

Concept
The international German School's kindergarten

Villa Kunterbunt

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The International German School's kindergarten

The kindergarten is located in the immediate vicinity of the school building in a lovely old villa and carries the fitting name: "Villa Kunterbunt".

The Villa Kunterbunt is surrounded by large outdoor grounds, which were devised a few years ago in accordance with the latest pedagogic expertise. Our garden is much used, as we want to give free rein to the children's urge to be active as often as possible, not only when the sun shines!

The kindergarten's own gymnasium and the possibility to use the school's swimming pool add to the attractive offer.

Up to 62 children from age 3 to their entrance to school are looked after by experienced educators in three mixed age-groups. In these "family groups" the children learn from and with one another in a social and cognitive way. We make sure that each individual child is furthered to its fullest potential by considering individual differences within the group.

We structure our teaching around the "Situationsansatz" (special concept of social education for young children) which, among other things, is reflected in project-orientated learning, and which comprehends seasonal and traditional themes. We work on an [intergroup](#) basis and the themes are taken from the children's environment and realms of experience.

In an atmosphere of confidence, security and acceptance the children experience an everyday life which contributes to developing and strengthening their personalities. We give priority to socio-pedagogical aims such as consideration, tolerance and mutual help.

Further objectives are the fostering of linguistic, musical and rhythmical abilities as well as training fine motor skills.

Preschool work is an important component for the preschool children.

Free play time takes an essential place, encourages activity and is a significant part of self-development.

Gymnastics and "dream"-lessons, swimming in the school's own swimming pool and visits to the kindergarten's library are regular components of the weekly routine in the Villa Kunterbunt. We introduce the children to the French language in a playful way and in different level groups with a native French speaking educator.

We also support all children whose first language is not German.

The kindergarten's mission is to help the holistic and age-appropriate development of each child, in accordance with our aim of family support.

Going to kindergarten is the first step towards an enlarged world of experience, a step which does not always come easy to the children nor to the parents.

What children learn in the Villa Kunterbunt

Much of what the children learn in kindergarten does not show immediately at home. But they nevertheless experience and learn a lot – these are qualities that strengthen them for life.

Here are twelve examples of learning success in kindergarten which lead to a sustainable development of the children, although this success is not always obvious at first sight.

You are important to me

In mixed age-groups children experience sometimes being the big ones, sometimes the small, sometimes strong and helping others or on the contrary looking for help... Such experiences are the basis for mutual understanding and responsible behaviour.

I am interested

We take time for the children's questions and look for the answers together. If their interests are taken seriously, they discover the joy of learning.

I understand

Children learn in a holistic way. They do not only want to look at and talk about things. They want to touch, smell, taste, feel, and experiment with them. This approach is allowed and encouraged in our kindergarten. Sensory perception is the basis for power of imagination and intellectual capacities. That is why children often have dirty trousers and sticky hands. But this is the best way for them to gain the experiences necessary for successful learning at school and to understand correlations between things.

I can do this

To get dressed and undressed oneself, to tie ones own shoes, to make sure one finds the lost shoe, to mop up the spilled drink oneself... These are the little steps towards true independence.

I want to know this

Curiosity is the motivating force behind learning. And children are extremely curious. We welcome and encourage this curiosity in our kindergarten.

I dare

To cut with a knife, to saw, to climb trees... Children want to really experience these things and not only play at doing them. In kindergarten children are allowed to cook, bake, do wood- and metalwork, plant, and develop their own ideas...

I have an idea

Painting pictures, wood- and metalwork, playing in the sand, performing plays, inventing... Kindergarten offers time, opportunities and the freedom to discover own forms of expression. Thereby children develop own initiative and imagination, find own ways and solutions, become inventive and creative.

I like doing this

Everyday life in kindergarten is orientated towards the needs of the children. We emphasize the importance of playing. The children have fun playing, and everything they enjoy is done with all their heart. They learn a lot whilst playing. Time to play means time to concentrate on something, and that fosters the development of perseverance and endurance.

I am part of it

Spending time with others is equivalent, in children's eyes, to playing with others. Common interests in playing unite them. They plan together, discuss things, learn to assert themselves, to find compromises, to make friends...

I have something to say

To clarify arguments, to relate what one has seen, to plan an outing together, to be asked one's own opinion, to be able to say what one wants and doesn't want... These are things that strengthen children. Learning to express oneself means learning to communicate and be heard.

I have a responsibility

All children take on a job within the kindergarten group: setting the table, tidying up together after playing, helping others get dressed, looking after a new child... They learn to be responsible for one another and for equipment and belongings in many different ways.

I get to know you

Children coming from varied parental homes, with different familiar, cultural and national backgrounds meet in kindergarten. They learn from one another in a natural way and on a smaller scale what is often difficult on a social scale.

In order to explain our way of working with the parental home we will now inform you about our conceptional work. We will give you the necessary information for understanding our pedagogic tasks and aims better. We attach great importance to the following **learning areas**.

Emotional competence

Human behaviour is accompanied by emotions. These are part of people's daily experiences. A child has to learn how to handle its feelings. There are three essential abilities that are founded on one another and that a child should acquire in order to do so. Firstly, develop an awareness of one's own emotions as well as a suitable, socially acceptable way of handling them. The next step is to acquire a capacity for understanding and for sympathising with others. Thirdly, to be able to sense other people's emotions and react to them. These abilities are the basis for emotional competence and are decisive factors for success and contentedness in life.

Our task is to prompt these processes and set down the foundations for the child's social and emotional development.

Physical experience – sensory perception

Through moving children can get to know and explore their environment, to approach other children and things, to understand, to feel, to come into contact with others, to play and to communicate with them. Children perceive their environment with all the senses, explore and discover the world by seeing, observing, hearing, feeling, touching, smelling, tasting. Physical experience and the development of their senses intensify their self-perception and that of the world. This is how in kindergarten children can gain varied experiences which are the basis for discovering and learning to know the world.

Self-concept

Movement allows children to get to know themselves and their bodies and to get a feedback about what they can and can't yet do. They experience success and failure as consequence of their own action. But they also learn what others think they are capable of doing and what opinion their social environment has got of them. These experiences, this knowledge and this information lead to the views and convictions about their own person which form their self-concept.

An elementary purpose of our kindergarten is to strengthen the positive concept your child has of itself, as this is the motor for all its bodily, social, mental and cognitive development.

Social competence

The group as a social form is an essential component within the kindergarten. People, being social persons, are dependent on other people. Children experience recognition and esteem in the group. Rules and arrangements are necessary for living together. They are the result of a process and need to be accepted by the group. The way the group sees itself is passed on through traditions, into which the children grow by participating actively. Thereby the child can increase its knowledge about itself and its competence for life. We attach great importance to this in our kindergarten.

Wakening curiosity

In order to waken the children's curiosity and their urge to explore we have created stimulating and well planned surroundings. This relates to the interior as well as the outdoor grounds. The group room is divided into various functional areas: building corner, doll's corner, book corner, painting corner, dining table ... Furthermore, games using all the senses, games with rules and experiments are an inherent part of our daily routine. We also offer the children the possibility to discover new things outside our walls. Outings to the park, the museum, the farmhouse, the theatre etc. are incorporated into kindergarten life.

To pass on values

Our kindergarten is an intimate and safe place for the children. They find themselves in an atmosphere that allows them to feel at ease and secure. They need to have friends and playfellows of the same age as well as younger and older ones. Our mixed age-groups give them this opportunity. The development of the child's personality is essential. The role of the kindergarten is to complement and support the education of the child in the family and takes into account its individual circumstances.

Tolerance and respect for one another are learned by playing together. The children learn to help and reassure one another and to deal with emotions and aggression. They learn responsible behaviour and that there are common interests as well as differences of all sorts.

Linguistic competence

Language enables us to communicate with others and examine our environment. It helps us to attain our own goals. The pleasure of language and the improvement of linguistic competence can be attained by stimulating offers such as looking at picture books, finger games, rhymes, story telling rounds, rhythmic speaking, as well as by accompanying everything we do with language. Hence the child's vocabulary is broadened, and verbal as well as non verbal expression skills are improved. Stimulating the use of language in kindergarten is essential, as lack of language at kindergarten level can have an effect on all other life and learning processes.

Foreign language – culture

Nowadays children are used to foreign languages and cultures. To discover language as a wonderful instrument, sounding different depending on the mother tongue of each child, is important for linguistic stimulation and strengthens language skills.

In our kindergarten, we introduce the children to the French language. Through saying rhymes, singing, painting, handicrafts or cooking your children learn French in a playful, comprehensive way, adapted to their way of life and age. French habits and traditions are as much part of this introduction as visits to local theatres and French kindergartens. In this way, the children are familiarised with a different culture. "The boundaries of my world are governed by the boundaries of my language" (Ludwig Wittgenstein).

Knowledge transfer

Children are naturally curious and want to know a lot. This is how they get their own educational process going. Asking "why" is the prerequisite for acquiring knowledge. Learning should be fun and pleasure. We set down the foundations for success at school in a playful way. Playing fosters the capacity for concentration and logical thinking. We ask the children to do little jobs suited to their age and in accordance with the various areas of education. They learn to recognise and describe objects. It is only by means of concrete situations that children can understand procedures and words. The daily routine in kindergarten gives them many opportunities to do so. To waken interest for the language is a major task of educational promotion. In order to understand the meaning of texts they will be reading later on, they have to know and understand the meaning of words.

And in order to get a feeling for numbers, quantities, sizes and shapes, children have to really "GRASP" these in the truest sense of the word. They need auxiliary means and objects they can touch (e.g. dice, geometrical shapes etc.). That is how they learn spatial dimensions that are essential at school for mathematics, for example. The terms "more" and "less", "same as", "least", "smallest", and "biggest" should be clearly understood. Children learn orientation in a room and the meaning of "right" and "left".

Arts/experience with materials

We want to give all children the opportunity to put their ideas into practice by using a wide range of materials and techniques. The themes are mainly chosen from the children's fields of experience and their adventures. Through painting and creative expression, they learn to show in an aesthetic and artistic way how they see the world and their feelings, their impressions and ideas. In order to enable them to express themselves in various creative ways, we put a lot of different materials at their free disposal: cardboard, wool, felt, various left-overs, wood, corks, chestnuts, lids etc. for them to paint with, work with and shape things with... They can gain sensory perception and experience with different materials by using water colours, finger paint, oil colours, chalk, coloured crayons, modelling clay, play dough, water, sand and earth. Artistic activity contributes to developing creativity and imagination, fine motor skills, the senses of touch and sight, and concentration. The ability to handle materials is improved and we practice drawing, painting, modelling, printing, experimenting and being creative with everyday materials. In addition, the following activities are possible in our well equipped workshop and in the presence of an educator: sawing, nailing, filing, drilling, sanding, and screwing.

Music – rhythmical experience

Children experience singing and playing music in a group as a cheerful game. In reality, it teaches them to concentrate, to listen to others, to feel confident about the cadence, measure and tempo, to experience doing things in a group, and to be proud of the work performed. At the same time, they train their voices, broaden their vocabulary and learn to give expression to a melody.

Preschool Concept International German School of Paris

Our preschool work is aimed at making a gentle start at school possible. We hope to allow an easy transition into the first class and lay a stable foundation for all further education. The cooperation between kindergarten and primary school is essential for preschool work. Preparing a child for school, which demands cognitive, social and emotional competence as much as the will to try hard and the necessary motivation, is a joint task of kindergarten and preschool, and naturally always demands the collaboration of the parents. Our aim in preschool is that the children are motivated to learn and attain individual targets. An important component of preschool work is the assessment of each child's individual stage of development with all its strengths and weaknesses. A further component is to support it according to its abilities. Preschool activity is not an independent process, but is embedded in the whole kindergarten procedure.

The iDSP preschool children

All children who reach their 5th birthday by September 30th of the current year (deadline in Baden-Württemberg) participate in preschool activities.

Children who turn 5 by December 31st of a year ("Kann-Kinder") can, after we have consulted the parents, be admitted to preschool. At the end of the kindergarten year they take a test to see if they are ready to start preschool.

If a child has its birthday after December 31st, it can attend preschool after the parents and educators have agreed to this and if, judged physically, socially and mentally able, it can be expected to follow the preschool activities. These children must pass the aptitude test for school. A psychological test is also necessary.

Preschool at the iDSP

All children aged 5 to 6 are put in a mixed-age preschool group. We have chosen integrative premises in order to set up a preschool in the kindergarten as well as in the primary school. In addition, the kindergarten has large outdoor grounds which provide ample space for games and movement. Recent

scientific studies have proved that our brain learns through the body and that we acquire knowledge about the laws of nature by playing and moving. The children have many opportunities for “Learning by Moving”.

Central idea, aims and purpose

Preschool in the iDSP was founded many years ago. The support programme is continually being refined and adapted to the educational goal of the kindergarten. The aim is to attain individual learning targets and foster motivation for child appropriate learning. All children with special needs will be supported in the preschool and helped to develop physically, mentally, emotionally and socially.

Heterogeneity

Both in kindergarten and the preschool group considerable differences between the children must be reckoned with. Everybody involved must accept these differences as something normal. Furthermore, a differentiated structuring of the lessons and tuition is necessary in order to take into account these differences.

Individualisation, differentiation within the group, building of a community

We devise lessons that take into account the diversity of all children’s stages of learning and development. That is why our lessons are highly individualised and make provision for internal differentiation within the group, without neglecting the building of a community in the preschool.

Prevention

We prevent school difficulties arising by providing special tuition when necessary. Existing difficulties are taken into account and subsequent negative developments are avoided through this special tuition. Emerging difficulties are identified at an early stage.

Daily routine

From Monday to Friday between 8 am and 10:30 pm (morning circle, free play time, structured activities), the preschool children are in their respective groups (red, blue, yellow) with the younger children.

It is in mixed age-groups that children learn from one another and with one another in a social and cognitive way. We want to ensure the development of each individual pupil to its fullest potential by considering internal differentiation within the group.

Between 10:30 am and 12 o’clock from Monday to Friday, the preschool children are divided in small groups in order to prepare them systematically for the transition between kindergarten and the first class at school.

Preschool programme

The preschool programme is suitable for children and adapted to their needs and potential.

The spheres of competence which we already described in the kindergarten concept are continued in preschool and the following areas, essential for school learning, are especially important to us.

Motor activity

Gross motor skills

Getting dressed and undressed on one’s own
Climbing, balancing, catching a ball...

Fine motor skills

Firm holding of objects

Holding a crayon safely
Cutting out shapes...

Perception

Visual perception
Differentiating forms and colours
Recognising objects
Sorting objects according to specific criteria (shape, colour...)

Auditory perception
Recognising and locating noises in the environment
Taking in and implementing oral instructions
Repeating melodies, clapping hands in time with a rhythm
Distinguishing words that sound similar...

Tactile perception
Sensing shapes and materials by touch
Discerning temperatures

Body perception
Assessing one's own strength whilst playing with others
Locating which part of the body is being touched...

Orientation in a room
Finding rooms in a familiar environment
Discerning of coordinates (left, right, top, bottom, in front of, behind)...

Social competence

Communication
Feeling and communicating one's own feelings
Taking in and reacting to other's mental states
Willingness to approach others...

Cooperation
Consideration and tolerance
Following rules
Non violent resolution of conflicts
Willingness to accept help and to help others...

Independence
Interest in environmental concerns
Looking after oneself in an independent way
Bearing disappointments and non-fulfilled wishes
Accepting of praise and criticism
Occupying oneself...

Emotionality
Positive self esteem
Showing feelings such as surprise, sadness, joy, annoyance
Coping with performance requirements in a positive way...

Dealing with tasks

Capacity to concentrate/ playing and learning behaviour
Willingness to apply oneself in order to solve a problem
Desiring to learn, trying new things
Getting active oneself
Accomplishing jobs without getting constant feedback
Working at attaining a goal
Working at tasks and finding various ways of solving them

Elementary knowledge/qualified competences

Language

Speech aptitude
Clear articulating of words and sentences
Speaking in long narrative units
Speaking at an appropriate pace

Language skill
Developing an active vocabulary
Using sentences with "I"
Talking about what one has experienced or telling stories logically
Using basic grammatical rules...

Discussion skills
Taking over the role of the speaker
Taking over the role of the listener
Referring to what was said before
Questioning...

Phonological awareness
Learning children's rhymes, finger games, poems
Structuring words and syllables
Continuing with a rhyme
Identifying initial sounds
Recognising noises...

Getting to know...

...symbols
Understanding and knowing common symbols

...writing
Wakening an interest for letters
Wakening an interest for books

... Using writing
Recognising signs and shapes and being able to copy them
Writing names....

Mathematics

Imagining quantities and numbers

Active handling of quantities

Relating quantities and numbers

Comparing, classifying and organising objects

Recognising and setting forth series and patterns...

Numeral skills

Counting up to 20

Being able to compare numbers up to 10 with one another

Comprehension of quantities

Calculating skills

Adding up and subtracting

(Exercises adding up and subtracting numbers up to 10 from one another are solved in a playful way)

Space – position – relation

Orientation right and left

Orientation in space (in front of-behind-next to-over...)

Experience with time (seasons, months, yesterday...)

Dividing activities into time intervals...

Discovering the environment

Nature and life

Recognising natural phenomena (time of day, weather)

Taking an interest in nature, respecting animals and plants

Experimenting

Observing the order of events, processes and changes

Everyday objects

Using objects made of various materials (painting with different colours, making things with varied materials...)

Food

Learning to handle food with respect and awareness

In addition to our regular sport lessons, our preschool children have the opportunity to take part in the special psychomotor tuitions. We use a special method of observation – “Die Abenteuer der kleinen Hexe” - to find out at what level the child is when it comes to motor functions and perception.

Furthermore, we offer an initiation into swimming and intensive foreign language courses.

All in all, the experiences gained by the children in kindergarten are embedded in more complex processes and thinking structures when they get to preschool, in order to prepare them intensively and create the best possible conditions for learning at school.

Parents' support

For part of the day, parents entrust their children to our kindergarten for us to look after them, educate them and teach them things. That is why we attach great importance to developing a positive relation with the families and attaining a close cooperation with them. We wish for an educational partnership on the basis of mutual acceptance and confidence. At the core of this cooperation stands the joint effort for the children's optimal development and wellbeing. But the parents too should feel comfortable. We give them the opportunity to ask questions, tell us their wishes and talk about problems and difficulties, so that we can look for solutions together or offer help.

During the entire duration of kindergarten, parents' cooperation follows various patterns of communication in order to fulfil our educational aims.

Spontaneous conversations when the child is brought to kindergarten or fetched: these conversations are natural and spontaneous but intensive and very precious to us. They allow a short exchange on relevant information.

Private discussions: these take place either on the initiative of the educator, or on the parent's initiative. They are structured discussions about the child's development and can contain suggestions about its further needs and support.

Parent's evening:

- Information evening at the beginning of the kindergarten year with the election of the parent governors who represent the parents' interests and support the kindergarten team
- Theme orientated information evenings (transitions from kindergarten to primary school)
- Get-together outside kindergarten to get to know one another, exchange information and be together convivially

Active participation of the parents: parents can participate in various activities such as handing out the books in the library, accompanying the children in the swimming pool, preparing the Christmas bazaar etc.

Festivities and celebrations

They are something special and, through the parents' participation, foster a sense of community and mutuality. Parents, grandparents etc. have the opportunity to get to know one another better and gain an insight into work at kindergarten.

Parents' letters: they are given out regularly and inform about subjects discussed in kindergarten and about important matters and events.

Pin wall: it is hanging in the entrance area of the kindergarten. Parents find information here and have the possibility to approach other parents with their concerns (advertisements).

Extras in the kindergarten

Motor activity

Sport

The aims of this activity are to train the senses, to lead the children to a better orientation in space, and to improve their skills (see the chapter physical experience – sensory perception). The gymnastic lessons, which are organised in homogenous age groups and take place in our well equipped gymnasium, always end with a quiet phase.

“Dream lessons”

These are embedded in relaxation and silent exercises (meditation).

Swimming

In the school's swimming-pool all children who reach their 4th birthday by the end of December have the opportunity to get used to water in playful, enjoyable ways and without constraint. We want them to gain a certain confidence in the water which allows them to keep afloat for a short length of time without being scared. Some children have managed to obtain the seahorse swimming award.

Psychomotor tuition

The aim is to enable a holistic development of the child's personality through movement, perception and play.

French as a foreign language

(See the chapter Foreign languages – culture)

The children are divided in different level groups and introduced to the French language in a playful way.

German as second language/Promotion of the German language

This concerns all children who wish to learn German as a second language or for whom German is obviously the weaker language. They reiterate words and sentences, listen to stories, talk freely and repeat in their own words in small groups and in a playful way. To help this process, we look at picture books, incorporate role playing and finger games, sing and do other manual work.

Traditions and festivities

We attach great importance to German and French traditions and festivities. Embedded in a suitable framework, we discuss and celebrate these festivities. These are:

- St Martin with lantern processions, songs, “Weckmänner” (special rolls) and a fire
- St Nicholas with a real Nicholas
- Christmas market at the iDSP with the kindergarten's own stand
- Christmas festivity or advent singing with the parents
- Christmas singing with the primary school in the hall of the iDSP
- Carnival festivity
- Looking for Easter eggs in the kindergarten's garden
- „Le chandeleur“ („le jour des crepes“)
- Epiphany (the three Magi) with a “galette des rois”
- Visit to the French Punch and Judy show “Guignol”

Library

The kindergarten's own library, which is supervised by some of our mothers, invites the children to come and look, listen and marvel. Once a week, they can borrow a book, an audio book, video or DVD and bring it back a week later. The children learn to deal with the books carefully. Our library has a wide selection of German and French books.

Outdoor grounds

Our kindergarten is surrounded by large outdoor grounds which offer generous opportunities for playing and other gross-motor activities. These are designed in a stimulating way and respect the needs of the various age-groups.

The grounds have varied floor coverings for the different activities, such as a hard surface for cycling, riding the tricycles or driving the go-carts and scooters. Natural surfaces (lawn, sand, earth...) invite the children to run, jump, roll on the ground, balance and play with a ball... We have a large number of spades and wheelbarrows that inspire them to dig and build in the large sandpits. Furthermore, the outdoor grounds have challenging obstacles such as steps, stairs, walls, big stones, tree-trunks,... and differences in altitude through mounds of earth and inclined levels. They can also test their physical aptitude on a variety of playground equipment such as climbing frames with ladders and slides, bars, balance beams, swings and rocking horses.

Hence, the outdoor grounds invite the children to get exercise through their great variety. Physical movement and playing are in direct correlation with one another and are essential for the children's development, since their impressions mostly come from their bodily experience.

Through varied and continuous physical experiences, children become conscious of their body relation to space. Balancing, climbing, running and swinging are good for their sense of balance and refine the coordination of their muscles. They learn to be aware of their own body's sensations and to get to know their strength, abilities and limits.

The children have many opportunities for "Learning by Moving". Recent scientific studies have proved that our brain learns through the body and that we acquire knowledge about the laws of nature by playing and moving.

The outdoor grounds also have a henhouse. Three hens named Lilli, Liese and Lotte lay their biological eggs there. The children learn to take on responsibility for the animals and are in charge of looking after them and feeding them. When there is a ban on keeping livestock outdoors, our hens are separated through a window of special acrylic glass. Our vet has attested our hens are in good health.

Further lessons in speech therapy, psychology, [psychomotricity](#) and musical education are offered against fees.