

Playgroup – What is it?

In the playgroup, two years before they start kindergarten, children meet one or multiple times a week. A group consists of around 8 children, with the maximal number being 12. The children learn social behaviour in small groups and gain own experiences, frequently for the first time without the parents. All of this in a playful way. The children are cared for, nurtured, supported, and supervised. They are allowed free play without having to fulfill specific tasks.

Playgroups are meant to be an island for the child. An island which fosters their wellbeing.

The pre-kindergarten child with its needs for play, activity, expression, and calm is at the center of playgroup. It allows the child to expand their field of activity and their network of social relationships.

In the process the child learns to find their own place within the group, to assert themselves, to show consideration, to accept one another's strengths and weaknesses, to help one another, to listen to one another. Arguing and making peace again are also components of the group experience and life.

The ideal condition is a consistent children's group. This consistency is an important difference to daycares. Pre-school children want to be involved and not just occupied. For this reason, the child chooses and determines their own activities and games. The group supervisor helps support and assist this free play and offers a large scope of freedom for exploration and discovery within clear boundaries.

Within the playgroup diverse materials are used to work, paint, knead, make music and sing, make noise, move, and tell stories. The core of all activities is the playful exploration, joyful experimentation, and the convivial aspect, not the production and execution of perfect handicrafts.

Age-appropriate needs are considered, which means that all activities both play and creative are voluntary. This enables the child to act according to their own rhythm, to retreat, observe, and choose their own level of participation in the happenings.

Unlike kindergarten playgroups do not follow a fixed curriculum or play plan.

What does the playgroup offer a child?

Children can gradually practice detaching from their closest caregivers in a secure and manageable framework. They take their first steps into an unfamiliar environment, towards a new caregiver, towards other children, as well as towards independence and opening themselves. The child expands their handicraft, language, mental, social, and motor skills.

The playgroup offers children a personal field of experiences, which they do not have to share with a sibling, allowing them to slowly transition from their family into the larger group of the kindergarten.

What does the playgroup offer the parents?

The playgroup offers the parents the opportunity to connect with other parents of children in the same age range and to exchange experiences. Mothers/Fathers are given the chance to take care of their own needs for a certain time.