



# FRÖBEL Conceptual Framework



FRÖBEL  
Kompetenz für Kinder

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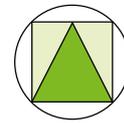
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### **We would like to thank ...**

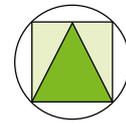
**... all staff who have given us valuable feedback during the development phase of the FRÖBEL Conceptual Framework. Their critical questions, suggestions and ideas helped create this comprehensive reference work for the FRÖBEL group.**



## Contents

<b>The FRÖBEL group</b> .....	<b>05</b>
Competence for Children .....	05
How we are organised .....	06
The origin of our name: Friedrich FRÖBEL .....	07
<b>Mutual orientation and diversity</b> .....	<b>08</b>
Mission Statement and Values .....	09
The Participants: Children, families and education professionals .....	09
What education means to us .....	11
The principle of attachment .....	12
The principle of individualisation .....	13
The principle of participation .....	13
<b>The educational profile of the FRÖBEL group</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Professional guidelines .....	14
FRÖBEL Standards .....	15
FRÖBEL Focus Bilingual Education .....	16
Centre Focuses .....	17
Implementation of the educational profile .....	18
<b>Organisation and structure of educational routines</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Transitions .....	21
Observation and documentation in dialogue .....	23
Integrated language intervention .....	24
Cooperation with primary schools .....	24
Cooperation with families .....	25
Management and team .....	26
Child protection .....	27
Voluntary participation at the centres .....	28
Work/life balance .....	29
<b>Quality and quality development</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>Professional development and knowledge transfer</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>On-site support: FRÖBEL education consultants</b> .....	<b>32</b>





## The FRÖBEL group

### Competence for Children

'Competence for Children' means that we provide children with competent adults who act as their educational guides. It also emphasises the goal of the FRÖBEL group, which is to enable children to grow into independent, self-confident, prejudice-aware and responsible members of a democratic society through open interaction with each other. We see it as our mission to create welcoming spaces for children and their families where they are at the centre.

### Equal opportunities

We ensure that children have equal opportunities by giving all the children in our care the chance to discover and develop their own competences and to expand their individual potential. We are convinced that this is the right way to facilitate high-quality early education and care for all children and their families.

### Inclusion

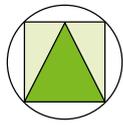
The diversity of people, whether children or adults, is a part of our daily routine and a real treasure trove when it comes to structuring inclusive educational practices. Where different cultures, languages, nationalities and social backgrounds meet, there is a strong basis for learning about social and democratic structures. We work to overcome disadvantage, exclusion and discrimination based on differences.

We provide care to children with disabilities or special needs, fulfilling their needs as far as possible.

Meeting the complex challenges that arise in children's day-care centres thus requires a team made up of people with a broad range of skills and qualifications and a variety of personalities. We make sure that our teams are made up of people from different generations, cultures and educational backgrounds, and of both men and women.

We are committed to an inclusive understanding of education based on a culture of respect and equality and on the participation of all children and families in the centre. The teams and professionals then implement and further develop this in their daily activities. This means recognising commonalities as well as differences, being perceptive of individual requirements, and basing educational activities on such knowledge while bearing in mind potential prejudices.

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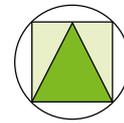
### How we are organised

FRÖBEL e.V. and its not-for-profit subsidiaries are recognised independent welfare agencies for children and young people, and are members of the Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband, an umbrella organisation of social movements. FRÖBEL operates crèches, kindergartens, after-school clubs and other children's welfare centres managed by regional companies in several federal states of Germany, in Sydney and Melbourne (Australia), and in Istanbul (Turkey). Currently, over 2,400 FRÖBEL employees care for around 12,000 children in over 130 centres. FRÖBEL e.V. is the owner of all the not-for-profit companies of the FRÖBEL group. The federation is managed and supervised by a voluntary board of governors and a salaried board of directors. An advisory board advises the federation and provides impulses for its continuing work.

Every FRÖBEL crèche, kindergarten and after-school club is assigned to a regional office. FRÖBEL employees can directly approach contact persons in these offices regarding any professional or organisational concerns arising in the region. The Board of Directors convenes at monthly conferences to discuss current issues and take decisions relating to the FRÖBEL group. Regional directors share information pertinent to the region with centre managers at monthly round-table meetings.

Regional education consultants provide professional guidance for crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs. All education consultants discuss open issues in regular education consultancy conferences, thus contributing to the conceptual development of the FRÖBEL group's educational profile. → [More under 'On-site support: FRÖBEL education consultants', p. 32](#)

**For more information on the FRÖBEL group, contact persons and locations, go to: [www.froebel-gruppe.de](http://www.froebel-gruppe.de).**



## The origin of our name: Friedrich FRÖBEL

Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel (1782–1852) is regarded as the 'father of the kindergarten' and a pioneer of educational reform. He advocated ideas about child-oriented development and education that inspired educationalists internationally.

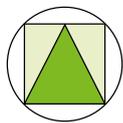
His goal was to raise 'free, thinking, self-motivated people'. He demanded that children be given an environment which allowed room for activity, creativity and decision-making. Fröbel considered the best approach an education of body, mind and soul that stimulated, roused and encouraged all a person's strengths.

Fröbel founded kindergartens where his ideas about how to educate and care for children were put into practice. Unlike the staff of the child-rearing institutions of the time who merely took children into their custody, the kindergarten teachers employed by Fröbel were trained in accordance with his vision of education. This laid an important foundation stone for the qualification of education professionals. Even in these early stages, the trained staff were not alone in their responsibility for early childhood education. Rather, Fröbel based his approach on the concept of an education structured by both the children's families and the educational institution.

Guided by the aim of realising Fröbel's educational idea of raising 'free, thinking, self-motivated people' and effectively supporting the welfare of children and young people in their lifeworld environments, the education professionals of the FRÖBEL group make it their priority to create a stimulating atmosphere for children every day. Families are actively integrated into the organisation of this work and given opportunities to experience these basic educational principles in action. The family and the day-care centre, as the two focal points in children's lives, can thus work together to develop shared values.



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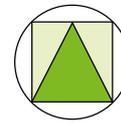
### Mutual orientation and diversity

Our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs can be found in many parts of Germany, and as far away as Australia and Turkey. Our common educational orientation forms the framework that connects and binds together all of our centres.

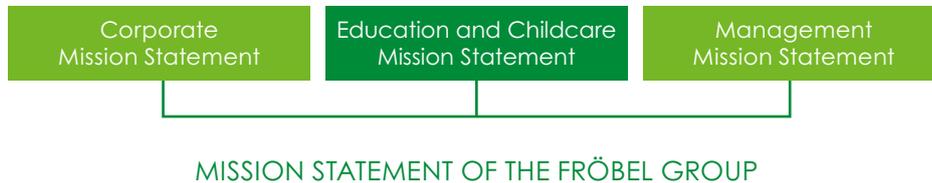
This commonality is described in the FRÖBEL Mission Statement and will be given a concrete form in this Conceptual Framework, which is valid for the whole of the FRÖBEL group. In addition to the principles which relate to our pedagogical ideals and what work in the centres should be like, the framework curriculum sets out common professional subjects that have to be adhered to in all centres. It will assist them in organising their daily work, which aspires to the highest possible standards of professional practice.

No two FRÖBEL centres are exactly the same: and that is a good thing because they are located in diverse environments and the people who attend and interact in them are equally as diverse. Every crèche, every kindergarten and every after-school club has its own concept. The education professionals and the centre management work together to develop the focuses of the educational work as set out in these internal concepts, taking into account the needs of all the children and their families. Moreover, the centre-specific concepts are based on concrete local conditions and circumstances, and are constantly monitored and reviewed as appropriate.





## Mission Statement and Values



### Notes

The mission statement of the FRÖBEL group is composed of three elements: the Corporate Mission Statement, the Management Mission Statement and the Education and Childcare Mission Statement. The Education and Childcare Mission Statement is the basis on which all education and childcare at FRÖBEL is founded. It emphasises the rights of children in the daily educational routine at all FRÖBEL crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs. In this way, FRÖBEL helps children to develop into members of the community who shape their own daily life and their environment through processes of mutual negotiation.

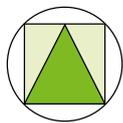
### The Participants: Children, families and education professionals

There's always a lot going on in FRÖBEL centres because everyone involved in our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs is involved in determining the daily activities.

#### Children

Children are the main protagonists in our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs. They are inquisitive by nature and enjoy getting to know and influencing all facets of their environment. They want to be active and mobile and to discover the world bit by bit with all their senses. Children learn by doing, especially when they play. They learn by exploring, acquiring new experiences and finding out more about themselves as social beings through contact with other children and adults. Children want to have fun, make friends, play and thereby shape their own educational processes.

Children already have many abilities, but they need other children and competent adults to stimulate them, to take them seriously when they make their discoveries, and to guide their development.



## Notes

FRÖBEL centres are attended by children of different ages. The spectrum is very wide, ranging from eight weeks to twelve years of age. Each child's individual stage of development guides the actions of our education professionals. This encourages children to follow their own personal educational process and takes them forward from the point they have currently reached in their development.

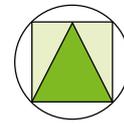
### **Parents and families**

At home it is usually the parents and families of the children who offer guidance, provide protection and security, and create educational opportunities. The child will always have a special relationship with these people. It is the task of the education professionals to support this relationship and involve parents and families in the institutional education and guidance of their children. → [More under 'Cooperation with families', p. 25](#)

### **Education professionals**

The activities of our education professionals are guided by the needs of the children and their families. When the focus is on children's rights, the education professionals face responsibility and challenges. They see themselves as guides, observers, learners, questioners and supporters. The staff of our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs are caring, attentive adults who are imaginative and competent in their dealings with the children. They are familiar with current educational and child-care issues, undertake continuing professional development and seek dialogue with their colleagues. → [More under 'Professional development and knowledge transfer', p. 31](#)





## What education means to us

Children have a natural need to develop and learn, and a right to guidance and support while they do so. Children take an active role in their education process by establishing contact with their environment and the people around them, and by exploring and discovering the world with all their senses. This is how they take ownership of the world and develop their own personality.

We understand children's education as a process that includes the development of social and emotional competences as well as of motor, linguistic and cognitive skills. Learning processes in children are complex, holistic processes that involve their senses, body, language, feelings, thinking and memory.

In children, these learning processes progress above all as they play. Because it's not just a game – it's also an opportunity to test themselves and their own limits, and make contact with both children and adults.

The responsibility of the adults around them is to structure the spatial environment, and above all their interactions, in such a way that the children can have a diversity of experiences.

Children's understanding of themselves and the world always develops in a social context. By relating their own actions to other people and generating responses to their own actions, children discover self-efficacy.

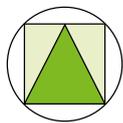
If children feel they are trusted and not underestimated, they gain the confidence to approach the unknown and cope with new and ever-changing situations. This helps them to experience their strengths and potential, and they structure their own educational processes with the aid of other children and adult attachment figures.

Consequently, our education professionals see it as their task to foster educational opportunities and learning situations appropriate to the children and to support each child in his or her individual development.

In our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs, we establish the conditions necessary for the stimulation and guidance of these complex educational processes based on three principles:

- ▲ The principle of attachment
- ▲ The principle of individualisation
- ▲ The principle of participation

## Notes



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The way in which children are treated, the extent to which they can structure their own experiences based on their own individual personalities, how seriously adults take them and how involved they are in decision-making are all important factors.

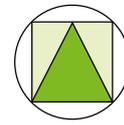
### ▲ The principle of attachment

Stable emotional and social attachments give children security. Once they stand firmly on this foundation, children can actively interact with their environment and use all their senses to explore it, and even to change it. Therefore, children have a right to dependable relationships which are the precondition for successful educational and developmental processes. Through the sensitivity and emotional availability of our education professionals, we support this enormously important relationship-building process.

In the first years of their life, children form attachments to the people who regularly satisfy their physical and psychological needs. Usually this is the parent-child attachment. At the same time, children form relationships with other adults. These may be less intense than the bond with the main attachment figures, but they are no less important.

Attending a day-care centre gives children an opportunity to experience life in a social community that is different from the way they live together in the family. They meet children of different ages and from different cultural backgrounds who, although they may share some ideas and interests, will also have differing ones. Discussing game ideas with other children, making friends, musing about the world and solving conflicts are all activities that shape children's personalities and the development of their socio-emotional competences.

Our educational mission is to provide children with the chance to experience stable relationships. We organise daily life in our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs such that children can have many varied experiences and test themselves in different relationships, roles and forms of social interaction.



### ▲ The principle of individualisation

Children have a right to others' respect for their personality and their individual educational and learning processes. Our educational work is guided by the children's needs, occupations and interests. Every child in a crèche, kindergarten or after-school club is part of a community. This opens up opportunities but also imposes limits on individual preferences and interests. Education professionals cannot always satisfy the needs of every child. When that is the case, it is crucial for education professionals to take notice of these needs and signalise to the children that they nevertheless acknowledge them. If they cannot deal with the needs at this particular time, they explain why.

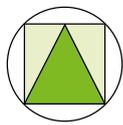
As part of the individualisation of our educational work, children are given opportunities to take up offers, use materials independently and choose whether or not to join in a group activity over the course of the day. Because all the education professionals recognise the specific needs and educational and developmental concerns of the children, they structure an environment centred on the individuality and educational processes of every child.

### ▲ The principle of participation

Children have a right to self-determination and co-determination. They are capable of making decisions and judgments, and we encourage them to share these with the community and to work together to seek solutions for problems. This helps them build up confidence in their own strengths, learn to respect themselves and to respect the welfare and wishes of others. They experience an early form of democracy that gives them a chance to test themselves in and help shape an environment with democratic structures.

We believe that all children should have the opportunity to contribute their enthusiasm, their abilities and their individual potential to the development of the community. This necessitates a participatory attitude. To that end, we create situations that facilitate children's participation in our day-care centres. Children are taken seriously as experts in their own world. It is important that they are not merely left to their own devices but guided in their decision-making processes as appropriate to their stage of development.

Notes



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Through opening-up processes in our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs, we expand children's opportunities to experience new things and make decisions, allowing them to test themselves and gradually broaden their range of activities. In this way we support their striving towards independence and personal responsibility, and create a space where they can experience how a self-determined life within a community is possible.

## The educational profile of the FRÖBEL group

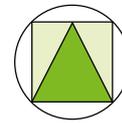
The educational profile of the FRÖBEL group is defined by binding terms of reference which apply to all FRÖBEL centres. This provides a mutual orientation which safeguards quality and signals a sense of togetherness. Beyond that, there are individual characteristics that make every FRÖBEL centre special.

### Professional guidelines

The educational work in our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs is underpinned by the laws and regulations of the state in question and by the individual educational programmes of Germany's federal states. The provisions of Book VIII of the German Code of Social Laws (SGB VIII) assign a national childcare and educational mandate to day-care centres for children.

Since FRÖBEL operates crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs in several federal states of Germany, we adhere to the 'Common Framework for Early Childhood Education in Day-Care centres for German Federal States' ('Gemeinsame Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen') – drawn up at the Conference of the Ministers for Youth and the Standing Conference of the Ministers for Education and Cultural Affairs in 2004 – for cross-regional orientation in the following areas of education:

- ▲ Language, writing, communications
- ▲ Personal and social development, values
- ▲ Mathematics, natural sciences, ICT and technology
- ▲ Musical education / Exposure to media
- ▲ The body, exercise, health
- ▲ Nature and cultural environments



All these areas of education are addressed in every one of our centres according to the specific requirements within the applicable education programme. The task of our Group is to strengthen the competences of our education professionals in their work within the education programmes.

In addition to the education programmes, this Conceptual Framework and the Mission Statement form the binding terms of reference for the daily routine of all education professionals in the FRÖBEL group.

'Quality of Education in Day-Care Centres for Children: A National Catalogue of Criteria' ('Pädagogische Qualität in Tageseinrichtungen für Kinder: Ein Nationaler Kriterienkatalog') offers additional orientation. It describes best practices in day-care centres according to 'quality areas'. It addresses the concrete activities of education professionals and touches upon manifold themes of early childhood education, upbringing and care. The subject groups are organised under recurrent and structuring foci, and draw attention to important factors in educational practice, like the interaction between teacher/carer and child, participation and individualisation.

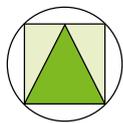
## FRÖBEL Standards

Universally applicable FRÖBEL Standards based on the unifying orientation framework are implemented in all FRÖBEL centres. These Standards define an education standard within the FRÖBEL group that all children and their families will encounter when attending a FRÖBEL centre, regardless of which federal state they are in. The topics listed are cross-sectional and a fixed part of the educational practice of every crèche, every kindergarten and every after-school club.

### The FRÖBEL Standards cover:

- ▲ Cooperation with families
- ▲ Healthy food
- ▲ Transitions
- ▲ Equipment
- ▲ Observation and documentation
- ▲ Attachment
- ▲ Individualisation
- ▲ Participation
- ▲ Quality development

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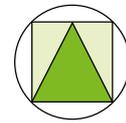
### FRÖBEL Focus Bilingual Education

FRÖBEL strives to give children an opportunity to encounter a foreign language at an early age. Consequently, in some of our centres the FRÖBEL Focus Bilingual Education is already firmly incorporated thanks to the presence of education professionals who speak a language other than German. Usually, children attending a centre of this type will come into contact with English, but Polish, Italian and Spanish are also offered. In the longer term, this Focus will be extended to all FRÖBEL centres.

Early introduction to a second language encourages the communicative and linguistic competences of the children as well as an openness and ability to learn languages in general. Moreover, a bilingual education offers children the opportunity to get to know other cultures and acquire intercultural competences.

It is important to us that the children in our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs encounter the foreign language through play and according to the 'one person, one language' principle in their daily routine. They can thus familiarise themselves with this language within their everyday life, in the same way they learn their native language.

The precondition for this procedure, which is based on the immersion concept of language learning, is that there are native speakers among the education professionals who use the foreign language in all areas of the daily routine. This gives children the opportunity to come into contact with the other language and be immersed in it over the course of a day. Since we integrate it into the daily routine, we give all the children an opportunity to access this offer – regardless of the financial or social situation of the family.

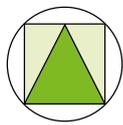


## Centre Focuses

Every FRÖBEL centre has its own individual profile that finds expression in its Centre Focuses. These focuses might be on music, movement, media education or other educational themes. The profile is geared towards the interests of the children and their families, the local circumstances and the individual skills of the education professionals. It is constantly undergoing development and adjustment, and is laid down in the centres own concept. So although all FRÖBEL centres have a common framework of orientation, each has its own centre profile which is individually structured and implemented.

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### Implementation of the educational profile

#### **Responsibilities of the education professionals**

The education professionals in the centre are responsible for organising and structuring educational routines in accordance with the education programmes, the FRÖBEL Conceptual Framework, the FRÖBEL Mission Statement and the National Catalogue of Criteria. Thanks to their qualified training and targeted continuous training and professional development, they possess the professional competence to integrate these concepts into the daily routines.

#### **Cooperative partnerships that complement educational provision**

In specific areas of education, we also work in cooperation with diverse partners. These partners provide our education professionals with good specialist materials for special topics.

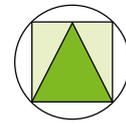
As far as language and reading support is concerned, FRÖBEL cooperates with Stiftung Lesen (Reading Foundation), working with them to develop supplementary materials for practical use.

In order to strengthen the areas of natural sciences and technology, we cooperate with the Haus der kleinen Forscher ('The Little Scientist's House') foundation. Our education professionals are given extensive suggestions as to how they can incorporate this area of education more firmly into their daily routine. Using the opportunities supplied by scientific experimentation, they recruit the children's desire to actively explore their own world.

And, not least, each centre has its own network of partners with whom it cooperates to put its internal concept and its own focuses into practice.

#### **Reliability of educational standards**

The FRÖBEL Standards are regularly monitored by delegates of the Group system within the overall concept of quality development. This guarantees that the defined concepts are continuously integrated into routine educational practice. → [More under 'Quality and quality development', p. 30](#)



## Organisation and structure of educational routines

In FRÖBEL centres, educational routines are organised and structured according to the needs and interests of the children. They are characterised by an openness that allows the children to develop their personality, they include time for individual educational and developmental processes, and they encourage contact with other children and adults. They are framed by a structure that embodies constancy and flexibility, and take place in rooms designed to stimulate the imagination.

### Openness

Life in our day-care centres is defined by an open educational practice. Education comprises a good balance between continuity and change which evolves with the needs of those involved. Education professionals facilitate active, self-directed learning by noting and responding to the needs and interests of the children. In other words, they provide impulses on the basis of individual observations and trust that the children, guided by their own inquisitiveness, will pursue their own interests and in doing so create their own educational contexts and content. They are open to ideas put forward by the children and are available to them throughout the day as attachment figures.

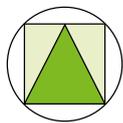
### Structure of the day

While planning the day, sounding out different interests and negotiating conflicts, children experience recognition, feel that they are taken seriously and learn to accept responsibility. We create manifold opportunities for the children to act and experiment independently through play. In addition, there are fixed points in the daily routine that give the children orientation and structure.

### Time for development

The education professionals base the offers and equipment on each child's stage of development. All children are given sufficient time to occupy themselves at their own pace with things that interest them.

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### Groups of children

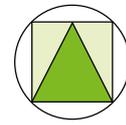
Wherever people come together, groups form automatically and spontaneously. Day-care centres are no different. Children are also constantly forming and reforming groups – in some cases guided by adults – which are focused on one thing. In our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs, these groups come about based on the interests of the children, and their members and size change over the course of the day. Children choose their own playmates. Education professionals suggest ideas for groups of children and organise activities that correspond to individual education topics.

Being part of a group means having a social life. In these diverse social contexts, children can gain new experiences, test out new roles and experience their own potential and limits.

### Open rooms

The rooms of our day-care centres are designed to offer as maximum flexibility and a high degree of stimulation. They allow children to pursue different interests over the course of the day. Function rooms and function corners offer the children opportunities to choose among various activities. The rooms in open day-care centres are constantly adapted to the current needs of the children. The children are actively involved in reorganising and restructuring the space.





## Transitions

The life of a child is marked by diverse transitions – including classic transitions, such as from their family to a day-care centre and, later, from day-care to school. A child also experiences many small transitions over the course of a day which should not be ignored from an educational viewpoint. All these transitions are noted and expertly guided by our education professionals.

### Settling in

One important transition in the life of children and their families is that from home to crèche or kindergarten. It is a huge challenge for everyone involved. We offer competent, individual guidance for the settling-in phase.

During the settling-in phase, children are given a sufficient chance to familiarise themselves with the new environment, the new people in the day-care centre and its routines. The family is also given opportunities to learn about the day-care centre and its structures, and to meet their contact persons.

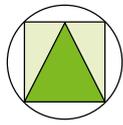
Children have settled in successfully once they have been able to develop confidence and trust in their new environment. This time is especially important for the families who need to feel confident that their child is in reliable hands and that the education professionals are competent and knowledgeable.

We use a detailed settling-in concept in our centres based on the Berlin settling-in model (Berliner Eingewöhnungsmodell), which makes this transition easier for everyone involved.

### Everyday transitions

Apart from specific transition situations, there are transitions that children go through every day. The separation involved in bringing children to the centre in the morning and picking them up again in the afternoon must be professionally supported. A pleasant atmosphere, personal rituals and an opportunity to talk make these transition situations easier for children and families, too.

## Notes



## Notes

### Internal transition situations

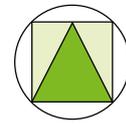
In order to give children guidance and confidence during transitions within a centre, they are given opportunities to gradually get used to impending changes. Together with their current attachment figure, they can explore their new environment, form relationships with new education professionals and establish initial contacts with their new playmates.

### Transition to primary school

Another significant step for every child is the transition to primary school. For this reason, preparation for school during the final year of kindergarten is very important. Although school-related subjects become increasingly important during the last year in kindergarten, we believe it is more important for the children to acquire competences that prepare them for school and indeed for life throughout the whole of their time in crèche and kindergarten.

For their families, too, a child's final year of kindergarten is often one of agitation as parents ask themselves whether their child is really ready for school. Through development reviews and events, parents in this phase are supplied with the information on the subject of transition to primary school that they need to deal competently with this concern. → [More under 'Cooperation with primary schools', p. 24](#)

Although for most children, curiosity about the new school is uppermost, leaving the kindergarten represents a separation from much that they have grown accustomed to and fond of. Making leave-taking from friends and familiar adult attachment figures easier for the children is another task for the final kindergarten year.



## Observation and documentation in dialogue

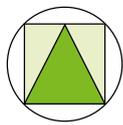
Observation and documentation are the foundations for the activities of education professionals. When children are observed regularly and systematically, their educational and developmental processes, their interests, strengths, occupations and ways of accessing the world can be recognised and used by education professionals to structure and suggest projects, rooms, ideas, etc.

In the FRÖBEL centres, we use recognised procedures for systematic observation to illustrate children's individual educational and developmental processes. Our education professionals select a procedure suited to the specific objective of the observation. The outcomes are recorded and form the basis for decisions as to the next steps. In this way, the education professionals can orient individual ideas and projects to the interests and needs of the children. The important thing is that the observations primarily follow the strengths, interests and needs of the children.

Education professionals also use observations to start a dialogue with children. This gives rise to an exchange that allows additional insights into children's current interests and wishes. The education professionals discuss their observations and talk about their different experiences and assessments at regular team meetings. To get a broader perspective of the children, they have conversations with the families. The observations also form the basis for the annual development reviews.

Some of the observations are summarized for the children and their families in a personal documentation of educational and developmental progress. Care is taken to actively involve children and their families in this process and to decide together what goes into the documentation.

### Notes



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### Integrated language intervention

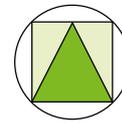
Linguistic competences are a key qualification in children's education. They are crucial to making contact with others, expressing thoughts and feelings, and understanding others. Therefore, language training is a fundamental task of all children's day-care centres. Utilising all of the daily routine for language training contributes to the successful development of children's linguistic and communicative competences. Education professionals act as linguistic models in everyday situations, initiating conversations, asking questions that expand the conversation, thinking together with children, listening to them, and putting the subjects that interest them into words. Using signs to decorate rooms, naming objects and making books available are important elements of integrated language learning.

### Cooperation with primary schools

The transition from kindergarten to primary school is an important step for children, their families and education professionals. We regard it as a special developmental task in the final year of kindergarten to manage this step jointly. During this period, we support the soon-to-be schoolchildren with projects and excursions relating to the topic of 'starting school' and the kindergartens cooperate with local primary schools.

Visits to primary schools, in particular, give the children an opportunity to get to know their new educational establishment and to imagine what school will be like. This process is guided and supported by the education professionals of the child's centre. In parallel, we try to get primary school teachers to come to the kindergarten so that a dialogue ensues between them, the children and the education professionals of the centre.

Strong support for families in the final year before school is achieved through, for example, parent evenings and development reviews that focus on starting school. Here they have a chance to ask questions, express concerns and get good advice from the education professionals.



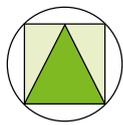
## Cooperation with families

Whether they grow up with father and mother, with a single parent, with a parent who has a new partner, with two mothers or two fathers, with siblings, with grandparents or in some other family constellation, children are always part of a family system. In light of the many types of families our children come from, we choose to include more than just 'parents' when talking about cooperation at home. The most important attachment figures and experts in matters pertaining to a child are those who from home. Processes of education and upbringing in crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs therefore have the best outcomes when they take place in close, comfortable cooperation with these people. For us, cooperation with families always means a partnership in education and upbringing between the education professionals, management and families that exists for the welfare of the children. Cooperation with families is founded on an attitude of respect that recognises the competence of individual parents to bring up their child and differences in family situations and aspirations. Stable cooperation grows through taking many small steps together with mutual enjoyment, and requires a good culture of communication. FRÖBEL crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs are places where children grow and gain life experience – and of course families are part of this.

Regular communication about children's development and educational interests are essential to this cooperation. It is also essential to talk about expectations on both sides, about the needs of the family and the child, and about potential problems. Regular meetings are scheduled which are based on subjects relevant to the child but also take account of the needs of the family and the centre. The basic framework is set out by a detailed discussion in preparation for the settling-in phase when the child joins the centre as well as by development reviews at least once a year, in which the current occupations, strengths and developmental potentials of the child are discussed. This dialogue is dependent on mutual trust, good communication structures and keeping the child's attachment figures consistently informed about the education and daily routines in the day-care centre.

The transparent organisation and structure of educational routines are the cornerstones of a successful cooperation. Families are welcome to share in structuring educational routines and to help with special educational events. → [More under 'Voluntary participation at the centres', p. 28](#)

### Notes



## Notes

As educational centres, our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs are also places where parents and families can meet. They facilitate the establishment of contacts and networks. This is encouraged by events such as parties, parents' evenings and common projects everybody can take part in. Parents can also participate in committees to which parent representatives and parent representatives from the 'Gesamtelternvertretung' (a German form of organisation which consists of all representatives from the respective centres from a region) are elected annually.

Complaints from parents will always be dealt with promptly, responsibly and constructively, and in line with the terms of reference of the FRÖBEL Complaints Management. They will be regarded as an impulse for change in our work.

## Management and team

A well-functioning collaboration of all employees is the basis for the quality of life there. The responsibility for this lies with the management and every single education professional committed to working responsibly to ensure that the entire process runs smoothly. Evolving a joint team culture and resource-oriented cooperation that encompasses the whole centre is a demanding process which management, education professionals, kitchen and technical staff all contribute to.

All staff serve as role models for children and their families through their attitudes and actions. They ensure that the atmosphere in the centre is open and encourages participation, that the needs of the children are noted and that a culture of participation is present within the team and with children and their families. Children are also given the chance to learn about and put into practice their rights as set out in the mission statement. When internal changes are made, the children's perspective is always considered.

Educational tasks and goals are supported by an internal organisational structure which ensures that information flows easily between the members of the team and facilitates regular professional dialogue and joint reflection.

The centre management plays a special role in planning and structuring all processes. It is management's task to integrate all involved through clear, transparent leadership activities and to give impulses for the further development of the educational mission.



Management is responsible for creating the conditions for a high standard of education at FRÖBEL, taking the whole centre, the children and their families into consideration, and thus facilitating the best possible chances for the children's education and development.

## Child protection

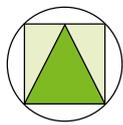
The welfare and protection of the children in our care is our highest priority. The FRÖBEL Child Protection policy 'Protect Child – Support Parents – Empower Staff' ('Kinder schützen – Eltern unterstützen – Erzieherinnen und Erzieher stärken') applies to all crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs. A FRÖBEL Child Protection policy file is available for reference and orientation. It contains the responsibilities at the centre level and in the FRÖBEL Child Protection network, and the regulations for the processes, documentation and, if necessary, reporting to the relevant youth welfare office. In the event of signs of a possible threat to a child's welfare among the children and families in our care, there will be a risk assessment in consultation with the internal regional FRÖBEL child protection specialists and, if necessary, the central child protection coordinator and external local professionals. The goal is to avert the threat through sharing concerns with families in an atmosphere of trust. Where this does not succeed, alternative paths will be identified. FRÖBEL professionals will seek to function as guides in the contact with the relevant youth welfare office.

Child protection means that nobody employed in FRÖBEL centres uses force in dealing with the children in their care. Through professional dialogue and continuous processes of reflection in the team, they will examine their own attitudes and the effects of their words and actions. This team process, which is in place in all FRÖBEL centres, ensures that our employees are generally aware of the issue and of their responsibilities, and that they do not confront the topic only in acute situations.

In addition to this team process, FRÖBEL far exceeds the statutory requirements for police clearance certificates. FRÖBEL education professionals and longer-term interns sign a 'Personal Declaration of Commitment to Child Protection' in which they agree to respect the right of children to grow up in a violence-free environment and to protect them from any form of abuse.

The FRÖBEL Child Protection policy and the FRÖBEL Mission Statement also provide the framework for a holistic handling of gender-sensitive educational subjects and sex education, as well as issues of fairness and problems of sexual interference among the children themselves.

## Notes



## Notes

The aim is that education professionals first develop a joint approach in the team, differentiate between age-appropriate sexual activity and interference, and react promptly and appropriately where necessary. Sexual interference is regarded and treated as a specific form of violence.

Strategies for conflict prevention and conflict resolution are elaborated together with the children, as are the rules for 'playing doctors and nurses'. With regard to these issues children and their families should perceive adults as open and approachable people who take their concerns seriously and provide security.

Complaints relating to child protection will always be dealt with sensitively, responsibly and with the necessary seriousness. The objective is to safeguard children in crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs at all times, to deal with grievances as quickly as possible and to prevent problems before they arise. Together with the children, we seek and establish forms of participation and open communication appropriate to their development. This gives them opportunities to talk about anything they find unpleasant or hurtful. The FRÖBEL group has clear structures which enable family members to express reservations or complaints directly.

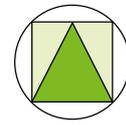
### Voluntary participation at the centres

Education in our crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs can and should be complemented and enriched by voluntary activities on the part of families and other volunteers. This opens up additional educational opportunities and experiences for the children. The encouragement of voluntary participation is therefore integral to the self-concept of every FRÖBEL centre – but it should always supplement, not replace, professional activities.

Voluntary involvement gives parents and families the chance to experience and actively enrich their children's day. Moreover, we welcome people of all ages and from diverse cultures and vocations who are seeking somewhere special to volunteer their services to our day-care centres.

During a normal day, volunteers support staff with special projects that would otherwise not be feasible. They contribute their own skills and competences, for example in sport or musical activities, or they could read to the children.

Volunteers in FRÖBEL centres are integrated into existing structures, and given appropriate preparation and guidance. This way they receive important information and are included in the crèche, kindergarten or after-school club team.



## Work / life balance

Many families face the challenge of juggling work and family life. They need the support of the day-care centre to achieve their aims in this respect. As a family-support service, we recognise the responsibility this brings and will respond constructively to the wishes and needs of working parents.

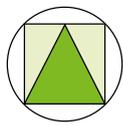
We adapt our offers and opening hours to the needs of families. Necessary closures for team training days or during holiday periods will be announced well in advance to give families time to make alternative arrangements.

## Cooperation with businesses

It is also our objective to integrate the wishes and concerns of businesses and parent employees into an optimal care package. With this in mind, many of our centres have established partnerships with businesses. Employers and day-care centres work together to facilitate the work / life balance.

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### Quality and quality development

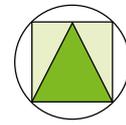
Children who attend a FRÖBEL group crèche, kindergarten or after-school club enjoy high-quality education. The quality of our educational work is defined by a common orientation framework and highlighted in the FRÖBEL Standards. The use of various internal and external evaluation procedures ensures that the quality of our education is constantly developed and secured. The system firmly establishes quality development measures that allow each day-care centre to be reviewed from two different perspectives which complement one another.

The NCC offers professional terms of reference for quality development and quality assurance. Its 'quality areas' describe best practices in the form of specific recommendations for education professionals. Using the checklists of the accompanying manual 'Developing Quality in Education' ('Pädagogische Qualität entwickeln'), teams can assess their own performance. These regular internal assessments emphasise the responsibility and professional competence of the education professionals in our day-care centres to assure the quality of their own work. Using various methodological building blocks from the manual, quality development processes are initiated based on outcomes and then defined in target agreements and implemented in planned stages.

The external evaluation, on the other hand, serves as a fixed element of quality development and assurance. External, objective and independent expertise gives the teams additional valuable impulses which they can use to further develop their educational work.

Representatives of the Group system assess the implementation of FRÖBEL Standards in the centres. Specified criteria are applied to monitor which Standards are already entrenched and which still need to be implemented. This also facilitates constant quality development and assurance.

Furthermore, regular surveys of parents and staff form an integral part of the quality development and assurance system. The results of the surveys provide valuable feedback which can spark critical debates and changes which, as improved conditions, ultimately benefit not only children and their families but also the employees themselves.



## Professional development and knowledge transfer

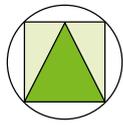
In order to give children the chance to develop according to their needs and interests, we are constantly in the process of developing and improving the quality of our work. This includes opportunities for further and continuing training as well as shared reflection on our educational activities and professional development in the FRÖBEL centre teams. Hence FRÖBEL offers all employees the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon the principles of education at FRÖBEL as set out in this Conceptual Framework with their teams or at joint seminars.

Additionally, our annual further training programme includes seminars open to all employees of the FRÖBEL group, including administrative, kitchen, domestic and technical staff. The seminar catalogue gives them the chance to enhance their competences individually in selected key areas, to expand their expertise or to take a leadership career path and prepare for a management position.

Through this comprehensive training offer for FRÖBEL group employees, we enable them to develop their competences innovatively and on the basis of recent knowledge, and to systematically expand their skills in a continuous improvement of the quality of their educational work.



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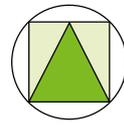
## Notes

### On-site support: FRÖBEL education consultants

Since July 2010, all regional companies of the FRÖBEL group have employed education consultants who support the educational work of the crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs. The priority for these consultants is to guide the development of the day-care centres towards providing the best possible education and care for the children through direct contact with management and teams. Furthermore, in discussions between the consultants and regional directors, topical themes from the education practice are debated and developments are initiated jointly.

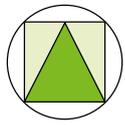
The consultants support and coach the education professionals, helping them to help themselves through professional consulting services. Their primary task is to support professionals in the centres so that they can optimise centre-related processes, and drive forward and maintain the quality of education. Consultants at FRÖBEL are distinguished by their expertise in early childhood education. With their additional qualifications from the areas of consulting and coaching, they put their know-how to use in diverse settings.

Close contact with the teams of the crèches, kindergartens and after-school clubs creates opportunities to provide concrete support services attuned to the needs of the day-care centre. Quality development processes are systematically and methodically supported in this way. The consultants advise centres on shaping their educational profile, drafting concepts and implementing Group requirements. They also support the teams with further training in various educational subjects, and initiate and moderate regional working groups to encourage dialogue among colleagues and deepen the expertise of the education professionals. To ensure cross-regional dialogue among the regional consultants, education consultancy conferences are held regularly. These are designed and organised by the Education and Quality Development team and also serve as a forum for feedback to optimise the support services managed by this team for the whole FRÖBEL group.



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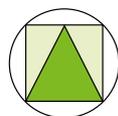
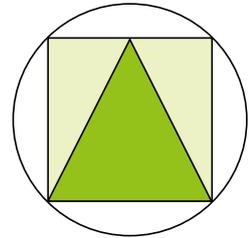
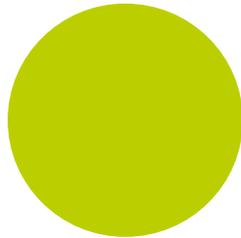
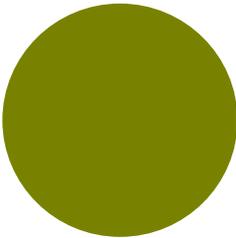
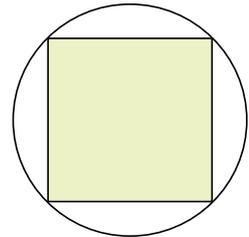
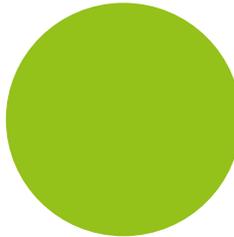
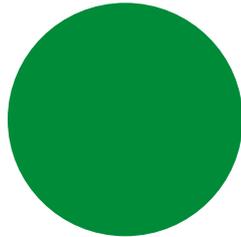
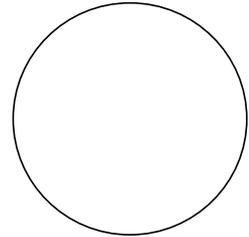
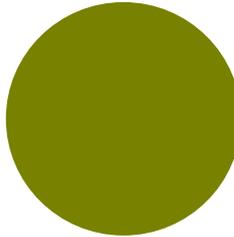
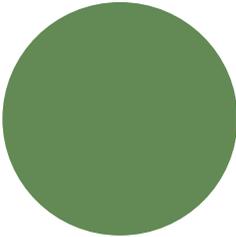
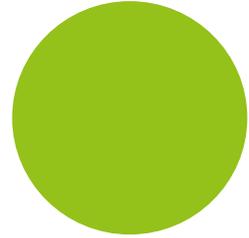
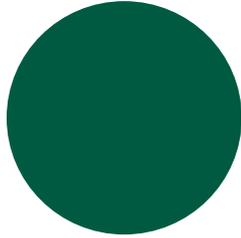
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**FRÖBEL**  
Kompetenz für Kinder