

## ■ Music

Music is a source of rich sensations and great enjoyment. It has mental and spiritual effects, promoting a child's inner balance and intelligence. Receptiveness to music is one of the abilities every person has from birth onward. Thus every child is "musical." The human voice is a means to express feelings. It is also our most important musical instrument. When children sing and make music, they develop the finer aspects of their hearing. At day care, your child learns skills including:

- ... how to carry a tune and maintain a rhythm,
- ... to pay attention to others when making music as a group,
- ... how to express harmony and disharmony through tones and music,
- ... songs to sing for specific traditional contexts (birthdays, holidays, seasons of the year),
- ... how to perceive individual elements of the note system.



## ■ First Experiences with Mathematics

The foundations of mathematically oriented thinking are laid in a child's first few years of life, when he gains experience with time and space and with measuring, counting, estimating, classifying, and comparing. The abilities to think logically and abstractly are not gender-specific. What boys and girls have the confidence to do depends in part on what others have confidence in them to do. At day care, your child is supported with skills such as:

- ... developing a basic understanding of the structures used to divide time (time of day, days, months, years),
- ... using mathematical concepts to structure social situations (using numbers to exchange, share, and distribute things),
- ... how to deal with small ranges of numbers and recognize some geometric shapes,
- ... how to handle money.

## ■ First Experiences with Science and Technology

Your child uses all her senses to explore nature. She experiences the elements, technical processes, and natural phenomena. She perceives and observes their characteristics and how they change. She makes observations about differences and commonalities and is constantly asking herself and others around her questions. Children are serious about getting to the bottom of things. They are not interested in long or scientific explanations, but they do want to understand phenomena that they have experienced, especially in terms of cause and effect ("if ... then").

Learning about and experiencing nature, plants and animals is a traditional component of the educational work done at day care facilities. Increasingly, it is a matter of course for chemistry and physics to be included as well. At day care, your child is supported in skills including:

- ... asking questions and thoroughly investigating things,
- ... perceiving, observing, and testing things in a variety of different ways,
- ... setting up simple cause-and-effect relationships,
- ... recognizing and labeling physical phenomena (e.g., gravity, magnetism, reflection).



## Transitioning to Elementary School

The educational recommendations set great store by increasing the contact between day care facilities and schools. When both types of institutions work together, children are better able to prepare for new challenges. Early childhood educators encourage children's curiosity, thirst for learning, and eager anticipation of going to school. They help your child to cope with his insecurities and fears and contribute to ensuring that he knows and appreciates just how much knowledge and how many skills he has already developed.

For children who are entering school, day care centers schedule visits at a school that has openings for that year. They offer elementary school teachers an opportunity to sit in on their work and offer parents a special parents' night on the topic of the transition to elementary school. For the parents of the four-and-a-half-year-old children who are invited to interview at the school, the day care center offers a meeting to discuss each child's development and provide advice.

## So what can you do?

The early childhood educators at your day care facility make sure your child is doing well. To do so, they need your support. Tell them about your child's preferences and interests. Take the opportunity to talk with the staff at parents' nights and in individual conferences, where the educators will be happy to report to you on your child's progress and their observations. And if you have criticism to offer, you will find that the day care center has an open ear. Of course, the staff is also happy to hear your acknowledgement and praise.

Perhaps you have a job or a hobby that would interest the children at the center, and would like to tell them about it sometime. Or maybe you come from another country and can tell the children about it. There are a lot of ways for you to contribute. Your child will be happy if you participate in his or her life at day care.

Herausgeber

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## Hamburg Educational Recommendations for Child Day Care Facilities

### Information for Parents

■ Body, Movement, Health

■ Social and Cultural Surroundings

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Early childhood plays a decisive role in shaping a child's future development. Deficits and missed opportunities at this stage are very difficult to make up for later.

Whether your child attends preschool or a day care center, all children in Hamburg learn according to the same basis, the Hamburg Educational Recommendations.

This pamphlet contains general information on what the Hamburg Educational Recommendations include.

If you want to know more, please feel free to ask your day care provider. The staff will be happy to tell you how the educational recommendations are put into practice at their facility and what concepts and emphases they apply in their work educating the children.

Sincerely,

Dietrich Wersich

Senator for Social Affairs, Family, Health and Consumer Protection

This pamphlet is intended only to provide an initial impression of the educational goals and content specified in the Hamburg Educational Recommendations. You can review the full text of the educational requirements at your day care facility, check it out from the Hamburg Bücherhallen public library, or download it online at:

[www.kita.hamburg.de](http://www.kita.hamburg.de)

## How do young children learn?

Children are naturally driven to discover and explore their surroundings. They use all five senses to learn and establish a view of their world and themselves. In doing so, they gain new abilities, skills, and knowledge and develop behavioral and personality traits.

They are especially successful in learning when their activities are acknowledged and reinforced. To achieve this, they need the dedication, attention, and interest of the people who matter to them. This encourages them and gives them the confidence to try new things.

At a day care center, the job of the teaching staff is to observe each child attentively and promote the child's development by offering appropriate educational materials and activities. The course of each child's development is documented for the child's parents.

## Why do we need educational recommendations for day care facilities?

The education provided at day care centers should support each child's development into a self-confident, responsible person and help each child to acquire basic skills and abilities.

The educational recommendations set out a number of practical examples to describe how children's learning can be enhanced when their time at the day care center is linked with play and learning, through projects that are planned together, suggestions and opportunities for play, and stimulating arrangements of their space. Through these opportunities for experience, children get to know the world in which they live while expanding their own skills and taking on new challenges.



## The educational fields

The educational recommendations describe seven fields in which children should gain experience during their time at day care so that they can acquire basic skills. The rest of this pamphlet introduces these fields and provides a few illustrative examples.

## Body, Movement, Health

Movement, hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch are the sources of your child's life experience. It is therefore important to pay attention to your child's physical perceptions and body awareness, and to cultivate his enjoyment of movement, his dexterity, and his coordination as well as providing him with basic knowledge about the body and its functions. At day care, your child is supported in skills including:

- ... moving with physical dexterity (balancing, catching a ball, riding a bicycle, etc.),
- ... negotiating rules about what bodily contact is welcome and what is not,
- ... enjoying shared meals and contributing to a pleasant, social eating experience,
- ... differentiating between right and left,
- ... knowing the importance of healthy food.



## Social and Cultural Surroundings

Day care is the first setting in which your child is together with a larger circle of other children on a regular basis, with all of the challenges and opportunities for learning that a group of children offers. Your child discovers differences and common ground, learns rules, and plays a role in making new rules. She forms friendships and learns to take on responsibility. She also learns to express her own interests and feelings appropriately and to acknowledge and accept those of others, how to say no, and how to get her ideas across to others. At day care, your child is encouraged and supported in skills including:

- ... forming her own opinion and taking a stance,
- ... coming up with ideas, taking initiative, motivating others, asserting her own will,
- ... gaining initial experience in the process of coordinating with others (for example, in group meetings),
- ... being able to give personal information (name, address, telephone number, etc.).

## Communication: Language, Writing, and Media

Language is the basis of understanding and communicating with others. For that reason, your day care provider cultivates your child's language skills and encourages his interest in books. In his dealings with others, your child also learns how important his say in things is and how seriously his contributions are taken. At the beginning, what is important is not whether a child expresses himself in the correct form, but rather his desire to communicate with others. At day care, your child learns skills including:

- ... speaking clearly, in full sentences,
- ... recounting events and telling stories,
- ... listening attentively and responding to what he has heard,
- ... recognizing and using signs, symbols, and pictograms,
- ... writing his own name,
- ... using books and other media.

Day care facilities also offer specific assistance for children with special speech and language development needs.



## Arts and Crafts

By drawing, painting, working with dough, plaster, or clay, and experimenting with wire, water, and paper, children explore their surroundings, process their experiences, and develop their imaginations. In arts and crafts, they develop their visions and are able to perceive themselves as forces shaping their own world. At the day care center, your child becomes familiar with a variety of arts and crafts techniques and materials. She sharpens her senses, develops her abilities, and becomes aware of her discoveries and her own abilities to express herself. For example, she learns:

- ... a broad repertoire of colors, materials, and techniques,
- ... how to experiment with light and shadow,
- ... how to use tools properly,
- ... how to appreciate individual works of art,
- ... how to set up her own collections and documentation.