

THE FOX NEST
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
AND CARE



CONTENT

OUR VISION.....	3
1.1. Business idea	
1.2 Our values	
THE UNIT AND SERVICES.....	3
2.1 Staff and daycare groups	
2.2 Our services	
2.3 The unit's ECEC process briefly	
TOWARDS CHILD WELL-BEING.....	4
3.1 Child as an individual	
3.2 Child's individual ECEC plan	
3.3 Early support	
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION EXECUTION IN THE UNIT.....	6
4.1 A good start at the daycare and daily routines	
4.2 Nature and its miracles in practice	
4.3 English and Finnish in perfect harmony	
4.4 Different fields of learning	
EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICE.....	11
5.1 Evaluation of the service	
5.2 Improvement of the service	

OUR VISION

1.1 BUSINESS IDEA

The Fox Nest is a private daycare unit, our primary objective is to positively support the child's day to day life using the English language and Finnish nature.

In everyday life at the daycare the child has an opportunity to explore and perceive nature and its diversity at their own pace. We offer the child a safe environment, at which the child's own interests and needs are taken into account when planning the activities. In our everyday life we also highlight multiculturalism with the help of two languages. Our main language is English, but naturally the children can also speak Finnish. Above all our main objective is to offer the child a happy day at the daycare.

1.2 OUR VALUES

Our values are respecting the child, safety, equality, child orientation, cooperation and cherishing the childhood. Additionally our elementary values include respecting the nature and tolerance. With us the child will learn how to live by sustainable development and make responsible choices concerning nature. They will also learn how to respect themselves and other people. These are all values that will stay with you till adulthood.

THE UNIT AND SERVICES

2.1 STAFF AND DAYCARE GROUPS

The Fox Nest is a small daycare with room for 60 children ages 1 to 6. We execute small group approach as instructed in the nationwide ECEC. Small group approach makes it possible for us to offer the child a calm learning environment and ensures individual attention to each child. Thanks to our small number of children the atmosphere at the daycare is familiar and warm. In everyday activities and games the children get to know all of the other children and adults in the house. We encourage the children and parents take part in all of our activities.

Our unit's staff consists of kindergarten teachers, daycare nannies, daycare helpers and preschool teachers. If needed we will call in substitute teachers.

2.2 OUR SERVICES

We offer high quality daycare services and our plans closely follow the objectives mentioned in the nationwide ECEC and municipal ECEC. The objectives come into play every day in situations characteristic of children, for example playing, singing, moving, acting in nature and using the English language.

The children's daycare hours are based on the needs of the guardians on weekdays from 6.30am to 5pm. During the day the child is offered a possibility to adequate nutrition, rest and outdoor activities as well as independent playtime.

2.3 THE UNIT'S ECEC PROCESS BRIEFLY

Our unit's early childhood education and care plan (ECEC) is based on Jyväskylän's own municipal ECEC and on the nationwide ECEC, but simultaneously it implements our own vision and values. The ECEC plan's basis has to work in the child's best interest and base on their individual needs.

In our daycare we include the families in the development of our ECEC. Practical means for this are for example customer satisfaction surveys, ECEC conversions and everyday meetings with the guardians. All above-mentioned bring us new information and improvement ideas that are best suited for our customers. We monitor the execution of our ECEC with regular staff meetings, daily observation and customer feedback. In addition to our own ECEC we also utilize the child's individual ECEC and our own pedagogic plan (PESU).

TOWARDS CHILD WELL-BEING

3.1 CHILD AS AN INDIVIDUAL

The most important matter in early childhood education is to take into consideration every child's uniqueness. Every child grows and develops at their own pace, so individual needs have to be the basis for all activities. We support the child's growing identity and self-esteem by listening to the child and their needs. As early childhood educators we observe the child's ways of acting and their areas of interest. To us every child is precious just the way they are.

3.2 CHILD'S INDIVIDUAL ECEC PLAN

The child's individual ECEC plan is drawn up together with the child, the guardians and the daycare staff. Child's individual ECEC is an essential tool in getting to know the child better and supporting their growth, development and learning in the future.

ECEC conversations usually happen twice a year, first during Autumn and second in the Spring. Before the conversation the parents contemplate on the information about their child in the ECEC form: How are they like, what are they fond of, what makes them happy and what makes them mad? How about what are their strenghts? In the child's own pages the child can for example draw their own thoughts about daycare and the guardians can write down how the child feels. The staff for their part write down their own observations during daycare.

During the ECEC conversation we figure out together the best ways to support the child's growth and development during their time in daycare. The pedagogic objectives and means of action are written down in the child's individual ECEC. In the next ECEC conversation during Spring the objectives will be brought up and the guardians and staff will determine together how they have been fulfilled. If needed the ECEC conversations can be arranged more than twice a year.

The pedagogic objectives that emerge from the child's individual ECEC are taken into account while planning activities and learning environments. Individual ECECs are the founding for all plans for pedagogic activities, this is how the individuals can be taken into account in every daycare activity. The child's individual ECEC is therefore an extremely important tool between the child and early childhood educator. (Attachment 1.)

3.3 EARLY SUPPORT

The most important collaborators for daycare in early support execution are the child's guardians. Well compiled individual ECECs and positive cooperation both have a major significance in receiving early support and preventing risk situations. There are certain guiding principles that have an influence on how well adjusted the child's life is at the daycare. For example regular activities (the daily structure), familiar adults, nature education and linguistic diversity are all things that create safety and structure into every day life and social interactions.

A child's social interactions consist of daily activities with adults, other guardians and the other children in the group. The job of an early childhood educator is to guide the child towards positive interaction using a safe, genuine and empathic approach. A safe foundation for these social skills is created with pedagogical small group approach, working together in pairs and of course with play. The child's personal level of development is taken into consideration in regards of speech as well as understanding. If necessary the early childhood educator will use certain tools, such as assistive sign language, picture cards or "Finnish as a second language" material (S2).

A child's self-confidence and independence is supported every day by partaking them in daily chores and decision making. The chores can be small acts that at the same time train the child's motoric skills, linguistic skills and responsibility while helping them to understand causal connections in life.

If needed an estimate can be made about the necessity of special needs support. The estimate is made based on the early childhood educator's observations and the child's individual ECEC. In the event that there may be need for special support the daycare will arrange a conversation with the guardians about the necessary measures (three-step support). Special needs support associates are for example Jyväskylä's early childhood education services, child health centre services, health care services, schools, social workers, psychologists, therapists and immigration services.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION EXECUTION IN THE UNIT

4.1 A GOOD START AT THE DAYCARE AND DAILY ROUTINES

Here at The Fox Nest we emphasize openness and strong mutual respect with the families, this is how we guarantee a solid foundation for cooperation with the guardians.

A respectful liaison between the daycare and the family starts with (1) visits to the daycare and familiarizing the family with the staff, (2) composing the service plan and (3) having the opening conversation about the child's daily matters. The opening conversation is about getting to know the family, the child's daily routines and their individual needs.

The guardians also have an opportunity to ask about things that may puzzle them before the start of daycare. (4) The guardians are allowed to spend a befitting amount of time with their child in the group to help and support them at the start of the daycare.

Structures are an important part of daily life at the daycare, they bring safety and substance into the child's day. Every morning when the child arrives to the daycare we welcome them in person, so the child can feel themselves as safe as possible. Our daily activities repeat the same familiar and safe structure, even though the contents vary. Mainly our days consists of play, outdoor activities, guided activities, nature education, linguistic education, adequate rest and nutritious meals. Additionally our activities also include seasonal physical education, creative music, arts and crafts and essentially utilizing the seasons in basically everything we do.

We aim to execute most of the daycare's pedagogical activities in the nature while actively utilizing the surrounding nature as well as constructed nature environment (such as parks). In the nationwide ECEC it is stated that the characteristic ways for a child to learn are: play, exercise, exploring, expression, experience and act. All of the above are fundamentally related to exploring the diversity of nature.

4.2 NATURE AND ITS MIRACLES IN PRACTICE

Nature is one The Fox Nest's most important and vastest learning environments. Every day we encourage the children to take action in nature and constructed environments to strengthen their bond with nature and to give them an idea on how to act responsibly. We learn about nature in nature.

Early positive experiences outdoors strengthen the child's bond with nature at the older age. Nature increases one's well-being and health. Nature's examined with all senses and during different seasons. The children get to explore it and discuss about it with safe adults. We learn about different concepts of nature, how to act in nature and how to take care of it.

Every day the children are guided to respect the nature and taught how to act in the interest of sustainable development by every day choices and example by adults. Good examples about daily lessons are among other things recycling, trips without littering, being responsible with food and saving energy.

4.3 ENGLISH AND FINNISH IN PERFECT HARMONY

The languages used at The Fox Nest daycare are English and Finnish. Our purpose is to offer the child a strong foundation for both Finnish and English language skills before primary school. With the guardians we communicate with both languages according to needs.

In the daily daycare life our main language is English and we encourage the children to use it as much as they can. Our early childhood educators understand both languages so if necessary we also use Finnish.

In practice especially the English education comes forth the best in every day life, in greetings, games, songs and short rhymes. Our intent is to use English language to even the children's way into the international world. However when you live and grow up in Finland we also think that it's important to learn the local language to adapt into society and surrounding culture.

4.4 DIFFERENT FIELDS OF LEARNING

Our daycares follows the nationwide ECEC plan, where the children's different fields of learning have been divided into five different sections:

1. The rich world of languages:

Communication skills, language understanding skills, speaking skills, language usage skills, linguistic memory, vocabulary and linguistic awareness are all parts of developing linguistic identity. We support the children's curiosity and interest in languages with stories, music, short rhymes and poems. We also take into account all of the different cultural- and linguistic backgrounds in the group, that are important for the development of the child's linguistic identity.

2. The many forms of expression:

Different forms of expression are musical, pictorial, verbal and bodily. It's characteristic for children to combine the different forms creatively and through this advance their prerequisite for learning, social skills and readiness to understand the world. We encourage the children to express themselves for example through play, dance, music and crafts while utilizing children's literature, theatre, media and nature.

3. Me and our community

When a child's life expands beyond their own home, the child will face new values, views and ways how to think and act. Our mission at early childhood education is to support the child's understanding of the community's diversity and to offer a safe platform for practicing these new skills in the local community.

At the daycare we ponder different ethical questions for example through group rules, friendship and justice. The child will always have an opportunity to think things over in peace, either alone or with a safe adult.

Regarding different world views we examine the groups own beliefs and cultural backgrounds, of which we mostly talk about in the context of celebrations, eating habits and clothing. While dealing with religions and other beliefs we work tightly together with the guardians, we respect the family's background, beliefs and habits.

During the daycare semesters we get to know our local surroundings, nature and the history that surrounds us. The children have an opportunity to empathize ja experience the events of past for example through different trips and visitors. Present time is explored through children's own points of interest.

The surrounding community can be explored also through different sorts of medias. At the daycare the media education is executed by familiarizing with different sorts medias in a safe environment. Different medias that can be explored are for example magazines, comics, tv and tablet. The themes that arise can be addressed through crafting, exercise or drama, while practising source- and media criticism and responsible use of media.

4. I explore and express in my own environment:

A child explores their own environment actively from a very young age, so the early childhood educator's mission is to give the child the means to understand and observe it.

As nature education is an important part of our unit's activity, the children are naturally given lots of chances to explore the daycare's physical environment. The foundation of exploring by observing and problem solving is based on supporting mathematical thinking, with that in mind we encourage the children to find solutions concerning their own learning environment. The children are inspired to reflect on mathematical observations with ways that are most typical to them: using pictures, their own body and play. Important skills when exploring nature are measuring, concept of proportion and understanding the outline of objects, all of

these are brought into everyday life by exercise games and using the offerings of the forest.

When observing everyday life and nature it's also important to have an understanding of technology. Technology utilized with the child group can entail technical tools, such as a camera, a tablet or a computer and instructions on how to use them safely. We can also familiarize with toys not technical to get to know how they function.

5. I grow, move and develop:

One of the missions of early childhood education is to guide the child together with the guardians towards healthy lifestyle, which consists of exercise, food, health and safety. The children are offered daily opportunities for diverse exercise in forms of independent play, outdoor activities and guided exercise. At The Fox Nest we are not afraid of different seasons or little rain, the children are encouraged to find the best exercise form for themselves and for the weather. We utilize different seasons when introducing weather specific sports and include traditional yard games in our activities. The sports equipments are available for all during independent play at the yard.

Daily lunchtimes offer an opportunity to explore with new flavours, different textures and appearance of food. We guide the children towards independent dining and good table manners in a calm environment. Outside of lunchtime the topic can be handled using for example songs or poems about food. A child's special diet can be arranged at the daycare between the guardians and the staff, if needed the child health care centre can be consulted.

Regarding health and safety the children will learn for example about personal hygiene and the importance of sleep. Safety is learned at trips with traffic rules and of course through daily procedures such as dressing up. The most important thing is that the child feels like they're getting help when they need it, and also know where to get it from.

EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICE

5.1 EVALUATION OF THE SERVICE

The evaluation of our ways of acting is an ongoing process that takes into account the feedback we get from the customer satisfactory inquiries as well as the feedback we get from children on day to day basis. We monitor the observations about our ways of acting made by our unit's early childhood educators by regular staff meetings.

5.2 THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SERVICE

In our activities we take notice of including the children in activity planning for example with children's meetings. We actively encourage our families to partake by bringing their own suggestions to the table and by getting to know the other families as well. The improvement ideas that come up in the staff meetings are discussed about and pondered through. We try to find the best approach so we can offer quality services to each family.