

Research Activity
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In June 1998, 15 teachers and prospective teachers of Parent-Child programs gathered in Portland, Oregon for a weekend conference entitled, "A Working with Parents and Very Young Children." Hosted by Erica Camay and the Portland Waldorf School, the conference brought teachers together from all over the West Coast and as well as from Ohio and Massachusetts. It was a truly exciting weekend as we worked together to better understand this relatively new work within Waldorf education.

Out of our working, the participants decided on a common research theme for the year or for the next few years. Using the indications given by Karl König in the book, *Eternal Childhood*, we are observing the significance of the 280 day cycle in the first three years (pp. 22-26). König states that at nine months we should see an urge to be upright (will), at 18 months an explosion of language (feeling), at 27 months a change in the expression of concepts (thinking), and at 36 months (three years) the "birth" of the ego. Our research project is to observe and record these intervals and pay attention to their archetypal accuracy -- ideally leading to a substantive reporting that could be shared with parents. We are also paying attention to children who do not follow this pattern and what we observe about them at those 280 day points, compared to when they actually achieve the corresponding attributes.

A major focus of our research is on the three year mark and the signals of the emergent ego. Many children are saying, "I am" as early as 18-24 months, and the question arises, "are these children really incarnating faster or is this particular expression of self no longer the main signifier of the birth of the ego?" Because many kindergarten teachers work with children older than three, it is in the realm of Parent-Child teachers and nursery teachers to really observe and record what we are seeing at three years of age.

Our general hope is to have enough people involved in this research so that we can offer to our colleagues a substantive piece of research that reflects the experience of today's children. In addition, by focusing on this theme, we hope to further clarify König's indications and be able to present them to parents in a way that is more understandable -especially focusing on what is actually being observed. Finally, our ultimate intention is that by engaging in this research we create a bond across the country (and world) between those of us who are engaged in working with the very young children.

If you work with children three and under, we invite and encourage you to join us in this project. If you would like additional information, please contact Erica Camay at (503) 234-3442 or via email at ericac@europa.com. Blessings on our work!