



House conception

Little Learners – big explorers

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I. Preface

We are very pleased that you are interested in the concept of the bilingual children's house "Little Learners – big explorers".

This house conception was developed together with the pedagogical team of the day care center, the *Kinderland-Fachberatung* (pedagogical council) as well as the management of the supporting organization, the Kinderland PLUS gGmbH. The basis of this is the BayKiBiG (*Bayerisches Kinderbildung- und -betreuungsgesetz*) and the additional execution guidelines of the AVBayKiBiG. Our conception is essentially based on the contents of the *Bayerischer Erziehungs- und Bildungsplan* (BEP). The same applies to the overall concept of Kinderland PLUS gGmbH, which, together with the house concept, represents the pedagogical guideline of our facility.

You can get detailed information about Kinderland PLUS gGmbH at www.kinderland-plus.de. Information about the BayKiBiG and AVBayKiBiG are found at <http://www.stmas.bayern.de/kinderbetreuung/baykibig/>, about the BEP at <http://www.ifp.bayern.de/projekte/laufende/bildungsplan.html> (only in German).

II. We introduce ourselves

1. The facility

In September 2015, *Little Learners – big explorers* (former name *Kinderland Baldhamer Straße*) was opened with a focus on the bilingual concept in a former office building at Baldhamer Street 39. The day care center offers space for a nursery, where children aged approx. one year to three years are cared for, and three kindergarten groups with children aged three years to school entry.

To make the bilingual concept more visible to the outside world, the name of the kindergarten was changed from *Kinderland Baldhamer Straße* to *Little Learners – big explorers* in September 2017.

Since September 2018, the kindergarten has been purely bilingual.



The partially open design of the daily routine enables all children to use the rooms freely and to work across groups in age-homogeneous groups.

a) Care, booking and closing times

Care hours: Our facility is open Monday to Friday from 6:45 am to 5.30 pm. The pedagogical core time is from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Other care times can be booked daily.

Booking times: from 6:45 am or 7:45 am or 8:45 am
up to 1:30 pm / 2:30 pm / 3.30 pm / 4:30 pm / 5.30 pm

Closing times: For information on closing times, please refer to the annual calendar posted on the day care center's website.

b) Building and outdoor areas

Our children's house is located on the ground floor of a former office building. There are three large group rooms. Our nursery group has its own group room. The facility also has a large hallway and entrance area with cloakrooms, a gymnastics room, an intensification room/library, a nursery bedroom, a kindergarten bedroom, a bathroom for kindergarten children and a bathroom with nappy-changing station for nursery children, as well as a team room and an office, which are located in the basement of the building. Our garden is located at the back of the building along the entire length of the house.

c) Target group

Little Learners – big explorers is a childcare facility for children aged six months to school age, regardless of gender, origin, religious affiliation or special needs. Our center is attended by children from different nations. We feel that the different nationalities and different experiences that these children and families bring with them are a great enrichment for our work and our facility. Cultural diversity is a great developmental opportunity for all children.



d) The social environment of the facility

The municipality of Vaterstetten, with a population of about 25,000, is located east of Munich on the federal highway 304 and belongs to the district of Ebersberg. The catchment area of the municipality includes the districts of Baldham, Baldham Dorf, Hergolding, Neufarn, Parsdorf, Purfing, Vaterstetten and Weißenfeld. The community is particularly popular with young families and enjoys a strong influx of residents. There is a train station (*S-Bahn*) with a straight connection to Munich as well as a well-developed public transport network. There is a bus stop a short distance from our day care center. It takes about 20-30 minutes to walk to the train station. The community also offers a wide range of activities, such as a swimming pool, a climbing forest, an adventure farm, several sports clubs etc.



2. Our pedagogical focus

The focus of our pedagogical work is the area of language education. In our daily pedagogical routine, we shape language acquisition in many ways through activities such as singing in our daily morning circle, talking together, reading picture books aloud and many other language-promotion activities.

It has been scientifically proven that the effortless acquisition of a second language at an early age brings many advantages. At *Little Learners – big explorers*, language is an important and everyday topic. Many families with different origins and language backgrounds choose our bilingual concept for their child because language education is a fundamental part of our work. The children and families bring many language skills with them into the everyday life of the day care center. We use these competences in our pedagogical work.

In addition to the special feature that we include English as a second language in our everyday kindergarten work, we have been participating in the federal programme "Sprach-Kitas: Weil Sprache der Schlüssel zur Welt ist" (*Language Kitas: because language is the key to the world*) since September 2021. As the title of the programme suggests, language is seen as a central and in-depth element for acquiring knowledge, making contact with each other and thus opening up the world. In terms of content, the programme uses three focal points, which are increasingly applied in everyday life in the kindergarten, namely **everyday integrated language education, inclusive pedagogy, and cooperation with families.**

Everyday integrated linguistic education gives many linguistic impulses to everyday kindergarten life by supporting actions, spaces and contents with linguistic emphasis. Inclusive pedagogy creates a place of learning for the children where it is normal to be different. Prejudices are critically questioned and diversity is discussed and valued. In our cooperation with the families, we regard them as equal educational partners by striving for a cooperative relationship. All three elements are closely connected and form the basic framework for our pedagogical work, whereby the children are always in the center. The three elements are reflected in the entire pedagogical concept and will be continuously integrated in our future pedagogical work.

III. The pedagogical concept of our nursery

1. The room concept

Our nursery has its own group room facing the garden, a sleeping room and a bathroom with a changing table. The garden and the gym are used by both the kindergarten and the nursery children. Due to our open work, the nursery children also stay in the kindergarten rooms, for example in the morning until about 8:00 am or in the afternoon from about 3:30 pm. After the nursery children have settled in, a visit of the kindergarten rooms can also be possible in the morning or during quiet time, depending on the situation and needs. Contact with the kindergarten children is also promoted by making it possible for the kindergarten children to visit the nursery area in consultation with the teachers. In this way, the children's sense of community is encouraged across all areas.

The nursery room contains various experience corners: In the building corner, the children can play and try out different building and play materials. The play corner



with vehicles, small animal figurines
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(*Schleichtiere*) and games such as puzzles and laying games stimulates and sharpens the senses of the children. The cuddle and reading corner is a place for the children to rest, withdraw, cuddle and experience books. At the painting table, the children can give free rein to their creativity at any time with various painting and crafting utensils. Our playhouse with stairs, slide and tunnel promotes both motor skills and various sensory perceptions.

The children learn to eat independently and properly during the daily meals at the dining table. During naptime, we practice undressing and dressing together with the children. In the adjoining bedroom, each child has his or her own fixed place to sleep with a mattress or crib and bedding brought from home. In the cloakroom, each child has its own place with a symbol and a book for jackets and mud clothes. The children are supported, motivated and encouraged to dress and undress themselves according to their age. In the nursery bathroom, there is a large changing table with stairs for children to climb on and off independently. Each child has their own drawer for changing utensils. For children who prefer to go to the toilet, there are three toilets in the bathroom at the appropriate height, which make it easier for the nursery children to go to the toilet independently. We accompany, motivate and support the children who are in the process of learning cleanliness throughout the entire learning process.

2. Key situations in everyday pedagogical life in the nursery

a) Adaptation phase/ Settling

Settling in is the key situation for building a good quality relationship between the pedagogical caregiver and the child. To ensure the child settles in well at the facility, we place great value on a gentle and sensitive settling-in process. Depending on the child, this can take at least four to six weeks until the toddler is acclimated for the entire booking period. It is necessary for the child to be accompanied by a parent in order for the acclimation process to take place. Parents should take this into account in their planning. After all, a successful settling-in period and a solid attachment behavior is an indispensable pre-requisite for subsequent successful learning and educational behavior. During the settling-in phase, each child has a constant caregiver from the pedagogical team. At the beginning, the child will attend the nursery together with a parent. On the first three to five days, parents have the opportunity to be present in the group room for hours at a time in order to have enough time for a good bonding process. After that, it is decided individually if and how long the first separation can be and in which rhythm the time is increased until the booked time is reached. This concludes the settling-in period. At the end of the settling-in period, there is a parent meeting in which the child's settling-in is reflected upon.

b) Changing diapers

We design the intimate diapering and care situation individually with special sensitivity. Non-verbal and verbal communication plays a special role in this area. The children are always changed or go to the toilet before lunch and after sleeping, as well as when needed.

c) Midday circle

Especially in the nursery group, the midday circle is an important part of the daily routine. Rituals are very important to us in order to give the children a sense of security and stability. We always begin our lunch circle with the song, "Alle, alle Kinder haben sich versammelt" in German (*All, all the children have gathered*). This song signals to the nursery children that we are now gathering together to begin the lunch circle. It is followed by the German welcome song "Hallo Lied" (*Hello song*), in which each child is called by name and greeted individually. Since the nursery is also in its way to becoming bilingual, we attach great importance to singing an

English welcome song as well. Currently, this is "The good morning train". After the three beginning songs, we discuss the season, the month, what a day it is, and the weather. Thereafter, we count the children in German and English. After that we talk about things related to a certain topic which has been chosen beforehand. For example, we end the lunch circle with the song "Häschen in der Grube" in German (*Bunny in the pit*).

d) Specific offer

Depending on the topic, we choose to do specific offers for the children. For example, we paint, craft, cook, bake or plant something with the children. Or we produce something together. Once a week, we take the nursery children to the gym. Depending on the focus, we organize this visit according to age or take all twelve nursery children to the gym together.

e) Activities outside the day care center

It is very important for us to go outside with the nursery children at least once a day. As a rule, between 9:30 am and 10:30 am, we go into our own garden or take a walk to the nearby playgrounds. We make sure that the interests of the nursery children are met. We love to visit the *Reitsberger Hof*, the adventure playground, the "Steinchen"-playground or just go for a short walk in case the weather is bad.

f) Lunch nap

For the nursery children, the midday nap is an important basic need, which we want to fulfill and make possible. Especially after a varied morning, most children already tired by lunch, shortly after 11:00 am. Each child has its own place to sleep and chooses which cuddly toy, cuddle cloth, pacifier or water bottle it wants to take the bed with it. We cater to the individual needs of the nursery children. Each child signals what he or she needs in order to fall asleep. If necessary, we sit or lie down with the children, maintaining the child's closeness and need for distance.

g) Body care

We give all nursery children who can walk independently the opportunity to wash their hands at the sink at certain times, such as before lunch or after. At this time, we sing the song "Hände waschen, Hände waschen kann jedes Kind" in German (*Wash your hands, wash your hands every child can*). The rest of the children clean their mouths and hands with the help of a washcloth.

h) Social-emotional development

Especially in the nursery, children learn to develop social skills from a very early age. These are named, supported, accompanied and promoted by us. Even the youngest nursery children show a social sense in their interaction with each other. With words and sentences we respond to what is perceived and underline it. Spoken words are taken up and referred to. The "yes" or "no" of a child counts and is taken seriously. It is very important to us that the children understand the nursery as an additional social space for themselves, in which they can develop independently, freely and with guidance.

3. A day in the nursery

from 8:00 am – 9:00 am	Arrival of the children, joint breakfast, free play, personal hygiene, changing diapers and going to the toilet.
9:00 am - ca. 10:45 am	Offers, changing depending on the day of the week, theme and season; e.g. free play, crafts, gym, garden time, walk, reading aloud/picture book viewing, baking, then clean up/personal hygiene.
10:45 am – 11:00 am	Daily lunch circle (welcome song, language stimulation through songs, verses, finger plays and circle games, closing song).
11:00 am – 11:30 am	Joint lunch
11:30 am – 12:00 pm	Changing diapers and going to the toilet
12:00 pm - ca. 2:00 pm	Lunch nap
2:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Changing diapers and going to the toilet, free play
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Free play and afternoon circle (literature, songs, finger games)
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm	Teatime (<i>Teestündchen</i>)
3:30 pm – 5:30 pm	Offers and free play in the kindergarten, garden, gym, group rooms of the kindergarten

IV. The pedagogical concept of our kindergarten

1. The room concept

The kindergarten area has three large rooms that are used by the kindergarten children. Children aged 3 to 4 years are cared for in two kindergarten groups and children of preschool age (last year of kindergarten and optional children) in the third group. Each of the three rooms has a basic equipment of toys and pedagogical materials. In addition, the individual group rooms are specifically equipped according to their focus.

Preschool group (Starfish-group, from 5 years)

In the preschool, the children have the opportunity to train their fine and gross motoric skills with specifically selected play materials, which are designed for the last year of kindergarten. Through the different shapes and colors of these materials, an early mathematical education takes place, which can be promoted, for example, by assigning and sorting objects. A painting table, a book corner and a building corner are available to the children during free play. In addition, the Starfish-group has a specially built playhouse with an upper floor. A kitchen has been integrated into the group room, which is equipped with pull-out platforms. It offers the children the opportunity to try out ion domestic work activities, to prepare, bake and cook meals.

Crocodiles (3-5 years)

In the Crocodile-group, the children have the opportunity to become creatively active. The children have a variety of materials at their disposal, which they can select and try out independently. In addition, activities are offered that are geared to the children's interests and abilities. The activities offered give the children the opportunity to try out and develop different techniques. Construction materials such as rolls, boxes and wooden blocks are used for spatial design. As with all other creative activities, the children not only acquire creative skills, but many other educational areas are also addressed. When tinkering and painting together, language is stimulated and motoric skills are promoted.

Dolphins (3-5 years)

A cozy sofa-doll corner invites children to slip into a wide variety of roles. This offer particularly promotes the children's imagination, language and social-emotional interaction. The children can choose whether they want to play in the building corner, the book corner or at the painting and craft tables. Body puzzles, magnetic games, wooden building blocks, Lego and much more encourage the children to deal with different materials and thus develop their living space.

Intensive room/library

We use our intensive room for specific activities with small groups. With benches and tables that can be folded against the wall, this room offers a variety of possibilities and can be used equally by the nursery and kindergarten. The intensive room is also used by the specialist service (*Fachdienst Integration*) and speech therapy (*Logopädie*) for individual work with the children.

In addition, we have set up a library for the children in this room. In small groups, the children go here every 2 weeks accompanied and are allowed to browse through the books and borrow books. Each child has his or her own book bag and library card for this purpose.

Relaxation room

Currently, our relaxation room, a quiet room facing the garden, is used as a sleeping room for our kindergarten children. The children decide for themselves whether and how long they want to sleep, according to their individual sleeping needs. Each child has its own place to sleep. They are welcome to bring along their own cuddly toys or personal blankets. However, we also provide these.

Gym

The children are given space for free and guided movement using soft building blocks, ropes, balls, bobby cars and other gymnastic materials. During the pedagogical core time, the gym is available to a different group of children every weekday in order to be able to offer targeted movement activities. At off-peak times, the gym can be used by all children in the house during free play.

Garden

Our garden with old trees extends over the entire length of the house on the back side of the building. There is a small terrace with an outdoor painting board, a raised bed, a swing for kindergarten and nursery children, a spacious garden house and a large sandbox. Retreats such as shrubs are also provided in our garden. An Indian tipi and two wooden horses in the front part of the garden area invite to role play.

Right next to our children's house is a nature garden, which we are allowed to use. In the nature garden there is a large meadow and several trees. The children have the opportunity to get closer to nature in this place and to play with natural materials. There is a public climbing playground about 50 meters away from our children's house. We like to use this and other public playgrounds in our area with our children to satisfy their desire for fresh air and exercise.

2. The immersion method

The immersion method (Latin *immersio*: to immerse, also called in German "Sprachbad") is currently considered the world's most successful language teaching method. In short, it simply corresponds to the way children learn their native language: without vocabulary and grammar cramming. In immersion learning, the new language is the working and colloquial language. The language itself is not the object of instruction, but a tool.

Following the principle of "one person - one language", each team member stays with his or her own language. The languages represented are German and English.

The central point of the immersion method is the teaching in context, the so-called contextualization, i.e. the language must be integrated into the action. The caregivers reinforce everything they say through facial expressions, gestures and pointing. The children then develop the language independently piece by piece from the context of the situation. This replicates the natural way children learn languages - including their mother tongue. They are constantly in contact with the new language and learn to use it in different areas.

In the process, children are not required to have skills they don't have on their own. They understand the situation through the activity. The immersion method thus enables intuitive language learning. It is particularly child-friendly because the children are introduced to the language without pressure. Each child can go at his or her individual pace; there are no class goals that must be met. Language teaching through immersion is motivating because it takes place without force.

It has been found that a second language basically enhances a child's cognitive development and even helps them develop their native language better - they are more aware of their own language. Children learn to think and act more flexibly, gain a better understanding of people who speak a different language, and are better able to put themselves in the mindset of others.

We actively promote an environment where cultural diversity is the norm and consciously cultivate interest in and acceptance of the "other." This means that differences are not only recognized, but also respected and lived. In practice, our goal is to welcome and integrate different cultures, languages and ideas into our daily routine. For example, we celebrate festivals such as St. Patrick's Day, Halloween, St. Martin, St. Nicholas, Christmas, Easter, the May Festival or Summer Festival.

Parents can trust the immersion method. Practice at home is not required, nor is an English-speaking parent. Due to the fact that the immersion method teaches a language without any pressure to perform, does not overtax any child and allows everyone to learn at their own pace, it is suitable for both children with learning difficulties and those with learning strengths.

3. Key situations in everyday pedagogical life

In our facility, we work according to the pedagogical approach of partially open work. This allows us to respond to the needs and wishes of the children and to encourage them in their independence. Due to the age-homogeneous groups, specific offers and activities can be offered, which promote the children individually. In order to give the children a sense of belonging to a group, each child is assigned to a kindergarten group (core group) from the beginning.

In addition, each child can choose which group room he or she would like to be in at certain times. The children have the possibility to change groups from 8:00 am to 9:00 am and from 12:30 pm to 5:30 pm.

Our key situations

a) Settling in

The children are exposed to a multitude of new impressions and experiences. For this reason, the acclimation to the new environment is handled extremely sensitively. The design and process of acclimatization is based on the individuality of each child. The pedagogical staff develops an individual approach for each child and family.

b) Morning circle

In each kindergarten group, the morning circle takes place daily from 9:30 am to about 10:00 am in German and Eng-



lish. Important contents of the morning circle are: welcome song, counting of children, calendar and the current thematic content as well as a closing song. In the morning circle, new songs are rehearsed or consolidated, sound stories are told, musical instruments are used or new circle games and finger games are learned.

On Friday, "show and tell" is an important part of the morning circle because on Fridays, each child from the Dolphins and Crocodiles groups gets to take a toy home.

c) Free play

Free play in particular enables the pedagogical team to observe the children closely. Therefore, we offer the children time windows in the daily pedagogical routine, in which free play is made possible. Based on these observations, the development and observation sheets can be filled out and processed. These are part of the development discussions, which are held twice a year.

d) Care situations

All kindergarten children have access to the sanitary area in the kindergarten. The groups send the children time-shifted to the toilet at specific times. A pedagogical specialist accompanies the children during this process. Nursing situations take place exclusively in protected, but visible rooms. At the express request of a child, we help them get dressed, undressed or changed. The children themselves choose who they want to receive help from. Depending on the child's age and stage of development, we offer to help the child go to the toilet. In the sense of, "Is everything okay?", "Do you need help?" If the answer is "Yes", the counter-question follows, "May I help you?" Only then do we take action and support the respective child if he or she needs help.

e) Transition to school

The last year of kindergarten is used to prepare the children for the transition to school. After this year, the children should have acquired the necessary skills to successfully start school. Many of the skills that children need for this are developed from birth and continue to develop throughout the kindergarten years. For a successful transition to school, children need basic skills in the areas of language, social behavior, motor skills and cultural techniques. For this purpose, preschool lessons in German and English take place in the preschool group. These include, for example, writing exercises, phonology exercises using the *Würzburger Trainingsprogramm*, and logic and cognitive education exercises. In addition, a gymnastics lesson and a soccer game are offered once a week for our preschoolers.

The transition to elementary school is the joint responsibility of parents, the day care center and the school. To this end, we work closely with the elementary schools in Vaterstetten. Regular cooperation meetings take place, where joint discussions take place with pedagogical staff from the facility, teachers and parents, e.g. in the context of an extra parents' evening for the preschool parents, which is also attended by a primary school teacher. This gives parents the opportunity to ask the teacher specific questions.

Observations and questions are also discussed after the teacher has visited the kindergarten during the so-called „Schulspiel“ (*school play*).

Vorkurs Deutsch 240 (Precourse German 240)

Children, who have a need for support in the German language should participate in the *Vorkurs Deutsch 240*. This applies in particular to children whose two parents are of non-German-speaking origin. This course concept begins 18 months before school enrollment. The need for support is determined on the basis of the SISMIK language development questionnaire. Only children who have demonstrated a need for support on the basis of this development documentation should take advantage of this course offer. The goal of *Vorkurs Deutsch 240* is to provide children with basic fluency in the German language to give them a good start in school.

4. Daily routine in the kindergarten

6:45 am - 8:00 am	Arrival of the children in the early service group, sliding snack, free play or planned activities.
8:00 am - 9:00 am	Opening of all groups, change of groups, free play or planned activities.
9:00 am - 10:00 am	Morning circles and breakfast in the different groups (greetings, language stimulation through songs, verses, games, storytelling, counting, weather, days of the week, thematic introduction to various topics). The morning circle takes place in both languages.
10:00 am - ca. 12:00 pm	Changing offers depending on the day of the week, project theme and season; e.g. handicrafts, gymnastics, playing in the garden, going for a walk, reading aloud, group games, preschool, cooking/baking or similar, followed by cleaning up, personal hygiene, diapering and toileting.
12:00 pm - 12:45 pm	Joint Lunch in the respective group
12:45 pm - ca. 1:45 pm	Sleeping (quiet room), quiet activity in group room, afternoon circle
1:45 pm - ca. 3:00 pm	Activities, free play, garden or gym
3:00 pm - ca. 3:20 pm	Teatime, afternoon snack
3:20 pm - 5:30 pm	Activities, free play, garden or gym

V. Parental involvement

With its warmth, love and upbringing, the family makes an indispensable contribution to the development of its child. The bonds, orientations and skills experienced in the family are crucial foundations for a child's educational and personal development. The family is the most important place for developing the readiness and ability for lifelong learning. Therefore, it is our goal to make our work transparent and to establish a partnership relationship with the parents in order to jointly shape the child's development in the best possible way. Forms of parental work are:

Parent talks

In order to ensure a mutual exchange of information about the developmental status of the children, regular parent meetings take place, which can be initiated by the parents as well as by the pedagogical staff.

Development talks

These meetings are offered twice in the day care year. In fall, the talks take place at the end of the settling-in period and development discussions (PERIK observation sheet). In spring, depending on the age and developmental stage of the children, the developmental talks (SISMIK, SELDAK or PERIK observation sheets) are offered.

Parents' evenings

Parents' evenings are held regularly, which can be initiated by the team, the parent's council or the sponsor. These parents' evenings can concern the pedagogical work of the facility, deal with certain topics or be of a creative nature.

Hospitation

In the months of June and July, parents have the opportunity to visit and observe. This is possible after consultation with the pedagogical team in the time window from 8:30 am to 11:00 am.

Parent Council

At the beginning of each kindergarten year, the parent council is elected during the first parents' evening. This election can also be offered in the form of a postal vote.

VI. Conclusion

This concept represents the current pedagogical work in the *Little Learners – big explorers* children's house.

Life is change, which is why our daily pedagogical work is also subject to a process of constant examination and adaptation. This concept is therefore not a final product, but will grow, change and be adapted again and again to new developments.

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