

"Regular services under the continued conditions of the Corona pandemic"

Dear parents,

The last weeks and months have presented you with great challenges. Work, home office, supervision and home schooling had to be brought under one roof. Your children missed their friends and playing together. Many of them were able to make use of emergency day care, others had to wait and may have wondered why this is so.

From Monday, 15th June 2020, all children will be able to access the day care facilities again.

We believe this step to be correct and important in view of the general development of social life, and therefore emphatically welcome this decision by the Berlin Senate. Children need other children and they have a right to early childhood education.

The day care facilities are now faced with the task not only of admitting all children from 15th June onwards after the times of emergency care, but also of fulfilling the scope of care from 22nd June onwards in accordance with issued vouchers. We think that such a two-step procedure does not make sense and is also hardly feasible.

You want reliability and need it in order to be able to plan your professional and family life again. The transition from emergency day care to regular operation is a major challenge for the facilities in view of the personnel and spatial restrictions. To do this twice within one week is impossible.

In parallel to the standard pedagogical hours, early and late services should also be planned. The facilities should organise the children into fixed groups. How large these groups are is left up to the facilities. If facilities want to offer early and late services, this fixed group must be large. Therefore, it may be necessary in smaller facilities to put all children into one group, to guarantee the opening hours.

The day care centre management will take all possible measures to contain the occurrence of infection. However, we will not be able to prevent infection due to multiple contact and mixing of children. There will have to be clear agreements and regulations on the times for drop-offs and pick-ups, to ensure the best possible protection for everyone. The facilities will do this to prevent cases of infection from occurring. Every case of infection must be reported to the responsible health authority and will lead to at least a partial closure of the facility concerned.

Besides the wish to enable you and your children to return to normality, the facilities' operators are concerned about the employees, especially those with relevant pre-existing conditions. They still cannot and do not want to employ these staff in day care centres. An essential aspect of the work as a child care worker is the shaping of the relationship with their children. This requires closeness, care and trust. Distances can therefore not be kept at all.

To put it bluntly: Some institutions will have to struggle with a lack of personnel resources. Although the Senate Administration for Youth allows the operators to employ additional staff, these will not be available or cannot be found immediately. For this reason, not every facility will be able to provide you with comprehensive child care services. The institutions will try to create the best possible situation with regard

to all children, parents and employees. However, this may mean that not every individual interest can be fulfilled immediately. We ask for your understanding.

Please be aware that this is still an exceptional situation. It will not be possible for you and your children to return to the day-care centre routine you were used to prior to the pandemic anytime soon.

In the next days, the day care centre management will contact all of you to inquire about your needs, talk to the parents' representatives and include all of this in their planning. Please understand that a well-informed agreement with you and thorough planning will take time. Therefore, it is possible that institutions may not be able to admit all children again until Monday, 22nd of June.

We are in contact with the State Parents' Committee for Day Care Centres (Landes Eltern Ausschuss Kita, LEAK) to ensure that all the different interests of parents are taken into account. We would like to draw your attention to LEAK's current survey for parents, which asks how the system of gradual opening of day care centres works for you, which restrictions on the operation of day care centres could be implemented and how you could be supported as a family by financial or practical measures.

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You can continue to place your trust in the day care centre operators, the management and the pedagogical staff. We look forward to seeing you and your children!

Best wishes and let's all stay healthy!

Your Kita department,

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