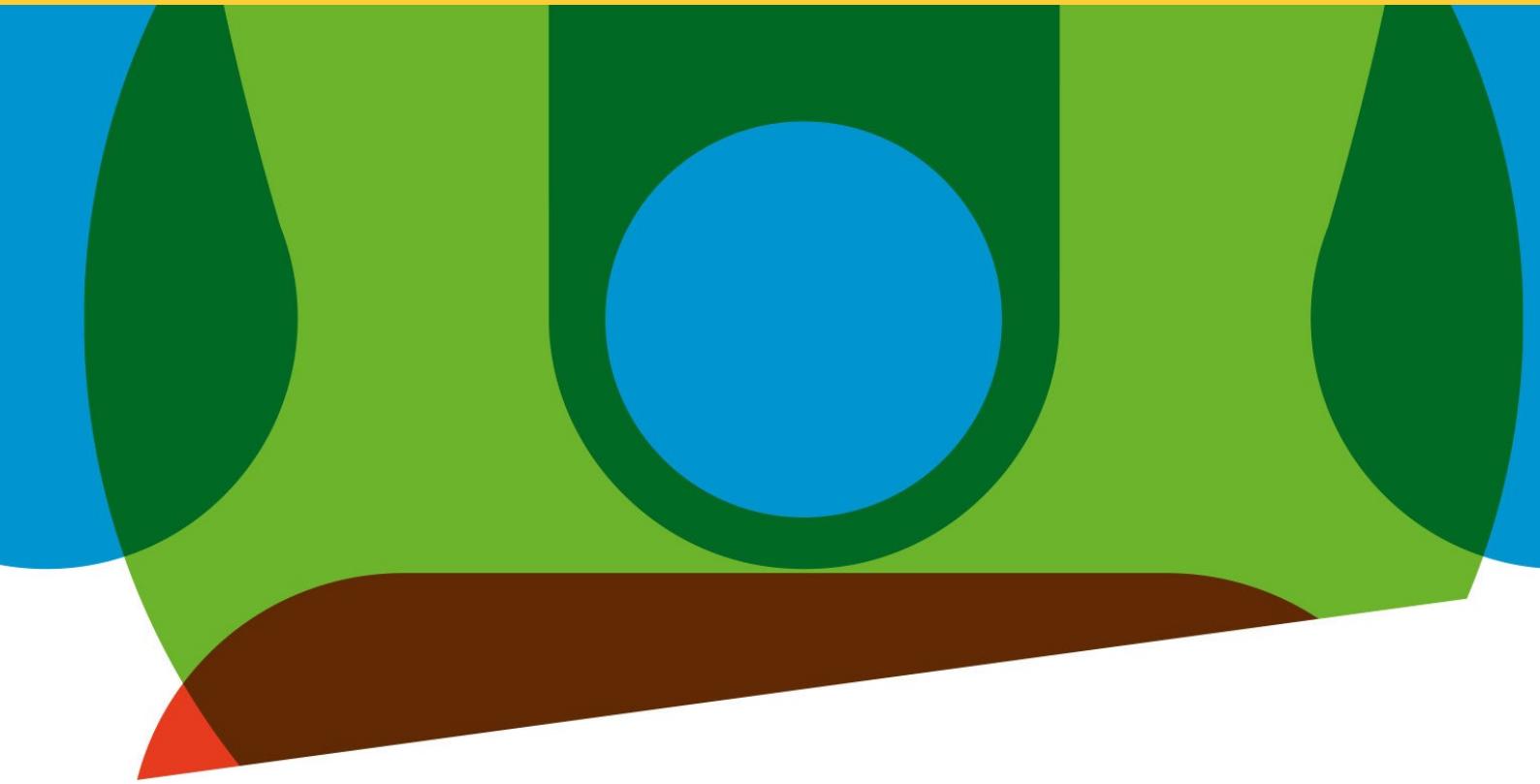


Pedagogy and Practice

An informational series for parents on select topics



Dear parents,

As a result of our continual team and organizational development, we engage actively with pedagogical and practical topics relating to childcare.

We would like to provide you the opportunity to be involved in our reflections and the resulting changes to our daily operations.

Our series begins with the following topics:

- Team and organizational development
- Our understanding of learning

Team and Organizational Development

Personnel turnover in childcare is fairly high compared to other professions in Switzerland. Even we are not immune to this fact. In response, we strive, among other things, to constantly develop our team and our organization.

On one hand, new personnel provides an opportunity to bring in new momentum and new ideas. On the other hand, integrating new employees requires a greater internal effort, and there is always the risk that the shared foundation and practical approach to our daily operations will suffer.

Therefore, as well as bringing in new ideas, we also regularly review current practices. That way, new employees get to know our policies better. At the same time, this presents an opportunity to discuss internal as well as external suggestions and implement them if necessary.

It is important to us that as many of our employees as possible can participate in such exchanges. Unfortunately this is not possible during normal work hours.

In addition to free time and off-peak hours (for example, after 4:00 pm on days preceding school vacations and holidays), we are required to implement several training days on which the kindergarten remains closed. Whenever possible we attempt to use so-called "bridge days" for this purpose.

Our understanding of learning

When it comes to their children, many parents think of learning in a very achievement-oriented and control-based way (as in a curriculum or syllabus). This approach is normal and understandable: parents only want the best for their children.

Clear information about our concept of how learning takes place aims to show parents that we also want the best for their children.

The strongly learning-oriented Montessori teaching method is often connected externally with the achievement-oriented mentality of today's society. Individual areas in the care and learning environment (especially mathematics, language and cosmic education) imply to parents that their children can and must be benefiting from early development in such an environment.

According to the Montessori method, the concept of the child's "inner blueprint" describes the tendency of children to be curious and eager to learn. Even small children want to investigate the world with all of their senses. For example, they gladly and joyfully drop things repeatedly to observe what happens, or they explore their surroundings by putting things in their mouth. Older children ask adults how cars work, why water starts to boil and much more.

The child's inner blueprint, however, does not always align with the parents' expectations. Many of the children at our school also have a strong need to play and move freely. Parents are often untrusting of the unavoidable, self-guided childhood development and inner readiness to learn that each child possesses.

Parents who want to enable early learning for their child should keep in mind that too much pressure can achieve the opposite and can thwart the child's periods of receptivity, their own inner drive and their curiosity. At worst, this can lead to the child losing the joy of learning.

From our perspective, the transfer of knowledge is not the most important thing. Most important is awakening the children's interest so they can investigate and develop for themselves. We should always remind ourselves that children learn better when they are enjoying themselves.

We all just want the best for each child. However, when a child does not achieve the "norm" or make the progress that is expected, this creates worry and in some cases damaging, subtle or even obvious pressure.

The enthusiasm for learning is present in every child, and it is up to us as adults not to destroy this enthusiasm but to promote it at every age.

The educational philosophy developed by Maria Montessori supports children in their thirst for knowledge by allowing independent learning at their own pace and providing a stimulating environment and helpful learning materials.

We know from research into brain function that knowledge gained through self-motivation is retained better in the long-term.

At our school, children retain their natural joy, motivation and enthusiasm for learning. Creative problem-solving, a willingness to learn and social skills gained through group composition are skills and abilities that remain with the children even after their time with us. They then benefit from these elements of the Montessori method in their further schooling and throughout their lives.

For our future, we need socially competent, creative problem solvers who can ask the right questions.

Did you know that such well-known people as Microsoft founder Bill Gates, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and Google founders Lany Page and Sergey Brin all received a Montessori education?