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## Groundbreaking Ceremony for New Gretel-Furler Daycare Center in Oberkirch

- **Koehler Group builds daycare center right next to company headquarters in Oberkirch**
- **Daycare center will offer 60 spots for children of employees and 40 public daycare spots**

**Oberkirch, 12/02/2025** – A groundbreaking ceremony kicked off construction work on the new Gretel-Furler daycare center in Oberkirch. The Koehler Group is building the new facility in order to create additional avenues for people to have a healthy work–life balance. The result is a total of 100 new daycare spots, of which 60 will be for children of employees and 40 will be public daycare spots. The daycare center is slated to be in operation during the 2025/2026 kindergarten year, and will be run by Konzept-e.

### Ceremonial groundbreaking signals the start of construction

The daycare center is being built a short walk away from the Koehler Group’s headquarters in Oberkirch in collaboration with the town’s government. The corresponding preparation, in the form of site clearance, actually started at the beginning of the year, but the groundbreaking ceremony marked the official start of construction. The new daycare center is set to offer daycare services to employees of the Koehler Group in the future and will additionally be incorporated into the planning done by the town of Oberkirch to meet its own daycare needs.

The groundbreaking ceremony at the premises where the new Gretel-Furler daycare center will be located was attended by Oberkirch Mayor Gregor Bühler, external project partners, and members of the Koehler Group and Konzept-e project team, among others. Koehler Group CFO Frank Lendowski had the following to say: “Today, we are celebrating a new milestone in the history of the Koehler Group. I’m tremendously proud of the fact that we are providing young families with good prospects and helping them so that they don’t have to worry about emergencies where they can’t find someone to look after their kids.” The new daycare center bears the name “Gretel Furler”, who was a remarkable woman from the founding family who distinguished herself through her love and care for her family and her close ties to her home and the Koehler family business.

Gregor Bühler, the mayor of Oberkirch, pointed out the following during his speech regarding the official start of construction work: “Thanks to the fact that the Koehler Group and the town of Oberkirch have always worked together in a manner characterized by trust, we’re now successfully taking another important step towards ensuring that families in Oberkirch have living and working conditions that improve their well-being. And on top of helping employees who have children, 40 out of the 100 spots will be available as public spots, which is really an enormous achievement when it comes to daycare availability at Oberkirch.”

Construction work on the Gretel-Furler daycare center will also include improving access for traffic by expanding the Winterbacher Weg street. It will be widened all the way to the intersection with the Hauptstraße road in order to make it possible for parents to drop off and pick up their children without blocking traffic. Moreover, a change to the “Winterbach – Hofmatt” zoning map has established the legal basis both for the new daycare center building and the corresponding infrastructure measures.

### **Gretel-Furler daycare center makes Koehler Group an even more attractive employer**

The new daycare center will offer spots for toddlers who are six months to three years old, as well as spots for older children. The daycare center should be in operation during the 2025/2026 kindergarten year and will be offering “extended hours” and “all-day” options (“verlängerte Öffnungszeiten” and “Ganztagesbetreuung,” as they are called in German). In order to properly accommodate parents’ working hours and truly provide for a good work–life balance, the center will be open from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and will not be closed more than 12 days per year. Frank Lendowski has no doubts: “With the new Gretel-Furler daycare center, we’ll be providing our team members with yet another great way to balance their work and family in a healthy manner.”

Also worth mentioning is the fact that the Koehler Group has found an extremely experienced and dependable partner for running the daycare center in the form of Konzept-e, which has already worked together with the Koehler Group on the latter’s vacation childcare program for Koehler employees in the past few years. All educational activities at the daycare center and during vacation childcare will be based on element-i pedagogical practices, in which children are nurtured and helped to develop in a personalized manner based on their interests. Waltraud Weegmann, Managing Director of Konzept-e, emphasizes: “The Koehler Group’s commitment to the compatibility of family and career is exemplary. We are delighted to be able to implement our element-i pedagogy in Oberkirch through this collaboration - with the aim of raising children to become responsible and strong individuals. We promote their independence, commitment and increasing personal responsibility so that they can develop and flourish as members of a community.”

Rates will be the same for all families and identical to those charged by the town of Oberkirch, plus a standard meal/snack fee. This fee will be used to follow guidelines for a healthy diet for children and prepare fresh food at the daycare center on a daily basis, ensuring that all children at the center will be properly nourished throughout the day. More specifically, children will get breakfast, lunch, and a snack in the afternoon, and meals will be prepared in a separate kitchen planned specifically for this purpose.

Until the new Gretel-Furler daycare center building is ready for use during the 2025/2026 kindergarten year, employees can continue to use an existing daycare center. In fact, starting in September 2025, the first children to use the new daycare center will be able to go to the former St. Josef Kindergarten in Nußbach for the time being. Then, as soon as construction work is done, these children will be able to start going to the new daycare center in Oberkirch, right next to the company’s headquarters.

#### **Koehler Holding SE & Co. KG**

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*Figure: Representatives of the Koehler Group, the city of Oberkirch, Konzept-e and other project partners participated in the groundbreaking ceremony.*

*Source: Koehler Group*



### **2030 Sustainability Strategy**

*By building the new corporate daycare center, the Koehler Group is helping achieve sustainable development goals in the area of “People, the Key to Success.”*

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## About the Koehler Group

The Koehler Group was founded in 1807 and has been family-run from that moment to the present day. The group's core business activity lies in the development and production of high-quality specialty paper. This includes—among others—thermal paper, playing card board, beverage coasters, fine paper, carbon-less paper, recycled paper, decor paper, wood pulp board, sublimation paper, and also innovative specialty paper for the packaging industry. In Germany, the Koehler Group employs around 2,500 people across five production sites, with three additional sites in the USA. The group operates internationally, with an export share of around 70% in 2023, and brings in an annual turnover of around 1.1 billion euros.

As an energy-intensive company, Koehler invests in renewable energy projects such as wind energy, hydropower, photovoltaics, and biomass with its Koehler Renewable Energy business unit. The Koehler Group has set a goal of producing more energy from renewable sources by 2030 than is required for its paper production operations.

With its Koehler Innovative Solutions division, the Koehler Group is collaborating with start-ups to promote innovations in the core business segments “paper” and “renewable energy”.

Find more information at: <https://www.koehler.com>

## About Konzept-e

Konzept-e is an educational institution. For more than 30 years, we have been developing innovative educational, supervision, and care approaches and making them a reality together with companies and communities. We have over 45 element-i daycare+preschool facilities and four element-i schools where we nurture, look after, and educate children and teenagers with the goal of helping them become independent and resilient individuals. All the work we do is based on our own element-i pedagogical practices, which we use to help every individual develop in a personalized manner based that is based on their interests.

For more information, please visit: [www.konzept-e.de](http://www.konzept-e.de) or [www.element-i.de](http://www.element-i.de).

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