



Stadt Ingolstadt

Amt für Kinderbetreuung
und -bildung

Concept for child-oriented sex education in municipal day-care centres (short version)

with professional support from



Preventive child protection requires child-oriented sex education that is respectful and safe. The primary aim of prevention work is to strengthen children's self-esteem. It is important that children be encouraged to listen to their feelings and learn to express them and seek help. Our concept for child-oriented sex education is intended to provide a guiding framework for dealing positively with children's sexuality within the day-care centre. It sets out a clear position against sexualised violence and creates a protective environment for the children in our care, confidence for employees in their actions and transparency towards the outside world.

1. Childhood sexuality

"In early childhood, children discover their own bodies and the differences between girls and boys. For them, there is no separation between tenderness, sensuality and sexuality. Experiences of tender contact with caregivers and with themselves are also sexual learning experiences. They create a certain body awareness and promote the ability to build relationships and love [...] where such a loving and stimulating atmosphere does not exist, learning and experience opportunities remain unutilised and the child's sensuality is stunted." (see Der Bayerische Bildungs- und Erziehungsplan (2019), p. 371).

Sexuality is a basic human need that manifests itself in many ways. Children essentially live out their sexuality centred on themselves. This is characterised by a certain lack of inhibition, curiosity and the constant search for new sources of pleasure with all the senses. Genital stimulation and arousal are related to feeling good and experiencing oneself on a physical and emotional level. Child sexuality must be clearly distinguished from adult sexuality.

2. Understanding child sex education in the team

As a matter of principle, we approach the child-oriented sex education of the children in our care with a professionally open and appreciative attitude, regardless of personal and cultural differences. At our centres, a common understanding of sex education for children is developed on an individual basis together with the entire team and anchored in the protection concept specific to the centre.

3. Pedagogical goals with regard to sex education

In early childhood, children discover their own bodies and the differences between them and other children. Experiences in nurturing contact with caregivers and with themselves create a positive body image and promote the ability to form relationships. In the absence of a loving and stimulating atmosphere, important learning and experience opportunities can remain unutilised. The Bavarian Framework for Early Education (“Der Bayerische Bildungs- und Erziehungsplan”) sets clear goals for sex education, such as “feeling comfortable in one’s own body” and “acquiring an unbiased approach to one’s own body” (see Der Bayerische Bildungs- und Erziehungsplan (2019), p. 363 et seq.). Sex education is not overtly addressed in our day-care centres and is geared towards the needs of the children. It is addressed when the children show interest and ask questions. We give the children age-appropriate answers (child-oriented information) to their questions and do not leave them on their own to cope with these answers.

4. Prevention

Preventative messages are important for children to develop a stronger gender identity and a positive body image. They convey to children that they are fine the way they are and boost their self-efficacy and self-confidence. When dealing with children, it is important to signal to them that they are being listened to and that they can approach the professional at any time with their concerns and questions. Preventative messages can include statements such as “My body belongs to me”, “Your feelings are right and important” or “You have the right to say ‘no’”.

5. Dealing with children’s sexual activities in the day-care centre

In body exploration games, children go on a journey of discovery together. This form of self-exploration is part of a child’s sexual development. Children get to know their bodies in a playful way and explore gender differences and similarities with children of the same sex. Body exploration games are not proactively encouraged in our centres, but are permitted as long as existing rules are adhered to (e.g. “No child is allowed to hurt another child”).

6. Procedure in the event of (sexual) assault among children

Professionals are obliged to ensure that children are protected and to protect children from any kind of assault in their everyday pedagogical work. If a (sexual) assault has taken place, the child concerned must be protected immediately. At the same time, effective measures must be developed with respect to the child who has shown abusive behaviour. Our concept describes in detail how to deal with the situation with the involvement of all those involved (children, parents, staff).

7. Sensitive work with parents

Child-oriented sex education in the day-care centre can only succeed if parents are fully informed and involved. Any concerns or fears parents may have are addressed and discussed in our centre in an open, respectful and non-judgemental dialogue. Parents are already informed about the centre’s specific protection concept and the concept for sex education as part of the admission interview. If required, the facility can address the topics of child protection and sex education for children – in meetings with parents or parents’ evenings, for example – and provide information on children’s books, brochures and contact details for advice centres (such as Pro Familia Ingolstadt e.V.).