

# ANNA SPINDLER

Preschool teacher

**“Understanding each child is like a puzzle that I piece together.”**

As a child, Anna Spindler loved everything about the special world of preschool.

“The furniture was tiny and it was full of cool things. You played and sang songs,” she recalled. “Everything was custom-made for kids.”

Now 33 and a preschool teacher, Spindler is completely fascinated by children.

“Each child has his or her own character,” said Spindler, who speaks with volume, clarity, and frequent hand gestures (understandably), “and they understand way more than you might think.”

The path toward becoming a preschool teacher is tough in Austria, taking up to five years to earn the required qualifications. Along with psychology, pedagogy, teaching principles, and creativity, the training also requires extensive “self-development,” a rigorous process of critical self-examination to understand who you are and what you stand for.

Vienna-born Spindler has no children of her own, and at first, some parents questioned her suitability. But once they see her in action, they usually start asking how they can get their children to behave as well at home as they do in her classroom.

“It’s a completely different constellation and dynamic,” Spindler explains. “Here, there are rules, you’re in a peer group. Home is where children get unconditional love.”

But that’s not to say that she hasn’t picked up a thing or two about what happens at home. She works to get to know all the children, their history, what makes them tick.

“I can’t change a child’s home or parents,” she made clear. “But what I can do is show them something different.”

A trainer of other teachers and life coach, as well as preschool teacher, Spindler has had the opportunity to observe closely the challenges families face today. “I think parents often don’t take the time to really ask, what does ‘family’ mean for me?”

That doesn’t mean that it has to conform to some traditional or ideal concept, she clarifies.

“It could be something entirely new. The important thing is for every family to work that out for themselves.”

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