

Focus on IFA's work

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ErgoKita: results of the project evaluation

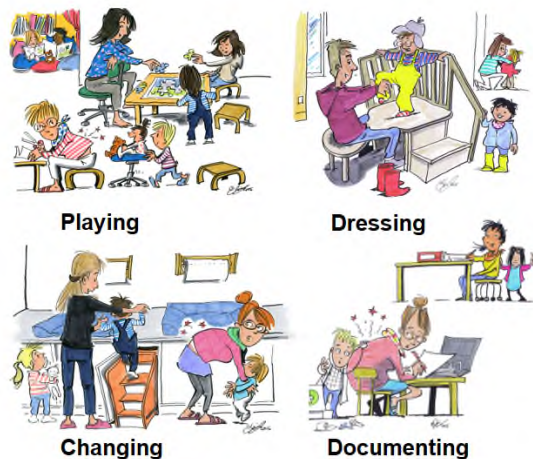
Problem

The ErgoKita intervention study had comprehensively analysed the current physical and mental stress situation in children's daycare centres. The results of these analyses were used to determine both circumstantial preventive measures (such as the use of ergonomic furniture) and behavioural preventive measures (such as ergonomics training for childcare professionals). The measures were implemented in six daycare centres and their stress-reducing effect studied in detail. At the project's conclusion in 2014, the results showed that the measures had been successful and had reduced the stress on the musculoskeletal system during day-to-day work.

Whether the effect of the ergonomic intervention would also be maintained in the longer term was still unclear.

Activities

The intention in 2016 was therefore to investigate whether the new furniture was still in regular use and considered beneficial three years after the intervention, and whether the intervention had led to lasting changes in the attitudes and behaviour of the childcare staff.



Examples of desired behavioural changes
Image: Michael Hüter

The evaluation included an on-site visit by the responsible labour inspector and structured interviews in all six daycare centres. An IFA employee interviewed childcare professionals and managers who had already been working in the daycare centre before the measures were implemented. The questionnaire on which the interviews were based was identical for all daycare centres, with the exception of the section concerning the furniture used in the centres. The structure of the questionnaire was based on Kirkpatrick's four-level model and McGuire's information processing model.

38 childcare professionals (eleven of whom had management functions) took part in the evaluation.

Results and use

Feedback on use of the furniture with enhanced ergonomics was positive: the different types of chairs for the childcare professionals, the changing table with pull-out steps, the desks and desk-chair combinations on wheels and the floor chair were rated by the majority of those questioned as being useful or very useful, and were still being used regularly. Only the kneeling cushion was rated by most of the childcare professionals as having no benefit.

76.3% of the 38 childcare professionals strongly agreed and 18.4% somewhat agreed that the measures taken in ErgoKita had raised their awareness of musculoskeletal stresses in their everyday work. 73.7% strongly agreed and 15.8% somewhat agreed that the measures taken had deepened their knowledge of the health-promoting effect of ergonomic behaviour at their workplace.

The childcare professionals had heightened their awareness for their own health. They had observed that measures for interaction with the children at eye level can be achieved to some extent by the children themselves, for example by means of platforms onto which the children climb to be dressed, or by individual tables at adult height in combination with high chairs for the children. The childcare professionals expect the bodies responsible for the daycare facilities to be more proactive in protecting their health. Besides furniture with enhanced ergonomics, the childcare professionals consider regularly repeated ergonomics training important for the overcoming of old patterns of behaviour and for making new colleagues aware of ergonomic behaviour patterns. 64.9% agreed strongly and 24.3% agreed somewhat that their behaviour had been more ergonomic (n = 37) since the measures to reduce musculoskeletal stress at their workplaces had been introduced.

56.8% of the childcare professionals strongly agreed and 40.5% somewhat agreed that they were satisfied with the measures implemented overall in the ErgoKita project (n = 37). 81.8% of the managers rated the overall benefit of the ErgoKita project to their facility as very high, the remaining 18.2% as high – particularly with regard to motivation, job satisfaction and retention of good health among the staff, and the recognition and appreciation of the profession of childcare professional.

User group

Particularly bodies maintaining daycare centres; daycare centre managers

Further information (in German)

- Hauke, A.; Bruder, R.; Ellegast, R. P.; Hartmann, H.; Hellhammer, U.; Hundeloh, H.; Köhmstedt, B.; Schedlbauer, G.: Was bleibt nach drei Jahren Kita-Alltag? Ergebnisse der Projektevaluation „ErgoKita“. In [DGUV-Report 2/2020](#), 7. FG Ergonomie. Published by: Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung e.V. (DGUV), Berlin 2020
- Ellegast, R.: [ErgoKita – Prävention von Muskel-Skelett-Belastungen in Kindertageseinrichtungen](#). Aus der Arbeit des IFA No 0378. Published by: Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung (DGUV), Berlin 2016

Technical enquiries:

IFA, Department "Interdisciplinary Services"

Literature enquiries:

IFA, Department "Interdisciplinary Services"