

Central Parent Council Annual Report for 2024

The year 2024 presented neither highs nor lows for the Central Parent Council in terms of policy matters. Still, there were some setbacks on a personal level: a Parent Council member, who had served on the Parent Council for many years, had to step down due to personal circumstances, and no new members joined despite the efforts made.

Although things remained unsettled in the various hotbeds of the world, we steadily continued with our activities at KinderRijk. We parted from the Zuidas location, but in return, KinderRijk saw an increase in the number of locations in Amstelveen. We greatly appreciate how KinderRijk consistently manages to maintain its service standards towards the parents, despite the tight labour market. Both at the locations with the educational professionals, who are here for us every day, and at the head office, where the educational policy is further rolled out and provides a strong basis for our childcare.

The Parent Council is the discussion partner of the chairman of KinderRijk's Board of Directors on issues of relevance to parents and children at all the locations. As in previous years, we discussed cost developments and inflation with the board, as well as the educational policy and its impact on the locations and how this is reflected in the activities. The question of how we can continue to increase parental participation was also raised at every meeting. More details about this subject are included below.

By the end of 2023, the Parent Council set two focal points, the spearheads, for the year 2024: sustainability and communication. Sustainability was continued as a focal point from 2023 and the topic of communication counted double, as the annual meeting in November 2023 had shown that many forms of communication were mentioned by the parents as a vital aspect that needs addressing.

In this annual report, we will give you an outline of the Central Parent Council in 2024 and how we conveyed the interests of our children and parents.

Spearheads of the Parent Council in 2024

Communication

Communication was a spearhead in 2024, which was divided into two components that had been chosen by the Parent Council: onboarding new parents and information about your child.

Onboarding new parents: the April meeting focused on the onboarding of new parents. Pauline van Nies, a Parent Council member, gave a presentation on the research she had done regarding the information provided by KinderRijk to the parents through the website and the parent app. This was based on a questionnaire she had prepared regarding registration and the procedure after acceptance of the placement agreement. The conclusion was that the website answers almost all the questions asked. The information is complete and up-to-date. She also rated the search function as good. In addition, much information is available in the parent app. The educational method is partly location-specific and therefore only available in the parent app for each location, making it easier to maintain in case of changes. The educational policy, however, is included on the website. In short: KinderRijk passed the self-imposed test and has adopted the tips provided by Pauline to improve the website.

Information about your child: In April, we also considered the questionnaire on communication together, which was to be submitted to the client panel. At the meeting of 17 October, director Margreet Hellemons-van Dijk presented the results of the survey among parents on communication: whether people use the parent app and how they perceive the information they receive about their own child. A very frequently heard observation from the Parent Council and Parent Committees is that a parent meeting about the child is not (yet) held at all locations. Whereas this is in fact policy and is regularly emphasised and brought to everybody's attention, yet it has consistently failed to have the desired effect. A conversation should be held for every child by 2025. The locations can

choose the moment for this. In 2025, the parents will be surveyed again to find out how this has worked out.

Sustainability

In February, Margreet Hellemons-van Dijk provided the Parent Council with a comprehensive update on KinderRijk's current sustainability situation. A sustainable view of the world is inherent to the childcare sector that is concerned with the well-being and development of children. KinderRijk believes it has a vital role in this. As a partner involved in children's development, it is essential to set a good example: by being sustainable where possible itself. Also, by encouraging the children in a natural and fun way to care for our planet.

A sounding board group with KinderRijk employees from all sections meets regularly and shares a great variety of ideas, both big and small. Such as solar panels on location, energy-saving measures, use of eco labels in purchases, use of refurbished mobile phones, working paperless, nature gardens that can help to promote awareness. And also focus on diversity in the workforce and cultural diversity, as well as developing a vision for equal opportunities and inclusiveness at the locations, encouraging appreciation of nature and the sustainable food chain through sustainability education. KinderRijk moreover endeavours to be a diligent employer and to promote sustainable employability through, for example, age-phase conscious policies, fun in the workplace and focus on talent development. We are working hard to raise awareness within the organisation. Policy choices are made based on sustainable aspects and on the concept: People (sustainable personnel policy), Planet (focus on a healthy living environment at present as well as in the future) and Profit (sustainable business). Sustainability is therefore part of the annual plans of all locations.

Parental participation

Parental involvement was a key and constant priority for the Central Parent Council and KinderRijk in 2024. The cornerstone of quality daycare is a dependable, secure setting where our children can grow and thrive. KinderRijk takes its role as 'partner in parenting' very seriously. To this end, it is important to have positive and regular communications with the parents and to work together. In recent years, we have seen a decline in parental participation in the Parent Council and Parent Committee, and every time again, it is a challenge to motivate parents to participate in Parent Committees or the Parent Council. With activities such as news items, recruitment campaigns, regular contacts with the Parent Committees and the organisation of a theme evening for all parents, we try to keep parental participation up to standard. Unfortunately, with the departure of Parent Council member Dennis de Lugt, the Parent Council was reduced to 4 members, whereas there should be 7 members. This topic will therefore remain full on the agenda in 2025.

Annual meeting of the Central Parent Council and Parent Committees

Every year, the Central Parent Council and Parent Committees meet to line up with each other, to get to know each other better and to brainstorm on possible spearheads for the coming year. Although a theme evening on sustainability was supposed to be held in November 2024, the enthusiasm was too low at that time and it was decided to move the theme evening to the spring of 2025.

Requests for opinions

In 2024, one request for an opinion was submitted to the Central Parent Council:

Rates for 2024

By the end of August 2024, the Parent Council received a request for an opinion on the proposed adjustments to the rates from 1 January 2025. Together with the rates committee, we discussed this matter with the KinderRijk Board of Directors in September. Documents from an analysis by external consultants on what would be a realistic rate increase for 2025 for the childcare sector were shared with us. The proposed 7.0% increase for KinderRijk was just within the expected range. The fact that KinderRijk's rates are on the high side this time has several causes:

- A. There was no interim increase in 2024. The external opinion assumed that such an interim increase had in fact already taken place.

- B. The "Randstad region factor". KinderRijk's activities take place in one of the most expensive regions in the Netherlands.
- C. A new collective agreement had not yet been agreed. KinderRijk deliberately estimated the expected salary increase on the higher side to reduce the risk of interim increases.

In addition, it was revealed that the childcare allowance would be further raised in 2025, which would result in a net gain for many parents, despite the 7% increase. This combined with the Board's commitment to maintain the same level of service to the children and the parents were reasons for the Parent Council to decide that the rate increase should be given a positive opinion.

Other matters

No other requests for an opinion had been received in 2024. This does happen from time to time and does not give rise to asking questions. Other topics were discussed at length, on which our Parent Council was asked for its opinion as well. For example, education at KinderRijk was discussed several times in 2024. The development of educational methods at KinderRijk made further strides in 2024. What do the children learn from KinderRijk's activities, and how are these planned ahead and followed up by additional activities? We trust that all parents are now observing this in their children at the various locations.

Changes within the Parent Council

We started the year with five members and a prospective member at the February meeting. After three meetings, she decided to leave. On top of that, we regretfully had to part with Dennis de Lugt this year, who had been a Parent Council member and a loyal visitor to the meetings for many years. Dennis was due to take over the chairmanship from Rens Koekenbier in April. Rens stayed on a little longer as chairman, and subsequently, Tim Baart took over as chairman in October. The year therefore ended with four Parent Council members, with the intention of making even more efforts to recruit more members for the Parent Council.

Should you like to receive more information about any of the above subjects, about the Parent Committee at your location or the Central Parent Council? Please feel free to drop by your location manager or send an e-mail to ouderraad@kinderrijk.nl.