



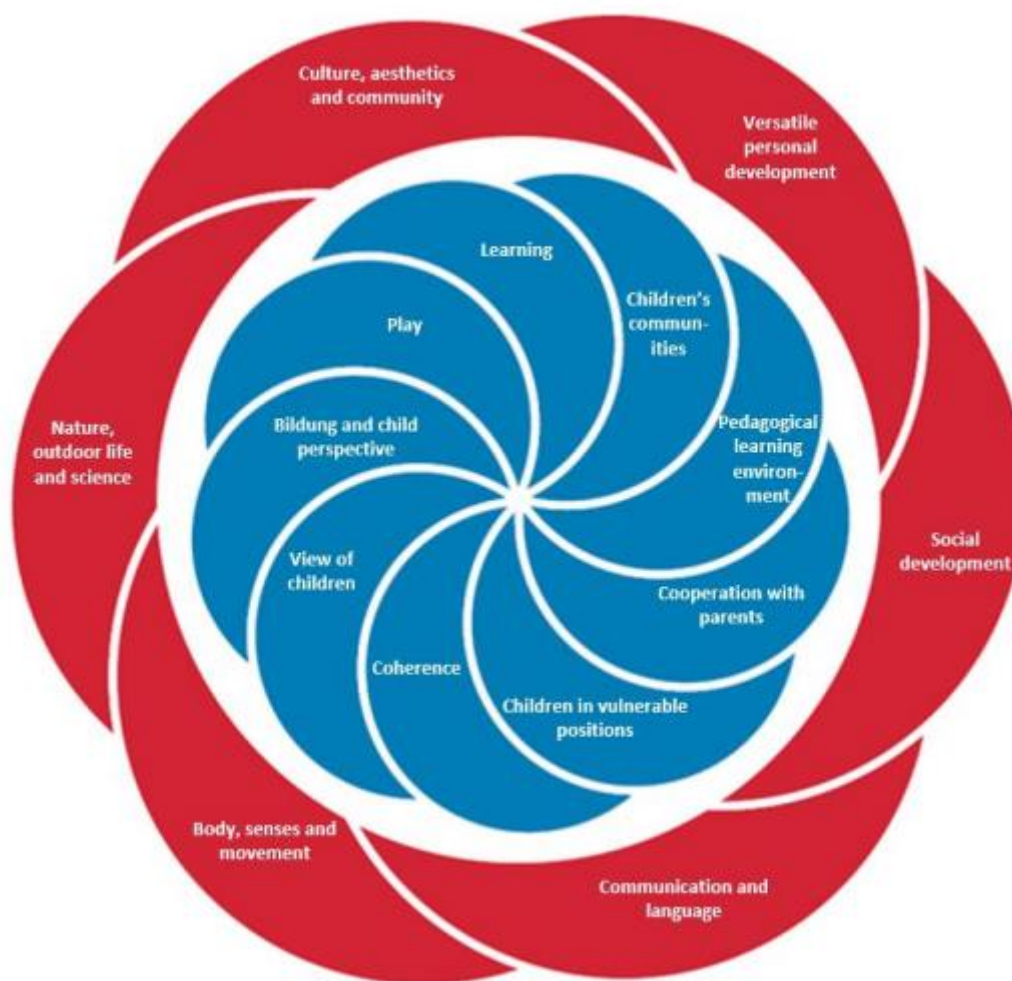
THE STRENGTHENED PEDAGOGICAL CURRICULUM

Stepping Stones Preschool

2024/2025

The Strengthened Pedagogical Curriculum

The common pedagogical foundation and the six curriculum themes.



The strengthened pedagogical curriculum constitutes the framework and common direction for our pedagogical work with the children's well-being, learning, development and education. The curriculum is a living document which briefly describes our pedagogical considerations and reflections with examples that guide the daily pedagogical work

INTRODUCTION.

Stepping Stones Preschool-Hellerup is a lovely nursery/preschool, located in a beautiful Villa in Hellerup, close to parks and the beach. We have 52 children, divided in three groups, the Pandas (age 1- 2), the Giraffes (age 3-5), and the Zebras (age 3-5). Our ratio in the Pandas is one teacher/pedagogue to three children and in the Zebras/Giraffe it is one teacher to six children. The children are together early in the morning and in the late afternoon. From 9.30-14.00 the children are divided into their own groups and during the day and during activities they are divided into smaller groups of 6-8 children, depending on the activity.

Stepping Stones preschool offers a well-rounded curriculum based on the common educational foundation as well as the six curriculum themes from the Danish strengthened pedagogical curriculum. Stepping Stones preschool focuses on the importance of meeting each child as an individual human being, which develops in his/her own special way and we see the child's unique potential for processing information in specific ways.

Our approach to education caters to each child's interests and learning styles. We provide a rich environment and a variety of educational choices to help children direct, develop and expand their own interests and unique talents. In addition, we support children in making their own choices both individually and as a group. We see education as a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by just hearing words, but by experiences in which the child interacts with its environment. This joy of discovery caused by doing and exploring develops a strong foundation for the child's self-esteem.

Preschool-age children are very active and curious, and they learn with every experience and play opportunity. In fact, the most important learning that takes place in this stage of development comes through play and 'hands on' activities. Children use many different ways to show their understanding and express their thoughts and creativity. They express themselves through drawing, building, dance and movement, painting, sculpting, pretend play, modelling and music. It is important that we give them enough opportunities to express themselves. By incorporating these activities in our curriculum, we are encouraging their learning and development. Something very important in our daily approach to education is that learning and play are not separated.

Creating supportive learning environments is particularly important for children in vulnerable situations. We have a responsibility to support children facing diverse challenges, ensuring each child has the opportunity to actively participate. Throughout the day, we provide breaks for them to unwind with toys, drawing, puzzles, or listening to a story. Our structure includes an educational component that allows them to engage in activities in their own way. Our framework and guidelines are designed to nurture each child individually and support their growth. We maintain close communication with parents through relevant meetings to provide optimal support and guidance on their child's development.

In addition, we see the parents as the child's first teacher. Here at Stepping Stones, we encourage parents to participate actively in our community, being part of celebrations and various events and topics throughout the year, as they are a vital component for the children and our community. Preschoolers are constantly on the move, exploring their world with exuberance, curiosity, and a seemingly endless source of energy. A child's capacity for learning in this stage is enormous. They learn and develop from every experience, relationship, and adventure they encounter. At Stepping Stones, we aim to create the space and provide plenty of opportunities to explore objects, the world around them and play in different environments to help develop their imagination and master the motor, cognitive, language and social skills that are essential for future development.

On the following pages you can read more about how we are working with the six pedagogical themes: 1. Comprehensive personal development. 2. Social development. 3. Communication and language. 4. Body, senses and motion. 5. Nature, outdoor life and natural phenomena. 6. Culture, aesthetics and community.

Comprehensive personal development & Social development

At Stepping Stones, one of our greatest strengths is our size and teacher ratio. As a smaller school, both the children and teachers are familiar with each other, which helps us cultivate a sense of community. This family-like atmosphere is one of our core values, and we believe it makes all the difference in providing a nurturing and friendly environment for our students.

From early in the morning, children greet each other and the teachers in a warm way, showing trust and affection. Our priority is to provide a secure and comfortable space so that we can achieve the best possible conditions for the development of the individual child.

Throughout our daily activities, we make sure that every child has the chance to demonstrate their abilities and we praise their efforts and actions. We encourage the children to express their own ideas and to describe themselves positively. Furthermore, we encourage them to interact cooperatively with their peers while playing, reading, sharing materials and doing activities together.

The child's feelings must be understood and recognized, and children need to feel accepted as they are and for what they are. We recognize the child, his/her resources and feelings and we allow them to participate freely to strengthen the child's interests and emotions. For example, we do this by being flexible in relation to planned activities. If we are doing an activity about a specific topic, but this topic raises children's interest in a different area, we follow the child's interests. Moreover, we guide the children towards confident self-expression in music, meanwhile gaining physical coordination and control of their bodies, voices, inner feelings and emotions.

Being an international preschool and having many different nationalities in our classrooms, we understand and recognize the children's cultural diversity and cover themes related to nationalities, different traditions, recipes, songs and celebration of foreign holidays.

Goals & Achievements

- Emotional Expression and Comprehension
 - The child displays curiosity regarding their own and others' emotions and feelings. They can recognize and label emotions and their triggers in themselves and others. In typical situations, they express themselves appropriately using words and actions, and they respond to others' emotions by helping and showing empathy.
- Initiative and Persistence
 - The child takes pride in their developing skills and abilities. They demonstrate initiative by initiating activities based on their interests, can engage in and prolong activities, and can return to an activity after a break. They seek adult assistance when unable to find solutions.
- Willpower and Self-Control
 - The child understands and follows agreements, maintains politeness and peace, and demonstrates self-control in their interactions with others through their words and actions.
- Self-Awareness and Self-Esteem
 - They develop a sense of self, understanding their past, present, and future selves. They perceive themselves as part of a family, group, or community, displaying confidence in their abilities and skills. They speak positively about themselves, recognizing their rights to play and belong.
- Readiness for Challenges and Problem-Solving

- The child shows readiness to face challenges and solve problems. They can identify and name challenges, problems, and obstacles independently or with others, seek solutions to overcome challenges, make decisions appropriate to the situation, and evaluate the outcomes of their choices.

Language & Communication

Through activities such as story time, 'book show-and-tell', puppet shows, singing rhymes, games and playing, children grow an interest in language and books. Story time is an important activity in our curriculum as we believe it is very beneficial to promote their listening skills, comprehension and vocabulary as we ask questions about the story and talk about it afterwards.

Children also gain confidence and become accustomed with the language as they are encouraged to listen and share their opinions and experiences throughout group and individual activities such as circle time. We encourage the children to use sentences instead of individual words as they become more and more familiar with the English language.

In addition, we use different tools, materials and methods to introduce the children to the first pre-writing and reading steps, such as learning letter recognition, formation and sounds. The children learn and practice language using fun and engaging tools (playdough, sand, paper, pompoms, trays, and much more).

Goals & Achievements

- The child displays curiosity in both verbal and non-verbal communication methods.
- Shows an eagerness to listen and comprehend others.
- Capable of understanding different forms of speech and meanings appropriate for their age.
- Expresses thoughts, feelings, and experiences through various communication methods.
- Actively engages in conversations and storytelling.
- Demonstrates writing skills by copying words and writing their own name.
- Engages in imaginative and rule-based games both independently and with peers.
- Follows the rules of different games effectively.

The child exhibits trust in teachers, respects them, feels at ease in various environments, learns from them, shares thoughts, and understands how to interact with unfamiliar adults.

Shows kindness towards peers, embraces differences, forms friendships, and comprehends the impact of their words and actions on themselves and others.

Body movement & Senses

In order to develop control over their large and small muscles, children are encouraged to use their body through physical activities and games, body movement and music, outdoor play, field trips and, through self-help practices such as going up and down the stairs, cutting fruits and mixing ingredients during cooking class.

In addition, they gain autonomy and independence by doing regular tasks such as getting dressed, tidying up, setting up the tables for lunch, pouring water in their glass, serving the food on their plates and helping to clean up after themselves when needed. We also promote their fine motor skills by teaching them how to hold the pencil, use age-appropriate scissors and do small manipulative activities such as building with Lego and playing with beads.

As part of our curriculum, children also learn about fire safety, first aid skills, health, nutrition and hygiene.

Goals & Achievements

- Enjoys acquiring skills essential for a well-rounded daily routine.
- Prioritizes personal health and practices safety in the surroundings.
- Demonstrates independence in using the bathroom, dressing, eating with utensils, and tidying up.
- Makes healthy food choices, eats on their own, maintains personal hygiene, helps keep the environment clean, exhibits basic safety skills at school, and knows how to behave safely in various settings such as on the street, at home, in nature, and around strangers.

Nature & Science

As part of our curriculum, we focus on themes and activities that teach children about nature, the weather, the animal kingdom and human body. We use our daily practices to talk about and explain why nature works the way it does at the same time as they are experiencing it, for example, why does it rain, how do plants grow, etc. We show children how to take care of nature, trees, plants, flowers and animals and involve them in several activities, such as watering our plants and helping with taking care of the outdoor area. In addition, we incorporate recycling activities and make art projects out of different materials such as boxes, plastic bottles and nature elements. Field trips also play an important role in the learning process as the child can experience and learn from nature.

Goals & Achievements

Engaging in outdoor activities can significantly enhance children's physical abilities, including increased strength, improved coordination, and enhanced flexibility. Furthermore, positive interactions with nature can cultivate a sense of environmental respect. Science experiments provide a valuable opportunity for children to explore the world, encouraging a healthy level of scepticism and problem-solving skills.

- Identifying and explaining social and natural phenomena, describing personal

attributes, living environment, family, and surroundings, showing interest in technology, and actively learning to utilize it.

- Developing the ability to learn and take charge of their learning activities, displaying curiosity, engaging in self-initiated and suggested tasks, actively pursuing goals, observing, reflecting, and adjusting their activities and outcomes.
- Actively investigating and displaying interest in personal, social, cultural, and natural surroundings, demonstrating the ability to use research methods such as observation, experimentation, and questioning, reflecting on observations, discoveries, feelings, and experiences.
- Recognizing and describing known social, cultural, and natural elements, using this knowledge in games and other activities.

Culture, aesthetics & community

Aesthetic experiences give the child the opportunity to share, reflect and understand their own experiences and thoughts. Curiosity, sensation, play and imagination are part of the aesthetic learning process and can create new perspectives and views that can be new knowledge and new learning. Therefore, the child must be supported in creating cultural expressions in a learning environment that involves the child in the process, appreciates engagement and construction, as well as the child's own experimental expression.

The child should feel that his/her way of managing time and space, play, friendships and conflicts is met with curiosity and respect. At the same time, the educational learning environment must be a democratic community where all children can participate and experience themselves as an active part of decision making.

At Stepping Stones, we encourage a democratic environment by promoting dialogue with the children and giving them the right communication skills. Children learn to listen and respect others' opinions, to express their own opinion and wishes and develop both as individuals and as members of a society.

Goals & Achievements

Focusing on culture within diverse learning settings allows children to explore different aspects of themselves, express their thoughts in various ways, and develop a deeper understanding of their environment.

- Engaging experience and imagination to delve into personal and others' ideas
- Discovering methods and tools to showcase originality
- Engaging in discussions with others

Children strive to master the languages of art to the best of their abilities. They spontaneously and intentionally convey emotions, impressions, thoughts, and ideas using familiar artistic techniques. They identify their artistic interests and utilize basic artistic concepts to express their experiences effectively.

- Identifying and appreciating natural and cultural phenomena
- Reacting to and perceiving these phenomena
- Discussing aesthetic qualities based on personal understanding

- Sharing personal aesthetic encounters
- Enjoying both personal and others' creations

Children authentically express themselves with a sense of adventure, always eager to delve into new concepts.

- Drawing on experience and imagination to explore personal and others' ideas
- Discovering ways to demonstrate originality and creativity in executing innovative concepts
- Engaging in discussions with peers

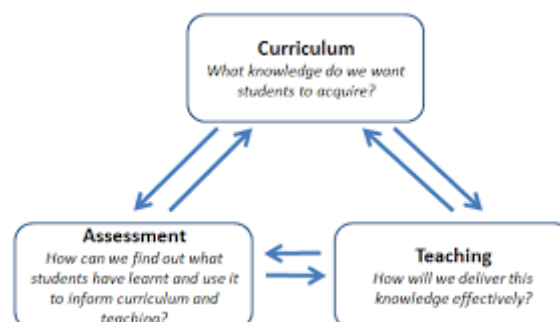
Evaluation

A good children's environment is the essence for learning and development. In order to achieve a good environment, it is important to look at different environments and perspectives.

The physical environment regards the possibility of movement, space, noise, light, ergonomics and hygiene. The indoor and outdoor physical environment fosters optimal growth and development through opportunities for exploration and learning. The aesthetic environment focuses on the interior design and decoration of the rooms, which have an impact on the children's experiences and actions.

The psychological environment is the foundation for how the children feel and interact with each other and adults. A good psychological environment is created when focusing on social relationships, good communication and understanding. The children and parents should always feel safe and the staff should always be apparent, present, engaged, motivated and inclusive. The children's perspective takes into consideration understanding the children as individuals and appreciating their differences. It is our goal to understand, respond and use the children's perspectives to improve the quality of our practice.

Stepping Stones preschool is a small school but with many good resources. We divide the children in smaller groups so they can get more space and attention. It gives the teachers an opportunity to give the individual child more attention. The children decorate their classrooms throughout the school year, which gives them a belonging to their classroom. We study different themes every month, where we focus on relationships, nature, cultural celebrations and the world around us. Furthermore, we have good and clear communication between children, parents and teachers and the children interact well together.



In order to provide the best environment and quality of education, we evaluate our children's environment throughout the year. We hold a monthly staff meeting to discuss and evaluate our curriculum themes, educational goals, and efforts.

Annually, we conduct a comprehensive assessment of the educational curriculum and plan for the next year.

We evaluate the learning and school readiness of the older children, work closely with the international schools, and organize visits to ensure seamless transitions for the children.

We prepare an annual assessment report for each child that covers all the pedagogical themes, goals, and achievements. The assessment is used for our pedagogical work and for the yearly parent's teacher meeting.

