

**“Real Daily Life”:
 Children's kitchen & craft corner
 Tool: Cartographic Observation**

Context:

Location	Kindergarten Auer, Kindergarten district Neumarkt South Tyrol Italy
Details	Age: 2-7 years Number of children: 79 children (4 groups), 12 educators
Building	Size, age, type: ? m2, year of construction 1967, renovation & extension carried out. The kindergarten building is located on a slope and consists of seven rooms that can be used for kindergarten activities. Some of these are accessed via a continuous corridor area, but some group rooms are also passage rooms. The movement room is located in the annex. The entire kindergarten is at ground level and each group room has access to the garden.
Kindergarten context	Small town, everyday language: German
Activity	Observation in every day kindergarten life
Phase in the design process	in use reflection, POE



Tool used: Kartografische Beobachtung

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/cored/tools/cartographic-observation/>

The instrument is first introduced to the pedagogical staff and then the observation is carried out.

Dates for implementation:

- September 27, 2021 with the pedagogical staff.
- April 5, 2022 Implementation of the cartographic observation in two group rooms
- June 9, 2022 Discussion of the results with the kindergarten head and a representative of the kindergarten district.

Rationale for the activity and the instrument used

In the kindergarten district of Neumarkt, space and room design have long been a topic in the pedagogical work and are actively supported by the kindergarten district management. Since the pedagogical concept of opening is basically applied, themes and functions are assigned to the individual rooms or parts of rooms. Thus, in all kindergartens there is a room for language education, a room for science or mathematics education, a movement room and studios for artistic work. The design of the rooms is adapted to the structural conditions in each kindergarten. In the Neumarkt kindergartens, the thematic assignments and the corresponding room design are more or less complete and are adapted annually to the needs of the children and the team.

A fully equipped and functional children's kitchen was newly installed. The dimensions of this kitchen, i.e. the height of the work surfaces, are adapted to the children. In the u-shaped arrangement of the kitchen cabinets, the floor has been raised so that children can easily reach the work surfaces, the stove, the oven and the refrigerator here. Thus, the interior of the kitchen should be used by the children independently and the educator should only direct what is happening in the children's kitchen from the outside. Whether the children's kitchen is used in accordance with the pedagogical considerations is to be tested with the instrument of cartographic observation.

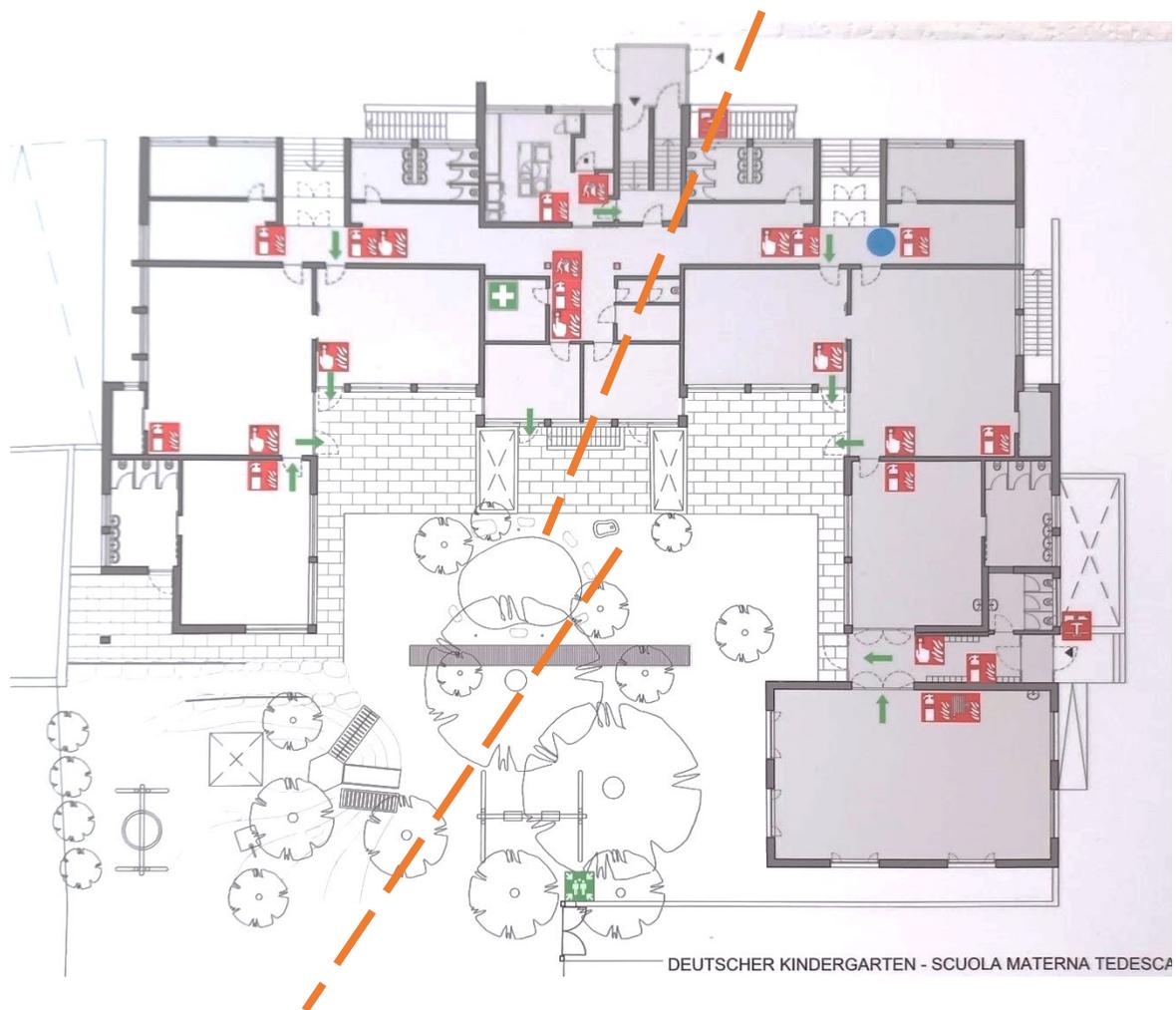
In contrast to this, another observation is to be carried out in a regular group room in order to document the use of the room itself. Here, it will subsequently be considered how the areas of the room can be redesigned and reframed. Since this room is one of the passage rooms, the paths of the educator and the children through the room to other areas of the kindergarten are to be analyzed in particular.

Case study description: Process

Participants: kindergarten head, pedagogical team and a representative of the kindergarten district.

In a preparatory meeting with the kindergarten head and a representative of the kindergarten district, the steps of the joint work with the instrument were determined. Ideas for the room design as a whole are discussed, but also the special framework conditions of the pedagogical work due to the regulations during the pandemic. The normally practiced opening of the kindergarten rooms and the children's self-determined use of the rooms cannot be carried out due to the pandemic regulations. Instead, two fixed groups of 37 children each have been formed. Each group now uses only one area of the kindergarten (see sketch) and the groups swap areas in a fixed rhythm. The garden has also been divided accordingly.

Dividing the kindergarten for separate use during the pandemic



In a second meeting, the instrument was tested. The pedagogical team selected the newly installed children's kitchen and the group room "Role Play, Letters, Handicrafts" for the observation. Observations will be made during free play time.

In a third meeting, the cartographic observation will be validated communicatively and decisions on further cooperation will be made together..

Photo * Documentation - rooms for cartographic observation

Auer,
Children's kitchen



Auer,
Role play (doctor's office),
letters, handicraft

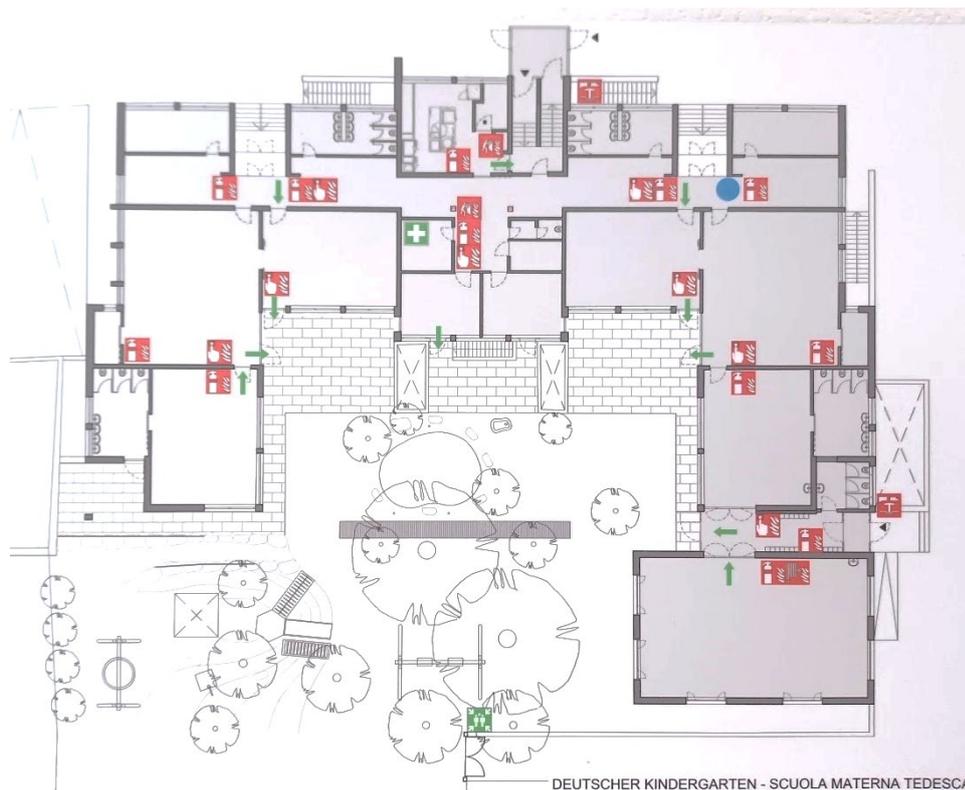


Description of case study

The aim of the first workshop with the pedagogical staff was to get to know the tool "Cartographic Observation" and to plan the further cooperation in the project. For this purpose, the rooms of the kindergarten were inspected and two areas were selected where the observation takes place: the children's kitchen and the room for role play, letters and handicrafts. The focus of the observation is the movement patterns of the kindergarten teacher, but the activities of the children should also be recorded - if possible.

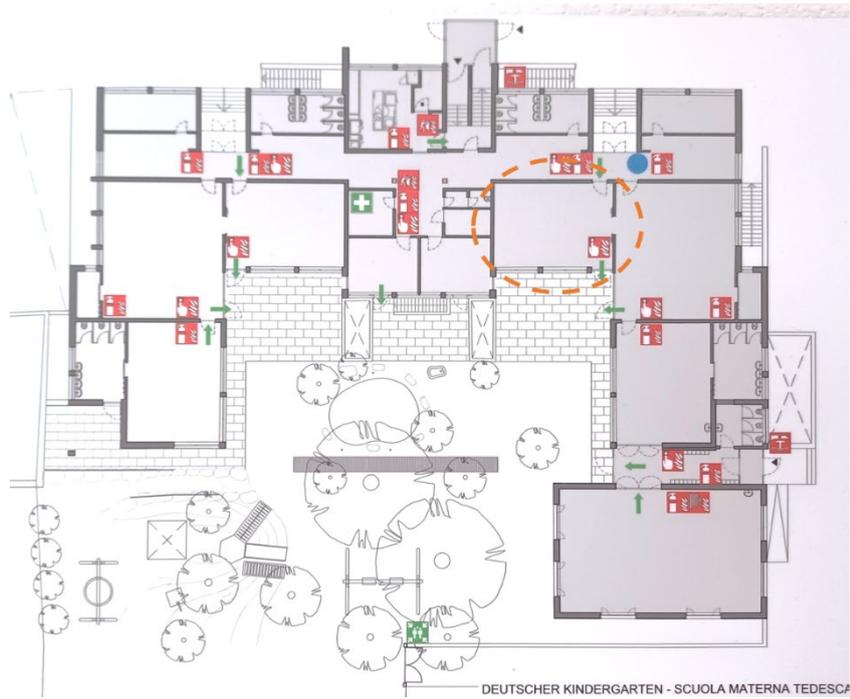
Cartographic observations take place one morning during free play time. The cartographic observation is carried out by a staff member from the CoReD project. In the afternoon, the first observation impressions were discussed with the pedagogical team. After the evaluation of the cartographic observations by the CoReD researcher, the results will be validated communicatively in another workshop.

Floor plan of the kindergarten (ground floor)

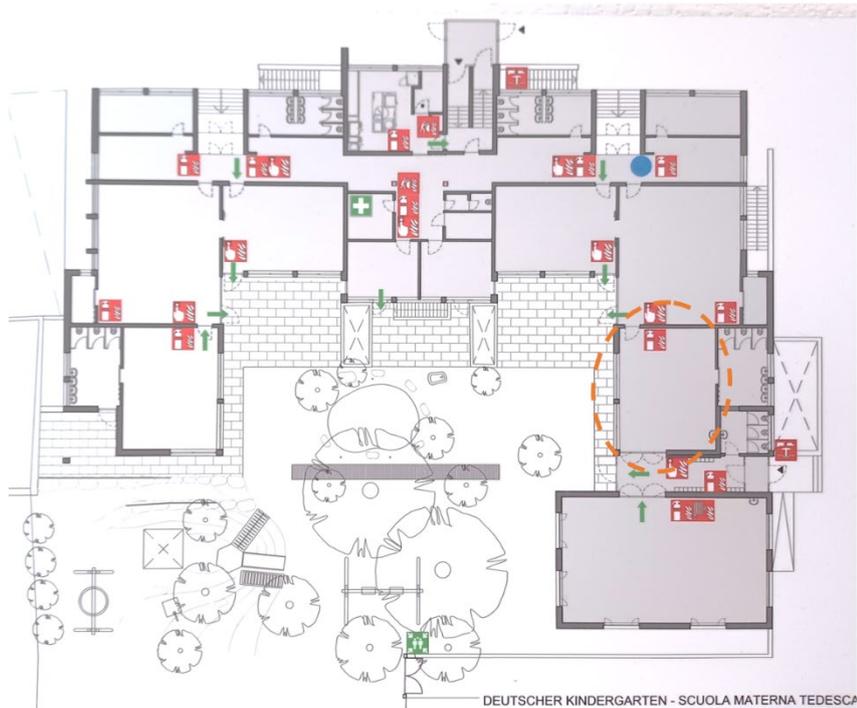


Location of the rooms for cartographic observation

Children's Kitchen



Role play, letters, handicrafts

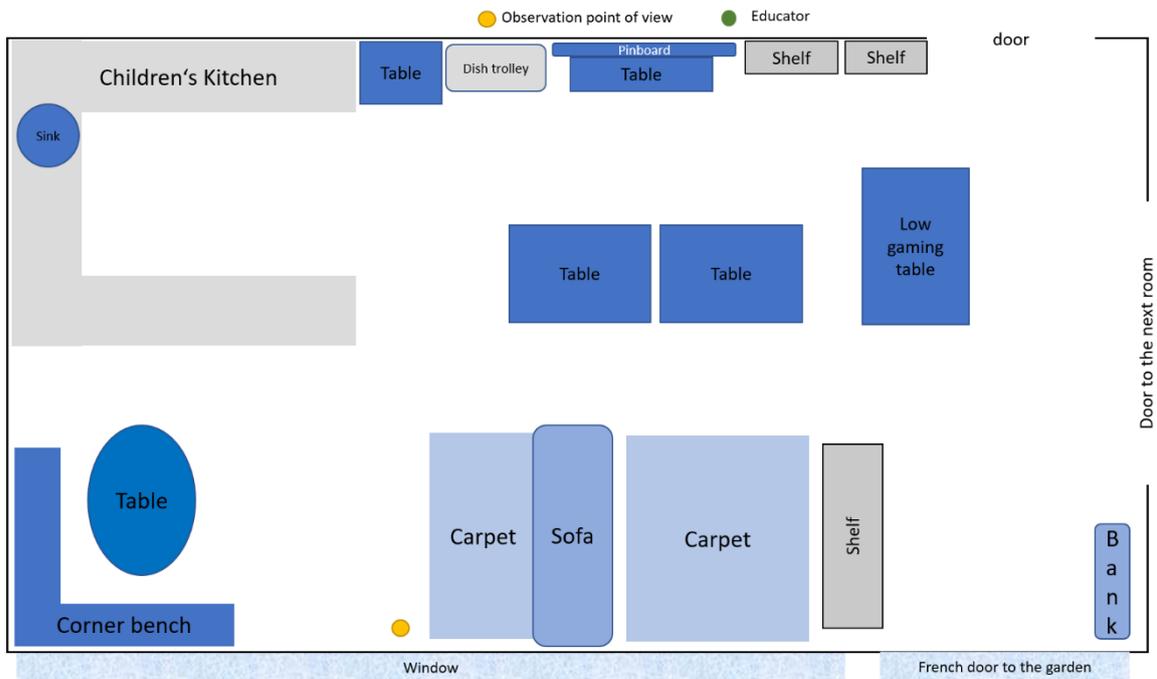


Observation protocols & results

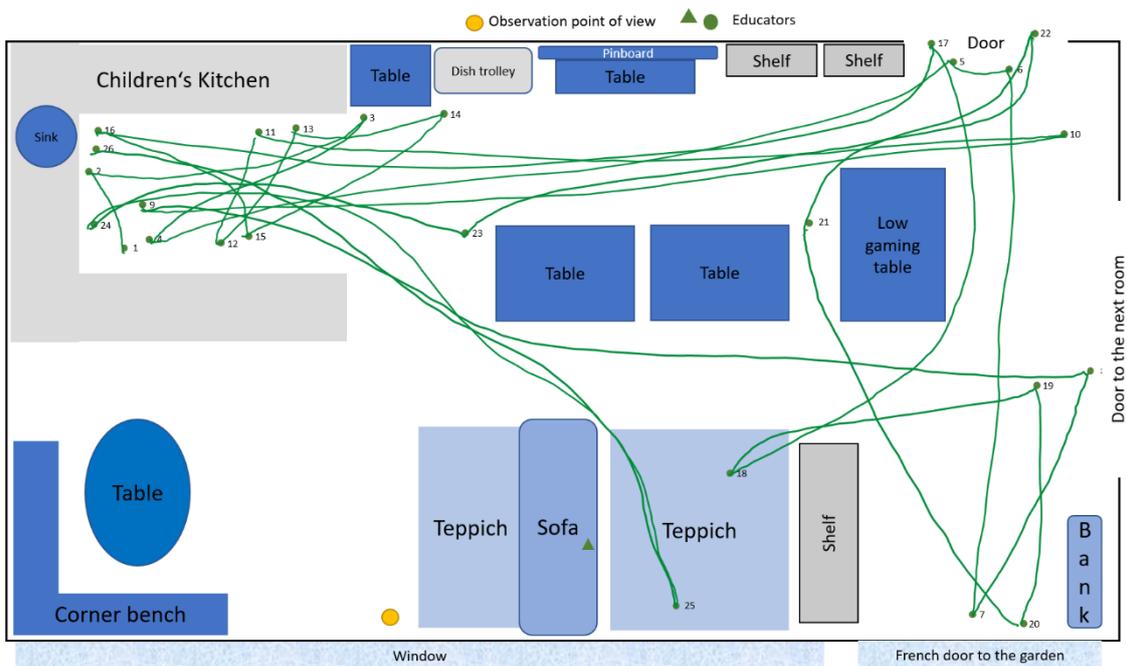
CHILDREN'S KITCHEN

Observation time: 09:45-10:15, free play time

Drawn floor plan for observation:



Movement patterns educator

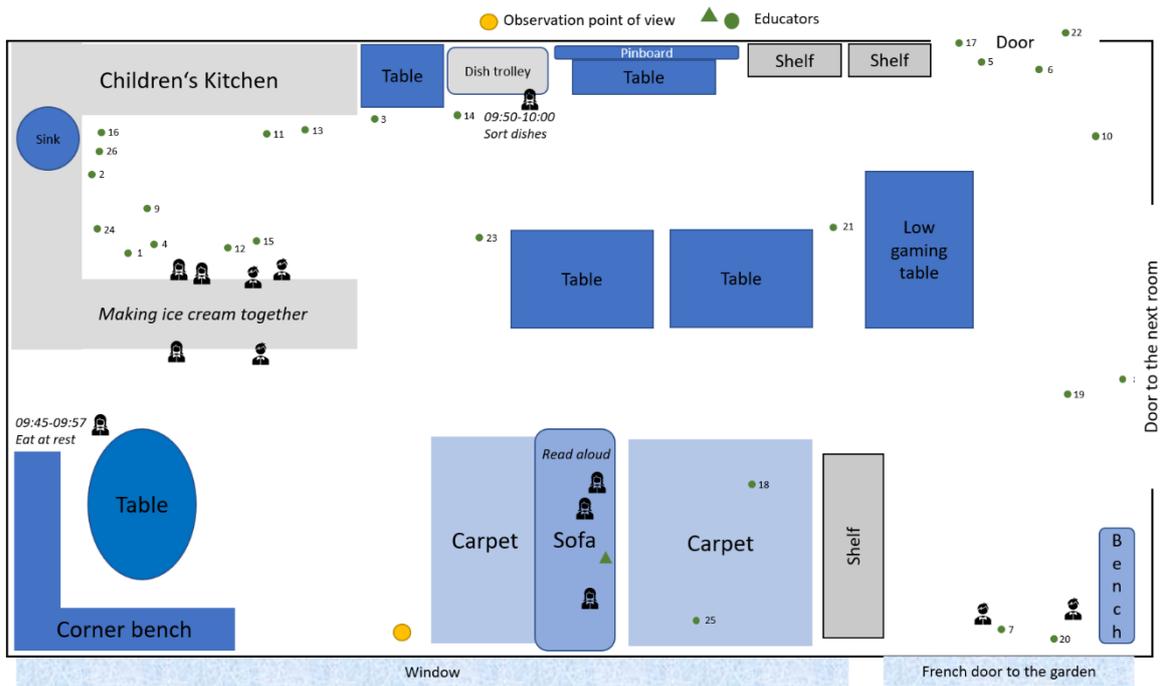


Activities of the educator and interaction with the children

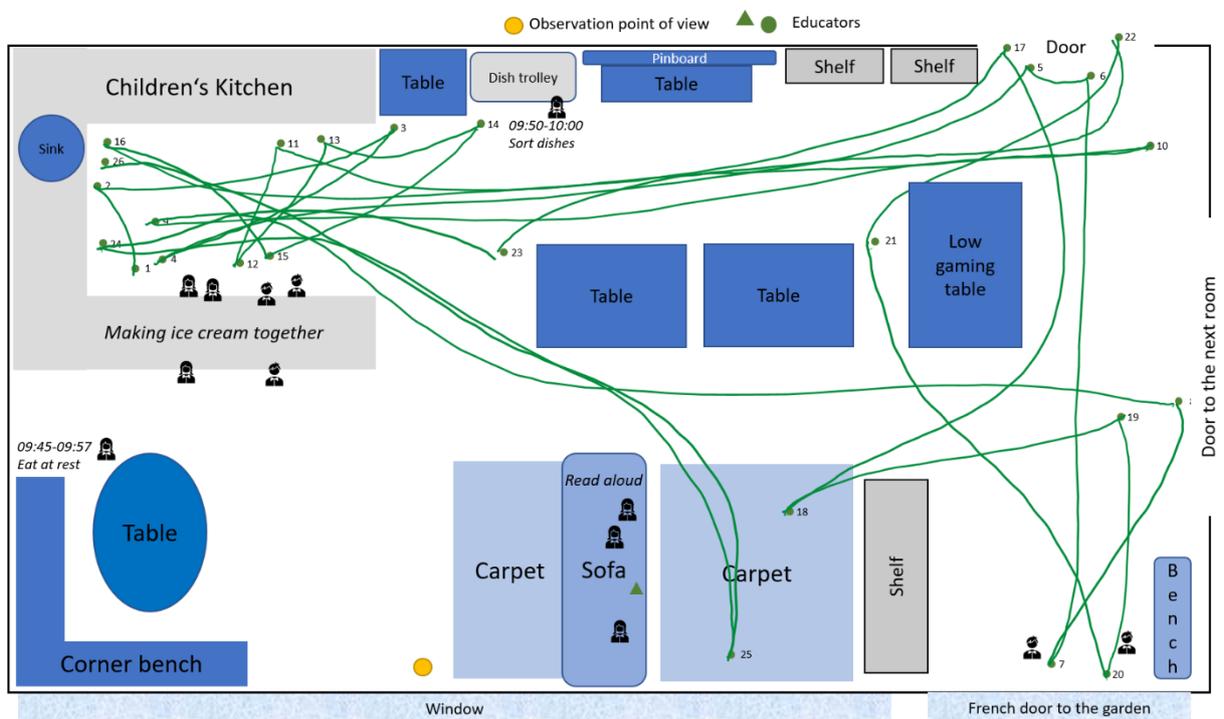
Activity		Timeline	
1	Make ice, guide stirring, lick out	1	09:45
2	Putting bowls in the sink	2	09:50
3	Wash dishes, put them away	3	09:50 30sec.
4	Guide, assist in filling ice cream mixture	4	09:51
5	Take ice cream mass filled with children into the refrigerator	5	09:52
6	Come back, get overview	6	09:56
7	Get child out of the garden	7	09:56 30sec.
8	Look into the neighboring room, observe	8	09:57
9	Motivate to clean up	9	09:57 30sec.
10	Bring child in	10	09:59
11	Clean up child's kitchen, sort	11	10:00
12	With children: Clean up children's kitchen, sort	12	...
13	With children: Clean up children's kitchen, sort	13	...
14	With children: Clean up children's kitchen, sort	14	...
15	Clean up work area	15	10:05
16	With children: wash up	16	10:06
17	Bring children into the room	17	10:07 20sec.
18	Consultation with colleague	18	10:08
19	Provide an overview	19	10:09
20	Support children on their way to the garden	20	10:09 20sec.
21	Tidy up material	21	10:10
22	Checking	22	10:11
23	Tidy up the table	23	10:12
24	Clean up	24	10:13
25	Check on the children in the garden	25	10:14
26	Clean the sink, finish cleaning up in the children's kitchen	26	10:15

Special occurrence during the observation period:
Colleague with three girls on the sofa, reading aloud.

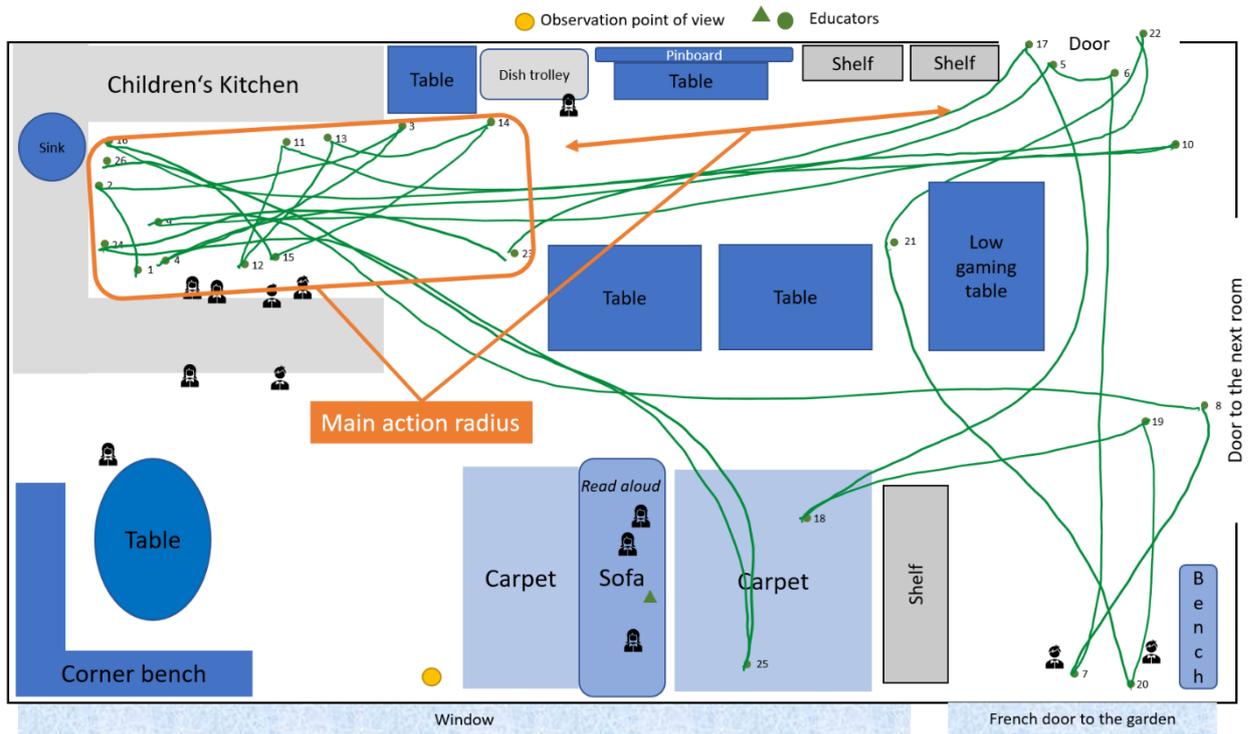
Activities of the children



Combination: movement patterns of the educator & activities of the children



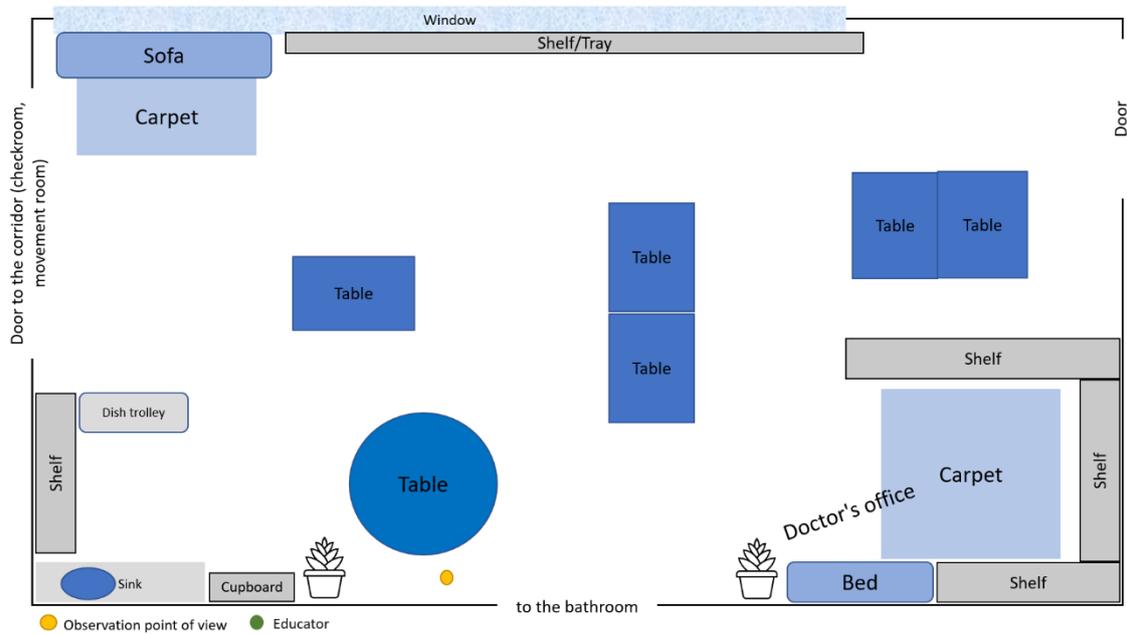
Analysis of the movement patterns



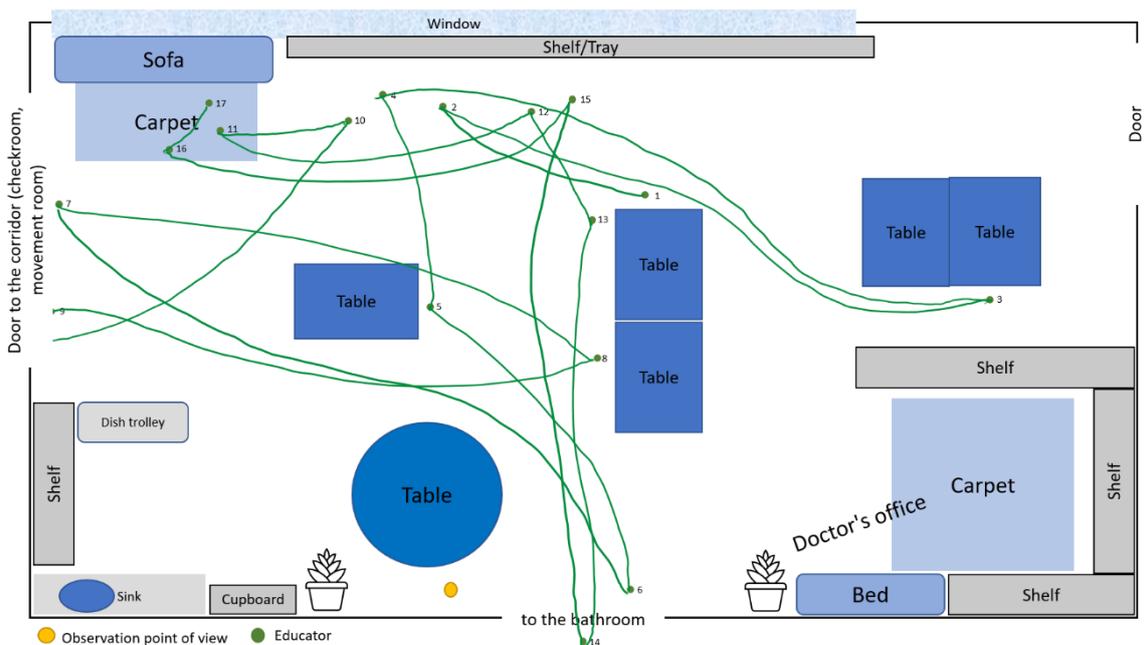
ROLE PLAY (DOCTOR'S OFFICE), LETTERS, HANDICRAFT

Observation time: 10:16-10:40am, free play time.

Drawn floor plan for observation:



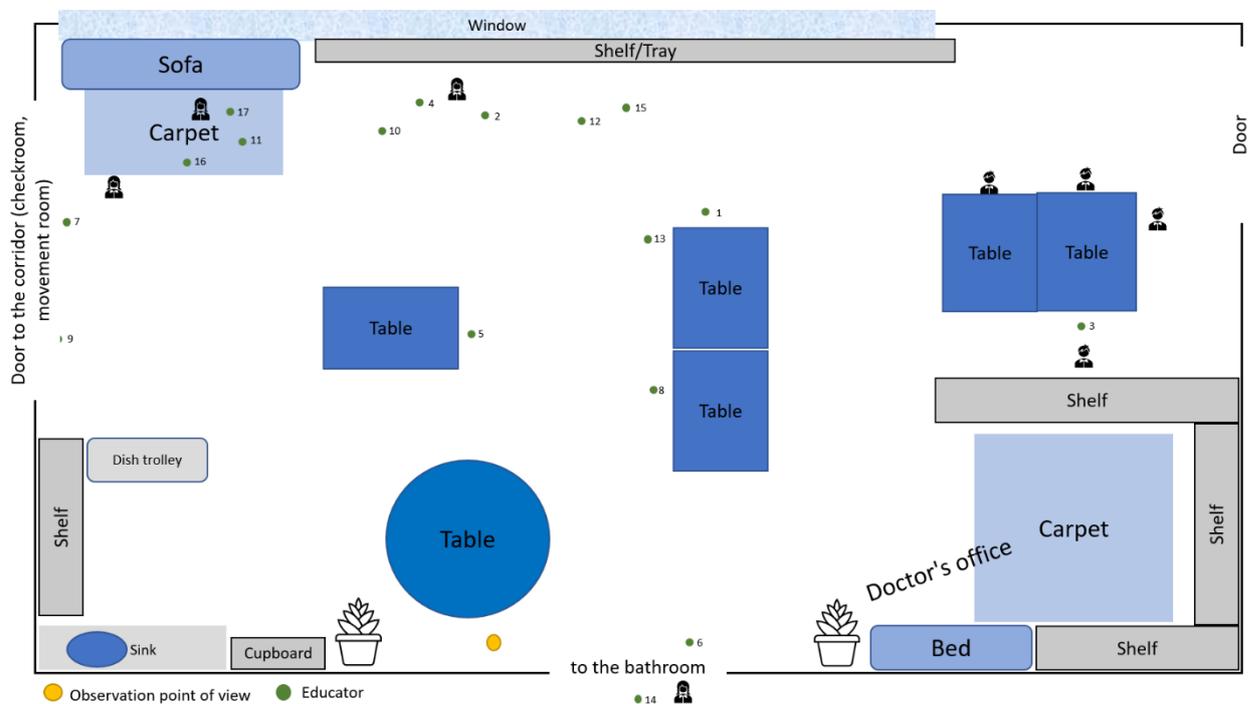
Movement patterns educator



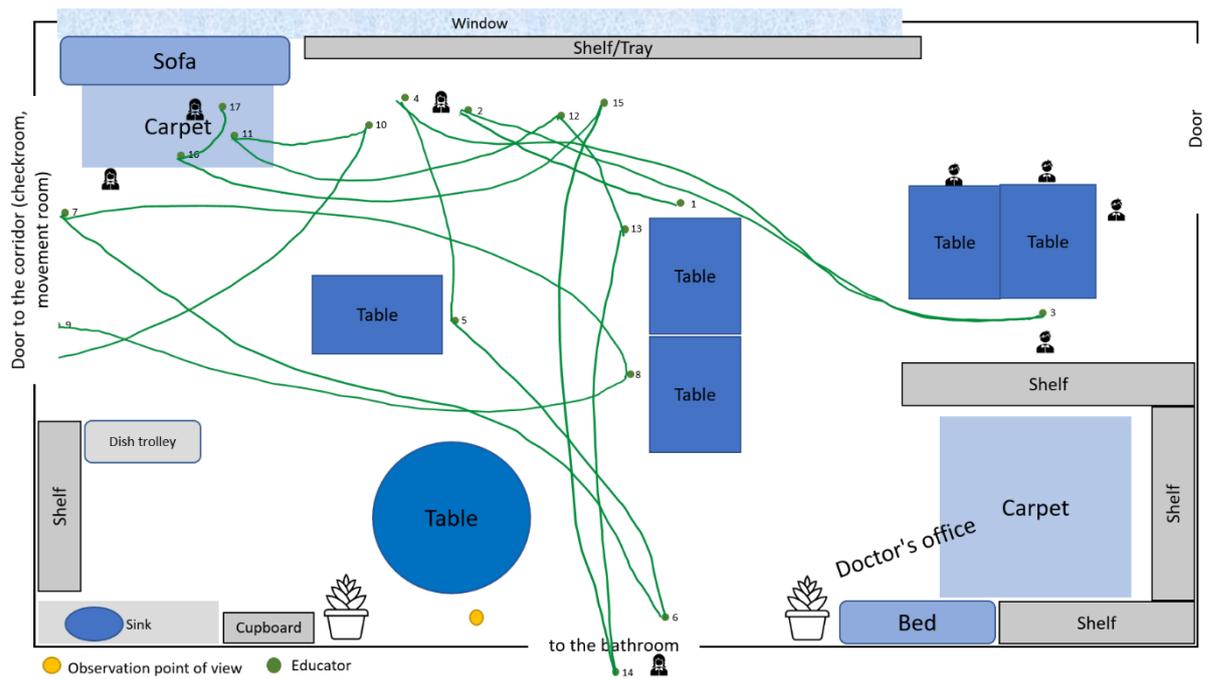
Activities of the educator and interaction with the children

Tätigkeit		Zeitleiste	
1	Watch, support	1	10:16
2	Help, advise	2	10:16 20sec.
3	Crafting	3	10:17
4	Encouragement: "If you need help, I will support you, but you can do it on your own".	4	10:17 30sec.
5	Support tidying up	5	10:18
6	Clear the table, wipe	6	10:19
7	Going to the bathroom with a child: washing hands	7	10:19 30sec.
8	Get an overview, observe	8	10:19 50sec.
9	Watching, supporting handicrafts	9	10:20
10	Briefly look into the dressing room and movement room	10	10:21
11	Set up work results with child	11	10:22
12	Start reading aloud	12	10:24
13	Observe, help	13	10:24 20sec.
14	Admire work	14	10:25
15	With children: Cleaning painting and crafting materials	15	10:27
16	Putting craft items out to dry	16	10:27 30sec.
17	Continue reading aloud	17	10:28
18	Develop a game together from what has been read aloud	18	10:34

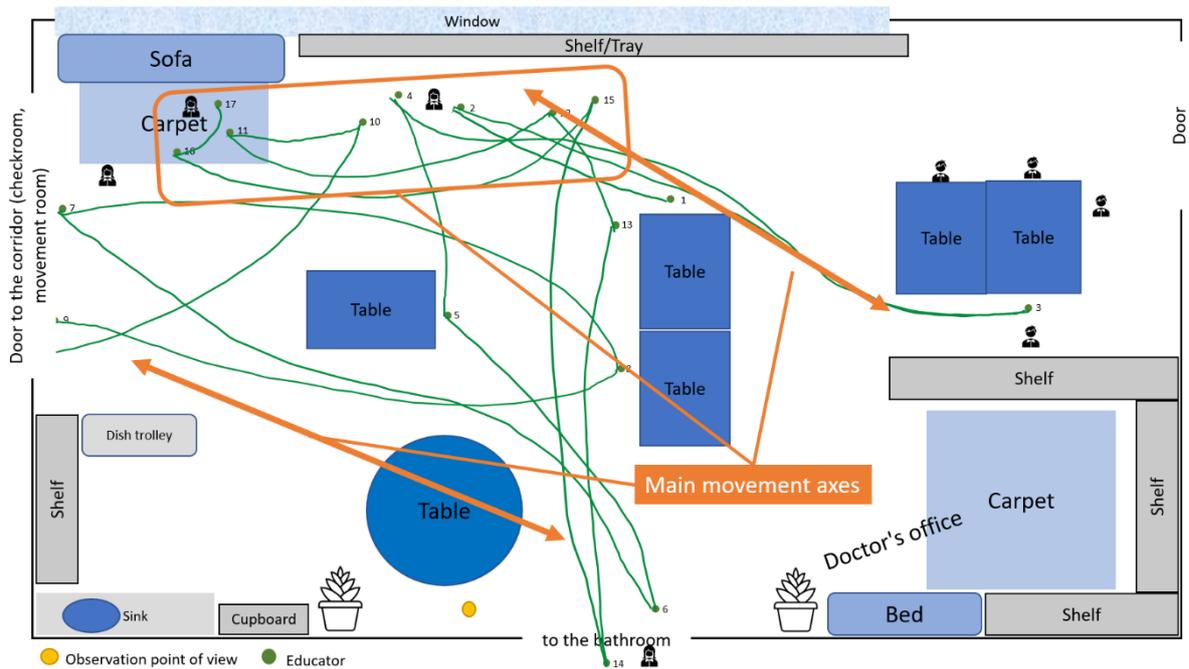
Activities of the children



Combination: movement patterns of the educator & activities of the children



Analysis of the movement patterns



Discussion with the kindergarten head and a representative of the kindergarten district about the cartographic observation

On the basis of the sketches, it is noticeable that the movement possibilities of the educator are conditioned by the furniture and the equipment of the room. This can have a constricting or an invigorating effect. But the room design itself is only one aspect, much more important is the activity of the children in the room. In the kindergarten and in the situation of free play time, it is essential for the pedagogical specialist to observe the activities of the children, to accompany them and, if desired by the children, to participate in their activities. A typical division into phases, as is familiar from the school situation, is not found in the movement pattern and in the activities of the educator.

The different use of the rooms by the children becomes clear in the sketches. This is obviously related to the design, furnishings and color scheme of the rooms. In the children's kitchen, the activity centers around the children's kitchen. This building element determines the use and activities in the room. In the conceptual planning of the children's kitchen, the children should move independently within the kitchen, i.e. between the work surfaces, and the pedagogical specialist should rather stay outside the children's kitchen and keep an eye on everything. In the observation situation, however, it became apparent that the educator works with the children within the children's kitchen and also prescribes the activities. On the one hand, this is due to the task of "making ice cream" and on the other hand, it also reflects the individual pedagogical attitude of the educator. She is apparently concerned with a joint, guided activity and not with independent work with independent tasks for the children. Perhaps the demand to let children work completely independently in the children's kitchen is too high. Presumably, the work in the kitchen needs to settle in. It could also be that the use of a children's kitchen requires pre-formulated and prepared tasks, because in order to be able to use the kitchen, it is necessary to plan beforehand which dishes are to be prepared and perhaps one or the other ingredient must also be procured beforehand. Based on the cartographic observation, the kindergarten head concludes that the pedagogical team needs to reconsider where the pedagogical specialist is located in the children's kitchen and which areas are reserved for the children.

In the group room "role play, letters, handicrafts" was worked intensively. Four boys were busy with handicrafts related to their names and only reassured themselves by glances that the educator was nearby. The few interactions with the children were characterized by a great deal of quiet and longer periods of time, i.e. the time the educator spent with the individual child was longer and the exchange more intensive. The pedagogical attitude of the educator is clearly reflected in her reaction to a child's request for support: "If you need help, I will support you, but you can do it on your own". In this way, the educator succeeded in giving the children security and the children worked intensively during the entire observation period. Therefore, the educator was also able to respond to the wish of a girl to read a book together without the group of children doing handicrafts feeling neglected. This situation is also evident in the sketches. In the debriefing with the kindergarten head, it was added that a craft and play opportunity developed from the reading aloud situation following the observation, which was continued for weeks by the child and the pedagogical specialist.

From these observations, it becomes clear that the room and its design provide a pattern of behavior and movement, however, it is the individual use by the pedagogical specialist that is important. This use of the room, in turn, depends decisively on the pedagogical theory and personal convictions of the educator.

Based on the cartographic observations, the kindergarten management makes the decision to deal with the topic of pedagogical attitude and the activity of observation in exchange with the colleagues.