



OPERATIONAL POLICIES

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1. WHAT IS WAKITA?

WAKITA stands for “Wald-Kinder-Tagesstätte”. „Kinder-Tagesstätte” („Kita“ in short) which is the most current term for “Kinderkrippe“ (day care center), which usually implies full day care to kids during the week. “Wald” means that the majority of the time is spent outdoors in the woods. **WAKITA** is one of the first Swiss outdoor daycare programs offering full day care. **WAKITA** is also one of the first day care centers in Switzerland to have integrated intergenerative work into its program. Intergenerative work implies a learning group comprised of more than one generation. At **WAKITA**, the children spend part of their time around the visually impaired inhabitants of the Blindenwohnheim.

WAKITA provides day care services to preschoolers from age 2 up to their entry into primary school. Kindergarten children are provided with gentle guidance as they move from self-discovery into structured learning. **WAKITA** has no political or religious affiliations. It is open to all children. Admission is available regardless of origin, religion or nationality. The Kita is a self-supporting, non-profit organization.

1.1 GOAL

WAKITA seeks to support children in becoming strong, socially-adept individuals who are able to deal with our ever-quicker changing world.

In **WAKITA**, gross and fine motor skills as well as the cognitive, emotional, aesthetic-creative and social aspects of development are stimulated just as they are in standard kindergartens.

WAKITA seeks to offer children the impulses that enable them develop an intimate, responsible and loving relationship to themselves, to their fellow man and to their environment. It seeks to build a contrasting educational arena in response to today’s overvalued emphasis on the intellect, which can often lead to such problems as lack of sensory expression, loneliness, rebellion, violence and danger of addiction.

WAKITA’s does not aim, though, to create a utopian environment sealed off from the rest of the world, It seeks instead to offer city kids a slice of Nature, enabling them sow the seeds which will later allow them to grow into strong, confident, responsible, happy and compassionate adults.

1.2 OBJECTIVE

WAKITA uses education in the outdoors as well as the concept of intergenerative education in obtaining these goals. It places special value on creative expression and individual learning.

Its philosophy draws from the insights of developmental psychology as well as the developmental stages that naturally unfold in a child, assisting each child in building a solid basis for a successful development. It knows that a big house needs a strong foundation.

Education in the Outdoors: The woods offer, like no other environment, an array of developmental possibilities at all levels. It stimulates a holistic, harmonious and healthy development.

Intergenerative Pädagogik – In an age of the nuclear family, and a time of increasing isolation and social marginalization, generational-spanning work is gaining increased value.

Children attending **WAKITA** have the opportunity to develop **social skills** as they interact with differing people and their unique characteristics as they learn to find common ground. Through their interaction with residents at a home for vision-impaired and blind elderly people, they can learn compassion and tolerance.

Creativity Studio: **WAKITA** places special value on creative construction and individual learning. An atmosphere is created that is both stimulating and safe, one in which children are enabled to take their own initiative in the learning process, in line with their own unique tempo and interests.

2. ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

2.1 SPONSORSHIP

A Parent's Associations has been established under the name **WAKITA**. Its goal is to operate a day care and child care education center. It is a self-supporting, non-profit organization.

The active members are made up of the parents of the **WAKITA** day care children; the distant members are comprised of any persons interested in the philosophy of day care in the outdoors.

Members receive a quarterly **WAKITA** news letter (full of current events at **WAKITA** as well as lots of helpful tips). Members also receive invitations to the center's events. Membership is made active through the payment of an annual association fee.

2.2 OPERATING APPROVAL

An operating license from the Social Department of the City of Zurich was issued on February 5, 2004, valid through the end of April 2008.

Responsible Supervisor: Social Services Department of the City of Zurich
Department Secretary / Day Care Supervision
8036 Zürich

WAKITA is member of the Swiss Association of Daycare Centers and has the recognition as an organization capable of training apprentices.

2.3 FUNDING

WAKITA is a non-profit organization. Its goal is to establish a rate-system which enables families with low incomes the chance to participate as well. In line with the philosophy of outdoors education, **WAKITA** is economizing. Nothing is purchased which is not absolutely necessary, and whenever possible, taken from its own resources (for example, work force).

WAKITA when fully-operated, is self-supporting. It provides a few subsidized spaces provided by the City of Zurich. Furthermore **WAKITA** offers cost-reduced spaces, financed through benefactors.

3. OPERATION

3.1 OPENING HOURS AND VACATIONS

Days: Monday through Friday

Opening Hours: 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Day Care Program: 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Full Day Care: 7:00/8:30 a.m. – 5:00/6:00 p.m.

Morning in the Woods: 7:00/8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Afternoons: 2:00/2:30 p.m. – 5:00/6:00 p.m.

Vacation days and holidays correspond to the city of Zurich. **WAKITA** is closed between Christmas and New Year as well as 2 weeks during the summer (3rd and 4th week of the official summer vacation for primary schools in Zurich). Individually planned vacation and holiday absences of attending children cannot be reimbursed.

3.2 DAY CARE SPACES

WAKITA offers a mixed-age group and can take up to 12 – 15 children. In the afternoons, the group is limited to 12 children (due to space constrictions).

Children from age 2 through entry into primary school may apply. Two spaces are reserved for children younger than age 3. For children at kindergarten age, a minimum of 4 -6 spaces are reserved.

3.3 DAILY PROGRAM

- from 7:00 a.m. Drop Off at the Kita
- 8:30 a.m. Departure to the Woods
- 9:15 a.m. Morning circle (edge of the woods), Walk into Woods, Free Play
- 10:00 a.m. Morning Snack
- 10:30 a.m. Organized Activity (voluntary) or Free Play
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch around Campfire
- 12:45 p.m. Storytelling (for kindergarten children separate choice)
- 1:15 p.m. Departure, Closing Circle (edge of woods)
- 2:00 p.m. Arrival at Kita (wash-up, tick check, possibility to pick up kids)
- 2:30 p.m. Afternoon Rest (nap or quiet activity)
- 3:30 p.m. Afternoon Snack
- 4:00 p.m. Free Play, Creativ Constructing and Intergenerative Activities
- from 5:00 p.m. Pick-Up
- 6:00 p.m. Closing

3.4 SAFETY AND HYGIENE

Children are checked on a regular basis to make sure their hygiene meets legal requirements.

A large, well-educated staff provide the necessary support system out in the woods. All staff members are certified in first-aid and continue to take additional courses. Parents are informed in detail about the dangers and necessary measures to be taken.

Included in the safety measures are the clothing requirements, a first aid kit, a fire blanket, a cell phone with a list of emergency numbers and emergency information for the children. Rules exist regarding interaction in the woods: plants, fruits, touching dead animals, rules around campfire, using tools safely, etc. Children are also checked for ticks, with the prior consent of parents, if they remain until evening. If anything is found, this is noted and parents are informed.

3.5 SPECIAL

3.5.1 MEALS

WAKITA emphasizes a healthy, balanced diet and informs parents as needed. Meals are organized by WAKITA and are included in the monthly dues. Children carry their beverages in their backpacks. No sweets may be brought to the Kita (among other obvious reasons, to keep wasps away).

3.5.2 GEAR

Attending children need the following necessary clothing/gear: long pants, headdress (a cap in the winter, in sun protection in the summer), sturdy shoes, rain pants and jacket, hiking shoes, lined, water-proof winter shoes as well as 2 pairs of gloves. Depending on the weather, they might also need leggings, t-shirts and a sweater to put on/take off in layers.

In the backpack, they should have their beverage in a thermos, rainwear and depending on the season, a sweater. Children should be able to fasten their backpack on their own. A “Brustgurt” is recommended - a belt to secure the backpack around the chest to keep it from slipping off.

3.5.3 PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

Parental participation is welcome and appreciated. Participation fosters good relations while also saving costs. Parents can help in the following ways as they see possible:

- Volunteering at Kita activities (building the “Waldsofa”, collecting wood, taking care of supplies, Kita cleaning sprints).
- Volunteering at public events like the Waldfest or events in the city.
- Participation and involvement in decision-making process at the General Assemblies.

WAKITA places special value on good communication between parents and the Kita. It also wishes to offer parents a place to meet up with others sharing similar beliefs, enabling them to exchange ideas and thoughts. Interaction among parents can take place in the following ways:

- Regular family outings in the woods.
- Parent’s visits, which are welcomed when notified in advance.

An accurate and reliable style of informing is important. For Parent-Staff meetings, the Kita Staff and Group Leaders are available. Generally, bi-annual Parent-Staff meetings take place in order to assess the current situation and to formulate goals.

3.6 STAFF

WAKITA employees are well-educated, motivated people. This is evident in its progressive salary regulation using up-to-date wages which surpass the recommendations of the Swiss Association for Daycare Centers. As well, employees are supported (both financially as well as in other ways) in pursuing continued education goals.

Wages are comprised of the base salary as well as the experience salary (years in the position, and years in other areas of experience).

The exchange between employees is important. A team meeting is held daily to discuss organizational issues, exchange observations made watching the children and to discuss educational questions. There is also the possibility for supervision.

Communication lines at **WAKITA** are open and transparent. All parties have the possibility to become informed as well as offer suggestions. Duties and responsibilities are clearly delineated.

3.7 RATES

Rates are based on the full costs. A rate scale according to income is planned to be put into effect enabling children from families with low incomes the opportunity to attend **WAKITA**.

WAKITA is happy to offer a few subsidized spaces provided by the City of Zurich. Furthermore, there are some cost-reduced spaces available.

WAKITA uses its rate policies to reach an optimal group:

- * The more frequent the attendance, the cheaper the daily fee
- * Choice of 3 programs: Full Day / Day in the Woods / Afternoons Only

Monthly Fees (including meals)

	Full Day	Morning in the Woods	Afternoons
1 day/week	460.-	275.-	275.-
2 days/week	812.-	520.-	520.-
3 days/week	1'100.-	725.-	725.-
4 days/week	1'364.-	900.-	900.-
5 days/week	1'612.-	1'050.-	1'050.-

(These contributions are based on the full costs calculation in the starting phase. Ask a Kita Staff Member for a current list.)

3.8 ADMISSION PROCEDURES

Interested parents will be invited for a trial visit, receiving a registration form with registration regulations and the center's operational policies. The educational concepts can be observed in the Kita environment itself.

Once the registration has been received, a confirmation along with a proposed likely starting date as well as a detailed handout for parents comprehensively covering regulations regarding the introductory period, illnesses, cancellations, etc., will be prepared and sent to the interested parents. The contract will then be finalized no later than 1 month before the starting date. The contract is binding.