

**Potsdam University of Applied Sciences, Department of
Social Work
Degree course in Childhood Education (BA)**

Tasks and Objectives of the Practical Training Phases

Dear Sir/Madam,

One focus of the degree course in Childhood Education is the combination of theory and practice, i.e. lectures where students are taught the content and methodology of their future profession are accompanied by two practical training periods of several weeks (6 weeks and 4 weeks) each, as well as regular job shadowing and work experience days. These practical training phases are complemented by in-depth seminars and workshops held by the university.

The aim of the practical training phases is for students to gain a comprehensive and critical understanding of the everyday institutional experience of children between the ages of 0 and 12, namely in day-care centres, crèches, day nurseries, kindergartens and primary schools as well as in family centres. Youth welfare institutions, associations, administrative authorities and foundations are also interesting areas for students to gain practical experience.

An important objective of the combination of theory and practice is for students to learn about children's developmental and educational processes and about cooperation with adults, i.e. with parents and colleagues in various professional fields. This knowledge should be combined with critical examination by the student of his or her own educational experiences so that acquired attitudes and professional educational practice may be adjusted accordingly. In order to develop the capacity for self-examination and empathy in dealing with children, appropriate methods are required for the observation and interpretation of children's behaviour and for the documentation of children's learning and education processes. Another prerequisite is a working knowledge of particular areas of education such as language, communication and writing; body, exercise and health; music, arts and crafts; mathematics and science; and social life, along with their practical applications.

Another focus of the practical training is the cooperation with colleagues and families. The practical training periods aim to promote the sharing of information and experiences between students, representatives of the institutions, and families.

Students should gain skills and experience in the following areas during the course of their practical training:

- Systematic observation of individual children and groups of children using various methods
- Methods for the documentation of children's education and developmental processes
- Systematic examination of their own attitudes and behaviour

- Ability to relate observed practical situations to theoretical knowledge and vice versa
- Knowledge of the institution in question and its responsibilities, procedures and particular features
- Integration into the team at the institution and assumption of responsibilities in consultation with colleagues
- Preparing and carrying out learning modules for individual children and groups of children
- Acquisition and reappraisal of knowledge of different areas of education such as language(s), exercise, arts and crafts, mathematics, etc., or of primary school subjects
- Reflection, together with colleagues and parents, on the learning modules prepared by the student
- Experience of project planning involving children
- Experience of cooperation with parents and families
- Communication techniques and conflict management skills
- Formation of questions arising from practice, to be looked at during the subsequent course of studies

The several-week-long period of practical training and the regular job shadowing and work experience days lead to a close partnership between students and the place of work, i.e. children, colleagues and parents. This should ideally constitute a reciprocal learning and teaching relationship in which those involved can benefit from each other's knowledge and experience. To encourage this dialogue, we offer regular opportunities for students, lecturers and representatives of the institutions to meet at the Potsdam University of Applied Sciences. You are also welcome to approach us at any time with any questions and concerns, and we look forward to a meaningful exchange. We wish everyone involved every success for their work together during the practical training periods!

Yours faithfully

Your lecturers and tutors at the

Potsdam University of Applied Sciences, degree course in Childhood Education

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