



OVERVIEW OF THE ST. MARTIN SCHOOLCENTER'S MENTAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

STUDENTS

The St. Martin school educates students from age 6 to 21 with special education needs, for instance with mental disabilities. Classes have students with severe disabilities as well as others with more minor learning disabilities. In each age group there are students with very diverse abilities, preferences and needs.

SCHOOL AND DAY CARE

St. Martin school is a private school. The governing body is the "Lebenshilfe Kitzingen e.V." a non-profit organization. The St. Martin school is organized as an integrated school or school preparatory facility ("Schulvorbereitende Einrichtung - SVE") and special education day care center.

This concept makes it possible to teach and train through the day according to a cohesive pedagogical concept. The school employs special education teachers, master trades people, home economics teachers, educators and pediatric nursing staff. In addition to the special education teachers, physical therapy and speech therapy are also possible in the day care part. This is supplemented by social workers, and psychological and medical services.

On the vocational level, we offer preparation for life as an adult. Here we also fulfill the statutory mandates for vocational school training. Students with mental disabilities in other schools can also be served through our mobile special education service ("Mobiler Sonderpädagogischer Dienst - MSD").

Children of toddler and pre-school age are served through the mobile special education aids ("Mobile Sonderpädagogische Hilfen - msH") in co-operation with the early childhood education office. In the school preparatory facility, children of pre-school age, who are handicapped or in danger of developing a disability, can be supported in a targeted way until they reach school age.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CENTER'S MENTAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Goals

The centers with mental development program are regular schools.

The curriculum is oriented towards basic life situations and vocational and avocational pursuits. Students are confronted with learning in real life situations and environments which is of special importance to them.

A major purpose of the school is to empower the students to be able to conduct activities of daily life with a minimum of outside help and gain independence in caring for themselves.

In addition to these practically oriented goals, regular basic education is

offered just as in regular schools, as well as musical and creative arts explorations.

The goal of all endeavors is to enable students to be self-directed, socially integrated, and to be able to participate in society in a normal way on equal footing with other members of society.

Target Group

The target group of the Center are students with disabilities in their mental development whose support in general schools cannot be sufficiently guaranteed: Frequently the mental disabilities go hand-in-hand with physical, psychological or social disabilities. Children with severe multiple disabilities are also among the target group of the school.

Admission

In general, counseling about the child's educational path already takes place when a child attends an early childhood education facility or school preparatory facility (SVE). For admission to the St. Martin school, a special education expert opinion must be obtained, which is the result of a comprehensive diagnosis.

A child with special education needs can also be admitted in a regular school, if he/she can participate actively in class. The Center then offers additional support through its mobile special education service (MSD).

Tasks

Education and instruction in the Center comprises almost all developmental areas with special emphasis on practical mastery of everyday life. The special education support starts with assessment of the individual circumstances of the child with the goal of achieving the maximum attainable in individual abilities. If necessary, the child will receive nursing care, which is frequently the starting point and content of pedagogical support for severely physically handicapped students.

Methods

The starting point is a stimulating educational and learning environment. The educational goals are presented in general curricula (curriculum to support mental development) and are translated into individual curricula, which are developed for each child. Content and goals are modified depending on individual learning abilities and the special education needs. This happens in close interdisciplinary co-operation. The form of instruction is very flexible, whereby the emphasis depends on the individual needs.

Equal importance is given to the teaching of proper behavior, movement, perception, communication skills, critical thinking and social competencies. The maxim "learning with all senses" is particularly emphasized.

The Center's mental development program aspires to an ongoing intensive cooperation with other institutions (early childhood education, workshops for disabled people, educational institutions for the handicapped) as well as speech therapists, physical therapists and other therapeutic specialties. The school sees itself as part of a network of education and support. A close partnership with the parents has a particularly high degree of importance. Openness to the outside world and cooperation with regular schools are important steps to socially integrate disabled children and youth.

School Structure

The Center's mental development program is divided into three tiers: The elementary school level (grade 1-4), the middle school level (grade 5-9), and the vocational school level (grade 10-12).

The vocational school level serves to prepare the students for work life as well as other areas of adult life, like living independently, partnership and recreation. The statutory requirements for a vocational school are fulfilled. Every student advances through these levels regardless of the nature and severity of their individual disability.

The average number of students per class is 10. The internal organization of each class is flexibly adapted to the respective requirements of the learners. It is for example possible to combine different ages and levels or provide individual attention for students, depending upon the curriculum and student abilities.

The mobile special education service (MSD) cares for students with mental development needs, who are in other schools, for example regular elementary schools. Children of pre-school age with disabilities, or those in danger of becoming disabled, are provided targeted support until school age.

Children of toddler and pre-school age can be supported through the mobile special education aids (msH) in cooperation with the early childhood education agency.

Graduation

The basic education of the students is considered finished upon completion of the vocational school level. Students receive a diploma from the Center. Upon graduation most students accept a job in a workshop for the handicapped. It is rarely possible to secure jobs in the open marketplace, the so-called "primary job market". St. Martin school cooperates closely with the Don Bosco special education vocational school in Wuerzburg, where more advanced students can receive partial accreditation in some occupational fields.