

Educational Policy - Childcare 2Samen - Shortened version

Childcare offers parents the possibility to combine parental care and work. However, the childcare at 2Samen aims above all to be inspiring for children. We want to contribute to a good starting position for children in society. On an educationally sound basis, we want to offer childcare that is both attractive and challenging for the children. To give substance to this wish, we have drawn up an educational policy that will be the guideline for the coming years. All childcare centres use it as a basis for their educational work plan, which is always available for perusal at the centre. This booklet gives you an impression of our educational policy.

In our daily practice, the child forms centre stage. Every child is unique and has many talents. We think it is very important to respect everyone's individuality. We value every child as it is. This makes sure that they can feel at home with us. Therefore, we respond to what the children indicate or contribute themselves. This might concern specific ideas for games or activities, but we also recognize less distinct signals. Listening to and observing children, is therefore essential.

Listening properly and observing what a child needs, starts on the very first day at the childcare centre. For every child, that first day is exciting. We do not have a ready-made programme, as every child needs a different approach. Some children want to join in immediately and we respond to that by involving them in other children's activities or play games with them. Others want to wait and see which way the wind blows: what's going on here? Who are these people? In that case, we let the children look around; we explore the room, make the children feel at ease, and give them all the time they need. Only when a child feels ready for it, it starts seeking contact with other children. By properly observing children, by accepting them, they feel acknowledged.

This booklet will provide you with an impression of our educational policy. You can ask for the complete educational policy at your childcare centre or the head office of 2Samen. You can also download the text via 2samem.nl.

Five educational objectives

2Samen works according to five educational objectives:

1. providing security and trust
2. providing challenges and the opportunity to develop
3. encouraging personal competences
4. encouraging social competences
5. helping the children to become familiar with values, principles and culture

These objectives are the standard for day care centres, out-of-school care as well as playgroups. Of course, every age group requires different emphasises. On the following pages we will explain the objectives.

1 | Providing security and trust

Listening to and observing children

Security and confidence form the foundation of childcare. We create a climate in which the child feels safe. We attune to the child's needs, and make sure it feels seen and heard. Thus, the child knows that the educational staff member is there for him or her and dares to explore the environment.

For babies and preschoolers we make a 'family wall'. This is a place in the group's room where pictures of the child's family hang on the wall, or can be found in an album. The child can look at the pictures whenever it feels the need. Thus, we connect the childcare centre with their home life.

Besides emotional security, we also have to take care of the physical safety. We always carefully try to find a balance between the necessary safety and a challenging environment and exciting activities. 'Giving room' and 'setting boundaries' serve as the guidelines for what we do. After all, children have to be able to discover things, to be amazed, to try out new things. But children also need rules and structures to know where they stand.

An everyday life example

Fixed daily routine

Clearness and structure are of major importance to form a solid basis. Every child wants to know what he can do or cannot do, as recognition offers security and trust. For babies it is important to follow their own rhythm: their sleeping and nursing schedule. From the age of two, we can provide recognition by offering a fixed daily routine. Besides the diverse activities, we therefore have fixed eating and sleeping times. Children also have their own routines that they are used to at home and we take these into account. For instance, we sing the song of the toddler's mum to get him or her to fall asleep more easily. For the older children at the out-of-school care, it is important to make clear agreements with the parents and child about the child's independent capabilities. These agreements will be recorded in the 'individual agreements form'.

2 | Providing challenges and the opportunity to develop

Young children are amazed by the world around them. They want to discover and try and experience things for themselves. That's the way children learn. The environment, the playing facilities and the activities should stimulate and challenge this ability to be amazed.

Voyage of discovery

What are the adventures that await outside their own group? What's behind that door at the end of the passage? When children feel sufficiently safe, they dare and want to look further than their own group. They are offered this space: guided by their educational staff member the children can go on an adventure and visit other groups. In their rooms other things can be experienced, different to their own groups. Besides ready-made toys, we make use of common-or-garden tools, and materials such as sand and water, as these provide plenty of possibilities for the children to use their imagination.

A step forward

The educational staff member makes sure that all the child's various development areas get attention. That means: running and clambering, but also building towers and making jigsaw puzzles. And of course listening to stories read aloud and singing, as well as drawing, painting, playing with clay and making music. We build on the child's developments and thus offer it the possibility to take that little step forward when ready for it.

Puk & Ko

To give further shape to the development process, we have chosen to work with the *Voor- en Vroegschoolse Educatie* or *VVE* (before-school and early school education) programme called *Puk & Ko*. We use it in some of our nurseries, vertical groups and playgroups, and a number of our nurseries and playgroups only work with the activities part of *Puk & Ko*. For more information about before-school education, you can ask our head office for a copy of the *VVE* leaflet.

3 | Encouraging personal 4 | and social competences

In a childcare centre, children meet many other children. In this way they develop their personality; they become self-assured, gain self-confidence and develop a feeling of self-respect. Learning to share things, to wait for their turn, to stand up for themselves, to help each other: these all contribute to developing their social skills. And of course the educational staff member gives a helping hand.

Who am I?

Games played together, fantasy games, imitation, taking part in a game: these are everyday experiences. Important experiences, as by discovering and pushing out frontiers, by winning and losing, children get to know who they are and what they are capable of. They learn to deal with problems and to adjust to changing circumstances. In a childcare centre, children also experience what it means to be in a group, varying from making friends to falling out. Step by step, we teach them to solve small conflicts. In addition, they get acquainted with various grown ups, through their contacts with the educational staff members.

An essential part of the out-of-school care is that children feel a sense of belonging. This makes it easier for the children to participate in what is going on. Thus, the children gain self-confidence and learn what it means to talk things through and reach compromises. For us, taking a child serious and showing respect for the child's opinion, form the foundation of children's participation. We think it is important for children to become familiar with having their say from a very young age. Of course, always according to their level of development.

An everyday life example

A child's drawing

"Look what I have drawn!" Children are very proud of what they make. They can imaginatively tell about their finger-paint paintings or handicrafts. Their pleasure is their main focus. However, being introduced to new materials is also very important. At the out-of-school care, professional artists frequently come to support the work of these budding artists, with surprising results.

5 | Helping to acquire values and principles and learning about other cultures

A childcare centre is a much broader form of community than the family. Children meet many different people and are introduced to various principles, values and cultures. Learning to deal with these, will make it much easier to function in society in later life. The educational staff member plays an important role in all this.

The role of the educational staff member

Every day, our educational staff members set to work with a positive attitude and a positive approach. They know that giving the right example is more important than correcting. Just as properly observing the children and thus sensing their needs. However, carefully observing their own actions and those of their colleagues is also essential: why do we do what we do? This a question they regularly ask themselves. By not just taking actions for granted, it is possible for them to scrupulously observe their own actions and ways of doing things: in other words, our educational staff members do not just take things for granted but are very conscious of what they do.

An everyday life example

“Sit down on the chair properly. If you stand on it, you might fall”. Children like to explore their limits and want to know what is expected from them. Sometimes, young children are still unsure about the difference between right and wrong. Through experiences and discovering limits, they learn what people expect from them. By observing the educational staff members, they see what is good and what is not good. We show them how to behave, give the right example and explain what is expected from them. Older children in the primary school period have a much better idea of what is expected from them and what is, and is not possible and allowed in a childcare centre. The older children are involved in setting up the main rules of the group.

The role of the parents

Bringing up a child is not just the role of the parent. From the moment that parents bring their child to a childcare centre, childcare plays a part in the upbringing and therefore good communication is essential. Not only during the intake, the familiarization and the parents' meetings, but also at the beginning and end of every day. And there is more involved than just informing parents about their child's sleeping and eating patterns. An educational staff member who knows that the child spent the weekend with his or her grandmother, can talk about this with the child. And vice versa, parents who know what their child has done during its stay at the childcare centre, can speak about this with their child. For a smooth transition between the home and childcare centre, transfer of information is of major importance. In addition, the photographs on the family wall make a connection between the childcare centre and home.

When the children go to primary school, parents will obviously be involved with the school too. However, we also attach great value to contacts with the parents of the children at out-of-school care. At this age, children start discovering who they are, they make friends and start searching for their boundaries. More than enough subjects to keep on discussing with the parents.

Parents, who would like to become involved in their child's childcare centre, can apply for the parents' committee of their centre. Our aim is to have an (active) parents' committee for every centre. We attach great value to the contacts with these committees. By involving them in the ins and outs of the childcare centre, good ideas rise to the surface. Ideas about festivities, such as a summer party or barbecue, but also ideas about how to further improve the quality of our care. An active parents' committee ensures a connection between the educational staff members and the parents, and keeps both sides alert. Besides the parents' committee, there is also a Client's Council; parents of various centres are members of this council. The Client's Council looks after matters that are brought up by parents' committees concerning the whole organization and is the interlocutor of the executive board (management).

Cooperation with the school

We consider a good cooperation with the school as very important. It is in the child's interest that the educational staff members of the out-of-school care and the school's staff members cooperate in order to attune their approaches to one another.

Out-of-school care is care in the child's leisure time. So the children are free to do what they want. Children, who want to do their homework, will be offered the facilities to do so. If possible, the educational staff members will offer support at the child's request.

For the preschoolers who are about to make the step to primary school, we think it is important that the school receives all the necessary information, so that they are able to properly attune to the children's development. To this purpose, parents/carers can use the written information they have received after the yearly interview concerning their child's well-being at the childcare centre or playgroup.

In the contacts with the schools, the educational staff members of the out-of-school care will always be very meticulous about the privacy of children and their parents.