

# ICDP in Germany during 2023

by Rita Crecelius, 11<sup>th</sup> of November, 2023.

For 5 years now, I have been trying to establish the ICDP programme in the field of health care for professional caregivers in Germany, particularly focusing on daycares, nurseries and institutions for people with special needs.

During this year, the ICDP approach had a better reception than before. I think this is because most of the institutions in the country seem to be facing health problems. Issues such as shortage of staff, high sickness rates and more bureaucratic duties than ever, are generating high stress levels in caregivers, and that is negatively affecting their relationships with the recipients of their care. Consequently, children are showing more behavioural problems. The rates of depression, panic symptoms and suicide among children are on the increase. There is a growing awareness, that children's health and wellbeing depend on the resilience of their caregivers, a notion that is also at the core of ICDP intervention: to strengthen caregivers experiencing difficulties.

Here is a summary of my ICDP activities in 2023:

## **ICDP in daycares which had already been involved in ICDP training:**

1. In the St. Thomas daycare in Hildesheim, which is the first daycare where I trained staff members in ICDP, I conducted a refresher programme to strengthen their application of the ICDP relational approach. They are always very grateful for staying in touch with the ICDP wisdom. Together, we had a wonderful start in 2023, we made a circle of appreciation for keeping children safe, secure, soothed and seen (D. Siegel) in difficult times.

2. In the Kinderhaus FrechDaxe in Braunschweig, (a daycare of Impuls Soziales Management), the training of 50 FrechDaxe staff members, started in February, albeit with a small delay due to financial problems. This was the training of the first of five teams, and by the end of August two more teams followed, and the remaining two teams will be starting their training in ICDP in January 2024. Over a period of 5 sessions, each team is given the opportunity to practice their skills in video analysis and drawing interaction profiles. After this phase of instruction, the teams should be able to supervise each other in reflecting on their daily interactions from the point of view of the 8 ICDP guidelines. All daycare workers, who had done the training in 2021, reported that they were happy to be back in the ICDP world. They said that ICDP had always accompanied them and that they still enjoy the benefit of applying the guidelines, especially when working with very young children during their adjustment phase.

## **Fostering interest in ICDP in daycares:**

Impuls Soziales Management (who run 40 daycares nationwide) and Hildesheim Church District (with 23 Daycares in the area of Hildesheim) are two daycare providers I have been working with since 2019. In both institutions, I held several day seminars to introduce their staff members to the interactive approach for reducing stress levels.

A very special event took place in the "Sternchen" daycare in Sindelfingen ([www.e-impuls.de/kitas/sternchen-sindelfingen/](http://www.e-impuls.de/kitas/sternchen-sindelfingen/)) at the beginning of 2023, where their 45 staff members

discovered the relational approach with great enthusiasm and celebrated the power of appreciation (ICDP guideline 5) for each other and for the children.

### Networking in the Lower Saxony to promote health care in early childhood institutions:

In May 2023, I conducted a workshop in collaboration with Mrs. Maasberg, from the Network for Daycare Health ([www.kogeki.de](http://www.kogeki.de)) – a Project of the State Association for Health & Academy for Social Medicine. It was attended by 50 participants (20 more were on the waiting list). In my talk, I explained the neurological reasons for practicing positive Interaction on professional levels. I received a very positive reception, which resulted in being asked to repeat the workshop on November 9th, 2023. See photos below: Mrs. Maasberg and me on the first photo; and on the second, me and the participants.



This talk opened doors for some later ICDP presentations to the institutions operating in the Lower Saxony and working in the field of early childhood education in Hannover:

- Nifbe ([www.nifbe.de](http://www.nifbe.de)), the Institute for Early Childhood Education and Development, which is groundbreaking for all day care centres in Lower Saxony. As a motto for 2024, they chose "Health and Wellbeing in the Daycare" and they invited me to introduce ICDP as a speaker at their annual conference in April 2024.

- I was also able to introduce ICDP to a leading person, a consultant for daycare work in the protestant church. In the Lower Saxony, the protestant church runs 975 daycares with about 10.000 employees and serving 68.900 children.
- I established contact with The Agency for Adult and Further Education (AEWB), ([www.aewb-nds.de](http://www.aewb-nds.de)). AEWB is the central service provider of adult education in the Lower Saxony for all recognized, publicly funded institutions and their employees. This organization operates at the interface between administration, science and practice.

All key persons involved in early childhood education in the Lower Saxony that I mentioned above, were impressed by ICDP, and I am looking forward to more cooperation with them in 2024.



### **Stress reduction through positive Interaction in the care for older people:**

In August 2023, I conducted a seminar for the municipal retirement and care centers of the city of Hannover. It was an Introduction to the ICDP training: Stress Reduction by Positive Interaction. All participants had high stress-levels, therefore, I introduced them to the neuroscientific perspective about the effects of positive Interaction in personal health-care and also to some strategies for self- and co-regulation. The Seminar received very good feedback and as a result, I was invited to participate in a project for improving the health of caregivers in the care facilities for older people of the city of Hannover, sponsored by health insurance companies. I designed a 2-day-seminar about Stress Reduction with Positive Interaction, which will be offered several times during 2024 and 2025. The participation will be mandatory for about 160 staff members. I trust, that this will raise some

good and measurable improvement in the stress-management and the relational consciousness of these caregivers.

To sum up, 2023 was a year that saw the opening of new horizons for ICDP in Germany, and I am very grateful for the mounting interest in using the relational approach to strengthen professional caregivers' health in so many care institutions in the Lower Saxony.