John Dewey (1859-1952), also provides inspiration. Education is therefore the most harmonious synthesis possible between the "natural" forces of the child (curiosity, urge to discover, creativity) and "cultural" forces (learning community rules, social behaviour).

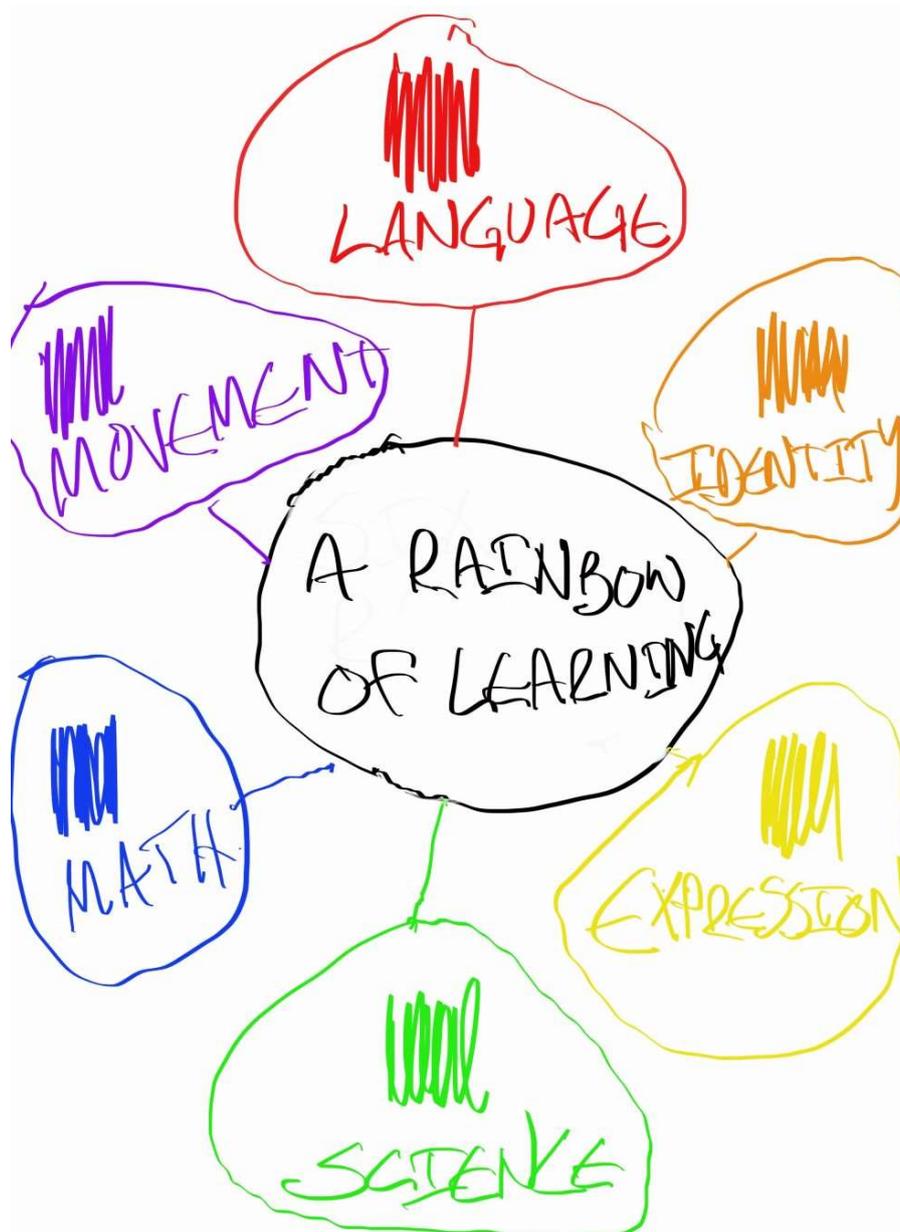
We value the constant challenge of reflecting and implementing current scientific research and educational philosophies. We firmly believe that diverse perspectives and pedagogical approaches enrich our teaching and help us to meet the needs, interests and abilities of our children.



2.5 Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on educational principles. It is intended as a framework programme for learning - and not as a list of knowledge to be taught. The children in our care want and need a learning structure that is predictable, balanced and flexible enough to adapt to the interests of the learning community.

To achieve this, we have identified six areas of knowledge for children to explore through play and research. These areas of knowledge will be discussed again and again throughout the kindergarten year. The knowledge areas are marked, according to our name, with the colours of the rainbow:



Although the names of the learning areas are reminiscent of school subjects, we understand them to be much broader in scope and fundamentally interconnected (transdisciplinary). Transdisciplinary thinking is the fundamental connectedness of all knowledge. In the course of life, we generally develop from generalists to specialists. Toddlers have no idea of individual subjects, they perceive the world as a whole. By cultivating transdisciplinary thinking from the very beginning, we encourage all members of our community - children and adults - to rediscover the interconnectedness of these fields time and time again.



3. Child welfare

3.1 Space utilisation concept

We operate three institutions at different locations in Cologne. The way spaces are used in our kindergartens differs according to the local conditions. Further information on the use of space can therefore be found in the respective pedagogical concept of each kindergarten.

3.2 Staffing plan

The minimum number of educational staff in the pedagogical teams is defined by law in the Children and Youth Education Act NRW. As a rule, significantly more personnel are also available. However, how much more depends, among other things, on the amount of financial resources available and the current situation in the labour market. The size of the teams is laid down in a staffing plan which ensures that all kindergartens - depending on their size - have the same number of staff and which is re-evaluated each kindergarten year.

The following team sizes for our institutions have been confirmed for the kindergarten year 2019/20:

The kindergarten in **Lindenthal** is the smallest, with 30 childcare places in two groups (a nursery group and a group for the approximately two-and-a-half to six-year-olds). At this location, we have seven full-time educators plus one management position which is partially exempt from group work, who are supported by a housekeeper (part-time) and occasionally by trainees and/or interns.

The **Junkersdorf** institution offers 50 childcare places in three different groups: the "Bumblebee" group as nursery class for the one-year-olds; one group for the two to four-year-olds ("Butterflies") and one group for the four to six-year-olds ("Dinos"). Here our staffing plan provides for nine full-time educators as well as a manager, completely exempt from group service, who are supported by a housekeeper (part-time) and a deputy manager, who is partly exempt from group work. In addition, trainees and/or interns supplement the team occasionally and when available.

The kindergarten in **Widdersdorf** is the largest of all with a total of 80 children in five different groups. On the ground floor there are several groups for under-3 nursery children. On the upper floor there are two groups for the older children, who work together across groups according to the partially-open concept. The Widdersdorf team consists of 15.5 educator positions as well as a full-time leader completely exempt from group work, supported by a housekeeper (full-time) and a deputy leader (partially exempt). In addition, trainees and/or interns supplement the team occasionally and when available.

3.3 Personnel qualifications

We attach great importance to professionally, well-trained employees. That is why we have clearly-defined recruitment requirements in a specification plan for applicants, for all positions from assistant to principal. In addition to the recruitment requirements with regard to qualifications and professional experience, the specification plan also regulates the requirements for the language skills of the employees, i.e. the level of bilingualism before recruitment and then while working.

Our Language Acquisition Policy (LAP) provides employees with additional support for bilingual language acquisition. In addition, our Professional Development Policy (PDP) provides organizational and financial support for the professional development of our employees.



Our human resources department supports the onboarding of foreign employees quickly and efficiently and has a lot of experience in accompanying them through the process of recognition of foreign professional certificates and degrees.

3.4 Child welfare endangerment

The welfare and protection of the children entrusted to us are rainbowtrekkers' top priority. The pedagogical professionals are regularly sensitized to potential hazards and the further measures and corresponding assistance are described in detail in our internal quality manual. The cyclical team meetings also serve to focus on this topic again and again and to discuss new developments.

In the event of suspicion of child welfare endangerment, a risk assessment is first carried out. If this initial suspicion is confirmed, an experienced specialist is called in for further consultation (contact and procedure are in the quality manual and result from §8a SGB VIII). Parents are involved in this process from the very beginning.

For us, child welfare also means that the responsible employees treat the children in a non-violent manner. Through regular employee discussions, team meetings and other professional exchange opportunities, the employees are to be checked for their attitude, the effect of their words and their actions. Employees should always be aware of their responsibility. Before an employee starts working at rainbowtrekkers, he or she must present an extended certificate of good conduct (as required by law).



4. Principles of education and development

4.1 Educational agreement and educational principles

It is the task of our pedagogical professionals to create coordinated educational occasions and learning situations for the children in order to support them in their individual development. These are based on the educational areas of our curriculum (see above).

The principals and pedagogical professionals are responsible for discovering, articulating and developing transdisciplinary connections with the children.

The topics and topic planning should generally be determined by the interests of the children. This means for the professionals to observe the children closely, to coordinate in the team and to implement the observed interests of the children in the form of an activity, an excursion or a project.

4.2 Inclusion (“Disability”)

In our institutions, children are at the centre of inclusive development processes. In principle, the inclusive aspect is about moving away from the two-group approach (disabled - non-disabled). In our opinion, there are different dimensions of heterogeneity, i.e. different levels and perspectives of difference and diversity. In this sense, all children always belong to several different groups (depending on age, gender, migration background, disability, etc.).

Rather, the children should feel addressed in all our institutions, regardless of their social, cultural or religious origin, their gender, and even regardless of their individual physical abilities and skills. They should find places where they feel comfortable. We want all children to be able to participate equally and on an equal footing in everyday life and in the respective educational processes in our kindergartens.

At rainbowtrekkers, questions of inclusion are dealt with by an inclusion expert who supports the principals with their expertise. Our internal quality manual describes in detail the appropriate measures for the admission and care of children with disability-related needs.

In order to focus on the topic of inclusion and to promote employees in this area, we offer in-house training courses. In addition, our pedagogical professionals have the opportunity to attend an external advanced training course on this or other pedagogical topics for four days per kindergarten year.

There are two development discussions for each child during the course of the kindergarten year. These meetings are conducted by the pedagogical professionals with the respective parents. This also applies to a child with special needs. In such a case, however, the following persons are also involved in the so-called "round table" talks: the responsible principal, the inclusion specialist and the therapist. A participation and development plan are also developed jointly and the child's progress is later compared with the target goal.

The feedback of pedagogical professionals with the responsible therapist takes place independently of the "round table". The therapists have the opportunity at any time to participate in the day-to-day running of the kindergarten.



5. Language development

5.1 Translingualism

The limit of our language ability is the limit of our horizon. In this sense, multilingualism is an opportunity to leave our own limitations behind us and to broaden our view of the world. In the meantime, it has also been neuroscientifically proven that early language acquisition also develops a child's cognitive abilities.

Classically, bilingual kindergartens in Europe have worked according to the concept of "one person - one language". According to this concept, children should learn "pure English" or "good German" in contact with their native speakers. This was based on a conventional idea of languages as practically autonomous, separable systems, which are acquired in a clear order (L1, L2, L3 etc.) as monolingual codes, more or less additively. Language mixing was seen as a deviation from the norm, since competent multilingual people would allegedly no longer mix their languages.

However, this practice has actually educated children (at best) to become double monolinguals. This is shown in particular by the comparison with classically multilingual countries such as Switzerland, Luxembourg, Israel or India. In these societies, language choice and use are much more flexible and dynamic. It is oriented both to the subject of the conversation and to the other person. For example, a well-trained Indian couple from the software industry may discuss professional matters directly in English for the sake of technical terminology, while in private matters they communicate in the local language Mahrathi due to their biographical familiarity, while in front of business partners in Delhi they talk to each other in Hindhi so as not to exclude them. For example, a rabbi in an Israeli yeshiva may prefer to speak English because of his own biographical background in his daily dealings with his students, switch to Hebrew and Aramaic when studying sources, and then tell the same students a joke in Yiddish because he is funny only in that language.

The concept of "one person - one language" has so far blocked such multilingualism in our kindergartens to some extent. In the past, we - following the concept of most other bilingual kindergartens in Europe - had already determined pedagogical personnel when hiring for a certain language (either English or German). This has regularly led to bizarre situations, for example when a German-speaking educator wanted to conceal from the children that she also speaks English, or when foreign colleagues used pedagogical terms in German and had been "reprimanded" by parents or managers according to the motto: "But you may only speak English here".

At rainbowtrekkers we assume today that multilingual individuals in monolingual settings can and should communicate monolingually, but that in a multilingual setting - like our kindergartens - a flexible and dynamic use of language is natural and accepted.

This access can be referred to as "translanguaging". The rainbowtrekkers are active members of the project group *Translanguaging im Alltag multilingualer Kölner Kitas* (Everyday translanguaging in multi-lingual kindergartens in Cologne), which is affiliated to the Department of Education and Social Sciences of the University of Cologne. The group is led by Prof. Dr. Argyro Panagiotopoulou. She writes in the magazine of the Centre for Multilingualism and Integration in Cologne (December 2018):

When multilingual children speak, write or calculate, they do not use individual languages or language systems, but their entire linguistic repertoire. In order to communicate with multilingual people, young children already combine linguistic elements into an integrated whole that is adapted to the respective situation and the repertoire of their conversation partners. From a monolingual external perspective, this seems somewhat unusual, but from the perspective of multilingual children this dynamic use of language is a matter of course.



For our personnel selection at rainbowtrekkers today this means that - unlike in the past - employees are no longer employed as "German-speaking" or "English-speaking" employees, but that all new employees, regardless of their native language, are obliged to prove bilingualism in German and English at least at level B2 or to make up for it promptly.

Furthermore, we would like to integrate the various family languages of our children even more strongly into the kindergarten routine, be it in the morning circle or in play situations. We also invite all parents to contribute their language repertoire and family culture, e.g. by reading aloud, telling stories, singing, dancing, researching, building, celebrating, cooking, etc. together.

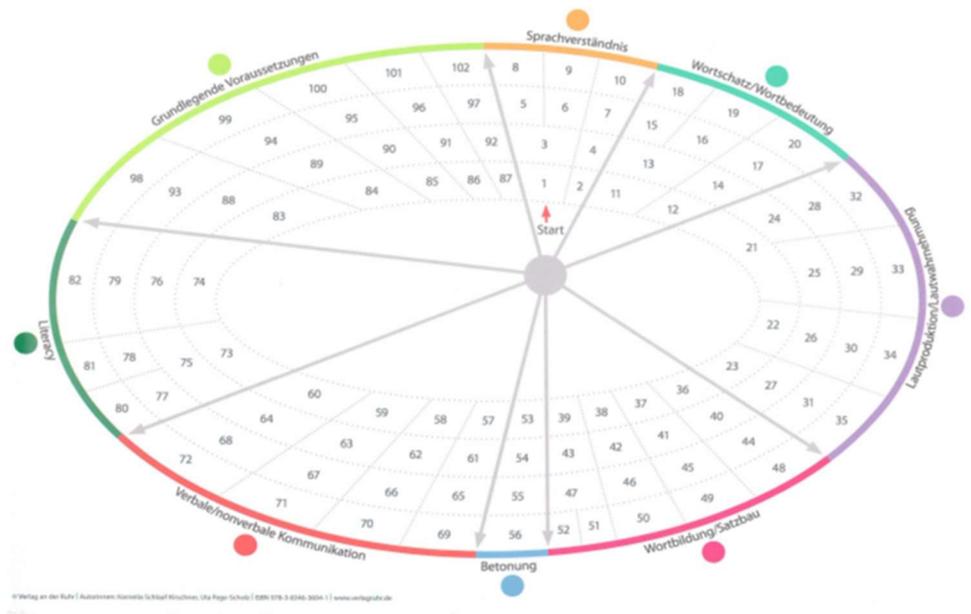
5.2 Language development integrated into everyday life

Language acquisition and language development at rainbowtrekkers are integrated into everyday life using the immersion method. All children are immersed in the bilingual language environment from the very beginning (immersion). In this sense, language development is always an inclusive language education. Unlike school concepts, there is no language level that can be achieved within a fixed framework. Rather, language acquisition is fluently integrated into everyday life and is oriented towards the individual interests and resources of children from one to six years of age.

Our experience shows that a child from a mono- or bilingual home, who starts at rainbowtrekkers at the age of about one year, has an age-appropriate passive bilingual vocabulary at the age of three and can actively express themselves in both languages at the age of six.

The language development integrated into everyday life is based on the individual language development processes of the children. Our pedagogical professionals deal with a variety of situations in everyday life and provide a language stimulating environment. The pedagogical professionals are aware of their important role as language role models and support the children individually in developing their language skills.

Documentation of language development is an important part of the pedagogical work of our professionals. To ensure this, we use the "Language Development Observation Sheet of 1-6 Years" by Kornelia Schlaaf-Kirschner and Uta Fege-Scholz. These questionnaires are part of the **IPS method** developed by Schlaaf-Kirschner (<http://schlaaf-kirschner.de/>). The evaluation sheets are divided into different areas of competence: Language comprehension, vocabulary and meaning, sound production and perception, word formation and sentence construction, speech melody and intonation, verbal and non-verbal communication, literacy and basic requirements. The following picture is an example of such an observation sheet:



The IPS method is currently only used at rainbowtrekkers to evaluate German language skills. With regard to the English language acquisition of the children, however, a short summary is prepared by the experts. The state of development of both languages is explained and presented in detail to the parents during the development talks (twice throughout the day-care year). Due to its visual overview, the questionnaire is very helpful and understandable for the parents.

6. Observation and documentation

Observation and documentation are the basis of a reflected pedagogical work. Observing children also means paying attention to them, i.e. seeing things in the world from the perspective of the specific child and trying to understand the child as a whole. At the same time, it serves the critical reflection of our role as adults/educators. The aim of educational observation and documentation is to capture and understand the child's actions and stage of development as objectively as possible without being influenced by our own subjective perception and value judgements.

As a sponsor, we aim to constantly support our pedagogical professionals in reflecting on themselves and questioning their observations. It is therefore desirable for an educator not to carry out his or her observation on his or her own, but to exchange information with a colleague in all phases.

Observation and documentation are to be seen as a process-like sequence that goes through several phases. It begins with a thorough planning of the observation. This is followed by the implementation, documentation and interpretation of the findings and, if necessary, a consequence, e.g. a support measure or intervention, a decision or an educational approach.

Similar to the language development integrated into everyday life, we also use the **IPS method** of Kornelia Schlaaf-Kirschner for the development documentation. Depending on age, two different sheets are used:

- the observation sheet for children under three years of age with the educational areas: hearing, seeing and understanding; speaking; movement and dexterity; body control; emotionality and social togetherness and thinking; and



- The observation sheet for children from three to six years of age with the educational areas: games; speaking, hearing and seeing; thinking; movement; life skills and social interaction/emotionality.

The procedures serve to visually represent and concisely depict the developmental process of a child. In the previously mentioned development talks, which the pedagogical professionals conduct twice in a year with the parents, these documents are presented to the parents, discussed in detail with them and the educational goals for the child defined.

In addition to the development discussions, we also work with portfolios. The word portfolio consists of the two Latin words "portare" ("to carry") and "folium" ("leaf") and refers to a collection of documents. The aim is to create a collection of personal documents for each child. The child is given the opportunity to help shape the portfolio, whether through painted pictures, crafts or writing.

The introduction of digitised documentation and portfolio software (presumably linked to the KiTaPLUS management system) is planned for the calendar year 2020.

7. Working with parents and cooperative child-raising

7.1 Settling in

A gentle familiarisation of new day-care children is an important starting point for our educational work. Our settling-in processes are based on the Berlin settling-in model, which is essentially based on the child's ability to form attachment relationships. A gentle settling-in is very important to us, because the kindergarten is usually one of the first instances that the children get to know after their family. The aim of settling in is to establish a sustainable relationship between the pedagogical professionals and the child during the presence of the caregiver (usually the parents). This relationship should be similar to a bond and offer the child security. The feeling of security through a good relationship with the pedagogical professional is the basis for successful educational processes in the kindergarten and a healthy start for the child in their new phase of life. The important task of the professionals in cooperation with the parents is to make this transition as smooth as possible.

Before the child begins to settle in, there is an information phase in which the parents of the child are thoroughly informed about the importance of a gentle process. As a rule, a parents' evening is held before the start of the new kindergarten year, during which the parents also receive our "Starter Kit" on settling in. This "starter kit" contains important information for the future care of their child. This includes an abridged version of our curriculum, a medication form, a checklist of what parents must bring with them, important safety information and instructions on when children must stay at home due to illness.

After a communal introductory phase at the beginning of the actual settling-in period, children and parents enter an initial separation phase after a few days, which can be gradually extended from a few minutes to a few hours depending on the pace and willingness of both sides. Once the child has become familiar with the new environment, then the stabilization phase is considered to have been successful. At the end of the stabilization phase, the child is considered to have become familiar with the new environment and with the new bonds when they feel safe and secure.

From the point of view of the administration, we consider it very important to sensitize the pedagogical professionals to this topic. This includes sound preparation, support and reflection of the professionals by the principals and the administration. In addition to the principals, the group leaders in particular are responsible for the settling in of new children. The group leaders are responsible both for organising the settling-in process and for providing advice to parents.



7.2 Structuring relationships

Learning is a multilateral process. Parents' observations and assessments are important for educators so that they can understand the child better and more quickly. And through the observations of the educators, parents can gain an understanding of how their child behaves in group situations. This exchange helps us all to respond better to the child and encourages parents and educators to work in partnership for the benefit of the child.

Parental work at rainbowtrekkers is characterized by openness and transparency. This allows the family system and the kindergarten system to come closer together. We attach great importance to respectful communication between parents, principals and pedagogical professionals.

7.3 Information, Participation und Advice

In principle, parents' evenings are held several times a year in all institutions during the course of the day-care year. Important information is passed on, organizational matters are discussed, the settling-in period is explained in detail and many other topics are dealt with. In addition, each institution creates individual newsletters. In addition, various festivals are held every year, which the professionals celebrate together with the parents and their children, for example a lantern parade or a summer party. The parents also receive a daily verbal report from the pedagogical professionals on how their child's day was.

At the beginning of each day-care year, the parents' council is elected. The Parents' Council articulates parents' needs, supports the organisation of special activities and the organisation of community life in the kindergartens.

The parents can approach the employees at any time with questions and concerns. This is possible orally as well as in writing. The parents should contribute their ideas, wishes or suggestions at any time. It is very important to us that the parents not only feel that their children are in good hands, but also that they feel comfortable. Children are sensitive and they sense when their parents have difficulties dealing with professionals.

If desired, the principals can advise the parents on questions of parenting. At the moment, no further counselling, e.g. in family matters or special social questions, is provided conceptually. However, we are currently examining the possibility of expanding one or all of our kindergartens into family centres in which such counselling services could also be provided.

The introduction of a digitalised parent app (presumably linked to the KiTaPLUS administration system) is planned for the calendar year.



8. Complaints management

We regard complaints as an opportunity for constructive feedback, which gives us the opportunity to further develop and reduce sources of error. For this reason, complaint management is part of our quality development.

We define a complaint as a statement or notification of an undesirable situation or misconduct. By complaint management we refer to the planning, implementation and control of measures that we undertake in connection with complaints with the aim of resolving the cause of complaint for the benefit of all parties involved.

The complainants can be parents, employees or children. For each complaint type (parent complaint, employee complaint, child complaint), we have defined thematic categories from which it is derived who is responsible for handling which complaint, as well as which information duties and which appeal instances exist. The processes are described in detail in our QM manual.

In the near future, we plan to implement our own child complaints system in which child complaints are to be recorded, processed and reflected upon.

9. Quality assurance

All rainbowtrekkers employees have personalized, business email access and a non-profit Microsoft Office365 license. They also have direct access to the rainbowtrekkers digital QM manual and digital security manual.

The **QM manual** describes all important educational and organizational processes at rainbowtrekkers in detail. It covers the subject areas: organisational structure, pedagogical mission statement, pedagogical work with the child, recurring events throughout the year, leadership in the pedagogical area, complaint management and quality of the service provider.

The digital **safety manual** deals with first aid, illnesses, hazardous substances, hygiene, fire protection, instructions, accidents, violence and terror.

Clear job descriptions exist for all pedagogical areas.

In addition to the aforementioned internal training events ("Team Days"), all employees have the right to receive **further training** from external providers or institutions as part of our training program. Each employee has a fixed financial budget and 4 working days per year for this purpose.

As part of our **language acquisition** program, we also support our employees financially in achieving bilingualism (German-English) up to Level B2 of the European Framework of Reference for Languages. In this way, German-speaking employees can improve their English language skills and English-speaking employees can improve their German language skills.

A further quality assurance measure is the provision of case-related **supervision** by an educational coach for individual teams in difficult phases. Pedagogical managers can receive **individual coaching** from an external consultant if they are interested and need it, in order to better work out their strengths.

The *Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband* has not yet provided us with **external specialist pedagogical advice**, pointing out that we are not a registered association but a non-profit limited company. For this reason, we have so far purchased specialist advice from other external providers. As things stand at present, however, we are assuming that we will also be able to make permanent use of external pedagogical specialist advice from the newly founded German *Kitaverband* (Kindergarten Association) as part of the Kibiz revision from the day-care year 2020/21.



9.1 Internal Evaluation

The aim of the internal evaluation is to identify what has already been achieved (*current status*) on the basis of a database and to generate impulses by comparing the target or *desired status* against the *current status*. These serve to check one's own standards and to systematically further develop unsuccessful ones and to initiate quality-enhancing processes.

The internal evaluation includes the parent survey (twice a year) and the employee survey on job satisfaction (once a year). The results are statistically evaluated anonymously. The CEO conducts an evaluation interview with the principals in connection with the parent surveys. The head of HR conducts an evaluation interview with the respective team in connection with the employee surveys.

Statistical methods can be used to identify topics that are important for many people in our organisation. By comparing the values over many years, it is also easier to identify downward or upward trends. The statistical key figures for employee and parent surveys, sick leave and accident figures can be viewed transparently by all employees of the organization via the intranet.

9.2 External Evaluation

The start of an external evaluation and certification process is planned for the day-care year 2020/21. The systems *PQ-Sys* of the *Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband* (with a focus on organisation and work processes) or an evaluation/certification according to *PädQUIS* (with a focus on pedagogical issues) are currently on the shortlist.