



element-i

Outline of the Nursery
Concept for Nurseries

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1. Introduction

This outline of the concept is geared towards parents of children in nurseries managed by Konzept-e für Bildung und Betreuung gGmbH. It describes the framework, structures and main educational goals of the work in the nurseries. More detailed background information is available from element-i Nursery Concept.¹

Element-i nurseries see themselves as facilities that support and supplement the role of families and provide a stand-alone educational programme. As a result, we offer all-day care and are as flexible as possible, while always maintaining the highest standards and quality.

The registered charities - Vereine Kind e.V. Stuttgart, Kind und Beruf e.V. as well as Konzept-e für Kindertagesstätten gGmbH are the patrons of these nurseries. Operations and management of their nurseries have been handed over to Konzept-e für Bildung und Betreuung gGmbH.

2. General overview

The facilities are open between 7am and 8pm, according to individual needs and funding. During opening hours, children are looked after full-time, (maximum of 50 hours per week), half-days (up to lunchtime, with the option of lunch) or flexible (30 hours per week spread over at least three days) according to individual arrangements. This flexibility is intended to accommodate families' personal daily schedules. However, there are also core hours, which are displayed on the notice board of each nursery. During these periods and during meal times, parents should neither drop off their children nor pick them up. Observing these time periods is of utmost importance to us and something we strongly insist upon.

Days on which the respective nursery is closed depends on the regional school holidays. Additionally, the nurseries close one Friday per year for staff training. Parents will be given plenty of notice of these days.

The number of nursery staff is determined by regional staffing level requirements and will depend on the number of children in attendance.

Typical daily routine

7.00am, 7.30am or 8.00am	Nursery opens	
7.00am - 9.30am	Free play / free breakfast	
9.30am - 10.00am	Children's meeting	
10.00am - 12.00pm	Intensive time with activities and projects	1st core period
12.00pm - 12.30pm	Lunch	2nd core period
12.30pm - 2.30pm	Relaxation time / nap	
3.00pm - 4.00pm	Snack / activities/ projects	3rd core period
4.00pm - close	Free play, children starting to be picked up	
5.00pm, 5.30pm, 6.00pm or 8.00pm	Nursery closes	

¹ This was sent upon registration, along with information on the individual nursery. It is also available on the Konzept-e GmbH website, as well as on the individual nursery websites.

3. The element-i educational theory: Individuals, Interests, Interaction ²

The element-i nursery concept links the principle of children teaching themselves through independent activity with an upbringing based completely on the spirit, the soul and the body. Having confidence in the abilities of the children, and recognising them, are key elements of our educational theory. This is based on the idea that children have abilities and prospects that we recognise and pick up on. Together with careful observation and enough support to ensure safety, we guarantee the children the greatest possible free space for individual interests and decisions. This enables and promotes the children's independence and engagement. It means that, according to their age and stage of development, children can do things such as play without direct supervision and we provide space for them to devise their own activities.

Humans teach themselves in a way that is unique to the **individual**, by confronting an environment that they find **interesting** and by **interacting** with others.

3.1 Main aims of our educational work

The most important objective of the element-i nursery concept is to fulfil the right of every child to receive support throughout their development and to be raised to be independent people, capable of living within a community. (Section 1 (1) of the Social Act *SGB VIII*).

This generates a frame of reference for the most important general aims for education and upbringing: **autonomy and bonds** as well as **health, resilience and joy of learning**. The learning and development objectives set out in regional guidance and education plans guide the implementation of these aims.

Autonomy

Autonomy means encouraging and supporting children's self-determination throughout their development. For this purpose, the nursery offers the freedom to practice and test out autonomous, self-dependent and proactive behaviour. In the daily children's meeting, for example, children can respond to the key question: "What are you going to do today?" by talking about and negotiating their current ideas and interests and, in doing so, devising a plan for the day independently and democratically, together with other children and teaching staff. This also involves the freedom to be able to play unsupervised, depending on the children's age and stage of development. It also concerns the freedom of school children to be able to leave the facility for their own ventures after agreement with staff, and to participate in games and activities in the vicinity.

Bonds

Bonds, in this context, means experiencing ties and a sense of belonging, as well as experiencing esteem and reliability and being able to give this to others as a result. In order to foster this, the teaching staff create a warm, safe atmosphere of reliability, esteem and recognition, which is necessary for the children to feel that they are able to take risks, to become independent and to enjoy optimal development.

The children should actively participate in social group life and take into account other people and their interests. They learn to understand and respect other people's beliefs,

² A detailed description of the basis of our educational activity, made up of the sections *playing is joyful learning, educational personnel as pioneers and assistants in children's educational processes, observation and documentation as tools of educational activity, exercise, verbal expression, nutrition, nature, integration as a nursery task, equal opportunities* and *child protection*, can be found in the element-i Nursery Concept.

feelings and actions in the community, and learn to take responsibility for their own actions. In their daily interaction they recognise each other's differences and learn to respect those who are different from themselves.

Furthermore, it is extremely important to us to promote a sense of community through working in small groups, in everyday activities, at celebrations with and without parents and via contacts through the nursery.

Health

Maintaining a healthy body is a vital factor in leading a long, happy, active life, and one that can be influenced independently. Therefore it is one of the aims of our work to make children aware of the link between healthy eating and sufficient exercise as integral components of a healthy lifestyle.

Element-i nurseries provide a well-balanced diet compatible with children's needs, using high-quality, locally sourced, seasonal ingredients. From an educational perspective, we place great importance on children deciding on their own portion sizes and food choices and developing a good understanding of nutrition. As we consider this issue to be so important, we have developed our own detailed nutrition plan.

Exercise is not only a basic need for children, but also demonstrably the most important prerequisite for their physical, psychological and social development. Hence children have access to a wide range of incentives for exercise, both indoors and outdoors, integrated into the normal daily routine and not confined to particular times and spaces. In a motivating environment full of possibilities, there will be a few bruises and tears when children are exercising. This is far better than the hidden and long-term consequences of well intentioned, but detrimental movement restrictions. After all, it is only when children can try something out for themselves that they can really learn something.

Resilience

Part of our basic preventative duties is encouraging resilience. Educational scientists define resilience as the psychological ability of children to cope with stress. This ability to cope with stress equips them to effectively adjust to difficult or stressful life situations. Resilience improves children's chances of successfully coping with the changes they are about to face and with crises, and being able to develop into self-confident, healthy and competent characters.

In order to make children strong they will, for example, be encouraged to participate in and to exert their influence on the organisation of every day communal life, to express their feelings and emotions and to resolve conflicts independently. Furthermore, topics which are acutely important for children will be taken up and pursued according to their age.

Joy of learning

The ability to learn and to further one's development is something established by humans within themselves. Learning is a self-active, experiential, problem-solving process that demands an active confrontation with environments, alone and with others. Joy of learning and active confrontations with the world, triggered by our naturally inherited curiosity, as well as our strengthened motivation to overcome challenges, are essential foundations for the lifelong learning process.

It is the job of our carers to empathically observe the children to determine their stage of development and work with them to create a stimulating and challenging environment (rooms and materials). Furthermore, as they interact with the children, they should provide incentives and stimulation, to allow them to accompany and enrich their learning processes. This leads us to work in function rooms, in which the children can concentrate on and pursue their interests, for example in a studio, building room, role play room or exercise room. Furthermore, the crawling nest offers the youngest children age-appropriate stimulation in

the safety and proximity of a constant circle of a few familiar people.

4. Educational partnership

Cooperation between parents and nursery staff is an important pillar in the work the nurseries do. On the basis of mutual understanding and mutual acceptance, close cooperation between carers and parents is the foundation of good care. As such, the carers consider the parents as experts on their children. But equally, our educational staff are highly qualified in the education and care of children in a community facility and make responsible, independent decisions in their daily work with children.

From the very beginning, close cooperation and committed support from the parents during the children's **acclimatisation** is essential. We attach great importance to the children's acclimatisation period in the context of the element-i nursery concept and as such have designed the process very carefully.

Building a trusting relationship between the child and their new surroundings can only succeed with the assistance of the parents or someone else the child trusts. This person serves as a 'safe haven' for the child, for as long as they need to feel comfortable in their new surroundings, until they accept the staff as people who create a feeling of security, trust, support and comfort.

Children usually take between two and four weeks to build such relationships. Individual adjustment to that timeframe can only happen with the agreement of the main carer for the child concerned.

Parents therefore commit themselves to setting aside four weeks, in which they bring their child to the nursery, only when the overseeing member of staff is working, and take care of them, ensuring that the child's parent or guardian can be present during this time to accompany them when necessary and to familiarise themselves with life in the nursery.

A successful acclimatisation period sets out solid foundations for a trusting life together in the 'nursery habitat' for many years to come.

Carers and parents regularly meet for one-on-one discussions about their child's development. This exchange not only enhances mutual understanding, it also provides an exchange of information. Likewise, parents are welcome to actively participate and start and realise their own initiatives.