in a group the special pedagogue is only provided on a part-time basis (mobile special pedagogue).

Integration - opportunity and responsibility

In keeping with a future-oriented education und Erzie- hung in Kinderbetreuungseinrichtungen stellt die soziale Integration von Kindern mit erhöhtem Förderbedarf einer grundlegenden Aufgabe an die Gesellschaft dar. „Kinder mit erhöhtem Förderbedarf können sich im Spiel mit Gleichaltrigen sozial und emotional ent- wickeln. Aber auch nicht beeinträchtigte Kinder lernen von Kindern mit erhöhtem Förderbedarf und gewinnen so ein hohes Maß an sozialer Kompetenz."

in child-care facilities, social integration represents a basic responsibility towards society. Children with special educational needs can develop socially and emotionally when playing with children of the same age. Children who have no special educational needs can also learn from children who do, thus greatly increasing their social competence. While every effort is made to support children with special educational needs, absolute priority is given to social integration. Therefore smaller groups are generally preferable. Even though the size for integration groups is limited, it does present more of a challenge for the group. For this reason, the general conditions of the facility should be clarified before a child is admitted.

These conditions include:

- personnel situation
- premises, taking into consideration the nature of the child’s disability
- number of groups and group sizes
- ocation and accessibility. Especially children with disabilities should not have to commute. All children should be in a local facility.

Focus on the child

Social Integration means integrating or reintegrating all children, irrespective of their individual stage of develop- lopment, type and degree of their disability. The child should always be at the centre of the educational work and special attention should be paid to the next step in their development. Special pedagogical support means that the disability in one or more development stages cannot be ignored, but that some children require special help. This disability is only a part of the entire personality and should never lead to social segregation. Integration makes social processes possible, in which each child can play a part according to its possibilities. A child is primarily a child – and not the bearer of a defect.

One of the basic principles of integration is non-selectivity and the preservation of every person’s right to education. Here the needs of the child must be the basic measure. Any major change in the overall development of a child – whether with or without disability – will usually consist in small steps. This is ultimately a question of the way adults look at a child’s development. Social integration also involves learning from one another – adults from children, older from younger children, those with disabilities from those without and vice versa.

Social Integration in practice

- The special kindergarten pedagogue in an integration group
  When three or four children with disabilities are integrated into a group, the special kindergarten pedagogue and the regular pedagogue in charge of the group work closely together.
- Mobile special kindergarten pedagogue – individual integration
  A special kindergarten pedagogue is in charge of one or two children with special educational needs in groups at several child-care facilities, and ensures the integration of children close to their homes. The special kindergarten pedagogue usually comes to each group for one or two mornings or afternoons a week and is always in close contact with the pedagogue in charge of the group.
- Pedagogues in an integration group or individual integration
  When there is a shortage of trained special kindergarten pedagogues, the provincial government may authorise regular kindergarten pedagogues or qualified primary-school teachers to support, ensure and accompany social integration. Their area of responsibility is similar to that of a special kindergarten pedagogue.
- Caregivers for children with disabilities

Social learning takes priority over factual learning and practising isolated skills. Individual support and therapy are not within the competence of the pedagogue for social integration, who has to differentiate between the individual children and their family circumstances.

Each child should be seen primarily from the point of view of its skills, strengths and characteristics

Hans Eberwein, a well-known remedial teacher and author of a book on the coexistence within society of disabled and non-disabled people, says: "Integration is not the children’s problem, but rather a problem of our educational and political thinking, our awareness, our views and our image of humanity."
Application must be made for caregivers for children with disabilities, to assist with care for those children.

Integration calls for collaboration

- Collaboration with trained staff at child-care facilities
  Collaboration with special kindergarten pedagogues reinforces and expands the existing educational and integrative capacity of a team. There are various possibilities for collaboration, depending on the social environment and organisation of a child-care facility. The most important role of the special kindergarten pedagogue is to support the social integration of children with special educational needs into a group.

- Collaboration between child-care facilities – parent – administrative authorities
  The now increasingly necessary collaboration between parents, administrative authorities, pedagogues, psychologists and therapists is an integrative learning process in itself.

Basic principle: Social integration

Social integration also takes into consideration the families of children with special educational needs and is therefore a necessary measure for social acceptance and the reduction of prejudices and their consequences. All children should have the opportunity of a place in a child-care facility close to their home.

Information for parents and children in the Salzburg education network: www.elterninfo.salzburg.at

From this point of view, social integration allows collaboration both in and outside the child-care facility, in all aspects of the child’s social environment.

Integration in after-school clubs and schoolchildren groups as well as school children in mixed-age groups

For children of school age, no psychological statement by the family department is necessary; reference will be made to the official notification from the district school board.

Here, too, each child with special educational needs counts as double and the admission limit is four. A special educator or special school teacher must be in attendance, at least periodically, and with three or more children with special educational needs, then daily at peak times (after lunch, especially for study assistance and free-time activities until about 4 or 5 p.m.).

If there is not enough qualified staff available, other suitable specialists may be authorised to carry out such tasks.

For requests for integration into a child-care facility please contact Alexandra Rückl, consultant for integration at the kindergarten department of the Province of Salzburg, telephone: 0662/8042-2319.

Information on kindergartens, after-school clubs, créches, mixed-age groups and schoolchildren groups in the Province of Salzburg can be found at: www.salzburg.gv.at/kinderbetreuung

Information for parents and children in the Salzburg education network: www.elterninfo.salzburg.at