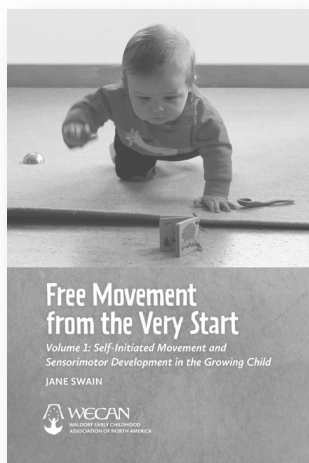

Free Movement from the Very Start
Volume I: Self-Initiated Movement and Sensorimotor
Development in the Very Young Child
Introduced by Dr. Debbie Laurin

Free Movement from the Very Start establishes a foundation for responsive and ethical care of infants and young children. It is rooted in an approach that values slowing down, free movement, and responsive care at the heart of the caregiver-child relationship. Jane references Henry David Thoreau's description of a healthy tree. Trees that grow more slowly at first develop a sound core, as if strengthened and solidified by the absence of an accelerated beginning. This offers a fitting analogy of slower development for young children.

In Volume I, *Self-Initiated Movement and Sensorimotor Development in the Growing Child*, Jane Swain successfully weaves insights from Dr. Emmi Pikler, Rudolf Steiner, and from the field of Spatial Dynamics. She impresses upon the reader a lasting image of the infant as a human being who feels, observes, remembers, and understands its own divine developmental plan, if given the chance by the child's primary carers. Wisely, Dr. Emmi Pikler and Rudolf Steiner understood and valued an early developmental approach that was grounded in free movement and environments that supported a child's own time to come into being in a natural unfolding. Jaimen McMillan's approach to movement education through Spatial Dynamics is touched on frequently in describing the child's development through self-initiated movement.



This will be explored more fully in a planned second volume.

While *Free Movement* describes key insights in the foundational development of children, it is also helpful for those working remedially with older children. It is filled with modern, up-to-date images depicting Pikler's self-initiated motor sequences and of children in the various stages of gross and fine motor development. Photos of caregiving moments capture the sacred relationship between the child and adult. There are also numerous photos illustrating

key aspects of the four lower senses. Each chapter is divided into sub-sections that feature particular aspects of each topic. For example, in Chapter 2, The Sequence of Self-Initiated Motor Development, subsections describe that sequence in its typical unfolding order.

Free Movement is a clarion call, urging adults to allow babies and young children enough time to come into their own internal rhythm of development. It is about the child's deep need to move and to be in relationship with caring adults. Honed by her many years of observing babies' movements, Jane's approach brings us closer to the child's experiences, inviting us to be curious and allow for a child's inborn abilities to unfurl. This book is an antidote to the hurried pace of life, showing us a way towards deepening our understanding of the unique needs of infants and toddlers. ♦

Adapted from the Introduction by Dr. Debbie Laurin, Pikler Pedagogue Candidate and Early Childhood Co-director, West Coast Institute for Studies in Anthroposophy