

Responsible childcare: further steps towards the future

Covenant on Childcare Quality

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1. Introduction

The quality of childcare in the Netherlands should be properly arranged. This necessity applies first of all to children and their carers; after all, this involves the most important development phase in a child's life. In addition, proper rules will also benefit the providers of childcare: they create clarity and promote fair competition. However, rules should also be flexible enough to enable the provider to run a successful business. Finally, proper quality rules serve a major social interest, as the childcare sector has become an indispensable element of our society.

For these reasons, providers and users of childcare services have together drawn up a number of nationwide quality requirements for childcare facilities in the Netherlands. The *Maatschappelijk Ondernemers Groep* (employers' organisation of the welfare, youth care and childcare sectors), the *Branchevereniging ondernemers in de kinderopvang* (sector organisation for entrepreneurs providing childcare services) and *BOinK belangenvereniging van ouders in de kinderopvang* (interest group representing parents using childcare services) have laid down these arrangements in this Covenant. The Covenant took effect on 1 January 2005 and applies for an indefinite period. It will be evaluated at regular intervals and adjusted on the basis of these evaluations.

The arrangements are basic quality requirements only; individual providers are free to take them further. The central question in the arrangements is: How do we together, as a sector, interpret responsible childcare? In this context, the focus is on the child's opportunities for development, health and safety. The Covenant regulates matters such as the number of children per carer, housing, size of the core group, parent participation, health, safety and provision of information to parents. In this way, the childcare sector is also marking out its social role in the overall youth policy.

This is a special covenant. The sector is expressly assuming responsibility for quality, now that the Childcare Provisions Act (*Wet kinderopvang*) no longer contains detailed government regulations in this respect. The parties regard this Covenant as the foundation for the further improvements in childcare that are to be gradually achieved between them during the coming years – hence the subtitle 'Further steps towards the future'. The Covenant provides the parties with a basis for proper supervision in the sector.

Existing quality instruments (such as certification) and, where necessary, new quality instruments (such as a comparison of provider performance) play a key role in the improvements. This will give parents and supervisors a better view of the actual quality of the childcare services. In short, the Covenant will help the childcare sector develop into a fully-fledged industry that offers quality and is attractive to (new) providers by presenting them with a level playing field.

2. Background and reason for establishing the Covenant

The childcare sector has grown spectacularly in the last 15 years: from 20,000 places in 1988 to more than 200,000 places at childcare centres and childminders' homes at the end of 2005. Over 300,000 children make use of these provisions.

On 1 January 2005, the Childcare Provisions Act entered into force. This Act lays down conditions for childcare and regulates the quality in general terms. Section 49(1)

stipulates that childcare centres should offer 'responsible childcare'. This means that childcare should make a contribution to the child's successful and healthy development in a safe and healthy environment. A comparable standard applies in respect of childminding agencies. The government has omitted to provide more detailed implementing rules. The Minister of Social Affairs and Employment has asked the sector to draw up its own basic quality requirements which may serve as the basis for the supervision of childcare by the Municipal Health Services.

Obviously, the requirements of other laws and regulations¹ and the arrangements laid down in collective bargaining agreements (CAOs) will continue to apply in addition to the Covenant. Providers associated with the *Branchevereniging ondernemers in de kinderopvang* fall under the CAO BKN (CAO for the Dutch Childcare Sector), while providers associated with the *MOgroep Kinderopvang* fall under the CAO Kinderopvang (CAO for the Childcare Sector). Having been declared compulsorily applicable, the latter CAO also applies to providers who are associated with neither of the aforementioned sector organisations.

Providers of childcare services should be listed in the municipal register.

3. Arrangements on quality aspects

This section sets out the common quality requirements for day care, out-of-school care (OSC) and childminding. On certain points, requirements obviously differ for day care and OSC respectively; this will be indicated separately. The specific quality requirements for childminding services are described in a separate section.

Pedagogical policy plan

The key factor in childcare is the way in which children are treated. For this reason, every provider should have a pedagogical policy plan in respect of day care, out-of-school care and childminding. The pedagogical policy plan is an important criterion for parents. Among other things, it addresses the four basic pedagogical objectives referred to in the Explanatory Memorandum of the Childcare Provisions Act. These four basic pedagogical objectives concern emotional safety, social competence, personal competence and the transfer of standards and values.

The provider, in consultation with the parents' committee, works out these basic objectives in more detail in the pedagogical policy plan and acts in accordance with this plan in the daily childcare practice. The parents' committee is also involved in the updating of the pedagogical policy plan.

Specific details for day care and OSC

The pedagogical policy plan also defines:

- the working method, the maximum size and age structure of the core group;
- the games and activities for which children will leave their core group;
- how professional staff will be assisted by other adults in their activities with children;
- how stand-in duty² is arranged on occasions where only one pedagogical staff member is present.

The policy plan sets out the views on handling children that are typical for that particular childcare centre. It contains a description of the opportunities for children to develop

¹ Apart from the Childcare Provisions Act, these laws and regulations include: the Working Conditions Act (*Arbeidsomstandighedenwet*), the Buildings Decree (*Bouwbesluit*), the Commodities Act (*Warenwet*), the Infectious Diseases Act (*Infectieziektenwet*), the Public Health (Preventive Measures) Act (*Wet Collectieve Preventie Volksgezondheid*) and the Clients' Right of Complaint (Care Sector) Act (*Wet klachtrecht cliënten zorgsector*).

² A stand-in is an adult with whom the provider has demonstrably agreed that he or she will be called upon in the event of an emergency.

their personal and social competences, of the way in which the children's emotional safety is guaranteed and the manner in which standards and values are transferred to children.

In addition, the pedagogical policy plan contains a description of the working method and of the maximum size and age structure of the core groups, and describes the games and activities which children can play and perform outside the core group. The pedagogical policy plan also states in what manner professional staff will be assisted in their work by other adults.

This description will give parents a clear picture of the way in which the childcare centre operates. The provider and the persons working for a childcare centre will apply the pedagogical policy plan in their daily work.

Number of children per pedagogical staff member

Day care

There should be clear rules about the maximum number of children looked after by one pedagogical staff member; this involves the number of children attending simultaneously. Children and parents also have to know to which core group the child belongs and which pedagogical staff members are assigned to which group. At the same time, the provider needs a certain degree of flexibility in order to operate successfully. This is also important for the children themselves. An *open-door policy* will therefore be possible where this can be realised in a responsible manner. In that situation, children will use various areas and leave their core group. The pedagogical policy will specify the situations where this is the case.

Day care: core group and carer-child ratio

The basic assumption is: responsible childcare with fixed groups of children in their own respective areas (core groups), with the option of an *open-door policy*.

It is a fact that different children attend on different days of the week, and that pedagogical staff members attached to the groups work part-time. The parties believe that core groups are a sound basis for a child's social and emotional development.

Working with core groups is the basic premise, with due regard for the possibilities of an open-door policy.

The parties have agreed the following in this respect:³

- Parents and children should receive clear information about the core group to which the child belongs and which pedagogical staff members are – in principle – attached to which group on which days of the week (this applies to the structural roster, subject to illness, leave and holidays).⁴
- A child will be assigned three basic carers.⁵ At least one of these pedagogical staff members should be looking after the child's group on any day of the week (this applies to the structural roster, subject to illness, leave and holidays). These pedagogical staff members will also be the parents' point of contact.
- During the week, a child will use no more than two different basic areas,⁶ except on the occasion of special activities described in the pedagogical policy plan.
- The following rules apply to day care:
one pedagogical staff member for every four attending children under the age of 1;
one pedagogical staff member for every five attending children aged between 1 and 2;

³ The first three arrangements do not apply to children making use of a flexible scheme, where these children attend on different days each week.

⁴ For example, every Monday a child will be in the same group of children with the same pedagogical staff members.

⁵ This means that one of these three pedagogical staff members will be on duty on the days when the child attends. Three basic carers are assigned in situations where the care is provided in groups with two pedagogical staff members attending simultaneously. If the care is provided in larger groups with three pedagogical staff members attending simultaneously, a child will be assigned a maximum of four basic carers.

⁶ A basic area is the area in which the child spends the greater part of the day.

one pedagogical staff member for every six attending children aged between 2 and 3; one pedagogical staff member for every eight attending children aged between 3 and 4.

If a group contains children of different ages, an average figure should be calculated in order to determine the number of children per pedagogical staff member, in accordance with the schedule attached as Appendix 1.

- The day care core group should include no more than 12 children if the children are aged 0-1 and no more than 16 children if the children are aged 0-4 (of which no more than eight children are under a year old).
- The children may leave the core group for certain activities; on those occasions, the maximum size of the core group will be temporarily abandoned. The number of children per pedagogical staff member will remain in force however, applied to the total number of children present at the location. The pedagogical staff members on duty at the location should perform tasks directly related to the children.
- To ensure flexibility in the organisation, it is possible in day care services that, for a maximum (non-consecutive) period of three hours a day, fewer professionals are on duty than is required according to the carer-child ratio, but never fewer than half of the required number of pedagogical staff members. If in such a situation only one pedagogical staff member is on duty at the childcare centre, at least one other adult should be at the childcare centre as a stand-in to provide assistance. Deviations from the required carer-child ratio are not permitted between 9.30 and 12.30 hours and between 15.00 and 16.30 hours. Before 9.30 hours and after 16.30 hours, the deviation from the carer-child ratio should not last longer than an uninterrupted period of 1.5 hours, while during the lunch period (between 12.30 and 15.00 hours) the deviation should not last longer than an uninterrupted period of two hours. All this with a maximum of three hours per day.

Out-of-school care

There should be clear rules about the maximum number of children looked after by one pedagogical staff member; this involves the number of children attending simultaneously. Children and parents also have to know to which base group the child belongs and which pedagogical staff members are assigned to which group. At the same time, the provider needs a certain degree of flexibility in order to operate successfully. This is also important for the children themselves. An *open-door policy* will therefore be possible where this can be realised in a responsible manner. In that situation, children will use various areas and leave their base group. The pedagogical policy will specify the situations where this is the case.

Out-of-school care: base group and carer-child ratio

The basic assumption is: responsible out-of-school care with fixed groups of children (base groups), with the option of an *open-door policy*. Children make use of different areas, leave their group area or base group and sometimes attend an outdoor activity straight from school without first starting up in their base group or group area.

The parties have agreed the following in this respect:

- In out-of-school care, there should be one pedagogical staff member for every ten (attending) children.
- If the base group includes children in the 4-8 age bracket, the size of the core group should be limited to a maximum of 20 children. In the carer-child ratio for base groups including only children in the 8-12 age bracket, the third carer may be an additional adult instead of a professional (for example, 30 children looked after by two pedagogical staff members and an additional adult, with the latter providing assistance in the primary process). If activities involve groups of more than 30 children, the operator's pedagogical policy plan should pay specific attention to dealing with the base group.
- The children may leave the base group for certain activities; on those occasions, the maximum size of the base group will be temporarily abandoned. The number of

children per pedagogical staff member will remain in force, however, applied to the total number of children present at the location.⁷ The pedagogical staff members on duty at the location should perform tasks directly related to the children.

- In out-of-school care it is possible, for a maximum period of half an hour per day, that fewer pedagogical staff members are on duty than is required according to the carer-child ratio, but never fewer than half of the required number of pedagogical staff members. If in such a situation only one pedagogical staff member is on duty at the childcare centre, at least one other adult should be at the childcare centre as a stand-in to provide assistance. If the children are looked after for the whole day, the permitted deviations from the carer-child ratio are the same as those applicable to day care.

Combined groups for day care and out-of-school care

With regard to mixed day care and out-of-school care groups, the number of children per pedagogical staff member is determined on the basis of an average figure, whereby a maximum number is set for the number of children aged 0-4 in the group. A further elaboration can be found in Appendix 2.

Housing

The Childcare Provisions Act contains no detailed requirements in respect of the indoor facilities. The Covenant parties take the view that the operator of a childcare centre should provide suitably equipped play and rest areas that are in keeping with the number and ages of the children looked after. Housing is an important element of quality and is further specified in this Covenant.

The parties believe that the childcare should be provided in a safe and healthy environment with sufficient space for the number of children looked after.

Day care

- In the group area, each child should have at least 3.5 square metres of gross surface area.⁸
- There should be a separate sleeping area for babies aged between 0 and 1.5 years.
- The day-care facilities should include an adjoining, accessible, safe and age-appropriate outdoor playground with a gross surface area of around 3 to 4 square metres per child.

Out-of-school care

- In the group area, each child should have at least 3.5 square metres of gross surface area.⁹
- The out-of-school care should be provided in an accessible, fixed and suitably furnished area geared especially to after-school activities. The outdoor playground should comprise a gross surface area of around 3 to 4 square metres per child and should preferably be adjacent to the building, but may also be situated in the immediate vicinity, provided that it can be easily and safely reached.

Parent participation

Parents are actively involved in the policy of a childcare centre or a childminding agency. This also benefits the providers: in this way, they can offer their customers the best possible service. The law stipulates that a childcare centre or childminding agency should have a parents' committee. The parties take the view that the provider should make demonstrable efforts to promote the establishment of a parents' committee. The form

⁷ It is therefore possible in OSC that – for example – one pedagogical staff member remains inside looking after three children while two other pedagogical staff members are outside playing football with 27 children.

⁸ Other space laid out as a play area is apportioned proportionally to the group areas.

⁹ See note 8.

and consultation of the parents' committee should be in line with the company's organisational form and should be feasible and efficient for parents.

In order to give parents the opportunity to participate in decision-making, they should be well informed about the day-to-day affairs of a childcare centre or childminding agency. The parties believe that parents should be able to provide advice on aspects of important issues; not all the provider's operations fall within the area of parent participation. Providers should also be able to run a normal business. After all, what matters is to create a situation workable for all parties – providers and customers – that does justice to the parents' justifiable interests and to the providers' responsibility for conducting a successful business.

In practice, tension may arise between the parents' interests and the entrepreneur's responsibility for successful operations. The Covenant parties believe that in such situations it should be possible to refer the matter to an independent committee, which will then provide advice. The parties have taken the initiative to set up a nationwide complaints body for parents' committees.

The parties have agreed the following in this respect:

- Where possible, parent participation should be governed by nationwide arrangements made between the parties in the sector, in addition to the requirements made by law.
- The parties have drawn up model regulations for parents' committees, setting out the parents' rights and the provider's obligations. Among other things, the regulations specify the situations in which the provider should ask the parents' committee for advice.
- These regulations should be actively propagated among the members of providers' organisations and among the parents (parents' committees).
- The parties will endeavour to bring about an amendment of the statutory provisions on the organisation of parents' committees.

Safety

The provider should pursue a responsible safety policy. The Childcare Provisions Act demands on this point that childcare centres carry out a hazard identification. The parties take the view that the hazard identification should be linked to a risk assessment. The hazard identification and risk assessment should show the risks to which children are exposed, how many and what kind of accidents involving children have occurred, what measures have been or will be taken by the provider and what have been the results of these measures. This information should be publicly available to parents and staff members.

If desired, providers may base the hazard identification on a model specifically developed for that purpose. Obviously, the obligations laid down in the applicable laws and regulations remain in full force as well.

With regard to safety, the Childcare Provisions Act demands a *Certificate of Good Conduct* (CGC) in respect of employees and temporary workers engaged in the primary process, other employees working at the centres, childminding agents, childminders and operators/directors.

If the deployment is of such short duration that the application procedure lasts longer than the presence of the person concerned, requiring a CGC would be counterproductive, however.

On the other hand, the Covenant parties consider the submission of a CGC to be essential in respect of trainees who work in the primary process of childcare for more than three months. As regards these trainees, the application for a CGC should be made at the start of their first traineeship period. The same CGC can then be submitted on the occasion of any subsequent traineeship periods during their training.

Health

The provider should pursue a responsible health policy. This is part of the hazard identification required by law. The parties take the view that a risk assessment should take place as well. If desired, providers may base the hazard identification on a model specifically developed for that purpose, with due observance of existing laws and regulations.

Childminders should also provide a safe and healthy environment that satisfies the requirements of the Childcare Provisions Act. Where childminding is concerned, the part of the house where children are looked after should be free from smoke at the time when the care is provided.

Quality of staff

Staff policy and training policy are primarily the provider's responsibility. The latter should ensure that the centre employs sufficient and well-trained staff members. Children and parents have a major interest in this: it is an important quality aspect on which parents assess a childcare centre. The provider should inform the parents as completely as possible about the staff policy insofar as the parent requires this information in order to make the right choice for responsible childcare.

Child abuse reporting code

Providers of childcare at childcare centres or childminders' homes have a child abuse reporting code that clearly describes the procedure to be followed in the event of (a suspicion of) child abuse and/or sexual abuse. This suspicion may concern the child's home environment or care environment.

At national level, a model child abuse reporting code has been developed for childcare centres and childminders. A protocol for a suspicion of sexual abuse within the organisation is also available at national level. The parties propose that the national model child abuse reporting code be adopted, on the understanding that it should be possible for organisations to apply an equivalent model, provided that this model contains the elements included in the national model. The Covenant parties have listed the minimum elements which a reporting code should contain in order to be used as an adequate instrument in the event of a suspicion of child abuse; these elements are set out in Appendix 3.

4. Specific requirements for childminding services

Childminding is a special form of childcare and takes place at a childminder's or the child's parents' home address. The care is provided through the intermediary of a childminding agency on the basis of a written agreement; parents are informed in advance about the policy in respect of health, safety and handling children (pedagogical policy).

Specific details of pedagogical policy plan for childminding services

The pedagogical policy plan sets out the views on handling children that are typical for that particular childminding agency. It contains a description of the opportunities for children to develop their personal and social competences, of the way in which the children's emotional safety is guaranteed and the manner in which standards and values are transferred to children.

In addition, the pedagogical policy plan describes the composition of the group of children looked after by a childminder and the requirements which the childminding services should fulfil, including in any case the requirement that the home where childminding takes place should offer children sufficient room to play and sleep and

sufficient outdoor play facilities, geared to the number and age of the children to be looked after. This description will give parents a clear picture of the way in which the childminding agency operates. The provider and the persons working for the childminding agency will apply the pedagogical policy plan in their daily work.

Number of children per childminder

Under the Childcare Provisions Act, childminders – after consultation with the childminding agency – may look after a maximum of four children, not including their own children.

The parties have agreed the following:

- The childminding agency's pedagogical policy plan should provide clarity on the age policy. In that case, parents will know the maximum number of children (including their own) a childminder is permitted to look after, and of what age.
- If a childminding scheme falls within the Order in Council on Innovative Childcare (*AMvB innovatieve opvang*), the childminder may look after a maximum of six children other than his or her own. If a childminder looks after more than four children (excluding his or her own), clear arrangements should exist about a stand-in service. The childminding agency should record these arrangements in its pedagogical policy.
- Under an ordinary childminding scheme, no more than four of the children looked after simultaneously at any time, both other people's and the childminder's own, should be under the age of 4 (these therefore include the childminder's own children under the age of 4).

Housing aspects of childminding

The available play and sleep areas and the outdoor play facilities are part of the childminding agency's quality criteria; they are assessed in relation to the number and age of the children to be looked after.

Health and safety policy in respect of childminding

The parties take the view that the performance of a hazard identification and risk assessment is also essential with regard to childminding services.

A hazard identification and risk assessment of homes where childminding takes place should be carried out annually, detailing health and safety aspects and emergency procedures. For this purpose, the childminding agency should visit every home where care is provided at least once a year. The first hazard identification should take place before the childminder starts providing care through the childminding agency.

The health and safety hazard identification should be carried out at the home where care is provided by or in the presence of the childminding agent. The identification should be clear to parents.

Quality of childminders

Childminding agencies should draw up written criteria for the quality of the childminders. These requirements are assessed annually when the childminding agency visits the childminder. These criteria are known to the child's parents.

The Covenant parties also consider it necessary that – if the care is provided at the childminder's home – all the childminder's adult household members submit a CGC.

The parties believe that, before the start of the childminding services through the intermediary of the childminding agency, childminders should be assessed on their professionalism and their attitude towards children and parents. Suitable childminders should:

- be physically and mentally healthy
- be prepared to cooperate with the childminding agency and to attend supplementary courses/ training/meetings related to the childminding task
- respect privacy-sensitive data and not pass on information to third parties

- be open to and respect other customs, cultures, ways of life and parenting ideas
- have good communicative skills and be capable of maintaining contact and making arrangements with the parents in a professional manner
- have knowledge of child development, be favourably inclined towards pedagogical objectives and capable of putting these objectives into practice (*add: text of the law*)
- have knowledge of first aid for children (in accordance with the exit qualifications of the *Oranje Kruis*, the organisation providing first-aid training in the Netherlands)
- be capable of reflecting on their own actions
- not leave children alone or leave the supervision to others
- be available for childminding on a regular basis, for a minimum period of six months
- have a good command of the Dutch language
- be easy to contact by telephone
- have personal liability insurance / passenger insurance for use of car.

Quality of childminding agencies

The childminding agency has a supervisory, intermediary and administrative role. In order to carry out these duties properly, it should meet the following requirements:

- The childcare is verbally assessed at least once a year with the child's parents. The assessment is laid down in writing.
- The childminding agency provides childminders with training opportunities at the start of their activities. This could take the form of an introductory course for childminders that is related to the actual childcare duties. See Appendix 4.
- The childminding agency organises themed meetings for the childminders and/or offers courses/ social events where childminders can meet up and exchange experiences.
- The childminding agent conducts the intake interviews with the parents and the childminder in person at their respective homes.
- At least two home visits are made every year, which will in any case involve the annual hazard identification and risk assessment, the annual assessment of the childminder against the criteria and the annual evaluation of the childcare. Apart from these home visits, additional home visits are made for purposes of intake, initial hazard identification and new matches.
- The childminding agents have demonstrable pedagogical knowledge that is relevant to childminding.
- Given the number of activities required for each match, the available number of staff should be in realistic proportion to the number of matches arranged by the childminding agency. The childminding agency should set this out clearly. An overview of the necessary activities can be found in Appendix 4.
- Clear and demonstrable arrangements should exist on how the child's parents can contact the childminding agency and the childminder.
- The childminding agents should possess the qualifications prescribed for this position in the CAO. The CAO stipulates a level of working and thinking equivalent to upper secondary vocational education, as well as knowledge of and insight into childcare/childminding processes.

The parties recommend that employers' and workers' organisations include a training requirement in the CAO in respect of the necessary training level for childminding agents.

5. Specific requirements for other forms of childcare

Small-scale childcare centres with a maximum of six child places per day

In principle, small-scale childcare has to satisfy the same requirements as day care, because there has to be a level playing field among providers. The parties take the view

that these centres should comply with the rules for childcare laid down in this Covenant. The childcare centre should have clear arrangements on the stand-in service and set out these arrangements in its pedagogical policy plan. The parents should be invited at least once a year to discuss those subjects on which the Childcare Provisions Act gives parents the right to advise.

24-hour care

24-hour care facilities should fulfil the requirements applicable to childcare centres. The stand-in service should be arranged in the same manner as in the childcare sector. The childcare centre should indicate in its pedagogical policy plan how it complies with these requirements.

6. Evaluation

For some years, the childcare sector has conducted its own quality assurance policy independently of the statutory obligations, among other things via the certification of institutions. The arrangements of this Covenant are a further reinforcement of this policy. The objective is: responsible childcare, proper provision of information to parents so as to enable them to make the right choice, and increasing the dynamism of the industry.

This Covenant is not static. The parties will keep a close eye on its practical impact. In order to monitor the application of the Covenant in practice, the parties have set up a Steering Group. This Steering group will meet at regular intervals and, where necessary, evaluate the Covenant arrangements. Where desired, arrangements may be amended and new arrangements added.

In 2008, the Steering Group will pay particular attention in its inspections to the new arrangements on childminding and their impact. Where possible, this will result in additional requirements, for instance on the ratio between number of staff and number of matches. There will be no evaluation in 2008 with regard to the structural features laid down in the Covenant, with the exception of the requirement that a non-adjointing outdoor playground pertaining to out-of-school care facilities should be easily and safely accessible. Where necessary, the latter arrangement will be worked out in more detail.

The Steering Group is also charged with developing concrete proposals before the next evaluation of the Covenant. These proposals relate to the further specification of the Covenant arrangements following the amendment of the Primary Education Act (*Wet op het primair onderwijs*); the further specification of arrangements on process quality features; examination of the possibilities of detailing the carer-child ratio; parent participation (examination of the possibilities of a combined parents' committee). Other subjects addressed by this Steering Group include innovation and outdoor play areas.

Evaluation will also take place on the basis of existing instruments such as certification, the complaints procedure and the terms of delivery. In addition, consideration will be given to the extent to which the childcare services are consistent with the local youth policy.

Depending on the evaluation of the Order in Council on Innovative Childcare, this form of small-scale care will become an integral part of the Covenant, with due regard for the changes resulting from that evaluation.

7. Final remarks

- The parties will be unable to amend the Covenant without the other parties' consent.

- *MOgroep Kinderopvang* and the *Branchevereniging* will stipulate that their members comply with the Covenant arrangements as a condition of membership.

Utrecht, 7 February 2008

*BOinK Belangenvereniging van Ouders in de Kinderopvang
Branchevereniging Ondernemers in de kinderopvang
MOgroep Kinderopvang*

Appendix 1**Table for calculating the carer-child ratio in day care groups of mixed ages**

Age	Carers	Maximum number	Carers	Maximum number	Carers	Maximum number	Carers	Maximum number
0 to 1	1	4	2	8	3	12	---	
1 to 2	1	5	2	10	3	15	4	16
2 to 3	1	6	2	12	3	16	---	
3 to 4	1	8	2	16	---	---	---	---
0 to 2	1	5	2	9 ¹	3	14 ¹	4	16
0 to 3	1	5	2	10 ¹	3	15 ¹	4 ¹	16
0 to 4	1	6	2	12 ¹	3	16 ¹	---	---
1 to 3	1	6	2	11	3	16	---	---
1 to 4	1	7	2	13	3	16	---	---
2 to 4	1	7	2	14	3	16	---	---

¹ Of which no more than eight children are under a year old

Appendix 2

Schedule for calculating the carer-child ratio in mixed groups of children in day care and out-of-school care

The Covenant parties have agreed that, with regard to mixed group of children in day care and out-of-school care, the number of children per pedagogical staff member will be determined on the basis of an average figure, whereby a maximum is set for the number of children aged 0-4 in a group. This appendix works out this arrangement of the Covenant parties in more detail.

In the context of childcare quality, a mixed group in the wide 0-13 age bracket is not an option which the Covenant parties would prefer.

However, there are situations in which the small scale of the childcare necessitates such a group composition, for instance where children of OSC age are put together with children in day care for part of the day. If the centre has an effective, age-differentiated working method, it can still provide responsible, high-quality childcare. Combined groups of children receiving day care and out-of-school care may be valuable in a pedagogical sense, for example where a mixed group includes the youngest OSC children and the oldest day-care children, and this is subject to express conditions in terms of the pedagogical working method.

In working out the carer-child ratio in mixed groups, the following points of departure were applied:

- It was presumed that the various ages were evenly represented in the group.
- Subsequently, the average figure was determined as laid down in the Covenant, based on the number of children in relation to one pedagogical staff member.
- In this calculation, only the final number was rounded up; subtotals were expressed in decimal figures.
- The table for children aged 0 to 3 remains applicable in full.

Where children receiving day care and out-of-school care are combined into one group, the pedagogical policy plan should give a clear, age-differentiated description of the activities and timetable of this group.

The Covenant parties have agreed to monitor and assess the practice of mixed groups in terms of quality. Based on this assessment, the arrangements and schedule may be adjusted where necessary.

Age	Carers	Maximum number	Carers	Maximum number	Carers	Maximum number	Carers	Maximum number
0 to 1	1	4	2	8	3	12	---	
1 to 2	1	5	2	10	3	15	4	16
2 to 3	1	6	2	12	3	16	---	
3 to 4	1	8	2	16	---	---	---	---
4 to 12	1	10	2	20	---	---	---	---
4 to 8	1	10	2	20	---	---	---	---
8 to 12	1	10	2	20	3¹	30	---	---
Age	Carers	Maximum number	Carers	Maximum number	Carers	Maximum number		
0 to 13	1	7 ²	2	14 ³	3	16 ⁴		

¹ The third carer may be an additional adult rather than a professional.

² Of which no more than four children are aged 0 to 3, of which no more than two children are under a year old.

1 to 13	1	8 ⁵	2	15 ⁶	3	16 ⁷
2 to 13	1	8 ⁸	2	16 ⁹	3	16 ¹⁰
3 to 13	1	9 ¹¹	2	16	---	---

³ Of which no more than eight children are aged 0 to 3, of which no more than four children are under a year old.

⁴ Of which no more than twelve children are aged 0 to 3, of which no more than six children are under a year old.

⁵ Of which no more than four children are aged 1 to 3, of which no more than two children are aged 1.

⁶ Of which no more than eight children are aged 1 to 3, of which no more than four children are aged 1.

⁷ Of which no more than twelve children are aged 1 to 3, of which no more than six children are aged 1.

⁸ Of which no more than five children are aged 2 to 3.

⁹ Of which no more than ten children are aged 2 to 3.

¹⁰ Of which no more than twelve children are aged 2 to 3.

¹¹ Of which no more than six children are aged 3.

Appendix 3

Criteria for Child Abuse Reporting Code

In the Covenant of 2007, the parties indicated that the application of a child abuse reporting code should be made obligatory for all childcare organisations and childminding agencies. These institutions are urged to follow the National Child Abuse Reporting Code (*Landelijke Meldcode Kindermishandeling*) drawn up in 2006, a model protocol for childcare centres, playgroups and out-of-school care and a model protocol for childminding services. These protocols can be viewed on www.kindermishandeling.info or be obtained via the sector organisations.

Before the National Reporting Code was drawn up, organisations in this sector were already using various reporting codes and protocols with regard to child abuse. In order not to disadvantage these 'pioneers' by forcing them to implement the new National Reporting Code, the parties took the initiative to identify criteria with which an existing code or protocol, other than the National Reporting Code, should comply in order for its continued use to be allowed. These criteria are listed below.

- The definition of child abuse should be in conformity with the Youth Care Act (*Wet op de Jeugdzorg*) of 2005. The latter provides the following: Child abuse is any form of threatening or violent interaction of a physical, psychological or sexual nature imposed, either actively or passively, by the parents or other persons with whom the underage person is in a relationship of dependence or constraint, which causes or threatens to cause the underage person serious harm in the form of physical or psychological injury. This includes negligence and the denial of essential help, medical care and education, as well as witnessing domestic violence.
- The protocol should contain a clear division of responsibilities. This comprises a division of duties and powers per organisational layer, in order to prevent confusion in a reporting situation.
- The protocol should include a clear step-by-step plan and timeline. This step-by-step plan should start with the person who has a suspicion of child abuse and cover all the stages of the process, including the aftercare.
- The step-by-step plan – which should at least address the respective steps of suspicion, consultation, plan of approach, decision, action, evaluation and aftercare – should be furnished with a clear explanation that is easy to understand for all those involved in the process.
- The protocol should contain points for attention in respect of the interviews with the various parties, and provide tools for following the step-by-step plan.
- It is generally acknowledged that it is very difficult to identify potential child abuse in time. Therefore the protocol should provide a list of signals per development area so that carers can be familiarised with these signals. The signals should be broken down into signals applicable to the 0-4 age bracket and the 4-12 age bracket respectively.
- The protocol should also address the situation in which the suspected offender is a staff member of the organisation.
- The protocol should contain guidelines on how to deal with the Privacy Act (*Wet op Privacy*).
- The protocol should contain practical information on the Youth Care Agencies (*Bureaus Jeugdzorg*) and the Child Abuse Counselling and Reporting Centre (*Advies-*

& *Meldpunt Kindermishandeling, AMK*). This information should concern their working methods as well as contact details.

- The protocol should pay attention to the other elements of the social map in this area.
- It is recommended that reference be made to background information and further literature on child abuse for the benefit of those persons involved who require more detailed information on the subject.

Appendix 4

a. Activities of a childminding agency with regard to matching and childminders' expertise

b. Subjects to be included in a childminder training programme

- a. Activities of a childminding agency with regard to matching and childminders' expertise
 - Intake interviews with childminder and parent
 - Matching interview with childminder and parent
 - Hazard identification at the home where care is provided
 - CGCs of childminder and adult household members if the care is provided at the childminder's home
 - Annual hazard identification and risk assessment
 - Annual assessment of childminder against the criteria
 - Providing assistance in the event of parenting issues, problems and emergencies
 - Organisation and (arrangement of) implementation of introductory childminding course
 - Organisation and (arrangement of) implementation of childminder expertise promotion programme

- b. Minimum subjects to be included in a childminder expertise promotion programme
 - First aid for children
 - Development of children aged 0-12
 - Pedagogical policy and pedagogical operations
 - Monitoring development and identifying abnormalities
 - Carrying out health and safety hazard identification and risk assessment
 - Guaranteeing health and safety
 - Communication with parents