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A child care center is a place of community life where the children are happy to be together and in which the parents have confidence.

1 Preamble

The values, principles and rules explained below come from a process of researching the best ways to ethically adapt practices to professional deontology.

"Ethics is the effort I've decided to make, with others, to reduce as much as possible the gap between values declared and values applied."¹

These values, principles and rules stem from the vision, mission and strategies defined by the Foundation Board of the Myosotis Foundation; they are in harmony with those approved by the Training Schools for Childhood Educators (EDE) and Socio-Educational Assistants (SEA), as well as the most successful ideas from the professional culture. They are responsive to legal criteria and, we hope, parent expectations.

2 Educational Project

The educational project reflects the institution. It is its personality; it contains the values and educational principles that are applied at the child care center. The educational project is a frame of reference for employees and a point of reference for families. This document explains the duties of the people who work within the Myosotis Foundation child care centers, as well as their role and purpose. Our pedagogical system defines our educational choices and the way we interact with children on a daily basis.

It sets the educational approach and methods used as well as a general framework and points of reference to which every professional can refer. It takes into consideration the children's ages and offers a range of educational objectives. The team's principal objective is to take responsibility for each child's needs and individual rhythm, while awakening the child to interactions with others and community life.

Above all, every element of this educational project is based on respect for the child and his or her family, as well as for the child's life in the community. Certain parts of this document are not completely developed, as we work them as a group.

The educational project hinges on three values:

- 1. DIGNITY: respect for individual integrity and human rights
- 2. KINDNESS: a spirit of understanding and tolerance toward others
- 3. FAIRNESS: the right of each person to be recognized and respected without discrimination, to receive equal institutional services that are adapted to the person's needs

The educational team will implement the necessary material, spatial, and educational methods to achieve this.

¹ Jean-François Malherbe: Philosopher and author, teacher in superior social education in Lausanne. Text taken from *"Tendre l'oreille à l'inouï. L'éthique des hérétiques"*, Editions du Cerf.

3 Educational Teams

The educational teams consist of Childhood Educators (EDE), Socio-Educational Assistants (SEA) and auxiliary staff (AUX). Future childcare professionals, interns and CIE/SEA students are trained at the child care centers.

Our educational ethics are founded on strong values that are shared by the educational teams and that aim for the children to build relationships filled with respect and empathy for what they experience, think and feel. The educational teams interact with the children on a daily basis and offer them a secure and stimulating environment. They pay attention to the rhythms and needs of each child.

Each child is monitored by a reference educator. This educator is in charge of arranging parent meetings.

4 Family

Parents are the first educators of their children. They are the principal agents for transferring life values. It is important to develop and maintain trusting relationships with families. Mutual confidence and regular communication are indispensable to the children's well-being. Meetings between the child care center's educational team and the families are organized upon request of either party. Celebrations take place throughout the year and provide an opportunity for families to meet.

5 Focus Areas of the Child Care Center

5.1 Kindness

Patience and prudence are special qualities in the educator and contribute to the respect given to each child.

5.2 Respecting individual Rhythms

Community life is regulated by routine, which instills a sense of security in the child. The psychological needs of children evolve with age. The structure of each sector takes into account the children's stage of development.

5.3 Collaboration with Families

Parents' participation in the life of the child care center allows us to understand the needs and expectations of the families and therefore to build a constructive collaboration with the children's well-being in mind.

5.4 Equality for all

The acquisition of the notion of gender is a long process which starts at the age of 2 years old and ends at about 7 years old. During this evolution, the educator has an important role to play in building representations that will influence the future life of children. The toys given, the language used, the way of managing a conflict or to enhance the actions of children are some of many ways for the educator to promote equal opportunities and reduce gender inequalities that we face in society.

5.5 Affective Security

Guarantee affective security of the children is essential because the children need to know where they are, who is going to take care of them and what they are going to do during the day. All of these information will help them grow with confidence within the child care and develop constructive relationships with their entourage.

Regarding the age group, different ways to support children exist to ease this feeling of affective security.

Within the Nurseries, we develop the carrying technique, which consists of carrying a child against oneself using a cloth (scarf) or a baby carrier. Used properly, it is a simple and comfortable method that offers the child to be contained when he or she needs it. The adult is aware that he is carrying a child and lives this moment as much as him or her. He's not necessarily going to have an extra activity at the same time. Some children like to be carried but some don't. The use of this support will be based on the needs of each child, the practices of the parents and of course, with their agreement.

5.6 Inclusion and Diversity

Our pedagogical position is inclusive and willing to integrate every child regardless of their specific needs. Our mission also involves all the aspects of prevention.

We work with each child to offer them a space of learning, play, interaction and relationships with their peers through personalized and collective projects.

Each child has his/her own strengths and difficulties, the educational team offers daily activities so that they can do with others but not necessarily like others.

We are able to welcome a child with a diagnosis. In that case, a close collaboration is established with the parents in order to offer the child the best welcome possible and offer him or her a secure environment that is adapted to its needs.

5.7 Ecology

Since 2019, child care centers of the Myosotis Foundation have been committed to obtaining the Eco-Schools label, also recognized by the UNESCO and the United Nations. Thanks to this label, we show a desire to commit to a more sustainable operation and to sensitize the young and old ones to environmental protection.

Even though the goal of the label is putting in place concrete elements towards a more responsible operation, its primary objective is, of course, raising awareness amongst children. Thus, we plan activities related to the treated topics in order to awaken them at their youngest age to the importance of our environment and ecology.

6 Educational Tools

To implement our educational project in compliance with the values that set out this line, we have different educational tools:

- Individual monitoring of the child through several observations we conduct.
- Observation of the group dynamic and sharing the educator's observations during weekly meetings.

- Children can be filmed at different moments: welcome, meals, free play, different activities, interactions between children, outings, etc., depending on the purpose. The analysis of short video sequences allows us to observe and focus on the children's skills. It also allows us to observe ourselves in our practices and to analyze a particular or large group situation. The educational teams can use the video to show the parents a moment or an activity experienced by their child during the day. These videos are also shared with families during meetings. These videos are only used within the institution for educational purposes.
- During our meetings, when we think about our pedagogical action and ensure the follow-up of our objectives and actions.

7 Highlights and Objectives for the Day

7.1 Rituals

A day at the child care is punctuated by specific activities, such as morning welcome time, meals, naps, snacks, etc. All of these events give the children a framework, some points of reference they can count on in order to feel a sense of security. Rituals lend the day stability. Thus, the child becomes accustomed to the same ways of doing things each day.

7.2 Children's Arrival and Departure

In order to adapt to the environment and grow within it, children must build relationships with adults in that environment.

All human beings need to have strong personal attachments. This relationship is built with the parents. The educator of referene ensures that children are welcomed in a way that makes them feel secure and recognized as individuals and are provided with one-on-one moments with an educator.

The educational team's role is to personally greet the children, addressing them by their first name. The atmosphere must be calm and conducive to focusing on the arrival of the children and their parents in order to provide an environment that is favorable to dialogue. Dissemination of information is necessary. It makes it possible to maintain a good plan for the child and ensure continuity. It plays an important role in ensuring a successful day for the children and allowing us to take good care of them.

7.3 Welcome Time

The morning welcome time must be pleasant for the child; it is a moment when everyone comes together; it is important that it be happy and friendly. The Nursery, Toddlers and the Preschoolers sectors have set up a welcome time routine that is adapted to the age of the children, to integrate the child into the appropriate group. All the children are encouraged to participate. If the child does not wish to participate, he or she may play in the room.

7.4 Personal Care and Hygiene

Personal care times provide an individual, one-on-one contact with the child. The child receives exclusive attention during this brief period of being changed or washed up. The child comes to know that this time belongs to him or her and that he or she will enjoy the full attention of the adult taking care of him or her. It is important to respect the children while they are growing and to place them in situations where they are independent.

These moments allow a relationship of trust to grow between the adult and the child. They also help with body awareness and help the child become autonomous.

The educational team does not interrupt the child during play but notifies him or her that they are going to help clean or change him or her when he or she is finished with the current game or activity. Regarding older children who can participate in changing, the professional may, if the child desires, change the diaper while the child is standing.

7.5 Meals

Nutrition is important for child's development and growth.

The meals are prepared on site by a company specialized in children's meals. This company has adopted the *"Fourchette verte des tout-petits"* [Green Fork for children] concept, which promotes a healthy and balanced diet. It ensures that all the essential nutrients are provided throughout the day.

The culture of each child and family must be taken into account. We come into the matter according to the type of request (for example: no pork diet, etc.).

For children, mealtime is also the time for many discoveries: tastes, smells and colors. They learn to share, wait their turn, pass the plate and stay seated.

Meals are taken under different conditions depending on the age of the child:

The youngest are fed on request in a calm and reassuring location. Individual rhythms are respected.

Children who are not able to sit on their own are fed in the arms. This ensures that a special relationship is built between the child and the adult and promotes the secretion of oxytocin².

Oxytocin is a hormone that affects mood and is linked to, among other things, feelings of attachment. Within a community, a child needs to experience one-on-one moments during the day. These moments contribute to a better child care experience.

Older children from the Nurseries eat in small groups, always with the educational team.

Toddlers eat with the educators in the group.

Preschoolers eat in different places in groups of maximum ten. The same children always eat in the same place. During a special event, there may be a reunification.

7.6 Naps and Resting Times

"A child who sleeps well and long enough is better able to develop his or her skills and ensure his or her growth." $^{\rm 3}$

Sleep is an important factor in child's development. It is during sleep that the pituitary gland secretes what is commonly known as the "growth hormone," which, as its name indicates, plays an essential role in child's development. This is both a health and comfort issue for the child.

² Oxytocin: a hormone which promotes attachment and a feeling of well-being

³ Professor Hubert Montagnier: Psycho-physiologist in development, behavior and rhythms of children

We ensure that each child sleeps sufficiently and can rest at any time while respecting as much as possible the family rhythms and habits, as well as the child care's schedule.

Each child has his/her own bed, and the educational team insures that the child has everything he or she needs (transition objects, blanket).

It's important to know that the child can sleep or rest 30 minutes before leaving the nap room.

Regarding Toddlers and Preschoolers, rest time is planned after the meal, but the team is flexible and looks for signs of fatigue in children. The team will adapt its activities to the group dynamic from day to day and will allow a weary child to have a rest if needed.

At the end of the nap, children change their clothes with or without the help of an adult. The educator suggests a calm activity in order to respect this transition time. The child may keep the transition object or put it in his or her bag.

Preschoolers may get up after half an hour if they don't want to sleep any longer. Once up, children join the group by themselves, find their basket (which contains their belongings) and get dressed on their own or with the help of an adult if needed.

8 Activities

8.1 Free Play

"Play is an art form, since it is a creation of the spirit and totally free of charge." 4

For children, play is a way of appropriating the environment. It is through play that children will open themselves up to the world around them and learn about themselves. All their intellectual, motor and relationship skills will be practiced through this activity.

Imitation and play are considered to be the most important aspects in the development of a young child.

Free play is meant to allow children to develop their senses in a personal manner and to stimulate their initiative. Children explore their senses, develop language, creativity and motor skills, and experiment with different types of relationships with their classmates, which will allow them to integrate into society. It is through this type of play that they will express their emotions and show what might concern or obsess them, using their entire range of negative and positive emotions.

"The self-induced spontaneous activity that a child freely pursues in an independent way is of an essential value to his development and must be a source of pleasure that is constantly renewed".⁵

During times of activity, it is essential to respect the child as an individual belonging to a group.

8.2 Guided Activities

The educational team frequently propose guided activities.

The educational teams set up manual, creative and motor activities. They provide the children with a variety of creative opportunities (painting, crafts, drawing, motor games, etc.) which allow the

⁴ Claudie Gordon-Pomares: Canadian neuro-psychologist.

⁵ Emmy Pikler-Loczy: Hungarian pediatrician and author. Text taken from *"Loczy ou le maternage insolite"*, Editions Scarabée.

children to exercise their skills and express themselves at their own rhythm according to their desires and needs. Manual, sensory, and creative activities aim to develop the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste.

The child care center makes available educational and pedagogical material that is appropriate to their age and needs (puzzles, building toys, board games, toys for motor function, etc.).

Educators balance free playtime and guided activities to ensure that the experiences of the children are as varied as possible.

8.3 Cognitive Activities

By growing up, the child develops both cognitive (the knowledge) and social skills (getting in touch with others). He or she also continues learning in other areas of his or her development, that is motor, emotional and language skills.

Cognitive skills include all the knowledge that the child acquires as months and years go by. They affect the thinking, reasoning, and intelligence.

By stimulating the child's cognitive skills, it helps developing mathematical reasoning or his/her interest in reading and writing, two skills that promote success in school.

8.4 Snoezelen Sessions

This approach puts three dimensions to the benefit of each age group:

- The awakening of the 5 senses
- The respect of individual development
- A proposal rich in experiences and discoveries

These sessions consist in finding a balance between soft stimulation and relaxation in a respectful relationship with each person. Materials such as sensory balls, light games, relaxing music, different textures, some musical instruments or various natural smells will compose these calm and playful moments of well-being.

8.5 Discovering Books

Books are a good media and a method of starting interaction (third-party object: it's not me, it's not you, it's something we share).

The book has an important place at the Myosotis Foundation, it allows to think, develop, give meaning and confront one's thoughts with others. Basically, reading is learning to recognize and link signs between them.

We let the child decide how he or she wants to discover books (at a distance, by playing, by always looking at the same book), so that he or she can positively apprehend this object and familiarize with it.

We are true to the text (learning new words, sensitization to different kinds of storytelling). These awakenings to books allow us to discuss about stories. Sometimes, we tell traditional tales, stories from different cultures, etc.

8.6 General Motor Skills

The child evolves gradually and continuously. Motor skills develop without stress through daily experiences, like climbing stairs, pulling a toy to himself or herself, turn around without falling.

Gross motor skills include coordination, dissociation, strength, flexibility and balance.

It develops through daily experiences: motor skills routes, outings, round dances, dances, rhymes, etc. The environment is planned so that the child can make experiences in complete safety.

We propose stimulating places that encourage movement. The educators support the children during their learning process by giving them gratitude signs. This is what allows them to take risks related to their capacities and surpass themselves.

Each child evolves following his rhythm gradually and continuously. The child refines his or her gross motor skills on a daily basis, during free play, guided activities, meals and all the moments that punctuate the day.

Our goal is to help children to develop global coordination and balance in order for them to integrate their body pattern. By putting them in such situations, they learn to organize themselves in time and space, they can experiment in order to develop new motor movements. Furthermore, it allows them to let off steam and free their emotional tensions.

8.7 Outside Activities

Outside activities allow children to discover their environment and to make experiments. It is an integral part of the educational mission to organize daily outings in all weather conditions (except in specific situations).

Beyond the health benefits, the time spent outdoors is revitalizing for the children. It is also a good opportunity to explore, exercise and develop physical skills, and let off steam: to run, to shout, to jump, to cycle, to climb, etc. These moments are also the occasion for the educational team to make children aware of the ecology by showing them the gestures to adopt outside.

It is also important to teach them the rules of life and to respect the instructions given by the adult (e.g.: learning to hold hands with another child, stop at crosswalks, etc.). Several types of outings can be organized. For exceptional outings, parents are sometimes invited to join to share a collective, recreational and friendly moment with their children.

We also ask parents to bring clothes adapted to the weather.

9 Language

From birth to 30 months old, the child acquires the use of speech by going through several steps. Cries, screams and babbles are a kind of language that appears at a very early stage, before the child is able to pronounce real words. Learning a language is long and difficult. Therefore, we need to be patient, to guide the children, encourage them, help them without discouraging them, to correct their mistakes and improve their skills.

It is by talking to the child that he or she feels recognized and that he or she is given the desire to communicate. Through this, the young child builds some points of reference that will help him or her to feel secure, understand the world and develop his or her intelligence. The educator's role is to enrich this communication through personalized verbalization. Each privileged moment is an occasion

to share and exchange. We make sure that we offer the children a maximum of opportunities in order to enhance their vocabulary and their ability to express themselves. The child will point with his or her finger, then, in his or her own way, will try to repeat or name the people and objects that are around him or her until being able to say words and then, build sentences.

9.1 Gestural communication

The educational team of the Foundation was created in 2019 by the association "First signs". Gestural communication comes from the French sign language of the canton of Vaud. It's important to know that just like the oral French, each country/area can have a different sign.

To allow the baby to express his or her needs and wishes before being able to talk, gestural communication is an advantage. From an early age, the baby will seek to connect and communicate with his or her entourage, whether it is through crying, looking or making gestures. The baby shows interest in moving hands. From 8-9 months old, the baby acquires the necessary motor skills to start doing the signs by himself or herself. However, the configuration of the signs as well as their meaning is already acquired before, hence the interest of starting the signs early enough. The signs being visual, the baby manages to link the word with the sign more easily.

In application, the educational team uses gestural communication daily: changing moments, welcome songs, meals, code of conduct, stories. The word is always said and linked to the sign, which is essential to give access to the vocabulary.

Gestural communication is also used within the Preschoolers groups. Since the acquisition of oral language is already complete for the most part, the usefulness of signs is different. Within this age group, gestural communication is used to make songs more fun or illustrate stories. However, for the sake of continuity, children arriving in the Preschoolers groups can make themselves understood with signs if oral language isn't acquired yet.

For the purpose of inclusion, gestural communication gives allophone children the possibility of accessing communication despite the language barrier. The representation of the sign will be the same in the mother tongue or in French, which gives tools to the child and his or her parents in acquiring French vocabulary.

Gestural communication is an inclusive tool when caring for children with a handicap. It gives them access to communication with their peers and educators, even though the speech isn't acquired. Collaboration between the different contributors of the child's network and family can include the use of signs in everyday life, hence the importance of the participation of the childcare.

10 Code of Conduct

Rules are what makes community life possible. The child's environment must be reassuring, and rules are an important aspect of education. They teach children what they can and cannot do. The rules must be adapted to the age of the child, be clearly set out and explained, and make sense both for the children and the adults. They must be respected so that everyone can feel comfortable within their group.

During the first years of a child's life, rules remain external to the child, they are imposed on him or her, especially by an adult. In this manner, children acquire information about their environment while

also questioning these rules to build their personality. "The identity feeling is built within the boundaries between self and the environment, in the experience of frustration."⁶

Through this natural process of socialization and education, children confront family and social norms.

They will adapt to them and integrate them, while questioning, rejecting, and diverting them as well.

Conflict and opposition are therefore a natural part of the development and socialization of every child. Children must experience them to "grow up."

11 Security

The Management guarantees compliance with cantonal standards of the reference framework and its application.

The Myosotis Foundation childcare centers have a security framework for children and educational teams. Personalized access cards are given to every family and collaborator.

The childcare center regulation, which is approved and signed by the parents, is applied by the educational teams and the Management team.

12 Collaboration between the Educational Team and Parents

Collaborate means "to work together with our competences, our values, our respective responsibilities and our deficiencies, knowing that there is no truth in education but only a process of trial and errors."⁷

Relationships are based on the notion of partnership and imply daily sharing of information concerning the child.

12.1 Daily Communications

The information exchanged between parents and professionals nurtures the bonds between the parents and the child's educators.

The team offers support to the parents if a difficulty is perceived (morning separation, evening departure). The educators pay attention that the duration of the transmission is context-specific: not letting it last too long or offering another moment to the parent if there is a need to develop.

12.2 Parents Meetings

Meetings are regularly offered to the parents: when they join the childcare, after three months for an assessment and after one year, as well as during a group change. An assessment may also be requested by the family or the team, as needed.

⁶ Isabelle Filliozat, « J'ai tout essayé », Marabout, 2011, page 151

⁷ Guy Ausloos: Doctor in medicine. Specialist in child psychiatry and in family therapy. Co-founder of the magazine "*Thérapie familie*". Taken from « *La compétence des familles* », Editions Erès, Ramonville Saint-Agne, 2004, p. 243

13 And then

This educational project is a living, breathing document; it is the backbone of our childcare centers. Through frequent reassessment, the educational team optimizes the daily organization, the supervision of the children and the inclusion of the parents to offer them quality care.

This project is constantly enriched by contributions of the educational teams. These contributions result from the pooling of observations, trainings and team meetings.

14 Conclusion

"Of all the illusions, the most dangerous one is that there is only one reality." ⁸

Communication and collaboration among the educational staff are essential to children's care. Everyone has his or her own life and values, which are an asset to the team. Working differently does not mean doing a bad job or being less effective. The important thing is to keep our common goal in mind: the well-being of the children who are taken care of.

Teams are encouraged to regularly question their practices.

The key concepts chosen throughout the discussions during the creation of this project are the following:

- Finding meaning
- Coherence
- Care context
- Values
- Spontaneity

"Coherence brings stability and therefore a sense of balance and reliability, which are essential for the young child being taken care of in a community."⁹

⁸ Paul Watzlawick: Austrian psychologist, psychotherapist, psychoanalyst and sociologist. Text taken from "La réalité de la réalité", Editions Points Essais.

⁹ Christine Schuhl: Early childhood educator, Montessorian and graduated in Education Sciences. Editor of the magazine "Les métiers de la petite enfance". Author of: "Réaliser un projet accueil de la petite enfance", "Repérer et éviter les douces violence", "Vivre en crèche, remédier aux douces violences".