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 **BUNDESVERBAND FÜR
KINDERTAGESPFLEGE**
Bildung. Erziehung. Betreuung.

 **ke Kindererde**
dolpöp

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und Jugend

Demokratie **leben!**

PLENTY OF ROOM FOR PARTICIPATION – PARTICIPATION IN DAY CARE FOR CHILDREN

KITCHEN

At the day care centre, your children decide themselves how much and what they eat. This may mean that they eat differently at home than you are used to. This is normal and no cause for concern. Even if your children only like to eat pasta for weeks: that is a phase, and it will pass. The advantages of self-determination outweigh the disadvantages: When your children decide for themselves what and how much they eat, they learn to listen to their own physical sensations. This is important for their health.

CHANGING TABLE

Your children will only be changed at the place of their family day care if they agree to this. This may mean that your children do not always wear a fresh nappy when you pick them up. Importantly, however, your children will learn that their own boundaries are respected.

PLAYROOM, LIVING ROOM OR KITCHEN

Your children are allowed to pour themselves water or unsweetened tea and drink it at any time during the day at the place of their family day care. It may happen that they then also want to pour for themselves at home. You can agree on rules with your children for this, which can also be different from those in the day care centre. Children quickly learn that different rules apply in different places. They learn to act differently in the place of their day care than at home.

BATHROOM

What applies to nappy changing also applies to the other aspects of personal hygiene: Your children may not be perfectly clean when you pick them up. But they will experience that they have control over their own body and that their boundaries are respected.

HALLWAY OR CLOAKROOM

In day care, your children are guided to dress themselves independently. They learn to feel for themselves whether they want to put on a cap or a scarf when they go outside. Adults often transfer their perception of coldness onto the children without considering that children move around a lot more. However, the fact that your children are allowed to decide for themselves does not mean that they are left to their own devices. The childminder will always keep offering your children a cap, gloves, scarf, etc. and gently, if required, check their body temperature.

PLAYROOM OR LIVING ROOM

In day care, your children have a say in what happens during the day. Childminders adapt the daily routine to the needs of all children. Of course, compromises must also be made. It is important for your children to learn that rules are necessary so that people can live together well. However, it is equally important to learn that rules are made by people and can be changed if there are good reasons for doing so.

PLAYROOM OR LIVING ROOM

Your children decide for themselves what they want to do in the day care centre. Free play is the most important activity, especially for young children, in order to develop their own interests, to process experiences, to learn to solve problems, to coordinate with others. Your children learn much more in free play than through activities that adults prescribe. They form a picture of the world and their own place in it – they educate themselves.

GARDEN OR PLAYGROUND

Many children love being outside. There they can move more freely, test their limits and also feel unobserved for once. This is where they can experience the weather, the elements, stones, animals and plants. Here too, children should be given enough time to keep themselves entertained and to pursue their own particular interests. It may happen that their clothes get dirty or wet, but in return, your children learn to be comfortable in their bodies.

AND YOU AS PARENTS OR GUARDIANS?

The federal parents' representation for children in day care centres and individual family day care (Bundeselternvertretung für Kinder in Kindertageseinrichtungen und Kindertagespflege = BEVKi) campaigns for improvements in family day care.

Get involved! For more information, visit www.bevki.de or email info@bevki.de.

THE PROJECT "DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY DAY CARE"

The project "Democracy and Participation in Family Day Care" offers information, training and working aids on the topics of democracy and participation in family day care: www.bvktkp.de/demokratie

DOLPÄP: SPEAKING-LISTENING-COMPREHENSION

Overcoming language barriers in day care centres and family day care. dolpöp offers free interpreters and other tools so that parents and places of day care can work well together: www.dolpaep.de

dolpöp is a project of Kindererde gGmbH supported by the Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family Berlin.

Have a look here: [dolki](https://www.dolki.de) – the day care app.
Download free of charge and without advertising from the Google Play Store and get started:



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7
GOOD
REASONS
TO INVOLVE
YOUNG CHILDREN IN
DECISION-MAKING

Participation
in family day care

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SEVEN GOOD REASONS TO INVOLVE YOUNG CHILDREN IN DECISION-MAKING – PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY DAY CARE

Participation is on everybody's lips. What does participation mean exactly? Why is it important? What are its consequences – also at home? This booklet provides clarity on these questions. On the front page, there are seven good reasons for engaging children in participation. On the back page, you can see what it means for the family when children are participating in family day care.

WHAT IS PARTICIPATION?

Participation of children means: children participate in the decision-making of their own lives and that of their communities. There are many everyday decisions for children up to the age of three: What do I eat? When am I getting my nappies changed? How long do I take a nap? What do I wear? What are we going to do today?

For a long time, it was assumed that adults know best what is good for children. By now, it has become clear that children are capable of much more than they were thought to be capable of in the past. So why is it important to let young children participate in decisions?

PARTICIPATION IS IMPORTANT FOR THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN.

Children become strong personalities when they realise that they can have an impact on the world and that their opinion is respected. They become democratic personalities when they learn that other people have the same right to speak out and express their own concerns as they do. They learn all of that in practical action – by participating in decision-making.



PARTICIPATION CREATES EDUCATION.

Education is a highly independent analysis of the world, the living beings that exist in it and with oneself. Education cannot be “filled into” the children from the outside. Education can only be supported by responding to questions and interests voiced by the children and by creating a stimulating environment for them. However, what exactly a child is interested in and what they want to focus their attention on – that is for the child to decide.



PARTICIPATION PROMOTES HEALTH IN CHILDREN.

Children make important physical experiences when they try out something new. This applies to food, clothing or nappies, for example. How it feels to step barefoot in the snow, to eat pure butter or to be without nappies for a while. Such experiments are important for children in order to develop a sense of their own bodily awareness and their own health. In this process, they need good pedagogical guidance without this guidance becoming patronising.



PARTICIPATION PROTECTS CHILDREN.

An important element of bodily awareness is also to know and defend one's own boundaries of discomfort. Children realise when something feels awkward and express this in many different ways. Childminders support them in expressing boundaries through clear gestures and words. Even a two-year-old child can already signal “Stop!” or “No!” They can tell from the reaction of the other person if they can successfully defend themselves against unwanted touching. Such experiences are important for child protection.



PARTICIPATION IS PEDAGOGICAL QUALITY.

Participation from a children's perspective is an indicator of pedagogical quality. Children care about being taken seriously and being involved. That is precisely because children do not just want to play: they also want to solve problems, make decisions and accomplish relevant tasks. They want to contribute to real everyday life. Family day care is particularly suited to provide these kinds of educational and participatory opportunities.



PARTICIPATION IMPROVES DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND ITS RESULTS.

Decision-making processes are good, when everybody who is affected by the consequences of the decision can chime in – even if the people affected are only two years old. They are good when they broaden the horizon of those who are participating. For example, because those involved get to know the viewpoints of others, they learn to substantiate their own opinions or hear new arguments. Children have their own ideas and opinions, often ones that cannot be foreseen by the adults. All children should therefore be directly involved in decisions.



PARTICIPATION IS A PART OF DEMOCRACY AND INCLUSION.

Democratic societies are not rigid, but subject to constant change. Democracy is never “completed”. Changes in legislation and conventions such as the introduction of women's suffrage (1918), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the General Equal Treatment Act (2006) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008) are examples of this.

Inclusion and democracy are intertwined: Inclusion means being included, being allowed to participate, being able to co-create. Democracy refers to the quality of participation and co-creation: ideally, one that considers the equal value of all people and that allows everybody – including all children – to contribute.

