



Teaching Policy

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kindercentra

Introduction

In our nurseries and toddler care and after-school care sites in Haarlem and Spaarndam we offer care to children from 0 to 13 years old.

For children, a safe, happy childhood in which they can develop their opportunities and talents in the best way is essential. Parents are the main providers of children's upbringing but we also make an important contribution by offering a loving, social, safe, healthy and sustainable environment with numerous opportunities for development. Our childcare is a valuable addition to the children's development.

This teaching policy describes how we at Hero kindercentra provide a valuable addition. We have listed our organisation's major assumptions concerning teaching in it. The policy has been written for children from the age of 0 to the age at which they leave primary education and it is applied by all the staff within our nurseries and toddler care and after-school care sites. The implementation of this policy is specifically formulated in separate work plans for each site.

Unique

Every child is unique, has his/her own character and needs and will develop in his/her own way. It's important for children at Hero children's centres to be able to discover who they are. Every child will be embarking on an adventure at his/her own pace, on their way to the best possible version of himself/herself. We work with this and offer all children chances and opportunities for developing in the best way.

From birth, children seek contact with their social environment. Because we offer group care, we make an important contribution to the social development of every child. Within the safe environment of the group they have a great time and exercise and experiment playfully together with children of the same age and teaching staff. In this way, every day they learn skills that they need both now and for the future. Here we are a partner with the parents in the upbringing of their child(ren). We establish a connection with the home situation and involve parents as much as possible in the care.

“Our mission is, every day, together with the children,
to embark on an adventure on the way to
the best version of themselves”

Foundation stones of the policy

The teaching policy contains the following foundation stones:

1. Emotional security
2. Personal skills
3. Social skills
4. Values and standards
5. Partnership with parents
6. Network

Emotional security

Children can discover the world around them from this safe base when they feel they are in secure and familiar surroundings. For the creation of this security it is important for children to be able to rely on the constancy of teaching staff. We build personal relationships with the children and make them feel welcome. We maintain a sensitive, warm and loving approach to all children. We have a lot of fun with the children because if children have fun, they are open to personal development. Each child receives positive attention. Babies in particular are provided with intensive one-to-one contact with their caregivers. Which is exactly why we spend plenty of time cuddling them, playing with them and talking to them. There is also daily personal contact with every child at the nursery and toddler and after-school care sites.

We are involved in the children's world of experience, so we know what they need. By watching and listening to the children carefully, we correctly interpret their verbal and non-verbal signals. We identify their emotions, needs, experience and interests and work with them. So the children feel that they are seen, heard and understood and enjoy better social-emotional development. We are also literally close to the children. We adjust our pace. We communicate, assist and/or look after the children with patience and undivided attention.

*“Attention - the children feel that they are seen,
heard and understood and enjoy
better social-emotional development”*

We ensure a balanced daily rhythm with fixed elements and rituals to make things predictable for the children. Recognition increases the sense of security. With babies, we coordinate mainly at their own rhythm. We signal what we are doing and what is going to happen. The establishment of the group area also contributes to a feeling of confidence and security. Consideration is given to good acoustics and to the allocation of space. The children can tell which specific area is intended for each activity. For younger children there are quiet corners and the space is laid out so that we can make eye contact with babies. For schoolchildren there is a place for them to withdraw to rest after the end of the school day.

Personal skills

Children have a natural urge to develop. They are curious and develop by discovering the world around them: by looking, imitating, repeating, playing, investigating and experimenting. If children are deeply involved in their play or activity, this automatically means that they are developing. They get involved in what they are doing and then gain intensive learning experience. To encourage this involvement, we observe the children and match the range of activities and play materials as closely as possible to the children's interests. Every child develops in his/her own way and at his/her own pace. We take this into account. Some children, specifically from our VVE (Pre- School and Early School Education) sites, need extra support with this. In order to match the range of activities as closely as possible to the children, we have mainly horizontal groups of children of the same age (if this is possible at the site).

The children are given the time to acquire new skills by frequent repetition. We also offer activities to those who lie within the 'zone of proximal development'. This means that children are challenged to deepen or broaden their skills. Here the emphasis is always on the process and the children's pleasure in playing and not on the end result. This gives the

children more self-confidence. It's a matter of trying and practising. Learning to deal with disappointments and setbacks is also part of this.

Challenging the children is always done in a playful way since experiencing pleasure lies at the heart of involvement and development. By playing, children practise all kinds of skills and they discover the effects of their actions. Attention is given to all areas of development. There is not one specific moment at which this happens. We create and seize opportunities for this throughout the day. We therefore restrict the 'waiting times' (for instance waiting until all the children have been to the toilet or they have put on their jackets) within the daily programme as far as possible and we make good use of this time by, for example, singing songs with the children during the wait, playing games or giving children an active role.

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Besides the activities, there is always time for unstructured play. A rich playing environment has been created for this. This means that the group area and other areas where children can play are attractive and challenging, with new materials introduced regularly, so that children have ample opportunity for discovery. We consciously consider the toys that we provide. There is a varied range of toys relating to all areas of development. We think it's important for the toys to encourage the children's creativity, imagination and drive to explore. The toys are visible to the children in the group area and they can access them themselves. When we buy new toys, we choose sustainable materials whenever possible. We ensure a good balance between activities and play on the one hand and rest and relaxation on the other.

We organise as much outdoor play as possible every day. This contributes to a healthy lifestyle. By playing outside and experiencing nature and the seasons, children gain many new experiences. Playing outside is good for the broad development of children. Outside, children are given the opportunity to explore their own possibilities, to push their own limits and to learn to assess risks for themselves. Children literally have the space they need to develop without constant adult intervention. This is important for their motor development and their self-confidence. This is how children learn exactly how to play safely. Children are allowed to get dirty outside and the occasional scrape or bump is normal too. However, we do supervise them and we ensure a safe playing environment. If something ever goes wrong with their play, we will be sure to inform the parents.

By offering as wide a range of activities and play material as possible, the children are given the opportunity to discover where their talents lie and what they enjoy doing most. This can include sports, art and culture, creativity, technology and nature. Here we make no distinction between boys and girls but take into account everyone's needs. For all the children we have as wide a range of activities and toys as possible so as not to foster any stereotypical behaviour: from busy to quiet, from carpentry to threading beads and from making music to gardening.

During the daily programme we make space for the initiative and autonomy of the child. Children play an active part in the choice and pursuit of activities. Children will as far as possible do for themselves what they already know how to do. Even if this takes a little longer, they will be given the time for this. Children are given (little) responsibilities such as for instance helping in the group.

There is a wide range of language tailored to the children's level. We talk to the children a lot and provide information and explanations. In addition, we articulate what the children are doing or what they are involved in. This stimulates their understanding of language. We give children the space and encourage them to tell their own story. In this way, children gradually learn to speak better. There are singing and reading out loud every day and a large number of books available appropriate to the age, level and requirements of the children. Encouraging language development runs like a common thread through the whole day.

We give attention to 21st century skills. Today's children are growing up in a digital and technological society and this calls for new skills from them. Here one might consider self-control, creativity, cooperation, communication, problem-solving tasks, critical thinking and digital literacy. Various skills are called upon in the activities that we offer at our sites. We restrict the use of digital media among young children because we think it is important for them to discover and experience the world for themselves. In fact, they learn the most from real-life situations. However, if we do choose to use digital media, this must always have a clear purpose and add value. For children in ASC, digital media will play a greater role in their day-to-day lives. With them, the rule is that we have a clear policy on the use of digital media. This policy is formulated in the teaching work plan of the care site. We ensure a good balance of activities and the assumption is that children prefer to play among themselves.

Social skills

Group care means that children spend the whole day together with other children and teaching staff. This is one of the benefits of group care. We think that it is important for children to develop properly socially. Children are indeed social beings. They need each other and they seek each other out. In a group, children learn the social behaviour that occurs in play. The teaching staff member plays an active part in this. Thanks to the creation of social situations in which children learn to listen, ask, wait, share, play together and acquire all the other social skills required so as to deal with each other positively, children become socially skilled.

Children learn social behaviour through imitation; copying others. So in a group, children learn from each other and the teaching staff member, who serves as an example. We communicate with the children with respect and we support interaction among children. Empathy with others is an important precondition for being together in a positive way. Play offers children an opportunity to process their own experiences and emotions. This teaches them how to deal with the emotions and behaviour of others.

By means of group activities in which children experience pleasure together, they also feel part of the group and learn that all children have a place. We are not all the same and that is good. With respect for each other we can create a good atmosphere. All the children and teaching staff have an impact on this. Together, we are responsible for each other.

It is good for children to play with their best friends and it can be exciting to play a game with children that they do not know so well. But supported, accompanied and sometimes together with the teaching staff member with whom the child feels safe, the child dares to do much more. In play situations, children practise various roles: one time, the child is the teacher, another time he/she forms a pair with an older child playing outside or helps a new child.

“Learning - Thanks to the creation of social situations in which children learn to listen, ask, wait, share and play together so as to deal with each other positively, children become socially skilled.”

Yet another benefit of group care is the opportunity to learn to deal with confrontation and conflict. This is also part of growing up. There are often too many children that want to play with that beautiful red car or sometimes a child cannot play with them. We support children with learning to assert themselves and in listening to others. We allow children to experience that everyone has a different perspective and that they can come up with a solution together.

In order to feel part of the group, it is also important for children to know that their voices will be heard. Children's own input is actively encouraged by letting them contribute their ideas about the care and the activities. In this way there can be a children's committee in the ASC site in which children contribute their ideas about, for instance, the layout or children from the NDC may decide to play outside longer because the weather is so good. Child participation is possible at any age.

Values and standards

We encourage children to get to know the culture and the (generally accepted) values and standards of society with an open mind. The group in which the children are cared for acts as a “mini-society” in which children play, learn, experience and imitate. This is of major significance for children's social and moral development.

We are aware of our own attitudes and the specific values and standards that we ourselves have acquired from our upbringing. We discuss this with each other and deal with this in a professional manner. Generally accepted values and standards and the vision of teaching within our organisation guide us in our work. We might consider values such as being friendly to each other, helping each other, having consideration for each other, having respect for yourself and each other and respecting the environment. Moreover, care for nature and the environment forms an important foundation stone within our organisation. We also think it is very important to impart to the children a healthy lifestyle in the areas of diet and exercise. We also show consideration for ways of dealing with and respecting diversity. So we let children get to know other's cultures and customs. We always set a good example to the children regarding all these issues.

We are open to the children's own input and encourage them to think for themselves about how the world is structured and to learn to form their own opinions about what is good and not good in a way that leaves others with their dignity. In addition, there are a limited number of clear rules within the group, which gives the children a point of reference. The rules have been formulated as positive instructions for behaviour. However, we do not apply these rules rigidly. The rules may be changed or apply to specific situations. We explain properly why the rules apply.

We are aware that the children's moral development occurs in phases. Moral development relates to, among other things, the awareness of good and bad, the development of conscience and the control of emotions. Young children cannot yet empathise with others and they do not yet know what is and is not allowed because their moral awareness is still to develop. They act on the basis of their needs, they are impulsive and do not yet have much self-control. We bear in mind that children still have to learn this and we tell them what they can and cannot do in the group. We help children to gradually learn to express their emotions in a positive way and to be aware that their actions have an effect on others. Learning to deal with rules is part of the moral development of toddlers and infants. They gradually learn to see the rules as self-evident and to internalise them and they learn to empathise

with others. For schoolchildren from about the age of six, the social environment becomes more and more important in determining what is and is not good and they begin to wonder what others think of their behaviour. They also wonder why certain rules apply and they start experimenting with breaking them. Their conscience gradually develops. For this there must be a positive relationship with the educator.

We give mainly positive attention to the desired behaviour in the group. If children show undesirable behaviour, we try to discover why the child shows this behaviour. Then we know better how to support this child. The child's behaviour can be changed in various ways (e.g. by using humour, by removing the cause, by offering alternative forms of behaviour, by responding non-verbally etc.). Children's behaviour may have consequences but we never punish children. With punishment, children may in fact avoid certain behaviour in the future but they do not gain insight into their behaviour or its consequences. Nor does this support the relationship with the teaching staff member. So we mainly state the behaviour that we do want to see and we explain why. We also explain what effect children's behaviour has on others or on the environment. We condemn a child's undesirable behaviour where necessary but never condemn the child as a person.

Partnership with parents

We as an organisation are a partner with the parents in the upbringing of their child(ren). We do not see children as separate from their parents but as part of the family in which they grow up. So we ensure that families feel welcome and that they are listened to. This creates mutual trust. We are involved with the children and also look out for their well-being. So we exchange ideas with parents about how to deal with children and we tell each other about the adventures that they are embarking on with us and the growth that they are going through. In this way we support and complement each other. Thanks to this cooperation there is a connection between the climate of upbringing at home and the childcare. This has a positive impact on the children's well-being.

*“Adventure - we exchange ideas with parents
about how to deal with the children and we tell
each other about the adventures that we embark upon and
the growth that the children are going through”*

One benefit of a balanced partnership with parents is equality and reciprocity within the relationship. To achieve this, it is important to show attention and respect for the way in which parents put their parenthood into practice. We also expect respect and understanding from parents for the way in which we deal with the children.

So we explain why we do things in a particular way and discuss this with parents. We have as much positive contact with each other as possible. In fact we work together to ensure the children's proper upbringing.

Network

Children form part of a greater whole. So besides contact with the families of the children, we maintain contact with other organisations. We attach value to good cooperation with, for instance, the municipal authority, educators, the library, sports clubs, the CJG (Centre for Youth and Family) and the JGZ (Youth Healthcare). Thanks to regular contact with schools we ensure good coordination between care and education. If we have any concerns about a child's domestic situation, in some cases we contact Veilig Thuis (Safe at Home) to ask for advice. Here we follow the national guidelines. If we need advice or support in the area of education, we consult the CJG or the JGZ. We do this in consultation with the parents. By working together with parents, educators and all other partners, together we create a network in which children can optimally develop into the very best versions of themselves.

Hero kindercentra
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