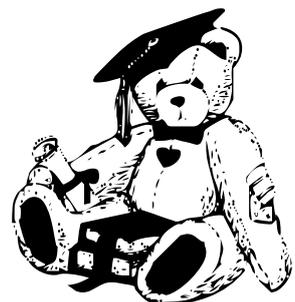


# PARKSIDE SCHOOL

## **Montessori Kindergarten**

**Pedagogical Concept**

**Parkside School Oberrieden**



# Inhaltsverzeichnis

1. Leading Principle.....	3
1.1. About the child.....	3
1.2. About us.....	3
1.3. Team work.....	3
2. Pedagogical matters.....	3
2.1. Familiarisation.....	3
2.2. Communication.....	3
2.3. The Children Group.....	3
2.4. Conflict resolution.....	4
2.5. Portfolio.....	4
3. Montessori-Pedagogy.....	4
3.1. Maria Montessori.....	4
3.2. Sensitive Phases (from 3 to 6 years).....	4
3.3. The prepared environment.....	5
4. The Montessori material.....	5
4.1. Practical life exercises.....	6
4.2. Sensory training.....	6
4.3. Preparation for math.....	6
4.4. Mathematics.....	7
4.5. Language.....	7
4.6. Bilingualism.....	7
4.7. Cosmic education / Biology / Geography.....	7
5. Further learning.....	7
5.1. Early music education.....	7
5.2. Expressive painting.....	8
5.3. Movement (Forest and gym).....	8
5.4. Creativity.....	8
5.5. Field Trips / Excursions.....	8
5.6. Nutrition.....	8
5.7. Household maintenance.....	9
5.8. Relaxation, siesta.....	9
5.9. Garden.....	9
6. Cantonal curriculum ("Lehrplan 21").....	9
7. Our teachers.....	9
8. Opening hours and weekly schedule.....	9
9. Cooperation with the parents.....	9
10. Medication dispensing.....	10
11. Public Relations.....	10

# 1. Leading Principle

## 1.1. About the child

We see the child as a competent, cooperative, active and learning human being. We want to support and encourage the child in its social, emotional and cognitive learning.

Through observation of the teachers, the individual abilities and skills of the child are revealed and meaningful support and learning opportunities are developed for it.

Success in learning strengthens the child's talents and self-confidence.

## 1.2. About us

The Parkside School Pre-school and Kindergarten Thalwil is a family-complementary, bilingual (German / English) pre-school (as of 3 years) and a kindergarten for children as of kindergarten age.

At our Parkside School Oberrieden location, we have a daycare center with five groups (four of which are bilingual) and a Montessori kindergarten.

In a loving environment, the children grow into self-confident, trustworthy and independent personalities. Their strengths are supported and their desire to actively learn optimally activated. We give them the confidence to grow with big tasks.

## 1.3. Team work

We maintain an open, honest, respectful and constructive approach within the team. Cooperation is promoted through communication, support, mutual trust, personal responsibility and independence.

The staff has the necessary expertise and personal commitment. The tasks and competencies of the staff are regulated in the job descriptions. The professional competence of the staff is to be continuously expanded through further training.

# 2. Pedagogical matters

## 2.1. Familiarisation

We pay great attention to the optimal acclimatization for the child. The child is slowly introduced to the daily routine according to its needs. It is accompanied by a parent during the initial period.

The structure of the familiarization is determined during the initial interview and is based on the individual needs of the child and the parents. The kindergarten children usually do not have a formal familiarization, however, it depends on the individual situation.

## 2.2. Communication

Relationships with adults and other children help the individual child to formulate its needs, feelings and desires. Through the trust gained, it learns to express itself in the group. The communication rules are worked out step by step with the group.

Therefore, it is of great importance to use a neutral, encouraging, attentive and affectionate everyday language.

## 2.3. The Children Group

In a mixed-age group, the older children learn to be considerate of the younger children, and they can deepen their knowledge and skills by applying them in dealing with the younger children.

The younger children, in turn, orient themselves towards the older children and thus receive a variety of developmental stimuli in a natural way.

The tutor system strengthens the children in their self-esteem, and the sense of belonging allows each individual to take responsibility for others or the group. At the same time, the whole group is carried by the sense of community.

The needs of the different age groups are promoted through individual and specific offers in different levels of difficulty.

During bringing times, pick-up times, lunch/siesta and the holidays of the public schools the kindergarten children and the pre-schoolers are together.

## **2.4. Conflict resolution**

We cultivate a constructive conflict resolution culture in order to positively promote the development of social coexistence. Every child's feelings, interests and competencies are taken seriously. The successful management of a conflict situation always means a development opportunity for the individual children and their relationships in the group.

Encouragement and the use of logical consequences that are linked to the child's behavior and that deal with current events lead to constructive conflict resolution.

## **2.5. Portfolio**

The children each have their own folder that accompanies them through the Parkside School time. Some are given pages to be filled out by the teachers, another part are drawings and works by the children, which are stored in the portfolio and document the learning status. The child can take the folder home after its time at Parkside School.

# **3. Montessori-Pedagogy**

**No one can relieve the child to build the human that it has to build.  
No one can grow for the child.**

Maria Montessori

## **3.1. Maria Montessori**

Maria Montessori was born in Chiaravalle (Italy) in 1870 and died in the Netherlands in 1952. In 1896 she became the first woman in Italy to obtain a doctorate in medicine. She worked as an assistant at the University Clinic in Rome, where she specialized in paediatrics and was particularly interested in working with mentally handicapped children. During this time she studied the work of two forgotten French doctors, Jean Itard and Edouard Seguin.

During her time as the head of a curative education institute in Rome, she developed special didactic sensory materials that she used for work with mentally handicapped children, and achieved success. Every child was able to learn and was encouraged accordingly. In 1907 she opened the first "children's house" (Casa dei Bambini) in the poor district of San Lorenzo near Rome, which she managed according to her own pedagogical ideas and, with the help of her didactic learning materials, led to impressive results in the development of the children. Later she developed the Montessori method based on the experiences she had made in the children's home. Montessori pedagogy is widespread all over the world and is widely recognized by many schools.

Maria Montessori stated that every child wants to learn regardless of age, gender, origin, religion and disability, and that the learning process takes place holistically with all senses. For this reason, a didactically prepared environment is created for the child, which consists of the Montessori learning materials, the trained teacher and the children.

## **3.2. Sensitive Phases (from 3 to 6 years)**

During development, the child goes through various phases in which it is particularly receptive to certain learning content. Jean-Claude Piaget also dealt with the sensitive phases of the child at an early stage and

also came to the conclusion that these were essential for the learning progress and development of the child. Montessori understands sensitive phases to be certain periods of receptivity in which a large volume of learning can be mastered within a very short time without great effort. The most obvious example here is language: never again in life can a language be learned so quickly and perfectly and without special intervention as within the first years of life.

### **3.3. The prepared environment**

The prepared environment is a precisely structured landscape that enables the child to meet its developmental needs. It is made up of the room / materials, the teacher and the other children. Maria Montessori strived for an environment for the child so that it can develop optimally and fully exploit its potential. From birth, the child pursues the goal of becoming self-sufficient and independent by actively dealing with its environment.

#### The child as a builder of himself

We should be aware that the child has the appropriate possibilities to be able to build itself (builder of itself). We have to be a role model for the child and stand by what we say to them and set an example. Last but not least, this includes the prepared environment.

#### Room

All materials are within sight and reach of the children and should respond to their needs and wishes. It should attract through its beautifully decorated exterior (decoration) and have the character of a call. The prepared environment is a place with a peaceful and orderly atmosphere, adapted to the size and interests of the child. A quiet place is created for the children. All materials should be arranged on open shelves. They are arranged low so that the children can take them by itself. Visible objects arouse interest and encourage the child to work with them. Each material has its own place, is beautifully and appealingly arranged and complete.

#### Pedagogue

The Montessori teacher has the role of a companion who helps the child on its way to independence: "Help me do it myself." The teacher shows the children trust in their own abilities, supports and guides them towards independent work.

#### Children's group

The Montessori children's group is made up of the different ages of the children as well as boys and girls. The mixed-age groups allow the younger children to observe and admire the older or more experienced children. The absorbing mind helps them to take in a lot of information and to learn from it (social learning).

For the older children this means repeating certain activities and getting a better understanding of the work. The children help each other in a beautiful way, which contributes to a special harmony in the group. The charm of the group lies in the number of different characters of the individuals. In addition, different age groups cause less competition and the children compare themselves less with one another. The Montessori children's groups also consist of large societies, where the students deal with the individuality of each. In this way, a great diversity can be created, consisting of multiculturalism, age and gender.

## **4. The Montessori material**

The Montessori material is so-called "development material" and form a fundamental part of the prepared environment. It is equipped with materials that "seduce" the child into action, as they are adapted to the child's inner needs and promote holistic development. It enables active and independent learning and the joy of doing.

The material is divided into the following areas:

- Practical life exercises
- Sensory material
- Mathematics
- Language
- Cosmic education

After an introduction by the teacher, the material enables the children to develop knowledge and skills independently. All materials, regardless of which learning area they depict, should promote the development of the child and his needs accordingly.

The child achieves abstract thinking via the concrete action: touching leads to understanding. The material is intended to support the children in developing their full potential and in according to their needs and interests. Since the child discovers a learning content largely independently and deals with it in greater depth, it will perceive this learning process as a personal discovery. This creates a feeling of deep satisfaction and leads to building and strengthening a healthy sense of self-worth.

The child builds a realistic self-image by getting to know its strengths and also perceiving areas that pose a challenge. The adult's judgment does not apply here, as the child can in most cases control his or her work himself. Mistakes are therefore always a task that every single child faces in its work. The social reference norm, i.e. the comparison with other students, is put back in favor of an individual and objective reference norm. Mistakes are perceived as learning opportunities and difficulties as challenges that one can grow from. The child's self-perception and self-assessment is becoming increasingly differentiated and realistic. After a while, the child knows where it is, when it needs to get support and which steps it can take on its own.

#### **4.1. Practical life exercises**

The practical life exercises are examples of everyday actions and serve to improve our environment. They are known to the children in their area and help them in later life. They are more or less an indirect preparation for the various activities in everyday life and promote independence. Practical life exercises help the child to adapt to their surroundings. The aim of all practical exercises is to encourage the children to coordinate their movements by learning, for example, how to carry a chair or a tray with small water jugs. They promote his sensorimotor development and lead to harmonious eye and hand coordination. They practice using tweezers and three-finger grips and concentration is promoted.

The promotion of manual dexterity also serves the cognitive development. It promotes the independence of the child from the adults, its independence and thus its security and self-esteem. They help to develop a sense of responsibility for the environment in the child, and at the same time an inner order is formed. So they help to build up the personality and enable people to live in a community.

#### **4.2. Sensory training**

The sensory training addresses the following senses:

- Sense of sight (visual)
- Sense of hearing (auditory)
- Sense of smell (olfactory)
- Sense of taste (gustatory)
- Sense of touch (tactile)
- Sense of balance (vestibular)
- Depth perception (proprioceptive)

Through the five senses the child can get to know its external world. The sensory materials address the sense of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. There is also vestibular perception (sense of balance), which determines the position in relation to gravity and equilibrium.

Finally, Maria Montessori enumerates the proprioceptive perception (sense of strength and movement), which means depth sensitivity.

As the ultimate sense, Maria Montessori speaks of the stereognostic sense, to which she always ascribes an important role. The stereognostic sense describes the ability to perceive the shape of solid objects by touching them from all sides or actively feeling them in various ways (heat, structure).

#### **4.3. Preparation for math**

The sensory materials are made precisely to refine the senses. Working with them addresses both internal (feelings, pain) and external (noises) stimuli. The sensory materials are concrete and help the child to get to know the abstract world. They support the refinement of the child's senses so that they are able to optimally

observe, understand and appreciate the social and cultural environment. The sensory materials also help to draw logical conclusions and bring the importance of exactness, precision and order to the fore.

#### **4.4. Mathematics**

All people have a mathematical mind. It is the ability to think abstractly that engages our imagination. Mathematics accompanies us through our entire everyday life. It is about counting quantities and the connection between symbols.

While working with the sensory materials, the child is indirectly prepared for mathematics. We start first of all with the concrete material, through which we show the quantity (amount). We have the quantity in a material such as the numerical rods. They represent the numbers from 1-10 in the form of bars (quantity recording up to 10). The child gets to know an abstract number through the concrete size. We always get from the concrete to the abstract, from grasping to understanding.

Then the symbols follow, the digits. In this way the children get a “concrete picture” of the importance of mathematics. Finally, it should be added that mathematics is a science and requires a lot of practice.

#### **4.5. Language**

The child's vocabulary is shaped by those around him and the environment. It speaks in simple sentences. Verses, songs, rhymes, conversations, picture books, stories and working on topics support it in its language development. The formation of terms expands the vocabulary.

The child is interested in individual letters and also perceives them visually in words. Initial sounds are recognized visually and acoustically. Individual sounds are put together into words and made visible through written symbols (characters). Words are written down aloud and the child discovers that words can also have different functions (nouns, articles, adjectives, prepositions, verbs) and that sentences have certain structures.

The language material is of great importance because it expands language formation step by step.

#### **4.6. Bilingualism**

Bilingualism means being able to express and communicate in two languages in all life situations. Language gives us the opportunity to learn, experience and feel. The child assumes a language with his whole being, he absorbs it. Therefore, when learning a language, the emotional aspect plays an important role.

At the age of three, a child learns a second language just as intuitively and naturally as his or her mother tongue. Phonetic awareness and flexibility are promoted by listening to and dealing with different languages, as is language awareness.

In part, the children learn the language in daily dealings with the staff and the other children, and in part we deliberately teach English.

#### **4.7. Cosmic education / Biology / Geography**

Cosmic education includes dealing with the environment (space, earth, geography, child's environment, history, plants and animals, etc.). The child acquires an idea of the close relationship between nature and living beings and the special, responsible position of human beings.

The child also comes into contact with different cultures (people, language, customs, festivals, etc.).

## **5. Further learning**

### **5.1. Early music education**

In the Parkside School, a musical basis is created through dance and movement, rhythm and singing. This enables the children to develop in a wide variety of directions and, for example, later specialize in a musical instrument.

## **5.2. Expressive painting**

Expressive painting promotes creativity and strengthens personality. It trains emotional intelligence, increases the ability to concentrate and make decisions and promotes self-confidence. The possibilities of perception and expression expand, care and fine motor skills are practiced.

The joy of painting, the play with colors and shapes and the associated sensuality are awakened. The discovery of creative activity enables access to one's own creative powers. The resulting images are not rated, commented on or compared.

Sometimes topics are given that the children should paint on, or music is played that has a stimulating effect.

## **5.3. Movement (Forest and gym)**

The development of movement (motor skills) has an impact on all other areas of development. Through movement the child acquires an image of its own body and thus of itself. It learns to assess its abilities and to trust itself to do something. This is important in building self-esteem and confidence.

The child opens up the world through its actions, it understands and grasps the world. Through movement it can form concepts, gain knowledge and understand connections. Exercise is also important for a healthy physical development.

Playing in the open air, in the garden, on the adjacent playground, in the nearby forest or in the gym offers another space for the physical and mental development of the children.

The joy of movement as well as gross and fine motor skills are also promoted. Playing outside also becomes a safety training, because children who have good body control are less at risk of accidents. In addition, fresh air and the seasonal change train the immune system

## **5.4. Creativity**

Being creative with children doesn't just mean giving them the most precise instructions possible, but also letting them try them out for themselves. The child is given the opportunity to act creatively on a daily basis, be it in a painting workshop or while creating works. Free design and work without a template means being able to live out your imagination and creativity and being free to choose, for example, which material you want to work with. Working without a template promotes independence and the ability to combine. Working and creating in this sense also mean that the children can work according to their individual abilities and level of development.

We have a separate creative studio / craft room for the children.

## **5.5. Field Trips / Excursions**

Depending on the topics we are working on, there are also trips, for example to the zoo, the children's museum, the dinosaur museum, etc.

## **5.6. Nutrition**

Food, well-being and health are directly related. That is why we maintain a conscious and healthy approach to food.

Our lunch is delivered to us fresh every day from the Seespital Kilchberg, or we cook it ourselves.

We offer a varied, balanced and seasonal diet. The children are actively involved in the preparation (e.g. peeling, cutting, grating, etc.) of the snacks. They learn how to use various kitchen appliances, which promotes their fine motor skills and independence, and they do a job for the community.

We maintain a harmonious table community, which also pays attention to the table culture.

Water, various teas or occasionally fruit juices are served with meals.

Because a healthy and balanced diet is very important for the development of children, we do not give any sugary foods (e.g. chocolate, candy, chewing gum, etc.). We also ask that the children do not bring them to kindergarten.

## **5.7. Household maintenance**

The child is integrated into various household chores (e.g. setting the table for everyone, washing dishes, mopping the floor, vacuuming, etc.). By helping to maintain order and taking care of the premises, it learns to be mindful of objects. The exemplified approach has a role model function.

## **5.8. Relaxation, siesta**

In addition to all the learning, playing and all activities, relaxation should not be neglected either. After lunch there is a rest period where the children can hear a story, rest, play quietly, read. Some also fall asleep.

## **5.9. Garden**

We have a nice shady garden for the children in the backyard. The garden offers the children a space for free play. A sandpit, a water feature, a playhouse and a climbing tree form the prepared environment.

# **6. Cantonal curriculum ("Lehrplan 21")**

The learning content represented in the Montessori environment by the Montessori material is based on the cantonal curriculum 21. The teacher ensures that all competencies of the curriculum are covered by the lessons.

# **7. Our teachers**

The group leader of the Montessori kindergarten has completed pedagogical training with a recognized Montessori diploma. She is temporarily supported by a second person.

# **8. Opening hours and weekly schedule**

The Parkside School Oberrieden is open from 7:15 am. to 7:00 pm.

The children are brought in between 7.15am and 8.30am and can be picked up from 4.30pm.

# **9. Cooperation with the parents**

The Parkside School is an institution that complements the family, which is why it is important to us to maintain an open, respectful and trusting relationship with parents. We see mutual understanding as a prerequisite for a good cooperation.

The mutual exchange promotes the development of a basis of trust between parents and kindergarten.

We offer the following elements of cooperation:

- Parents' evenings
- Participation in everyday kindergarten (visit morning)
- Appointed meetings with parents
- Compulsory on-site meetings (once a year)
- Festive events
- Open-door day

Parents have the opportunity to actively participate in the preparation and implementation of celebrations.

Parents will be informed in writing of any innovations and changes or unusual events.

Parents should also inform us about important things, such as changed telephone numbers (availability!), Or special family situations that may concern the child in everyday life (divorce, grief).

Parents are also invited to support us with ideas, suggestions and comments to help drive our development process. We also appreciate the support from parents in the field of advertising.

It is important to us to make the goals and content of our educational work transparent for the public as well. We want to achieve that parents are interested in our work and are curious about our institution.

## 10. Medication dispensing

Sometimes we are asked to give the children medication. For the safety of the children as well as for our own safety, such a submission must be arranged in writing (form in the kindergarten). Since we are convinced that sick children belong at home as a matter of principle, we do not give antipyretic drugs.

## 11. Public Relations

We want constructive and transparent public relations. If necessary, we maintain contact with authorities, offices, neighbors and other interested parties.

We draw attention to ourselves with advertising in various media. Various occasions offer the opportunity to get to know us.

### Maria Montessori and the absorbing mind

Maria Montessori spoke about the child of the absorbing mind that comes into the world with untapped potential and (far-reaching) powers. She came to the conclusion that the greatness of the child doesn't just begin when they start school, but much earlier - at birth. From the first day on which the child sees the light of day, a process begins that affects the child - initially unconsciously. You have to let the child use his mental powers so that it can develop into a person. In view of this knowledge, it is necessary to create a good environment for it so that it can develop optimally.

#### *The absorbing mind in metaphors*

One can explain the absorbing mind as a sponge or a camera. The explanation of the sponge, which literally soaks up everything in the water, is more understandable. It doesn't matter whether it's dirty, clean, or full of colored water. The sponge absorbs everything unfiltered, just like the child does. We adults can filter our impressions of yesterday or today. We can forge or delete pictures or distinguish them from good and bad pictures, but the little child cannot. It is heavily focused on the here and now.

Oberrieden, June 2021