

PEDAGOGIC CONCEPT

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Gymboree Preschool (Kita)

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International Preschool/Kita at Gymboree Play & Music in Munich

1. Gymboree International Preschool/Kita - Our Journey

Gymboree Play & Music in Munich (Gymboree) was founded in 2010 to give families with small children the opportunity to introduce their children aged 0–3 to social interaction outside the home through parent-child classes. In 2011, we introduced a Preschool Playgroup for children aged 2.5 through 5 years (without parents), in line with our guiding principle: **"We support and develop your child through play."**

In September 2022, we extended our childcare and received a license for a Kita group for up to 24 children 2.5 years old until school entry.

In our bilingual and international learning environment, children are prepared for their future school life through a variety of age-appropriate activities. Our unique bilingual concept strengthens the child's individual skills, promotes their self-confidence, awakens their curiosity, supports independent learning and the development of both languages. Learning takes place in a stimulating, exciting and caring environment that meets the needs and interests of the children. In the following, we would like to introduce you to the cornerstones of the educational concept of our Gymboree International Preschool/Kita.

2. Vision and Philosophy

2.1 Our Vision

Our vision is to create a "family-supporting childcare environment" that accompanies families with children in the years until the start of school. Our aim is to support children in becoming strong, self-confident individuals and to prepare them as well as possible for school and the rest of their lives.

In this formative phase of life, we offer children stability and continuity: they do not have to adapt to constantly changing settings or caregivers. Instead, they start with us in our baby classes, continue their development in the toddler classes and are seamlessly enrolled into our Preschool/Kita. The focus here is on emotional security - an environment that feels like home.

2.2 Our Facility

The Gymboree International Preschool/Kita is aimed at children from the age of 2.5 until they start school and is therefore officially classified in Bavaria as "Haus für Kinder" (House for Children).

The contact information for our facility is:

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Our 260 m² education center offers the following:

- **A 121 m² play area/group room:** A spacious area that offers the children plenty of room for stimulating learning environments and exciting challenges. Morning circles, sports activities and active games take place here.
- **A 30 m² side room** where the children can carry out creative activities and learning processes, eat and rest.
- **A 20 m² entrance area**
- **One adult toilet** in the entrance area
- **A children's bathroom** with 2 children's toilets, children's washbasin and changing table

During Preschool/Kita hours (Monday to Friday, 8:15 am to 3:00 pm), the entire play and learning center is exclusively available to the Preschool/Kita group. Parent-child classes take place on Monday to Friday from 3:15 pm to 6:00 p.m. and Saturday mornings.

2.3 Our Philosophy

At the Gymboree Preschool/Kita, we are convinced that every child is unique and should be seen and accepted for their individual personality. Our approach attaches great importance to responding to each child's individual needs and creating a protected, loving space that enables personal development. Our bilingual pedagogical concept provides a framework that offers children orientation and, at the same time, allows them to play an active role in shaping their experiences.

Our educational opportunities are geared towards the individual needs and life situations of the children and their families. These opportunities are designed in such a way that children not only acquire knowledge and skills but also develop their attitudes and dispositions.

The pedagogical staff continuously observe the children's educational and developmental processes and adapt their educational activities accordingly. We create a stimulating environment that offers each child the freedom and time to deal with experiences and new learning opportunities in their own way. The central starting point of our educational work is always the strengths, interests and needs of the children.

The educational work at our Preschool/Kita is geared towards enabling children to participate in society as equal members. In doing so, we encourage their active participation in everyday life - adapted to their age, their stage of development and their individual needs.

We fully implement Gymboree's internationally recognized and practiced guiding principle "**We support your child through play**" in our international Preschool/Kita. The heart of our facility is our 121 m² play and learning landscape, which is equipped with high-quality Gymboree play equipment and climbing worlds. Our innovative play landscape is specially designed to meet the needs of children up to school age. A special feature of this environment is the flexible design of the play elements, which can be regularly recombined and changed. This always creates a varied and challenging play world - a clear difference to conventional playgrounds.

The free movement of children is our focus. Climbing, sliding and running are essential activities that stimulate basic motor impulses. These experiences are crucial for the holistic development of the child, as they not only strengthen physical abilities, but also have a positive influence on cognitive development.

3. Pedagogic Concept of the Gymboree Preschool/Kita

3.1 Differentiated Learning Environment

The differentiated learning environment refers to the provision of a wide range of opportunities and materials to support the development of each child in the various areas in an age- and developmentally appropriate manner. This includes the targeted promotion of cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills with the aim of strengthening the child's independence, self-confidence and problem-solving skills.

Individual support in the Gymboree Preschool:

Differentiated tasks and challenges

We offer differentiated learning opportunities tailored to the individual developmental stage and personal abilities of the children, which optimally develop the individual potential of each child. These include:

- Pre-school activities, German language course for older children
- Weekly activities to develop early number and letter awareness
- Worksheets with writing exercises, puzzles and pre-writing exercises
- Creative tasks such as coloring, cutting, arts and crafts.

Participation of the children

The children are actively involved in shaping their own learning processes by contributing their interests and ideas and participating in decisions. We offer different levels of difficulty for each task so that each child can learn at their own pace.

Language support

We use targeted methods to support language development, including:

- Storytelling and retelling
- Rhymes and songs to expand vocabulary in a playful way
- Group discussions to promote communication skills
- Language games to improve pronunciation and grammar

Fine Motor Skills

Children who have difficulty grasping or holding objects are given targeted support:

- Painting and drawing
- Crafting with small materials
- Working with plasticine to strengthen the muscles
- Puzzles and pegging games to improve hand-eye coordination.

Social and emotional development

Shy or reserved children are supported through targeted group activities to develop social skills and strengthen their self-confidence. These include:

- Shared games in small groups
- Team projects to promote cooperation and cohesion
- Positive reinforcement and encouraging feedback.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Our diverse learning opportunities include:

- Reading aloud age-appropriate books
- Playful introduction to numbers and letters
- Nature and science experiments (e.g. water experiments)
- Exploring the environment through themed projects.

Emotional intelligence and empathy

The children learn to recognize their own feelings and to understand the emotions of others. This happens through:

- Stories that address emotional issues
- Role-playing games to promote empathy
- Conversations about emotions and feelings.

Through this differentiated learning environment, we create an inspiring atmosphere in which each child receives individual support, recognizes their strengths and develops a love of learning.

3.2 Mixed-Age Groups

The Gymboree Preschool/Kita is open to children from the age of **2.5 until they start school**. In our mixed-age group, the children learn through daily interaction with older and younger children.

This structure enables the children to develop social skills by supporting each other, learning from each other and growing together. Younger children benefit from the experiences of the older ones, while the older ones learn to take responsibility and practice patience and empathy.

This mutual support is particularly evident in the following areas:

- **Help with getting dressed:** Older children help the younger ones to tie shoes, fasten buttons or pull up zippers
- **Playing together:** Older children explain the rules of the game, help with building or actively involve the younger children in role-playing games
- **Learning by imitation:** Older children help the younger ones to recognize and name colors, shapes, numbers or letters
- **Strengthening social skills:** Older children help the younger ones to find their way in the group, to share and to resolve conflicts
- **Eating support:** Older children encourage younger children to try new foods and help them learn table manners
- **Encourage creativity:** By painting, crafting and experimenting with different materials together, older children stimulate the imagination of the younger ones
- **Act as a role model:** Older children show, through their own behavior, how respect, helpfulness and a sense of responsibility are lived in everyday life
- **Encouragement and support:** Older children help the younger ones to overcome fears, accept challenges and try out new things.

This **cross-age interaction** strengthens the sense of community, promotes social development and facilitates respectful interaction.

3.3 Pedagogical Focus at the Gymboree Preschool

Early childhood education focuses on communication and language development, social and emotional relationships, movement, experimentation, creative design and free play. The aim is to make the world understandable to children so that they can discover and experience it in their own way. In doing so, they playfully "train" social interaction, which is a fundamental prerequisite for their future lives.

Our structured program offers children the opportunity to strengthen their individual skills and develop socially, emotionally and cognitively. The learning environment supports children in preparing for school, learning in a group and developing social skills.

Imaginative and creative play also encourages:

- the ability to solve problems
- emotional processing
- communication
- creativity.

We strive to create an environment in which children can not only learn but also develop with joy and curiosity.

3.3.1 Movement: Motor Skills

We offer a diverse movement environment in which children can develop their gross motor skills. Through movement, rhythm and dance they strengthen their muscles and improve their balance, stamina, coordination, body control and dexterity.

A central part of our daily routine is the morning circle as well as free and guided play in our 121 m² colorful play and learning landscape. This provides a stimulating environment with challenging tasks and gives the children a safe and positive start to the day. Here they can let off steam and express their natural need for movement.



Sports lessons take place every Monday. Here the children can experiment with different **sports**, including:

- Gymnastics
- Athletics
- Soccer
- Basketball
- Field Hockey
- Volleyball

Whether jumping in gymnastics or running in athletics - the children learn to consciously perceive their bodies and better assess their own abilities. This promotes body awareness and coordination.

Team sports such as soccer, volleyball or field hockey also strengthen social skills:

- Cooperation and adaptation to other players
- Compliance with rules and fair play
- Working together towards a common goal

Building self-confidence is also a key goal with our sports curriculum. In early childhood, self-esteem is strongly linked to motor skills. A sense of accomplishment - be it catching a ball, overcoming an obstacle or winning a game - helps children to develop confidence in their own abilities.

Children also gain valuable movement experience during **free play time** on our playfloor with play equipment, e.g. by climbing and running. In doing so, they improve their dexterity, hand-eye coordination and motor skills.

Regular excursions into nature are an integral part of our programme. The nearby Denninger Park, just a few minutes' walk from our play center, offers numerous opportunities:

- Active outdoor play
- Walks in nature
- Playtime on the fenced-in playground

Through these experiences, children not only become familiar with the environment, but also learn more about their own bodies and abilities. They can "grasp" their surroundings in the truest sense of the word.

Organized **group games** - e.g. circle games, games to get to know each other or problem-solving games - promote children's social skills in a playful way. They learn in the process how to:

- Communicate with other play partners
- Establish, comply with and adapt rules
- Deal with victories and defeats

By playing together, children develop a better understanding of cohesion, fairness and team spirit - important foundations for their future lives.

3.3.2 Language Support: Language Skills

In our international Preschool/Kita, we consistently pursue a bilingual (German English) concept, which is reflected in all areas of education as well as in the language-sensitive design of our daily activities. The promotion of both languages is particularly important to us, as we not only want to introduce German-speaking children to the English language in a playful way but also give many international families a gentle introduction to the German language. We are firmly convinced that it is optimal to learn a new language at an early age and that children who grow up with multiple languages will find it easier later in school life.

Gymboree is a place where internationality is not just a concept, but a reality. Through our bilingual pedagogical concept, we create an environment in which families of different nationalities feel welcome and understood. Our team is just as diverse as the children and families who attend our Preschool/Kita. In addition to our two main languages, many of our teachers speak other languages and have different cultural backgrounds, which enriches our concept and the children's everyday lives in a special way.

Language development is of great importance in early childhood and an essential part of our work. Language is far more than just a means of communication - it is a key to the world. Children who hear and learn different languages develop not only linguistic but also cognitive and social skills. At our Preschool/Kita, we attach great

importance to giving children the opportunity to discover new languages through play, to experience the diversity of the world and to develop an awareness that differences are an enrichment.

Our teachers therefore consciously integrate intercultural exchange into everyday life. In the morning circle or during playtime, we ask questions such as: "How do you count in your language?", "What do the animal sounds in your country sound like?" or "What special festivities do you celebrate at home?". These conversations inspire the children and help them not only to learn new words, but also to better understand other children and their backgrounds. They learn that everyone is different and that this is perfectly okay. It's important for us to teach the children that diversity is a strength and that it's not about everyone being the same, but rather that we need to respect each other and learn from each other.

Introducing books, songs and stories from different countries is also an integral part of our programme. Through fairy tales from different cultures, international songs or traditional children's games, children playfully discover new worlds and learn to appreciate differences.

Our bilingual concept is reflected in our daily routine. To ensure that the children experience both languages equally, there are fixed activities in which one language takes center stage. This ensures that the children feel confident in both languages and can integrate the different languages naturally into their everyday lives. The children also have consistent reference points for both languages and can develop their language skills at their own pace.

Learning a second language at an early age offers not only linguistic but also numerous cognitive and social benefits. Children who are regularly exposed to two or more languages often develop better problem-solving skills as they are used to switching flexibly between different linguistic structures. This also encourages their creativity and understanding of complex relationships. In addition, daily exposure to different languages increases awareness of other cultures and their ability to understand different perspectives.

Especially at a young age, children are extremely receptive to new languages, as they learn them intuitively and playfully - without the conscious effort that adults often need. This ability forms a valuable basis for later language learning processes, whether at school or later in life.

Children do not learn language in isolation, but through interaction with others - by speaking, listening and communicating. We therefore attach great importance to ensuring that language development is not only anchored in specific activities, but also in the entire daily routine.

A central component is the expansion of vocabulary by introducing the children to new terms in a wide variety of situations - be it in the morning circle, when playing together or when telling stories. Equally important is the promotion of communication skills: children learn to express their thoughts and feelings, communicate their needs and exchange ideas with others.

The development of early reading skills is also encouraged in the Gymboree Preschool/Kita by regularly reading books aloud, repeating rhymes and playing with language, we sensitize the children to the sound and structure of words and thus support their phonological awareness.

Key elements of our language support include

- Singing songs together in both languages
- Looking at and discussing picture books and stories
- Circle games that combine language and movement
- Finger games that playfully support language comprehension
- The morning circle, in which the children can express themselves linguistically
- Themed projects in which the children actively use new terms
- Role-playing games that promote language acquisition in social contexts
- Puzzles and language games that arouse curiosity about words and their meaning
- Rhymes and syllable games that raise awareness of linguistic structures

These diverse methods ensure that language is not just "learned", but actively experienced. Through daily immersion in the German and English language, the children develop natural language skills that will benefit them far beyond their time at the Gymboree Preschool/Kita.

3.3.3 Music: Social and Musical Development

Our own Gymboree Play & Music instruments, movement and dance elements as well as songs and rhymes in English and German are a central part of our daily program. Music accompanies us throughout the day - be it in the morning circle, in movement lessons or during our Music class. It not only gives children exposure to different musical techniques, styles and instruments, but also plays a crucial role in their social and emotional development.

Music makes feelings perceptible and tangible. It can calm, activate and inspire children and connect them with each other. In the group, they experience how making music and singing together can create a strong sense of community. At the same time, they learn to express and understand their own emotions through music - an important foundation for their personal development. Perceiving and recognizing feelings, both in oneself and in others, is an essential part of early childhood development and promotes empathy and social skills.



In our Gymboree music programme, children experience a fascinating musical journey around the world. They discover music from different cultures and eras - from the Beatles to Bach, from traditional children's songs to modern melodies. Over the course of the year, they experience around 20 different musical styles and experience how different music can sound.

The children explore rhythms and patterns in a playful way. They clap, tap and stomp to the beat, experience the rhythm with their own bodies and train their sense of tempo and coordination. They also experiment with a variety of musical instruments: maracas, rhythm sticks, drums, bells, etc. By consciously listening and playing along, they develop an initial understanding of musical structures and improve their fine motor skills.

But music means much more than just listening and playing. Our musical activities are linked to movement and language. The children dance to songs, follow choreographed movements and practice playing instruments and improvising. This not only develops musical skills, but also concentration, memory and expressiveness.

Music is a natural form of learning for children - it promotes language, creativity, social skills and self-confidence. Music is not only heard in our Preschool/Kita, but actively experienced and created.

3.4 Further Preschool/Kita Educational Goals

3.4.1 Creativity: Social and Fine Motor Skills



Our large, bright secondary room offers the children an inspiring environment in which they can develop their creative and cognitive skills. There is plenty of space here for a wide variety of educational and creative processes - whether it's learning letters, doing crafts or experimenting with different materials and techniques.

Our goal is to provide the children with a broad spectrum of artistic and cultural forms of expression. We give them stimulating impulses and promote their understanding of aesthetic and cultural values. We attach great importance to giving them free rein to their imagination. There are no fixed guidelines in the "Crafts" area - many works are created solely from the creative ideas of the children, who are allowed to express themselves here in all their diversity.

While the focus in the early years is on free, playful creativity, we provide more targeted stimuli in elementary education to challenge and encourage the children in all areas of education. This not only trains fine motor skills and aesthetic awareness, but also strengthens important skills such as concentration, problem-solving and perseverance.

3.4.2 Mathematical Education: Shapes and Colors

At Gymboree, children can look forward to a wonderful movement/play area that offers them a variety of opportunities for climbing, jumping, sliding and balancing. Our playscape consists of various areas with steps, ladders, ramps and slides - all secured with soft mats so that children can let off steam in a safe environment. These specially designed building elements not only promote motor development, but also playfully awaken an interest in mathematical and geometric shapes. The appealing colors and age-appropriate structures make the movement landscape accessible to a wide age range.

A special feature of our playscape is its variability: every three weeks, the elements are rearranged so that a new environment awaits the children. This encourages their natural curiosity, while at the same time the familiar play materials give them a sense of security. In this way, all the senses are stimulated, and the children constantly experience new, exciting challenges.

Our focus here is not only on motor skills - mathematical skills are also specifically promoted. One of the ways we do this is through our playful school preparation program, which includes numbers, counting and geometric shapes as well as letters and sounds. In the morning circle, the days of the week, months and seasons are discussed, and the children playfully count how many are present. Even during puzzle time, they discover mathematical concepts - for example, they learn to distinguish shapes and sizes when doing puzzles and develop an initial understanding of spatial thinking.

Our teachers use targeted mathematical activities to provide the children with a solid foundation for their cognitive skills. Mathematics is not abstract, but is brought to life and made tangible in the day-to-day life of the Preschool:

1. School Skills lessons:

- Playful learning of numbers and geometric shapes
- Counting, drawing and cutting out numbers
- Craft projects with shapes such as triangles, circles and squares

2. Morning circle:

- Counting the number of children present ("How many children are there today?")
- Discuss days of the week, months and seasons
- Date determination with visual support (calendar)

3. Table games & board games:

- Recognize sequences ("When is it my turn?")
- Dice games to understand and assign numbers

4. Early musical education:

- Counting with songs, e.g. *"Five little fish"* or *"One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive"*
- Movement games with numbers, e.g. *"We stand up at 5... 1, 2, 3..."*

5. Mathematics in free play:

- Everyday mathematical concepts in shopping, cooking, tidying and sorting
- Group division for team games in sports lessons

6. Everyday math while eating & playing:

- Setting the table: "How many children are at the table? How many plates do we need?"
- Advent calendar: "How many days are left?"

7. Puzzles & building games:

- Recognize shapes, sizes and patterns
- Understanding spatial thinking and logical relationships

This playful combination of movement, music, everyday routines and targeted exercises enables children to develop an intuitive feel for mathematics. In this way, learning is naturally integrated into their world - with fun, movement and curiosity.

3.4.3 Intercultural Education

Intercultural and ethical education are essential components of a child's personal development. We educate according to the **principle of diversity** - every child learns from the very beginning that they are unique, both internally and externally, and that they are valuable just the way they are.

Children who experience diversity from an early age - whether in their family or at childcare - develop a high level of sensitivity to cultural differences. They learn that the world is colorful, diverse and worth living in and that everyone can contribute to its beauty.

Inclusion in our Preschool/Kita

Inclusion means that all children participate equally in learning and community life. This is achieved by teaching values and moral standards and by promoting social skills:

- **Playing together:** All children can play together and get to know each other.
- **Sensitization:** Every child's individual needs and abilities are recognized and respected. Shared songs, games and activities create an awareness of the value of diversity.
- **Shared meals:** All children eat together. Special dietary requirements (e.g. religious, health-related) are, of course, considered.
- **Social integration:** Children are encouraged to make friends across cultural and individual differences.
- **Inclusive activities:** All planned activities, excursions and projects are designed to be accessible to all children regardless of their abilities.
- **AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication):** Children with speech or communication difficulties are given aids such as signs, picture cards or alternative communication methods.

Ethical education in Preschool

Ethical education conveys fundamental values for living together in a community. These include Tolerance and respect for other opinions and ways of life, fairness, solidarity and a sense of responsibility for one's own actions and the environment.

How we convey ethical values:

1. **Empathy through role play & stories:**
 - Children take on different roles to put themselves in other people's shoes.
 - Stories and active listening promote understanding of feelings.
2. **Cooperation & helpfulness:**
 - Children learn to share toys and work together on projects.
 - Teamwork is strengthened through group activities.
3. **Peaceful conflict resolution:**
 - Children practice resolving conflicts through discussion, compromise and alternative solutions.
4. **Respect for animals & nature:**
 - Encounters with animals and environmental projects promote respect for nature.
5. **Social commitment:**
 - Activities such as collecting gifts for disadvantaged children raise awareness of social responsibility.

Intercultural education and upbringing

Children are growing up in a globalized world - we want to teach them at an early age to be open-minded, non-judgmental and respectful of other cultures. This also includes living their own identity with self-confidence. Due to its bilingualism (German and English) and the diversity of the families, our Preschool is a natural place for intercultural education. Children experience daily contact with different languages, traditions and ways of life.

How we promote intercultural education:

1. **Music & Dance:**
 - Children discover traditional musical instruments, songs and dances from different cultures.
 - They can try out musical instruments themselves and learn simple dance steps.
2. **Multicultural books & stories:**
 - A selection of picture books and stories from different countries introduces children to cultural diversity.
3. **Festivities & traditions:**
 - We celebrate various cultural festivities together, e.g. **Christmas, St. Martin's Day, Easter, Halloween** and international celebrations.
4. **Language diversity:**
 - Greetings, songs and simple words from different languages are consciously integrated into the Preschool's daily routine.
5. **Intercultural encounters:**
 - Children and teachers from different cultures share their experiences.
 - Families can present their traditions at the Preschool (e.g. bringing their traditional food, storytelling sessions).

Through these measures, we strengthen intercultural awareness and create a preschool culture in which diversity is seen as enrichment.

3.4.4 Cognitive Skills

We promote the children's cognitive development through stimulating learning materials, games and activities that strengthen their thinking, concentration, problem-solving skills and creativity. We encourage the children to be curious, ask questions, make connections and develop their own ideas.

Through experiments, games and active exploration of their environment, they learn to think logically, solve problems and act creatively. All senses are used to discover the world not only through sight, but also through touch, hearing, taste and smell.

Examples of sensory learning activities:

- **Blindfolded sensory activities:** Children are blindfolded to consciously experience smells or textures, for example.
- **Experiences in nature:** A forest excursion where children can feel tree bark or explore barefoot paths to feel different ground structures.

- **Tactile learning:** working with different materials such as sand, water, wood or fabrics to train the sense of touch.

3.4.5 Emotional Development and Social Relationships

Social interactions are an essential part of a child's learning process. Social interaction includes dealing with conflicts, the ability to compromise and the ability to cooperate. Through social interactions, children develop empathy, consideration and a sense of responsibility for themselves and others.

Conflicts are part of everyday life. Negotiation processes challenge children to cooperate with others, to present, represent and assert their own interests, to show consideration for friendships and to find solutions. Dealing with conflict is a developmental process. Over time, children learn to solve conflicts without the help of the educational staff and to find their own solutions. We observe and accompany the children as they behave in the group and offer them a variety of opportunities to strengthen their social skills:

- **Playing together:** e.g. on our varied playfloor.
- **Group projects:** e.g. joint arts and crafts projects to promote teamwork.
- **Developing empathy:** Encouraging children to care for friends who are hurt or sad.
- **Resolving conflicts:** Encouraging children to find their own solutions to disputes.

Methods to promote social skills:

- **Conversations** about emotions and social situations.
- **Thematic projects:** "My emotions, my feelings".
- **Morning circle:** discussing feelings and social experiences as a group.
- **Picture books and stories:**
 - "Every Day Has Its Own Color"
 - "Little Blue and Little Yellow"
 - "Will I Have a Friend?"
- **Developing solutions for conflicts**
- **Role-playing games** to promote changes of perspective
- **Songs about emotions:**
 - "All the children are already here"
 - "If You're Happy and You Know It"

3.4.6 Science and Technology Education

A child's curiosity about scientific and technical phenomena is awakened through playful exploration, observation and experimentation. We use child-friendly approaches to technology, physics, biology and geography to teach fundamental concepts.

Subject areas of the natural sciences:

- **Four elements:** earth, water, fire, air
- **Color theory:** mixing and perceiving colors
- **Temperatures:** hot and cold
- **Our Earth:** geography, landscapes
- **Seasons and weather:** water cycle, climate change
- **Life cycles:**
 - From egg to butterfly
 - From grain to bread
- **Nature and the environment:** natural development and cycles
- **Celestial bodies:** sun, moon, stars
- **Living beings:** humans, animals, plants

Practical implementation in the Preschool:

- **Experiencing nature:** Playing and discovering in nature (exploring leaves, stones, sand)
- **Experiments:** Research and discovery with different materials
- **Picture books about nature:**
 - "The Very Hungry Caterpillar"
 - "The Little Cloud"
 - "The Little Spider"
- **Games:** Acting out natural processes (e.g. "From egg to butterfly")
- **Songs about science:**
 - "Oh, I Wish I Were a Little Caterpillar/Butterfly"

3.4.7 Environmental Education

Our aim is to raise children's awareness of the environment and its importance. In our Preschool, they learn through play how to protect nature and act sustainably. This is not just about environmental protection measures, but also about a deep understanding of life, nature and its cycles.

We attach particular importance to sustainability - whether in drinking bottles, nutrition or play and creative materials. Environmental education is an integral part of our educational work, as we are convinced that children can develop a sense for protecting the environment at an early age.

Social aspects of environmental education:

- **Taking responsibility:** The children realize that they are part of a community and can contribute to the preservation of the environment.
- **Cooperation and sharing knowledge:** Through collaborative activities, they learn to work as a team and pass on environmental knowledge in a fun way.
- **Developing the ability to act:** Through their own experiences, they develop creativity and imagination to become actively involved in environmental protection.

Practical implementation of environmental education in our Preschool:

Perceiving the world with all senses

- Smell, taste, feel and consciously experience nature
- Marvel mindfully and learn to understand natural cycles

Getting to know and appreciate animals and plants

- Observing animals in their natural environment
- Learning how plants grow and what role they play in the environment

Experiencing nature throughout the year

- Forest and meadow visits at different times of the year
- Collecting and examining leaves, seeds and fruit

Develop mindfulness and care for nature

- Taking their own waste home to help keep the environment clean
- Respect plants and animals, e.g. do not pick flowers unnecessarily

Practical nature experiences

- Explore natural materials (stones, leaves, wood, earth)
- Planting, caring for and observing flowers and herbs

Sustainable use of resources

- Careful use of water: How can I save water?
- Waste separation: What waste belongs in which bin?
- Awareness of local food: getting to know regional fruit, vegetables, cereals and trees

3.4.8 Media Education and Digital Literacy

At our Gymboree Preschool/Kita, we attach great importance to **promoting digital skills** and the **sensible use of media**. This is not just about technical skills, but also about **critical reflection** and the conscious use of digital media. We help children to **discover** the world of media **in a playful and age-appropriate** way and to develop their skills in a protected environment. At our Preschool/Kita, media education means:

- Gaining initial experience with digital media
- Understanding how various media work and their implications
- Using media creatively and sensibly

Practical implementation of media education in our Preschool

Independent use of media

- Photography with a camera: children explore their surroundings and learn how to use visual media.
- Watching video material during school skills lessons: Playful learning through videos with age-appropriate content.

Creative and interactive use of media

- Digital picture books and stories: Interactive narratives for language development.
- Music and audiobooks: Promoting auditory perception through audio stories and songs.

Raising awareness of media literacy

- First conversations about media consumption: playful reflection on what they see and hear.
- Mutual explanation of media experiences: Promoting critical thinking through exchange.

Technology as a supportive learning tool

- Use of tablets for educational games: Promoting cognitive skills through age-appropriate apps.
- Digital drawing programs: Playful design and testing of creative possibilities.

Discovering media as a gateway to the world

- Virtual excursions: exploring nature and cultures through digital media.
- Encountering different languages through digital language learning games.

Our approach to media education is based on an age-appropriate and playful approach to digital media so that children can gain their first experiences without being overwhelmed. We see media as a tool that can be used creatively but should never be used as a substitute for real-life experiences and social interaction. It is important to us that children do not just passively consume media but actively engage with it. Through supervised use and targeted reflection, they learn to consciously perceive and critically question digital content. In this way, they not only acquire technical skills, but also develop creative and responsible media awareness.

3.4.9 Aesthetic, Artistic and Cultural Education

Creative dramatic play plays a central role in early childhood education at our Gymboree Preschool/Kita. Our aim is to introduce the children to a broad spectrum of artistic and cultural forms of expression that go beyond fine art alone. We want to stimulate their creativity, encourage them to develop their imagination and deepen their understanding of aesthetic and cultural values.

This includes various areas such as music education, performing arts, visual arts and the introduction to cultural knowledge. Children are given the opportunity to live out their creative abilities in a variety of ways and expand their expressiveness - be it through making music, acting or visual arts.

We also attach great importance to raising the children's awareness of cultural diversity. This is achieved, for example, by introducing them to fairy tales and stories from different cultures or integrating foreign language and cultural elements into everyday life at Preschool/Kita. It is particularly important to us that the children are not just participants, but co-creators of their educational processes. They are actively involved in decisions, planning and discussions so that they develop a sense of personal responsibility and co-determination.

Through aesthetic, artistic and cultural education, we not only encourage children's creativity, but also strengthen their cognitive, emotional, motor and social skills. Their personal development is supported in a holistic way as they playfully engage with art, music and theater.

In our Preschool/Kita, we implement this through the following activities, among others:

- **Picture book exploration** where children can experience stories visually and talk about them.
- **Creative projects with different materials** that allow them to express their imagination freely.
- **Visits to museums and theaters** to experience art and culture up close.
- **Free play with a costume box** to encourage scenic design and role play.
- **Modelling clay activities with music** to combine tactile and auditory stimuli.
- **Self-organized concerts with musical instruments**, where children play music for their parents on festive days.

Through these activities, we offer children an inspiring environment in which they can develop their talents, live out their imagination and develop a deeper understanding of artistic and cultural forms of expression.

3.4.10 Health Education

Health education is a central component of the educational work at Gymboree Preschool/Kita. Our goal is to raise children's awareness of their bodies and health in a playful and age-appropriate way. We place particular emphasis on teaching basic knowledge about nutrition, hygiene, exercise and relaxation.

An essential aspect of health education is the **promotion of a healthy lifestyle**. Children learn to eat a balanced diet and to be physically active on a regular basis. Equally important are relaxation exercises and periods of rest, which help to find a healthy balance between activity and relaxation. In our Preschool, we create a pleasant environment for these rest periods: a darkened room with relaxing music, comfortable mats, blankets and pillows offers the children a place to retreat.

Another key component of health education is **hygiene**. Children learn early on how important it is to wash their hands regularly and how they can contribute to their own health and that of others by taking simple measures such as covering their mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing.

We implement our health education through various **activities**:

- **Healthy snacks**, where the children learn about healthy foods and try out new things.
- **Cleanliness and hygiene education**, with regular hand-washing routines and age-appropriate support with personal hygiene.
- **Cooking days** on which the children playfully prepare food such as fruit and vegetable salads.
- **Shared snack time and lunch** to promote positive eating behavior.
- **Food pyramid** to raise awareness of healthy eating.
- **Children's yoga and relaxation exercises** to learn how to deal with stress.
- **Visit to the dentist's office** to convey the importance of dental care.
- **Activities in the fresh air**, such as exploring nature and visiting playgrounds.
- **Sleeping facilities for the little ones during rest time** to support their natural sleep rhythm.

- **Role modelling by educators** to promote positive behavior.

Through these measures, we help children to develop healthy routines early on that will accompany them throughout their lives and give them an awareness of their own well-being.

3.4.11 Gender-Sensitive Education

In our Preschool/Kita, we actively implement gender-sensitive education to enable children to develop openly and without prejudice. A central aspect of this is the conscious avoidance of gender stereotypes. We avoid statements such as "girls play with dolls and boys with cars" and instead encourage children to discover their individual interests. By offering alternative toy options and supporting children in their choices, we create an environment in which they can develop freely.

At the same time, we attach importance to recognizing differences and similarities between genders, but without prejudices or fixed role models. Through discussions and joint activities, we teach the children that diversity is a matter of course and that every child has the same opportunities regardless of gender.

Another important component of our gender-sensitive education is the promotion of empathy. We encourage children to empathize with others, show compassion and treat each other with respect - regardless of gender or other individual characteristics.

At our Preschool/Kita, we offer a wide range of learning and leisure opportunities to prevent children from being restricted to certain activities because of their gender. For example, we enable them to try out different sports such as soccer and dancing or to explore creative and craft activities in equal measures.

We also actively address the importance of equality and work with the children on how they can integrate these values into their everyday lives. This includes sharing household chores and toys fairly and supporting each other in their varied interests.

Through these approaches, we want to teach children that they can become and do anything they want, regardless of their gender, and that diversity and equality form the basis for respectful coexistence.

3.4.12 Participation

We attach great importance to the children being actively involved in shaping their everyday lives and their environment. This strengthens their independence, their self-confidence and their ability to take part in decision-making. Our teachers are attentive to the children's needs and interests and involve them in decision-making processes so that they learn to take responsibility and respect their own wishes and those of others.

A central element of participation is the morning circle, in which the children discuss their goals for the day and decide together which activities and games they would like to do. In this way, they develop an awareness of democratic decision-making, learn to express their opinions and, simultaneously, consider the perspectives of other children.

Participation is also very important when planning activities. The teachers suggest various options, but the children help decide which of these are implemented. This allows the children to contribute their interests and develop their personality.

Another important area of shared decision-making is meal planning. The children can help choose snacks, express their preferences and take responsibility for a healthy diet.

Participation in exploring nature is also particularly valuable. During excursions, the children can decide for themselves which areas they would like to explore in particular, which natural materials they would like to investigate or which discoveries they would like to deepen. This strengthens their connection with the environment and encourages their interest in natural processes.

Through these diverse forms of participation, children learn to understand that they are valuable members of a community. They learn that their opinions count, that their decisions have an impact and that they can play an active role in shaping their environment.

3.4.13. Learning to Learn

The development of learning skills is at the heart of our educational work. A central task is to encourage children's self-motivation and help them to retain their natural curiosity.

It is of great importance that children:

- are open to new experiences
- can adapt flexibly to new situations
- develop a positive attitude towards learning.

These skills help them to meet the demands of society and positively shape their educational and professional future.

By teaching children to enjoy learning and discovery, we give them the tools to appreciate lifelong learning and to acquire new knowledge independently. This strengthens their ability to solve problems, encourages their creativity and enables them to develop successfully in an ever-changing world. To this end, we encourage the children to reflect on their learning processes and answer questions such as "What have I learned?" or "What could I do differently next time?". Through this, they learn to:

- recognize their own strengths and weaknesses
- adapt and optimize their learning strategies accordingly
- regard mistakes as a natural part of the learning process and to use them as an opportunity to learn.

Examples from practice

1. Reading with reflection

- When reading together, we ask questions to help the children develop their critical thinking.
- They reflect on what they have read and discuss different approaches and perspectives with other children.

2. Experiments and active exploration

- Children learn by trying things out for themselves and observing.
- They ask questions, formulate hypotheses and search for answers in their surroundings.

3. Trying out different solutions

- Children are encouraged to test different approaches (e.g. in fine and gross motor skill activities or worksheets).
- They recognize that there are several ways to achieve a goal.

4. Learning through play

- Playful learning through board games or role-playing games such as doctor, craftsman, shopkeeper or superheroes promotes cognitive skills.
- These activities strengthen memory, problem-solving skills and logical thinking.

5. Time management and self-organization

- Children are taught to plan their time effectively and prioritize tasks.
- They learn to consciously organize their time for different activities.

Our Preschool/Kita is a diverse learning environment that encourages children to discover, experiment and learn independently. This facilitates the development of valuable skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

3.4.14 Dealing with Obstacles

Over the course of their lives, children are repeatedly confronted with situations that require perseverance. It is ideal if they learn to deal with setbacks early in life – at preschool/kindergarten age.

There are numerous ways to put this into practice. For example, when building with blocks, children can always take on new challenges and venture into larger projects. Similarly, when they try to paint something and need several attempts to achieve a satisfactory result, or when they learn to get dressed, tie their shoes or zip up their jacket or trousers.

These experiences help children to strengthen their frustration tolerance, develop their stamina and recognize the importance of perseverance and persistence. They learn to overcome obstacles and pursue their goals - a skill that will be of great benefit to them later in life.

This is how we support the children:

- **Encouragement and strengthening of self-confidence:** we accompany children in challenging situations where they need support. Through motivating words such as *"I know this can be difficult, but I'm here to help you. You can do it, you just need a bit of practice!"* we boost their self-confidence and encourage them to take the initiative.
- **Teaching problem-solving strategies:** Children learn about different solutions and practice using them. Teachers or older children serve as role models. For example, if a child has difficulty getting dressed, we patiently show them how to fasten a button and guide them through the process. Or if a building made of Lego blocks keeps collapsing, we consider together what options there are: creating a wider base, using different sized blocks or trying out a more stable construction method.
- **Dealing with frustration and failure:** In moments of disappointment, we are there to support the children. They are taught in an age-appropriate way how to deal with frustration by using positive self-talk and self-motivation. They learn to be patient, actively look for solutions and see failures as valuable learning opportunities.

- **Cohesion and mutual support:** children are encouraged to help each other and work together in difficult situations. By solving problems together, they discover new solutions and learn to give and accept constructive feedback. This strengthens their ability to reflect and helps them to cope better with challenges.

By accompanying children in this way, we help them to develop a resilient and solution-oriented attitude that will benefit them in all areas of life.

3.4.15 Getting to Know Yourself

Self-reflection and self-development play a central role in the developmental process of children. In addition to the ability to adapt within the group, it is essential that children develop their own personality and develop their own ideas and perceptions. This enables them to consciously align their behavior with their individual needs and goals.

Children get to know themselves by exploring their feelings, preferences, abilities and limits. For example, they recognise:

- **Their own feelings:** Children learn to identify and name emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger or fear. For example: *"I'm happy because I played with my friends"* or *"I'm sad because I fell down"*.
- **Personal preferences:** They not only discover their favorite colors or preferred food, but also with whom they feel most comfortable. A child may say: *"I prefer to play with Lisa because she is friendly"*.
- **Their own abilities:** Children become aware of what they are good at, e.g. *"I can already put my shoes on by myself"*.
- **Body awareness:** They become aware of their bodies and recognize characteristics such as *"I have big eyes"* or *"My hands are small"*.
- **Interests:** Children develop an awareness of what they like, such as *"I like dinosaur books"* or *"I like playing in the play kitchen"*.
- **Limits and development opportunities:** They understand what they have already mastered and where they still need support: *"I can walk up the stairs without help"*, but *"I still need help buttoning my jacket"*.
- **Decision-making skills:** They learn to make simple decisions themselves, e.g. choosing their lunch or deciding on which toy to play with.
- **Self-esteem:** Through self-knowledge, children develop healthy self-esteem and self-confidence by being able to say: *"I am brave"* or *"I know I can learn new things"*.
- **Expressing needs:** They learn to communicate their wishes clearly, such as *"I'm thirsty, can I have some water?"* or *"I want a hug"*.

Our educational work to promote self-development

To strengthen these skills, we create an environment that supports self-reflection, independence and personal growth.

- **Promote self-reflection:** Children are encouraged to think about and verbalize their own feelings, needs and experiences.
- **Explore interests:** Children can discover and explore their interests through various activities. Different play areas and creative activities support this process.
- **Recognizing and promoting strengths:** Every child has individual talents. We help them to discover their strengths - be they in art, music, movement or other areas - and support them in their development.
- **Develop empathy:** Children learn to put themselves in others' shoes and understand both their own and others' emotions. This promotes compassion and social skills.
- **Strengthen body awareness:** Children become aware of their bodies and senses, learn to be mindful of themselves and develop a healthy body image.
- **Promote self-acceptance:** Children learn to value themselves, praise themselves and recognize positive qualities in themselves. This strengthens their self-confidence.
- **Express their opinions:** Children are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas and learn to express their opinions confidently in discussions.
- **Promote independence:** Children are encouraged to take responsibility for tasks, make decisions and act independently.

By promoting a positive self-image, we help children to develop their individuality and actively shape their personal development. This not only strengthens their self-confidence but also helps them to go through life with conviction and authenticity.

4.1 Annual Plan

True to our motto "We support your child through play" and based on the Berlin model, our goal is to teach children, from an early age, through various topics that they are unique and that they are an important part of our society. We promote language skill development and support children in expressing their feelings, observations, moods and wishes.

Our educational work is based on various themes that accompany us throughout the year:

- **Seasons:**
What happens in the fall? Why does it snow here, but not everywhere? Which season do I like best - and why? In which season was I born?
- **Festivals and celebrations:**
As we are a **multicultural institution**, we not only celebrate traditional festivals such as Christmas, but also learn about cultural and religious holidays from all over the world. The children learn that there are different customs, cultures and religions.
- **Animals:**
Which is my favorite animal? Who has a pet at home? How does it feel to stroke an animal - and am I

even allowed to? Where are there dangers (e.g. allergies or unfamiliar dogs that are not allowed to be stroked)?

- **Places:**

Where do I come from? Who am I? Which country is my home? And what kind of city is Munich?

- **Occupations:**

What do mom and dad do when they leave the house in the morning? What professions are there? And what do I want to be when I grow up?

- **Nature and Environment:**

One example is the topic of **water**: Who lives in the water? What else can water be besides wet? Are there animals that live on water? Is snow also water?

The annual themes are incorporated into a **monthly plan** that focuses on individual topics, which, in turn, determines the **weekly planning**. We adapt the content to the age of children:

- Younger children are given a playful and simple approach to the topic.
- Pre-school children deepen the content with more challenging tasks according to the scaffolding principle (gradual promotion through targeted support).

The active involvement of parents is important to us. We regularly inform parents about current topics - through:

- Email Newsletters
- private WhatsApp group
- Postings on the info board

In this way, we create a transparent and close cooperation between the Preschool/Kita and the parents.

4.2 Everyday Pedagogical Life

The daily routine of our Preschool/Kita is as follows:

8:15 - 9:00	Staggered drop-off time and free play in the 121 m ² play area (= group room)
9:15 - 9:45	Morning circle
9:45 - 10:00	Free play on the playfloor, clean up
10:00 - 10:30	Hand washing, shared snack time, toilet break
10:30 - 11:00	Fine motor skills stations (e.g. painting, drawing)
11:00 - 12:15	Educational activities (arts and crafts, sports, park visits, music, pre-school activities)
12:15 - 12:30	Clean up/wash hands/toilet break
12:30 - 13:15	Lunch (food from our caterer)
13:15 - 14:00	Quiet time/ audiobooks
14:00 - 14:45	Puzzles/ board games, music, afternoon snack
14:45 - 15:00	Pick-up time

5. Transition

Settling in is an important phase for families, in which the child gets used to a new environment and new caregivers. For the first time, the child is no longer looked after exclusively by the parents, but also by our teachers, who take on an important role as additional caregivers.

For parents and children, this means a new experience: several hours of separation from everyday family life. This transitional period requires trust, patience and careful guidance. We attach particular importance to shaping this process lovingly and individually - so that both children and parents feel safe and comfortable.

5.1 Berlin Model for Setting-in

The 5 phases of the Berlin Model are summarized briefly as follows:

1. Introductory meeting (before Preschool/Kita start):

In the first introductory meeting, we exchange general and personal information with the parents, e.g. allergies or special needs of the child.

2. Basic phase (approx. 3 days):

The child comes to Gymboree together with a familiar caregiver (parent, au pair, etc.) and spends 1-2 hours per day in the Preschool/Kita. The caregiver remains passive (to the extent possible) while the child is slowly integrated into everyday Preschool life.

3. First attempt at separation (approx. day 4):

The first short separation takes place - but never on Mondays. The decisive factor is how the child responds. If it does not calm down within 30 minutes, the next attempt is repeated after a three-day break.

4. Stabilisation phase:

Our educational staff increasingly take on caregiving tasks (e.g. dressing, washing hands). An important milestone is when the child performs these activities at least once with their parents and then with the teachers.

5. Final phase:

The child has built up a secure bond with the teachers, can be comforted by them and is now able to cope independently with everyday Preschool/Kita life.

5.2 Basic Rules for Settling In

Settling a child into Preschool/Kita is an exciting and challenging time for everyone involved. It can be emotionally stressful but also offers the opportunity to build a secure bond between the child, parents and educational staff.

As mentioned above, our settling-in concept is based on the **Berlin Model**, which enables transition to be supported by parents. The individual phases are individually adapted to the child's age, stage of life and needs. The child, the parents and the educational staff together form a so-called **triangle of relationships** that supports a trusting educational partnership.

To ensure a successful settling-in period, we ask parents to observe the following tried and tested basic rules:

- The settling-in period lasts **around two to four weeks, depending on the child**. Our aim is to ensure that every child feels comfortable and enjoys attending Gymboree.
- A **designated educational staff member** accompanies the child through the 5 phases of the Berlin Model.
- **Major changes** such as vacations, relocation or new family situations should be avoided during this time.
- A **positive attitude** from parents towards settling in is crucial. It helps the child if the family talks optimistically about this new stage of life.
- Parents should remain **as passive as possible** during the settling-in period. They remain present but allow the educational staff to build up their own bond with the child.
- **Punctuality** is essential - both at drop-off and pick-up times. This allows the child to experience the daily routine from the very beginning and learn to rely on reliable routines.
- When parents leave, they should **consciously say goodbye**. In this way, the child learns to rely on the parents' word that they will return. We also ask for punctuality here.
- **Crying is a normal part of the settling-in process**. If a child does not calm down, we inform the parents and adapt the settling-in process individually. Our aim is always for the child to feel safe and happy in our Preschool/Kita.

With patience, empathy and close cooperation between parents and educators, we help children to make a successful start in their new environment.

6. Planning Ideas

6.1 Children

As a Preschool/Kita, we offer a mixed daycare group for children with the following care structure:

- Maximum six children aged 2.5 to 3 years and
- Maximum eighteen children aged 3 to school age

This mix allows the children to benefit from a collaborative learning environment in which they can learn from each other, strengthen their social skills and support one another. The younger children take their lead from the older ones, while the older ones take on responsibility and develop their leadership skills. Our educational concept is adapted accordingly to do justice to the different stages of development and to offer each child the best possible support.

6.2 Opening Hours

Our opening hours are Monday to Friday from 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

6.3 Booking Times and Costs

Our booking options and costs are as follows:

Hours per Week	Booking Times	Monthly Price (excluding food & materials)
up to 25 hours per week	Monday-Thursday 8:15-14:00	€745
	Monday-Thursday 8:30-14:00	
	Monday-Thursday 8:45-14:00	
	Monday-Thursday 8:45-15:00	
	Monday-Friday 8:15-13:15	
	Monday-Friday 8:30-13:15	
	Monday-Friday 8:45-13:15	
up to 30 hours per week	Monday-Thursday 8:15-15:00	€820
	Monday-Thursday 8:30-15:00	
	Monday-Friday 8:15-14:00	
	Monday-Friday 8:30-14:00	
	Monday-Friday 8:45-14:00	
up to 35 hours per week	Monday-Friday 8:15-15:00	€899
	Monday-Friday 8:30-15:00	
	Monday-Friday 8:45-15:00	

The costs for lunch and materials amount to €110 per month for a 4 day booking, €140 per month for a 5 day booking. Lunch is provided by Kindermenü König (www.kindermenue-koenig.de). Children that are 3 years old as of September 1 of any given year are entitled to financial support from the state in the amount of 100 Euros per month. This amount will be automatically deducted from the monthly fee.

6.4 Pedagogic Staff and Team

With **24 children and 3 pedagogic staff**, we offer a very good staff-to-child ratio of **1:6**, which is significantly better than the usual sector standard. This enables us to provide each child with more individual attention and high-quality care and support.

Our multicultural team has a wide range of experience and combines specialist knowledge with the joy of working with children. It is made up of one head teacher and 1 assistant teacher and 1 English language specialist.

Thanks to this staffing structure, we can respond flexibly to the children's needs, provide them with targeted support and create a caring, supportive environment.

7. Protection Concept

The safety and well-being of children in our care is our top priority. To ensure a safe space for the children, we have implemented clear safety measures:

- **Secured entrance area:** During core hours, our automatic main entrance door remains locked from the inside and outside. Visitors must ring the bell to be admitted. Adults can leave the building at any time (together with the kids) by pressing the white exit button (at a height of 1.75 m) - e.g. in case of a fire.
- **Child-friendly play equipment:** All Gymboree play equipment is specially designed for children up to school age and meets the highest safety standards.
- **Visibility on excursions:** For activities outside the Preschool/Kita, all children wear a Gymboree warning vest so that they are always clearly visible. On outings, they also wear a tag with the Gymboree address and telephone number.
- **Precautions for excursions:** When visiting parks or other places, we always have a first aid kit and parents' emergency contact details with us.
- **Safe behavior in road traffic:** Behavior on public transport and in road traffic is discussed and practiced with the children.

You can find our complete protection concept in our preschool folder and online at any time.

8. Educational Partnership and Parents' Council

8.1 Working With Parents (Educational Partnership)

Cooperation with parents is essential for us to ensure a holistic and successful education as well as upbringing and care of children. Openness, acceptance, patience and an appreciative attitude that is open to dialog form the basis of a successful parent-preschool/Kita partnership.

Our approach is based on a close exchange between parents, children and educational staff - a triangular relationship that contributes significantly to the well-being of the children. To promote this exchange, we offer various communication and participation opportunities:

- **Drop-off and pick-up conversations:** Short conversations at drop-off and pick-up allow for a regular exchange about the child's everyday life.
- **Development talks:** At regular intervals (once a year), we discuss the child's progress and individual needs together.
- **Parents' evenings:** twice a year, parents receive important information on educational topics, everyday life at the Preschool/Kita and upcoming events.
- **Events with parent participation:** Shared experiences strengthen our community. Particularly noteworthy are:

Summer trip to the zoo - a highlight for the whole family
Easter festival with egg hunt - a happy get-together for children and parents
Christmas party - a creative and fun event in the run-up to Christmas.

These regular meetings and joint activities promote a sense of community and facilitate the provision of the best possible care and support for each child.

8.2 Parents' Council

It is important for us to actively involve parents in our educational work. Their involvement is not only of great importance for the current children, but also for the continuous development of our Preschool/Kita. Our goal is to create a trusting educational partnership between parents and educational staff.

The Parents' Council consists of **two elected parent representatives** who are elected annually by all parents of the Preschool. They take on an **advisory and mediating role** between parents and educators.

The tasks include:

- **Participation in pedagogic and organizational topics**
 - Discussion of the framework conditions and pedagogic principles
 - Support with change processes within the Preschool/Kita
- **Mediation and exchange**
 - Contact with parents with questions or concerns
 - Communication between parents and educational staff to promote constructive dialog
- **Support for events and projects**
 - Planning and implementing joint celebrations, excursions or activities
 - Promoting the community within the Preschool

By actively participating in the Parents' Council, parents can help shape the day-to-day running of the Preschool/Kita and make a valuable contribution to the positive development of the Gymboree Preschool/Kita.

9. Further Thoughts

9.1 Quality Management, Development, and Assurance

The continuous assurance and further development of our educational quality is a central component of our work. Our quality management is currently based on **regular evaluation** as well as an open and transparent exchange with parents and professionals.

Instruments for quality assurance:

- **Regular discussions**

Door-to-door discussions with parents for direct exchange of ideas

Conversations with parents about the child's individual development

Parents' evenings on current educational topics

- **Parent surveys**

Implementation of structured surveys for quality assurance

Analysis of the results for the continuous further development of the Preschool/Kita

Our pedagogic specialists regularly take part in **training and further education** to integrate the latest developments in early childhood education. These include

- Online seminars and webinars
- Specialist events and workshops
- Regional and supra-regional qualification measures

From 2023 to 2024, we worked intensively with the **PQB quality consulting service**. Our PQB consultant visited us regularly and not only gave us very positive feedback on our pedagogical work but also made valuable suggestions for further optimization. We have already successfully implemented many of these ideas for improvement to further increase the quality of our facility and our work with the children.

These measures ensure that our Preschool/Kita continues to offer high-quality, loving and professional care that meets the individual needs of children and parents.

9.2 Observation and Documentation

The Gymboree Preschool/Kita sees itself as a family-supporting early childhood setting in which we work closely with parents. Even after the settling-in period, we want to actively involve parents in their child's development in order to facilitate a transparent exchange.

We offer regular development meetings in which we talk to parents about their child's progress and needs. If parents or the educational team have any concerns, individual appointments can be arranged.

Development meetings are held once a year for each child, in which we use **age-appropriate observation forms**. We use standardized observation instruments such as **SELDAK, SISMIC and the PERIK questionnaire** for social-emotional development and to assess language skills.

These sheets serve as a basis for discussing the child's skills, interests, strengths and development opportunities with the parents.

All observations and documentation are carried out confidentially and in accordance with **data protection guidelines**.

The observation of learning and development processes not only strengthens the professional exchange within the team but also contributes to the **quality assurance** of our educational work.

In addition to the individual development meetings, we keep parents informed through:

- **Quarterly letters to parents** with insights into monthly topics, upcoming events and organizational information (e.g. closing days).
- **Welcome messages for new families** to make it easier for them to join our community.

With these measures, we create **trusting and professional cooperation** between parents and the childcare team to support each child's development in the best possible way.

Commented [SH1]: That will not be enough!
Please look again in the BayBEP under 8.4.1.Observation of learning and development processes

Commented [Ro2R1]: Are Ms. Heße's comments enough?

At our Preschool/Kita, we also use **portfolios** as a key tool for documenting and observing children's development. Each child receives their own portfolio, which records their individual learning and development path.

Educational staff document special moments, developmental steps and interests of the children through observations, photos and notes. The children are actively involved in the creation of their portfolios.

Goals and benefits of the portfolios:

- Making **individual development** visible: The portfolio shows the child's learning process and makes progress visible.
- Strengthening **self-esteem**: Children experience themselves as competent and can be proud of their own work.
- Basis for **development discussions**: Parents and educators gain an insight into the child's strengths, interests and development.
- **Pedagogical reflection**: Professionals can specifically observe the child's educational processes and adapt their pedagogic work accordingly.

Through portfolios, we create an appreciative and child-friendly form of documentation that makes the child's learning and development visible and allows the child to actively participate in it.

9.3 Elementary Education and Transition to School

We are in close contact with our local primary school as well as with other primary schools and Preschools/Kitas in Munich, to optimize the transition to school.

To ensure successful preparation for school, we support the children in various areas:

- **Independence**: Children learn to recognize their own needs, organize their things and complete simple tasks independently.
- **School-relevant skills**: We practice basic skills such as cutting, writing and recognizing numbers and letters with the children to strengthen their motor and cognitive skills.
- **Social skills**: Sharing, listening, teamwork and conflict resolution are practiced through play so that the children adjust well to the school environment.
- **Project work**: Exciting projects arouse the children's curiosity and strengthen their linguistic, cognitive and social skills.

Parents are actively involved in pre-school work. They regularly receive information, tips and suggestions on how they can best prepare their child for school at home. At the end of the preschool years, we organize a graduation ceremony to celebrate the child's individual successes and to celebrate the transition to school.

Change to another Preschool/Kita

If a child leaves our facility, we support this transition sensitively:

- We talk to the child about the change and explain together with the parents why this step is being taken.
- We emphasize the anticipation of new friends and exciting activities.
- We give the child a feeling of security and support so that the acclimatization to the new facility goes well.

Our aim is to send the children off to the next stage of their lives with **confidence, curiosity and positive experiences** - be it to school or to another Preschool/Kita.

10. Concluding Thoughts

We see these conceptual considerations as the basis, further development and consolidation of our previous work. We will endeavor to shape our educational standards in such a way that the child is still allowed to be a child whilst receiving very good and comprehensive preparation for their school days.

This concept is published on our website: <https://gymboreeclasses-dach.com/munich/preschool/>