

Gateways

Newsletter of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America ♦ Issue 72, Spring 2017

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From the Editor

— Nancy Blanning

As early childhood educators, we are constantly striving to better understand how to support the healthy incarnation of the dear, brave souls who are coming to this earth. Waldorf education is fortunate to have the insights provided by Rudolf Steiner about how children learn to inhabit their bodies and experience the body as the physical house for life. The divine plan is that this body will be a comfortable home and a safe shelter. From here the child can venture out into the world to explore, discover, and learn about the wonders surrounding us and all the people who will encourage, support, and guide him or her to fulfill the individual destiny the child has affirmed for this life.

Feeling safe and sheltered is essential. Without a sense of security, the child may feel anxious and timid, afraid to explore, afraid to risk approaching something unfamiliar and uncertain. Stepping into the world without feeling secure and confident, the child may feel overwhelmed by sensory experiences she cannot digest and put into order. This can manifest as manic behaviors of wild craziness that the child cannot contain. It can show as meltdowns where the child falls apart in frustration and even rage. It can result in withdrawal; life is just too much so it is better to not leave the house at all. Distress from inaccurate or inefficient sensory streams disrupt the serenity the child seeks. The monitor of how all the senses are cooperating and whether the child feels well and at ease and comfortable is the **life sense**.

When all is humming along well, the life sense reassures the child that the house is secure and all is well. If health and harmony in the life sense are jeopardized early in the child's life, the incarnational road ahead may have many stones and uneven places where the feeling of security and safety is hard to come by. Guarding, protecting, and supporting the life sense is hugely important. This Spring 2017 issue of *Gateways* looks at the life sense from several perspectives.

We are honored to have "The Life Sense" by Barbara Baldwin, WECAN 2016 February Conference presenter, to lead the **Featured Topic** section. A curative educator from Australia, Barbara is a tireless and fearless advocate for each and every

child, especially challenging ones. Her presentation helped teachers to understand how difficult behaviors we see in the classroom are so often expressions of a disturbed life sense. Her deeply thoughtful and informative presentation offers guidance to understand, without judgment or condemnation, that the child is communicating his distress to us. Realizing this important fact opens a door to more objective seeing and the opening of eyes and hearts to more compassionate observation. Her article in this issue is but a part of her whole presentation, which will be published in its entirety in an upcoming volume that will include all the keynotes from the three years of WECAN conferences dedicated to the life sense. Thank you deeply to Barbara for this prodigious work.

Proper sleep and rest are fundamental in supporting the life sense. Aniko Gereb shares "The Afternoon Program: Working on Inner Quiet," describing what she has developed at her school. As you read this, you may experience it almost as an art form with the conscientious thought and care given to all the details. Each of our settings is different in the possibilities we have to create such a quiet and serene rhythm. Yet here is a source of inspiration for honoring and supporting the life sense through proper rest.

Healthy nutrition is likewise essential to a vital life sense. Providing this becomes harder and more complicated as we see children in our programs with food allergies and sensitivities. Zoë Rothfuss took on this topic for her teacher training research project. "Food Restrictions and Allergies: Feeding Our Children Well," her discussion of meeting and accommodating allergies—particularly gluten issues—is practical and considers sharing food from the standpoint of social inclusion. It is fascinating reading and accompanied by gluten-free recipes she has used successfully in her classroom. Laurie Clark looks at nutrition from a pedagogical perspective in a companion article, "The Pedagogical Importance of Nutrition." Thanks to them both for addressing this very timely subject.

Pioneers celebrates the life and work of Eva Kudar, a prominent Waldorf kindergarten teacher,

who crossed the threshold on Michaelmas Day last fall. Her contribution to Waldorf early childhood in North America was important and inspiring. She was one of the first members of the WECAN board in its earliest days. Her biography, as shared here through reminiscences from some of her colleagues, is a dramatic story in itself.

For the Classroom brings “Nursery Rhyme Bean Bag Games” for the kindergarten from Laurie Clark. These are enthusiastically received by the children and playfully and artistically support sensory integration. Colleague Trice Atchison describes her work cultivating quiet observation in parent-and-child classes in “Stepping Back.” Playful, artistic, incarnation-supporting movement and the quiet, interested attention of caring adults also bolster health to the life sense.

For Our Growth shares a “Call to Self-Care,” proposed by California colleague Kathy Rinden. We pay great attention to how we support the life sense of the children. In all we do toward this end, we often neglect care of our own vital forces. Kathy invites readers to share how you have found ways to continue doing our very demanding teaching work along with holding body and soul together without burnout.

The **Book Review** for this issue features a WECAN publication, *The Seven Life Processes*. This was not intentionally planned to coincide with Barbara Baldwin’s article, but it is most fortuitous that it does. I took on the task of reviewing this myself out of a professional interest in this topic, never expected this to be gripping reading, but found myself surprised and delighted by an engaging discussion. The etheric forces of the life sense and these seven life processes came alive for me in a totally new way. The life sense’s constant seven selfless servants—*breathing, warming, nourishing, sorting or secretion, maintaining, growing, and reproducing*—are really alive and dynamic in what they provide to us. Through this sevenfold lens we can see the life sense of our classrooms in new and very provocative ways. Please do add this book to your reading list.

International News wraps up this issue with news from the IASWECE conference last fall in Estonia. Louise deForest shares glimpses of this far-away country, the birthplace of Dr. Helmut von K  gelgen, the founder of the Waldorf International Kindergarten Association.

Gateways Issue 73 (Fall 2017) will be dedicated to stories and storytelling. We will lead off with the content of Susan Perrow’s WECAN February Conference Keynote talks on therapeutic storytelling. We will be so happy to share the warm, inspiring, and healing content of all she offered during the conference. There had recently been an online conversation about storytelling in our classrooms. Children’s impatience with listening to stories was a topic of discussion, along with whether it is still relevant—and even possible with short attention spans—to tell any fairy tales, much less any longer ones. Stories, fairy tales, nature tales, protection stories, puppetry, “acting-the-story-out,” and stories “dramatized” in movement during circle time are part of our rich Waldorf early childhood cultural and spiritual heritage that we do not want to lose. We warmly and earnestly invite your contributions on this topic.

This letter began by emphasizing how important it is for the child to feel safe and sheltered. We can further say that in our unpredictable and sometimes confusing times, it is urgent to find ways to assure our children that the world is good through the goodness of people who live here. Artistic means of reassurance, images of protection and sheltering through stories, verses, songs, and movements are all invited as submissions for *Gateways Issue 73*. There is so much circulating in the world today that is antithetical to all that Waldorf education pledges to provide to our children to give them courage for the future. We invite you to share your stories, ideas, and activities that affirm life so that we can flood the world with goodness. Thank you all in advance for what you will share on this very important need in our time.

Best wishes to all. ◆

FOCUS: Sense of Life

The Life Sense Within the Perspective of Point and Periphery

— Barbara Baldwin

Our rightful place as educators is to be removers of hindrances.

Each child in every age brings something new into the world from divine regions,

And it is our task as educators

To remove body and soul obstacles out of the child's way.

To remove hindrances so that the spirit may enter

In full freedom into life.

~ Rudolf Steiner
“The Spiritual Ground of Education”
(GA 305, Lecture 4).

Early in my career in curative education, I felt drawn to the work with young children. They bring into the world from divine regions new impulses from the spiritual world, which will carry us into the future. Early childhood teachers are blessed with the chance to be closer to the spiritual world through the children they teach. How can we actively experience this connection and learn from the children, while staying aware of their frailties and open to their needs?

When a child is born, the spirit, which was expanded in its pre-earthly life, gets compressed into this tiny physical frame and orients itself in the

physical world. In *Die Zwölf Sinne des Menschen*, Dr. Ernst Lauer, who in 1953 was the first person to attempt an anthology of Steiner's twelve senses, quotes Steiner as saying that the four lower senses are actually a reflection of the child's pre-earthly existence. Everything we take in through the senses is more than mere sense impression. Through our senses we experience those spiritual forces that make us what we human beings can become:

“The early experiences of the lower senses are an echo of pre-natal experiences.

1. The **Sense of Balance** is a reflection of our experience in the actual spiritual world (the realm of the Zodiac).
2. The **Sense of Movement** is a reflection of our experience in the planetary spheres.
3. The **Sense of Life** is a reflection of our experience in the etheric region surrounding the earth.
4. The **Sense of Touch** is related to the formative effect of the external world on the human organism” (Lauer, Chapter 3).

In infancy, the sensory experience is unified and undifferentiated. As the three faculties of thinking, feeling, and willing develop, the senses take on a more distinct character. Initially this happens unconsciously and can later be raised into consciousness. This process can clearly be seen when, for example, a small child inadvertently touches the sides of the bassinet, an event that slowly triggers awareness. The action is repeated until it becomes an experience. We will later see how actions later in early childhood, such as bumping into things and scratching, are attempts to experience boundary in the physical world—where perhaps the early experiences were somehow insufficient.

This article explores the life sense within the context of the twelve senses, particularly how it reveals itself with all its frailties in children who have different learning needs and who may need special education. We will also view conditions of the senses in relation to point and periphery, a central concept in curative education and the motif of the meditation given by Rudolf Steiner to curative educators. We will consider how sensory activity changes during the course of life—"the biography of the senses"—and will also view extremes of sensory activity, particularly as regards the life sense, which we encounter in children today.

Foundational Concepts

Rudolf Steiner did not refer to the senses as a twelvefold unity until 1916 and subsequent years, in lectures such as *The Riddle of Humanity* (GA170) and *Toward Imagination/Cosmic Being and Egohood* (GA169).

Steiner originally spoke of just ten senses, regarding touch and ego as intrinsic to all sensory activity: every sensing is a form of touching and our ego is involved in every sensory process. While this is true, he later deemed touch and ego to be two distinct senses: the former giving us a boundary between ourselves and the world, the latter enabling us to go beyond this boundary to an awareness of others as separate beings. Touch and ego are deeply connected. Touch conveys an awareness of where I end and the world begins, at the same time bestowing an innate sense of security, of *being* within my own body. It separates me from the world and connects me to myself within my body. We find many disturbances in this area in children today, seen in excessive touching (of self and others), hitting, scratching and more, which can be seen as attempts to reinforce the experience of the body as a boundary.

We know that touch forms the basis for the unfolding of the sense of the I of the other person. Steiner called this sense the *Ich-Sinn*, or sense of ego. He was not referring to one's personal sense of self, as in "I do" or "I feel," but the sensing of the other as a separate entity, which allows us to "sleep into the other and wake up to myself" in quick succession. He spoke of the need to experience this distinction during early childhood in lectures such as *The*

Foundations of Human Experience (GA 293, Lecture 8). To do this requires the fundamental experience delivered by the sense of touch. Just as many children have disturbances of the sense of touch as mentioned above, many adults also today have a weakness in the sense of I or other. They lack awareness and may even a fear invading another person's space. It can also express itself as rudeness, indifference, and lack of empathy—a total blotting out of the other.

This brings us to the fundamental distinction between doing and sensing, between thinking and perceiving.

Willing and sensing are united in the infant and only gradually become separate faculties. In *doing*, our will and metabolic-limb system are involved; in *perceiving* our intention and nervous system are involved. Willing is an instinctual drive from within, inherent from birth, which engages the musculature; sensing and perceiving are slowly awakened in the child through interaction with the environment. As will activity permeates the body and comes under the child's control, the sensory system is freed into activity. In willing, an inner motivation moves toward the world; in sensing and perceiving, the world imprints itself on our being. Thus kindergarten teachers must understand that the child is fully a sense organ, as Steiner described in *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education* (GA 303); he discusses the soul imitating the surroundings in *The Child's Changing Consciousness and Waldorf Education* (GA 306). The child takes in everything in her environment, and the environment makes a deep imprint on her young and impressionable organs.

Another essential fundamental distinction is what Karl König called *discrimination* and *integration* in his book, *Being Human*. While discrimination is an analytical activity (through discrimination I learn to differentiate and the world becomes richer), integration is a synthesizing activity (I bring things together, making a wholeness of the parts). In the process, my experience of myself becomes stronger.

I remember as a child, walking and playing on the meadow, enjoying the feel and the smell of the grass and jumping into pungent newly-mown piles. My father was a gardener and one day he taught me to distinguish the different types of grass and to recognize the different so-called weeds as herbs.

Suddenly, the greenness underfoot was no longer just “grass.” It became a whole world of interest and delight.

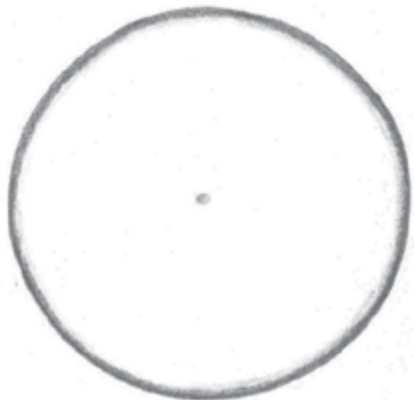
We exist in a twofold relationship to the world. On the one hand: I am my world, am at its center. From this center I activate my senses, which connect me with the world. On the other hand: the world flows in through my senses and affects me unconsciously. Yet the more conscious I become, the more I can refine my sense activity and experience myself as separate from the world—as a knowing and growing separate entity.

Many senses are already active *in utero*, but only after birth does the child gradually wake up to the world of the senses. The world around enters the child’s consciousness through the senses, and sense impressions awaken and further activate the sense organs to intentionally connect with the surrounding world.

One’s own I is the great integrator of the senses. Without the I, the sense world invades us. Sense activity awakens the child’s I, which then is able to educate and direct the sense organs’ activity.

Point and Periphery

This brings us to the central theme of this article: point and periphery. Steiner refers to this motif, in relationship between self and world:



Meditation Image Showing Point and Periphery

*Through the wide world
there lives and moves the
real being of man;*

*While in the innermost core
of man the mirror image
of the world is living.*

*The I unites the two and thus
fulfils the meaning of existence.*

*~ Rudolf Steiner
Verses and Meditations*

The theme of point (or center) and periphery is central to our topic. Every sense has a central and a peripheral aspect. We are all obviously the center of our own lives, but both in our families and in our work, we form the periphery for our children. How we do this determines the level of protection or openness we provide. In the family, we have to grow with our children and not be overprotective. In our kindergartens we have to be aware of the level of protection and openness needed for different age groups, for different temperaments and constitutions, and for individuals with special needs. This demands constant awareness and adjustment. We have to be grounded in our center so that we can move our awareness to the periphery without losing our grasp of the center.

Every morning we create the circle, a periphery which is at the same time its own center. Each child is her own center on this periphery and at the same time we create this center together, with the room and the world around on the periphery. What is at its centre? It is something intangible that affects us all. What happens to the children who are unable to join in creating the circle? What do they experience? Some throw themselves into the center, as though they cannot bear to be so exposed on the periphery.

Others remain on the periphery and cannot become part of the little center.

Some Examples

How can we respond when we see a child “outside,” on the periphery? It is said that some children are happy on their own and prefer to be outsiders. As a result, some children remain on the periphery for their entire kindergarten careers. The truth for many, as heard from those who can express themselves through assisted communication, is that they *wish* to join in but cannot. It may be right to allow them to stay on the periphery for a while, as they adjust to kindergarten routine; but we must always inwardly include them and gradually also outwardly invite them into the circle.

Japanese author Naoki Higashida wrote as a thirteen-year-old autistic boy: “The truth is, we’d love to be with other people. But because things never, ever go right, we end up getting used to being alone, without even noticing this is happening. Whenever I overhear someone remark how much I prefer being on my own, it makes me feel desperately lonely.”

These children are stuck in their own little centers and cannot find a way to connect. They cannot move between center and periphery as most people learn to at a relatively early age. Many junctures in their day create intense discomfort: the transition from home to school, from indoors to outdoors, from one activity to another. In fact, many children today have difficulties with transitions. The experience of these difficulties is conveyed through the life sense and may be expressed through various behaviors—from pushing and bumping, to hitting and biting, to covering the ears and screaming. These behaviors express discomfort, arising in the life sense, and communicate that they do not feel safe or happy.

How can we respond? We can find what they *do* enjoy, what they *can* respond to, and begin there. Join in their repetitive play so that they don’t feel so alone. Join their little centers. Realize that they often participate from a distance and are not ignoring you. It’s just that they cannot show their participation through facial expression or eye contact. Don’t give up on them or assume they don’t understand.

At the other extreme are children who throw themselves into the middle of the circle, spoil the

togetherness, and destroy the ambience. Truly every child would like to join and be part of the group, pleasing their teacher and parents. They would if they could, but they can’t. Some feel a constant agitation and restlessness, which drives them into action when the rest of the class is silent.

Case Study: Josh

Josh was a “wild boy,” always on the move, who pushed and shoved to get what he wanted. His voice was loud. Any piece of wood would become a gun or weapon, wielded indiscriminately, along with loud, vulgar-sounding noises. How to deal with this disturbing factor in the kindergarten? The wise kindergarten director began each day in the yard, working with a rake or a broom. When Josh arrived, she greeted him with a smile: “Josh, I’ve been waiting for you. I need your help,” she said, and handed him a broom or a wheelbarrow to help with the “job” she was doing. That done, she’d send him to the wooded end of the kindergarten to “shoot the wild bear” or to catch the giant fish. There he could shout and wield his weapons without endangering others. Some of his surplus energy had been gotten rid of by the time everyone came together for playtime or morning circle.

It requires moral imagination to understand and deal with these children without resorting to isolation or punishment.

Another example of this separation can be seen in children who want to speak but cannot. Sometimes they speak at home and not at school; some can speak with other children but not with adults; some fall silent the moment they step out of their homes. These children carry the diagnosis of selective mutism. Adults who have overcome selective mutism say that they find this diagnosis offensive. It is not a choice; they long to speak but cannot. Teachers often report that they simply won’t talk, because they have heard the child speak to other children or to a parent. Teachers must not take it personally. These children long to chatter away like others—and at home they are often loud and bossy. Yet outside the home, they are unable to make a sound. Their muteness is a silent communication that something is blocked between themselves and the world, often based on fear or anxiety. Only love, patience and acceptance

can help to heal the pain they feel at their exclusion. Observing these children will amaze you: they are usually extremely intelligent, often quite interactive, but they just cannot speak.

Case Study: Lilly

Lilly is a slender girl with light, transparent skin and big eyes. She keenly observes everything the other children do, listens to and enjoys stories, often smiles when another child is naughty. She clearly understands everything, is intelligent and usually plays quietly in a corner. She likes to help the teachers with little tasks. At home she is reported to be boisterous, loud and dominating.

Initially she is totally silent at kindergarten, following all routines, but never speaking or making a sound. When she needs something, she indicates with her eyes that she needs the toilet or wants a drink.

Gradually she is heard to hum some of the circle songs (all of which she sings at home). With time she joins in all the gestures and slowly, very slowly and quietly, she is able to join in.

It is a fatal mistake to cajole or even compliment her on her progress. She might once again become paralyzed by the expectations. Quiet patience and acceptance is what she needs to help unlock the prison of the center and allow her to move more freely between herself and others, between center and periphery.

Point and Periphery Again

As mentioned above, every sense has its central and peripheral aspect. As you sit and listen to a lecture, you can focus your auditory and visual attention on the speaker, screening out peripheral information while directing your attention to what is important. Well-adjusted people do this constantly. Karl König gives an amusing example relating to the senses of touch, self-movement (body image), and life.

Imagine lying on a warm, sandy beach with a relaxed experience of well-being. Suddenly you feel a tickling move up your arm. An ant is progressing up your arm. You try to ignore it. But soon focus changes from well-being to the ant. Without looking,

you catch the creature and toss it back to the sand, now to resume your sun-bathing.

How is this possible? At one moment you were totally lost in the peripheral experience of well-being. The next, your sense of life is disturbed by the itch, your sense of touch follows its progress, and your sense of self-movement informs your other hand exactly where to swipe in order to catch the creature. From peripheral to central awareness and back again to relaxation and semi-oblivion, the senses have worked together seamlessly throughout.

The Life Sense in Life

The basis for the functioning of the life sense is already present *in utero* and is closely linked to the sense of wellness of the mother. It is functional in its own right from the moment of birth. A sleeping baby radiates harmony and contentment. Conversely, as soon as the infant experiences any discomfort, hunger, or pain, the life sense shoots into action, sending messages of the disruption, and the child cries. The sense of life gives information about the state of the body, not about the soul, so we must realize that when a child cries, she is externalising bodily pain. Soul pain arises later. As Edmond Schoorel writes in his excellent book, *The First Seven Years*, the sense of life functions as a “mirror” of the bodily functions, alerting us to anything that is not in order within the body, within the life processes.

Initially the experience of the disruption of the life sense is all-pervading. The infant has no sense of the different parts of the body, so any discomfort or pleasure is a whole-body experience. Picture a baby feeding: she drinks not only with her mouth; her fingers and even toes show involvement and enjoyment. Similarly, any pain is for the infant a total experience, provoking gut-wrenching screams until the source is dealt with by the adult. A toddler will often tell her parent that she has hurt herself, but not be able to point to the source of the pain. Only very gradually does this become more localized. By four years, most children can tell whether they have a headache or a tummy ache or where they have hurt themselves after a fall.

However, this normal development does not take place in children whose life sense is disturbed. Such children—often but not always girls—respond

intensely to every discomfort. The smallest hurt or pain causes a major disruption in their sense of well-being. They cry excessively and require comforting (often with some soothing cream or a Band-Aid) before they can return to a state of equilibrium. They live in a heightened state of alertness and anxiety because they so often feel pain and discomfort.

In our kindergartens these children cling to their parents, find it difficult to adjust, and like to stick close to the teacher. They generally do not move around much, preferring to stay in one place. They often whine and complain that everything is “too much!” With their demands, these children can easily get on our nerves. What is happening here?

In these children many of their senses are too alert and too acute. When any sense is overreacting, the life sense is affected. Any disruption anywhere will affect the life sense of these children—and initially they need our protection, our understanding, and our sympathy. Only gradually, through our understanding and empathy, can they learn to manage their pain and discomfort.

Case Study: M.O.

M.O. is a bright little six-year-old, with a large head, blue eyes, and curly blond hair. He talks with a pleasant, melodious voice and can express himself well when he feels well. However, he often feels unwell, tires easily, seems to complain a lot, and can't really express himself during these states. It is as though he goes into “shut-down.”

Once at a playground, he wanted to go onto a small rotating toy. But as soon as he was on, he wanted off, not wanting to expose himself to the gyrations. As soon as he was off, he wanted on again. And so it went until the adult, losing patience, called him a “woos” (Australian slang for coward), adding insult to injury. He had been trying to overcome his fear and discomfort of an over sensitive sense of balance. Now, the physical pain he had been trying to deal with became soul pain: remorse and shame.

The adult quickly realised with shock what distress she had caused, apologized, and validated his feelings.

However, the adult's shame and guilt at having misread and mismanaged the situation lasted a long time. I was that adult and for a long time I inwardly asked for

forgiveness from my grandson, for this shameful lapse in my human understanding and empathy.

This incident made me acutely aware of how easily and how often we do these children an injustice. They are so sensitive that they are often late with skills like bike riding that come easily to most children. Their hypersensitivity causes discomfort, makes them anxious, and prevents them from engaging when they really long to participate.

At the other end of the spectrum of reactivity, we have children with a very high pain threshold. Very often they seem like bulls in a china shop: blustering, bumping into people and things, pushing things over, talking too loudly, and reacting too little. We often fear the disruptive element they bring into the kindergarten. We like things to be calm and orderly, but these children arrive with a bang. In some cases, with their strong urge to play, they direct things and know exactly what they want and will punch and pull things to achieve it. When they fall, they never cry, don't seem to notice the pain, and similarly are oblivious to the pain they cause others. Bumping into others gives them sensation, and they seek sensation because their senses, and most specifically their life sense, is under-responsive; it does not give them the feedback they crave.

Every child wants to belong, to be accepted and loved. It pains them not to feel the connection. Yet they will often repeat annoying or pain-causing behaviors because at least the pain gives them an experience. A boy once fell and cut his leg to the bone, but didn't notice until other children screamed and pointed to the blood. His life sense gave him no feedback, so he was constantly in search of sensory experience, making him a danger to himself and a major disruption to the class.

These children also need nurturing but from the opposite extreme. One needs to give them deep muscle experiences: rolling them in a blanket, kneading them like dough, rubbing and brushing their skin to awaken sensation and gradually softening the touch to bring them to self-awareness. Simple body geography, touching them in different ways—playful slapping and scratching, rubbing, brushing, tapping and stroking—can help them feel their boundary. Learning to sense differentiation can draw them from the perpetual periphery into the comfort of their own centers.

Sensory disturbances may be of two kinds: **hyper**, meaning too sensitive and overreacting, or **hypo**,

meaning under-reactive and sensation-seeking. In some forms of ADHD, children don't experience their boundaries and get lost in the periphery. Children on the autism spectrum get caught within their own organisms and cannot connect with others as they would wish. Some children swing between these two poles.

Problems that superficially appear to be behavioral are in fact manifestations of disturbances of the senses, in particular of the life sense. If we can begin to recognize these extremes of behavior as disorders of center and periphery, we can find new paths toward understanding and developing new approaches to them. ♦

Barbara Baldwin is a curative educator, therapist and speech pathologist. She works in Australia and internationally with children and families.

Resources:

This article will appear electronically at www.waldorfearlychildhood.org in the coming months, including an enhanced discussion of point and periphery. See the Resources section of this newsletter at page 38 for details.

- Naoki Higashida, *The Reason I Jump* (New York: Random House, 2014)
- Karl König, *Being Human* (Spring Valley: Anthroposophic Press, 1989; originally *Heilpädagogische Diagnostik*, 1984)
- Hans Erhard Lauer, *Die Zwölf Sinne des Menschen* (Basel: R. G. Zbinden & Co, 1953)
- Edmond Schoorel, *The First Seven Years* (Fair Oaks: Rudolf Steiner College Press, 2004).
- Rudolf Steiner, *Verses and Meditations* (Great Barrington: Steiner Books, 2004)

The Afternoon Program: Working on Inner Quiet and Other Benefits of This Work

— Aniko Gereb



The active and full morning hours of the kindergarten are naturally followed by a quiet, rest-oriented, intimate time. This creates a warm, home-like atmosphere where the children can digest the sensory, physical, social and emotional events of the day, a place to relax in a warm, safe environment filled with love and acceptance. The main focus is on helping the children achieve and maintain inner quiet through being in a reverent and safe space held for them by the caregiver. Falling asleep may be the end result of this state.

The setting in the room must be different from the morning time. The children enter into a new “dimension.” The curtains are drawn, the lights are dimmed, the room is warm but freshly aired, and mats are set out in a circular pattern. This new scene inspires a slower and quieter pace. Young children like to have clear routines

and rituals around rest time so they can relax into the experience. The time before nap-time is important. There are no surprises, choices, or changes, and no competitions.

Ideally, the children have a long outside playtime before lunch and rest. It is important for them to play as freely as possible in the natural world. Susan R. Johnson, in "Sleep Article II," reports Dr. Michaela Glöckler's explanation that "[h]ow we live our waking life determines the quality and depth of our sleep. It also determines our ability to be nurtured by the cosmos during our sleep . . . Just as we need to fully exhale in order to fully inhale . . . we also need to be fully conscious (awake) to the events of our day in order to have a deeper and more restful sleep." The children are fully awake after the rich experience of a wonderful and busy kindergarten morning with a lot of time in nature. Our deeply ingrained transition song brings the children into the transformed classroom. Outdoor clothes and shoes are removed and placed just so to create a routine that educates the will and keeps the room in order.

A quiet and friendly lunchtime follows. Finger games and songs with music from the kinderharp support this mood. When lunch is finished, the children are dismissed one by one to their beds.

As mentioned above, the beds are set in a circle. It is important that the children rest in the same, special place each time. They lie with their heads towards the center and feet at the periphery. A beautiful image is created: the children of the Sun, each of them being a sunbeam, shining from the center to the periphery. The caregiver tucks them in and recites a little verse: "The moon is round, the moon is round, it has two eyes, one nose, but no sound." This can also be personalized for each child using the color of their eyes. This is very soothing for most children. But if a child does not like it, perhaps instead a gentle pat on the shoulder or a foot rub will be welcomed. Quiet singing of a lullaby can proceed, or a story that was not told earlier. Then the gentle playing of the harp can take over. This can be a simple tone in the mood



of the fifth, preferably the small lemniscate.

All this time the caregiver is on the rug at the children's level. If the caregiver can really feel restful at this time, this significantly helps children go to sleep. A caregiver who is restless or preoccupied with other thoughts will impede the children's ability to feel relaxed. Now is a good moment for the caregiver to take the time and rest her thoughts on each child with interest and warmth. Picture some great moment captured from that child that very morning, or maybe openly picture the behavior problem they may have presented and let the partnership be formed with the child's angel. These can be the most profound and intimate problem-solving moments, but the caregiver has to be fully present for that to happen.

Lisa Gromicko, in "Toward Human Development: The Physiological Basis for Sleep," quotes both Rudolf Steiner and Waldorf teacher Audrey McAllen in stressing the importance of sleep to healthy development.

"Before age nine, the most important thing is for children to learn how to properly sleep" (Steiner). Audrey McAllen describes sleeping as a "breathing rhythm between the soul-spirit and the earthly body." She adds that learning to sleep and learning to eat, "to take in substance and transform it, an action of the



ego” are the two most “important educational factors” in the life of the young child. As we have seen, the transformation of substance, whether it is through the digestion of food or sensory impressions occurs on the physiologic level by way of the liver metabolism during sleep. How do we teach children to sleep properly? The breathing image given by Audrey McAllen is the key. Learning to sleep is learning to breathe. Without rest, the human being is continually breathing in. We are really speaking about a rhythmic function. Rhythm is living, breathing, life giving, never exactly the same, but regular. The young child’s rhythmic (cardiovascular) system is not yet developed, but the health and building up of the entire physiology depends upon rhythm. Rhythm must be imprinted in the early years from without

(from *The Developing Child: The First Seven Years*, edited by Susan Howard).

The child learns how to sleep by living around adults who appreciate the importance of sleep. For some children, we need to invest significantly more effort to help them learn these rhythms and to balance and overcome restlessness. Citing Norbert Glas, Gromicko also notes that “Although some may not sleep, all children including non-sleepers benefit from an enforced rest-time. Being able to pause (to be

still and quiet) is a skill that eludes even many adults. Children need desperately to learn this... the quality of sense impressions that are ingested during the day also have a tremendous influence on the child’s ability to sleep or rest” (ibid.). We have plenty of reasons not to give up on any children by labeling them as non-sleepers or letting them do something other than rest. As always, a fair amount of firm, inner conviction is required of the caregiver to secure for the child what he needs. The conditions in a Waldorf School may not always be ideal to run a quiet time in the afternoon. The “school being” is still very

lively around 1:00 to 1:30. It is very important for the caregiver who is holding the group to be comfortable with this. It totally depends on her reactions to any outside noises (recess, colleagues’ or parents’ voices, other class activities such as eurythmy, strings, singing, or movement) for the group to stay calm and peaceful and not react. As we always say, “You are the one who makes the weather.” The children will completely follow every single inner reaction or mood of the teacher. Therefore, we are able to create whatever we wish for the group. Usually, it is not necessary to fix our surroundings in order to have ideal conditions; it needs to come from our inner self. It is always helpful to eliminate any extreme disturbances but never try to mute “the crickets in the meadow.” The children will get used to the existing conditions.

The psychologist Daria M. Brezinski has said: “An essential key to creative intelligence is to be allowed to go to quiet places or quiet time and just BE or allow the mind to drift off, staring into space. When a child appears to have a blank stare or the gaze seems empty, the blank or ‘far off’ look is the brain synapses getting in touch with creative intelligence, making important connections. It is connecting synapses and discordant thoughts into a whole, putting the puzzle



pieces together . . . Allow time for a child's quiet space . . . When a child is calm, they become more sensitive to the finer qualities of life."

Our role is to teach children to breathe, to be quiet and peaceful, to learn to feel good and secure in their physical body, to feel that the world is a good and safe place, where they can relax and open themselves to everything that may come, letting their soul and spirit breathe and connect. If we are able to put this into practice, then we really have accomplished our job in respect to the incarnating child.

Sleep will follow from this quiet place as a response of the healthy physical body, in a perfectly predictable rhythm and routine. As Rudolf Steiner said in *A Modern Art of Education*, "In our modern civilization, where all eyes concentrate on outer, material things, no attention is given to the state of sleep, although man devotes to it one third of his daily life. Never should it be thought that man is inactive while he sleeps. He is inactive only in so far as the outer external world is concerned but as regards to the health of his body, and more especially in the health of his soul and spirit, sleep is all important. True education can provide for a right life of sleep, for whatever activities belong to a man's waking hours are carried over into the condition of sleep."

As we all know, the early growth years are crucial, and the only time physical growth occurs is during sleep time. Sleep is the only time that the body restores and renews its forces from the demands of the day. During the busy mornings in the kindergarten we are working continually on the development of the four lower senses. What the children receive through the senses during sleep will be literally digested through the metabolism and will become the child's physical body, forming the organs, brain-nerve-sense pathways, endocrine system, circulatory-rhythmic system, digestion and the entire physical construction. This occurs under the direction of the ego through the etheric (life) forces. The etheric forces give life, form, energy, and health to the body, working strongly with the immune system and contributing to all growth and repair processes. The primary organ of the etheric body is the liver, the organ of the will. The liver's vitalizing, restorative, growth-related processes occur in deep sleep. It is only during sleep that the

nervous system can rest, repair, and rebuild itself. During waking hours there is no possibility for cell growth. According to Rudolf Steiner, “although the overall time spent in sleep is shorter, the evolution of the sleep life is more significant in many respects than that of waking life” (*Understanding Young Children*).

According to Dr. Michaela Glöckler, “in school, children tend to be alert in the morning, but then are all tired out between 1:00 and 2:30 pm when they experience a sharp decline in their physiologic activity. In the later afternoon there is a second peak when they are happy and like to be active, and then a second decline before the later evening when they want to sleep” (*The Developing Child* at 60-61).

Lisa Gromicko’s research further finds:

Naps are extremely beneficial. ‘Long naps occurring at the right times make the child feel rested. . . A missed nap is sleep lost forever’ (citing Marc Weissbluth). Children do not make up their naps at night... Children who do not nap have elevated stress hormones that also cause increased alertness and irritability. The nap should last for at least thirty minutes (an hour is better) and is best spent in a stationary place (not in a car, rocking chair, etc.). Afternoon naps need to end by 2:30 or 3:00 p.m. at the latest... for children, the more regular sleep that they get, the easier it is to fall asleep. ‘Children who are not overtired sleep much better and more quietly at night’ (citing Norbert Glas)... Children ages three to six still need a nap of one to three hours (The Developing Child at 61-62).

Dr. Rebecca Spencer, associate professor of psychology and neuroscience at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, recently published a study of the importance of afternoon naps in preschoolers, which was reported by Alice Park in *Time Magazine* online. Dr. Spencer observed: “a lot is happening in the brain of a slumbering preschooler, including processing and storing memories that are the foundation for learning.” Dr. Spencer also strongly encourages nap opportunities in kindergarten, since her study demonstrates how naps boost cognitive performances in preschoolers. Nap is when neural connections are strengthened, thus cementing abilities acquired during the day. Sleep is imperative for a healthy life, because in the dream state problems are worked out and information is filed away for future reference.

Also important is the rhythm and routine that



follows the nap. The sleep-wake rhythm supports human growth and consciousness. Rhythm is the balance between life processes of rest and movement. The primary organ of the rhythmic system is the heart. Friedrich Husemann and Otto Wolff observed, “In the human heart the earthly and the cosmic are intimately united The human ego experience can develop in freedom experienced within.” As Steiner was known to have advised, “rhythm truly is the carrier of life,” and the reinstatement of rhythm after rest time is critical in the afternoon program and must be done in a natural, gentle and predictable manner. In order to achieve this, the caregiver has to create a transitioning scene and mood by slowly engaging in quiet tidying and domestic activities such as arranging toys, crayons, and dishes, dusting, and the like. At 2:30 pm the caregiver opens the curtains or shutters and gently sings the familiar wake-up song while doing exactly the same activity every day, such as sweeping gently, wiping the tables, or

whatever other activities come naturally with slow and gentle movements, humming or singing, smiling and greeting each awakening child with her eyes.

With gentle hand gestures, the children will know when to join the teacher in the tidying process by folding their own bedding (with help from the teacher or an older child as needed). This is the perfect time to engage the children in quiet chores like watering plants, putting away mats, or using the carpet sweeper. Or someone can simply play the kinderharp, then wrap it and put it safely away.

All these activities entrain behavior through imitation. It takes time to teach children these skills. In our busy, packed, and rushed world parents find little time to teach children properly by modeling these skills and to allow them time to help.

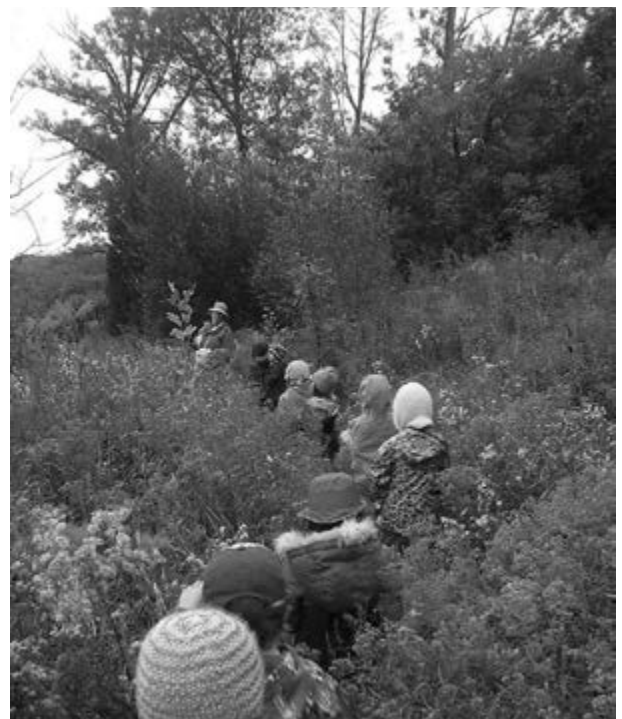
The afternoon continues with some fine-motor activities, a light snack, and further outside play. During this time spent outdoors, the children's energy levels peak, which manifests itself in happy and engaged play until it is time to go home.

The afternoon is the most sacred time of the day in my work with the little ones and their angels, a time when we truly bond as a second family. This is why I want to bring so much consciousness to how this program is carried out and the reasons behind it. ♦

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Food Restrictions and Allergies— Feeding Our Children Well

— Zoë Rothfuss

Today's children are incarnating into an environment that is ever more hostile to healthy growth and development. The sensitive digestive system of the young child may be overwhelmed both by exposure to toxins and to sensory overload. In his article, "The Doctor Speaks — Allergic reactions, Observation and Encountering Outer Stress," anthroposophical physician Philip Incao states, "an allergic reaction is what happens in our body when we encounter an outer stress which exceeds our capacity to process it, to digest it and to neutralize it."

The needs of today's children are often different from those of the children of even one generation ago, and nutritional needs are no exception. In our striving to offer a nurturing and supportive education, we must consider the manifold needs of the children coming to us and adopt an attitude which is open to new ideas and practices. As early childhood teachers, we are called upon to reexamine our accustomed ways of doing things, including the ways we feed the children. Let us remain aware, as Rudolf Hauschka writes in *Nutrition: A Holistic Approach*, that "humanity today does not need rules but knowledge and insight; not fixed traditions, but the development of new capacities" (page 299).

Meeting the challenge

There are many ways in which teachers and schools can work with food restrictions. We can choose to serve only foods that everyone in a given group can eat safely and happily. We can choose to offer substitute foods to those children who require them, which can or cannot closely mirror the quality and appearance of the "typical" food. The allergy-friendly food might be lovingly prepared at school or home or purchased.

How we choose to work with restrictions can depend on several factors. If there is a life-threatening allergy in the class, it would be prudent to completely eliminate this food from the classroom. If the sensitivities are not as serious, we can consider the following questions: How important is it to me to serve a particular food that not all of the children



can tolerate? Is there a snack that I can offer to all of the children that offers good nutrition? How can I maintain simplicity and ease of preparation? How does an alternative food fit into my budget? How can the children participate in the preparation of this particular snack?

Choosing what to feed the children is not a trivial matter: snack time is an essential part of our kindergarten day, during which the senses of life, touch, warmth, taste, and smell are nourished. Rudolf Steiner urged in *Theosophy and Rosicrucianism*, "Everything which the child perceives through his sense organs must be considered deeply and thoroughly" (Lecture 5).

The young child dreamily lives in the realm of sense perception, will-based imitation, and oneness

with the environment. It is essential that the child experience the world as a place full of goodness. Based on this understanding of child development, I believe that the best choice in the classroom is to serve the entire class the same food, so that it can be eaten by all.

Experience in my classroom has led me to this conclusion. At one time we had two types of butter for our (gluten free!) bread: regular dairy butter and a non-dairy spread. Although I attempted to be as unobtrusive as possible in serving the different butters, the children certainly noticed that there were two different jars on the tray. Many children piped up to request the type of butter they weren't being offered, announced that they can eat cow butter now, compared what type they were eating with their neighbor, shared that cow milk hurts so-and-so's tummy, and so on. It was clear that the conversation about food restrictions and limitations was one that these children had been hearing at home. So my attempt to be nonchalant and not draw attention to the different types of butter didn't work—the children were already aware that some foods hurt some people.

This led me to ponder how the inclusion of a forbidden food on the snack table affected the children and the group. The entire situation seemed to work against many of the principles we are trying to support and nurture: the children were becoming awakened to differences among the group, the question arose of some food being “bad,” and the focus shifted from brotherly sharing and sensory enjoyment to individualistic differentiation and cerebral rumination. Wendy Cook writes in *Foodwise*, “Mealtimes can provide an enduring experience of a real sense of well-being and community, of vitality and connectedness to nature, or the opposite, of alienation, restriction, lack of care.”

Ideally, snack time nurtures the physical organism of the child, and promotes a healthy life sense; we can view snack time as an essential foundation for developing a healthy social life. As Christopher Clouder wrote for the Fundación Marcelino Botín Report in 2008, “In western societies the drift to greater individualism raises the question of the future social coherence and sustainability. The increase in . . . fragmentation places new emotional strains on a child, faced with feelings of insecurity and risk over which they are powerless.” (“Social and Emotional Education. An International Analysis” page 25).

I believe that the simplest solution to the food restriction question is to ensure that our daily snacks and festival foods meet the dietary needs of all the children in the group. This is in alignment with Steiner's admonishment, “It is very important to let nothing happen in the little child's environment . . . which the child cannot rightly absorb and make its own.” (*The Etheric Heart*, Dornach, May 26, 1922). Accepting the needs of the children in our care and seeking a way to meet those needs embodies a spirit of love, respect, and conscious awareness of the other. Let's consider expanding the protected space we offer children to include a place in which all the food is healthy for everyone.

As is always the case in our work with the children, clear communication with parents and an openness to understanding is essential to navigating these challenges. For parents, figuring out which foods are safe and healthy for their children, and which are truly harmful, can present a bewildering puzzle, with different “experts” offering wildly different advice on what constitutes a healthy diet. Dr. Hauschka wrote, “in earlier times, people had a healthy instinct for what was good for them . . . now the time has come for guidance and instinct to be replaced by knowledge. However, striving for knowledge exposes the seeker to error, on the one hand, and to dogmatism on the other. This explains why chaos reigns in knowledge—and in nutrition—today” (Hauschka, page 17). Perhaps the best that parents can do is be conscientious observers of their children and to employ the spiritually-guided instinctual knowledge that can come with a deep commitment to truly seeing and understanding the other.

Festivals

Festivals are beautiful moments in the course of the year in which the community comes together in celebration. Across cultures, food is a central feature of festival life. In the Waldorf early childhood movement, one of our fundamental intentions is to welcome children and their families with a gesture of open-heartedness. We strive to create festival experiences which are inclusive, offer experiences which are universally meaningful, and to recognize and honor the unique needs and gifts of each individual. As Nancy Foster so eloquently put it in *The Seasonal Festivals in Early Childhood*, the



“realities of our school communities present us with a context that challenges and inspires us to re-examine some of our cherished festival traditions in order to welcome and include fully every child and family.”

When preparing a festival that will be celebrated in the classroom, such as a birthday, it is ideal to involve the children in as much of the preparation as possible, including creating a special festival food. This participation in purposeful work increases the joyful anticipation of the festival, and promotes a sense of contribution in the children. As Gerhard Schmidt wrote in *The Essentials of Nutrition*, “Everything brings health, which causes people to make themselves a center of creativity and production.”

In the case of school-wide festivals, I advocate for one lovingly and intentionally prepared alternative that is as similar as possible to the festival food being enjoyed by the majority, and which meets the needs of all those with food restrictions. Preparing an allergen-free treat for the entire student and parent body could be overly difficult and expensive.

Practical Considerations

It can seem intimidating to begin working with unfamiliar ingredients. And let us not forget, according to Rudolf Steiner’s *Essentials of Education*, that we are called upon to serve a snack which is delicious and satisfying, without being overly complicated in its flavors: “the child is conscious of taste . . . deeper down in its organism; its organ of taste extends, as it were, over a large part of the body” (Lecture 1, 15). Unpalatable foods with poor textures are not a necessary evil of working with food restrictions!

In my classroom, I strive to offer a daily snack which can be universally shared by all of the children. Traditional kindergarten snacks are centered around grains. Luckily, there are a wide variety of grains that are naturally free of gluten and well suited to being cooked into a porridge-type dish: rice, millet, corn grits, oats, even teff. If there is a child in your group whose family does not eat grains, they may find the “pseudograins” quinoa, amaranth, and buckwheat acceptable. All grains have increased digestibility when soaked in clean filtered water overnight with a tablespoon or so of lemon juice or vinegar, then drained and rinsed the next day (I do not drain oats, but simply cook them in the soaking water). Experiment with serving these grains either savory or sweet, as you would rice or oatmeal.

It is important to include sources of fat, protein, and complex carbohydrates in our snacks. Fresh or cooked vegetables, including roots, stalks, leaves, and fruits are also an essential component of a well-rounded meal! Some allergen-free sources of proteins include: seeds, ground seed-butters (or nuts and nut-butters where allowable), nutritional yeast, legumes like lentils or chickpeas, and bean dips. Healthy fats include virgin coconut oil, coconut milk, coconut butter, avocados, olive oil, nuts and seeds, and ghee (some children who cannot tolerate dairy are able to consume ghee, as all of the milk proteins have been cooked out).

When working with gluten-free flours, proper measuring is important for consistent results. Weighing out the amounts with a kitchen scale is the most foolproof method. However, in the recipes below, I used the “scoop and level” method: scoop a small dry measuring cup into the bag of flour, without packing it down, and gently level the top. In an effort to make the recipe more user-friendly, the

cake recipe simply calls for an entire bag of flour. If your school participates in bulk orders for grains, it is often possible to order gluten-free flours in larger quantities for a lower price. Amazon and other online retailers also offer discounts when buying flours in bulk. Flours should be stored in a cool, dark place such as the freezer or a cabinet.

Ground flax or chia seeds offer a solution when a binding agent is needed in baked goods, and whole psyllium husks (available in the supplement area of natural foods stores, or through bulk orders) add a bouncy quality to yeasted breads that allows them to be kneaded. Commercial gluten-free “mixes” contain xanthan gum and leavening agents in addition to the flours. Be sure to check ingredients, as some gluten-free baking mixes contain powdered milk. Xanthan gum is a blending and binding agent which can irritate some people’s digestion; ground flax meal generally works as a substitute.

In our classrooms, we are striving to create an atmosphere of inclusion, joy, sharing, and warmth. I believe that our intention to offer the best possible environment to young children necessitates the full and careful consideration of how we meet their nutritional needs. Have fun trying out these recipes, and I hope they bring the children in your care joy and nourishment!

Birthday Cake Ring

Makes one standard size ring or Bundt cake

Preheat oven to 325 degrees

Allow the children to “ice skate” with their fingers to oil the pan with coconut oil

Place in the oven, in a heat-proof measuring cup or bowl:

- 1/2 cup coconut oil

Place in a large measuring cup:

- 2 1/2 cups very ripe bananas (approximately 5-7)

Mash the bananas with a whisk, fork, or potato masher.

Add to the measuring cup:

- 1/2 cup maple syrup

Just be sure that the level of wets in your measuring cup (bananas plus syrup)



equals 3 cups. A little more syrup and less banana, or vice versa, is fine.

Add to the wets and whisk to combine:

- 1 t vanilla extract

In a large bowl, combine:

- 3 3/4 cups (16 oz) gluten-free flour blend

(I recommend the Trader Joe's GF flour: it comes in a pink bag and this recipe simply uses the entire bag of flour)

- 2 t baking powder
- 1 t sea salt
- 1 T cinnamon/pumpkin pie spice
- 2 t flax meal

Mix the wet ingredients into the dries

Finally, add the melted coconut oil. The coconut oil will solidify into chunks if the ingredients in your bowl are cold, so it is best to pour the coconut oil in a steady stream while stirring.

Transfer the batter (it will be thick) to the prepared pan, and smooth the top.

Bake for 40-50 minutes, or until the top springs back when lightly pressed.

Allow to cool for 10 minutes in the pan, then turn out onto a plate.

We like to garnish our cake with fresh herbs and/or edible flowers from the garden, and serve with fruit and/or whipped coconut cream.

Note: We buy overripe bananas at a discount, and store them in the freezer. The day before you are ready to bake, remove them to the refrigerator (in a bowl to catch moisture). When you are ready to bake, pinch off one end of the banana, and allow the children to squeeze the pulp into the measuring cup.

Suggested variations:

Apple Cake

Substitute chunky applesauce for bananas.

Harvest Cake

Substitute cooked and mashed sweet potatoes or pumpkin for bananas. If using pumpkin, use 2 cups pumpkin, and increase maple syrup to 1 cup.

Saint Nicholas Honey Cake

Use honey as sweetener; bake in a rectangular cake pan (baking time may need to be adjusted depending on size of pan). When cooled, cut squares and wrap individually for a treat from St. Nicholas.

Whipped Coconut Cream

Makes 1½ to 2 cups

The night before, place in the refrigerator:

- 2 cans full-fat coconut milk

Remove coconut milk from refrigerator, and scoop out solids that have accumulated at the top, placing them into a bowl: reserve the liquids for another use.

Add:

- 1 t vanilla extract
- 1 T honey or maple syrup

Beat or whisk until fluffy (3-5 minutes)

Serve immediately or refrigerate for up to a couple of days (may need a brief whisking before serving.)

Santa Lucia Buns

Makes 24 buns

Adapted from a recipe by Thea Tilberg

The previous night, or several hours before



baking, combine:

- 1 t vanilla extract
- 1 t organic sugar
- 1/2 gram (small pinch) saffron threads

Line two baking sheets with parchment paper

Combine:

- 1 cup warm water
- 1 T active dry yeast
- 1 t organic sugar

Allow the yeast mixture to become bubbly (5 to 15 minutes).

To the yeast mixture, add:

- 2 1/4 cup (1 can) lite coconut milk
- 1/2 cup whole psyllium husks

Allow the mixture to thicken for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

In a separate bowl, combine:

- 5 cups/600 grams gluten-free flour blend

(I recommend the Trader Joe's GF flour: it comes in a pink bag)

- 1 cup organic sugar
- 1/2 t sea salt

Add the wets to the dries and stir or use a hand mixer to combine.

Add:

- 7 T of organic palm shortening

Continue mixing until the dough is smooth and somewhat shiny, and all ingredients are thoroughly incorporated.

Form dough into a ball, return to the bowl (glass or ceramic) and cover with a damp cloth.

Allow the dough to rise in a warm place for two hours.

Turn dough out onto a clean floured surface, and knead until smooth.

Divide the dough into 24 pieces.

Roll each piece of dough into a snake approximately 12 inches long, then roll each end into the center to form a scrolled s-shape.

Transfer the shaped buns to parchment-lined baking sheets, cover, and allow to rise for another 30 minutes, while the oven preheats to 425 degrees.

Transfer the buns to the oven, and bake for 7-9 minutes.

Remove the buns from oven, and press a raisin into each side of the bun, in the inner ring of the coils.

Allow to cool on pans for 2-3 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

If not eating the same day, buns may be frozen, and reheated in a 325 degree oven as needed. Texture and taste are best when warm.

Variation on Santa Lucia Buns:

Hot Cross Buns

Omit first step (soaking saffron in vanilla).



When adding coconut milk to yeast mixture, also add:

- 1/2 t vanilla extract

After beating in the butter/oil, stir in:

- 1 cup raisins or dried currants

For a glaze, melt together:

- 1/2 cup coconut butter (not oil; this is sold in the aisle with nut butters)
- 1 T honey or maple syrup
- 1/4 t vanilla

Once buns have cooled, scoop the glaze up with a spoon and drizzle over the buns in the shape of an "x". Alternately, fill a freezer bag with the glaze, cut out a small corner, and pipe the crosses onto the buns.

Kneadable Bread

Adapted from "Dark Teff Sandwich Bread" by Alissa Segersten.

makes approximately 2 dozen buns

In a large bowl, combine the following:

- 5 cups warm water
- 1 T plus 1 1/2 t active dry yeast
- 2 t honey, maple syrup, or coconut sugar

Allow the yeast mixture to become bubbly (5 to 15 minutes).

Add to the bowl and mix to combine:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup sweetener of choice

While stirring, add and combine thoroughly:

- 2/3 cup flaxseed meal
- 2/3 cup whole psyllium husks (available in the nutrition aisle of natural foods stores)

Immediately add (waiting too long will cause the dough to become too stiff):

- 2 cups buckwheat flour
- 2 cups sorghum flour
- 1 cup sweet rice flour
- 1 cup quinoa flour

(or try any combination of flours, to total 6 cups)

- 1 T sea salt

Mix the dough together with a spoon, then turn it out onto a floured surface and knead with your hands until all the flour is incorporated, adding up to an additional 1/2 cup flour.

Return the dough to the bowl, cover with a damp cloth, and allow to rise until you're ready to knead with the children (30 minutes to an hour, or use immediately without rising time if necessary).

Flour the work surface with any gluten-free flour you have on hand (I don't suggest using quinoa for this, as it can add a strong flavor), then give each child a piece of dough (approximately 1/3 cup). Allow them to pull, push, and shape to their heart's content!

Shape each piece of dough into a ball, and place on an oiled or parchment-covered baking sheet. Allow to rise for another 30 minutes, or bake immediately if necessary.

Bake at 400 degrees for twenty minutes. Buns will be slightly gummy straight out of the oven, but will cool to a chewy texture.

You can shape extra buns, allow them to rise, then freeze them —make sure they're not too crowded— on a baking sheet or cutting board. Once they're frozen, transfer them to a freezer bag. In this way, you can pull out as many buns as needed the day before baking day, and won't need to make the dough every week. ♦

Zoë Rothfuss is the lead nursery teacher at the Azalea Mountain School in North Carolina. She came to Waldorf education the age of three. Since earning a B.Ed in Early Childhood Education from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2005, Zoë has served young children and their families in a variety of settings. She holds a diploma in Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Education from Sunbridge Institute. From her home base in Madison County, Zoë enjoys spending time with her family working in the garden, hiking, dancing, baking, and is blessed to wake up to a birds' dawn serenade every morning.

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The Pedagogical Importance of Nutrition

— Laurie Clark

“To have good taste” is a metaphor that describes a human capacity that can be applied to all areas of life — artistic, philosophical and practical. It is important that children learn to taste well. Children who have learned to taste nutrients well, they may also in other situations have a sense for the quality of a situation, because they have learned to perceive the “inner side” of things.

*~ from Chapter 3 of
The First Seven Years:
Physiology of Childhood
by Edmond Schoorel*

When we look at the origin and the meaning of words, we can find the hidden significance that the word holds. The word “nutrition” comes from the Latin “nutritio,” meaning “to nourish.” The word “nourish” comes from “nutrire,” also Latin, meaning “to cherish.” When we provide good and thoughtful nutrition for a child, we are cherishing their very existence.

What does it mean to be conscious of the nutrition that we provide? How can we best serve the children of our times with the food we offer?

The toddler takes food into her mouth — and everything else too, including toys, dirt and rocks. She *tastes* whatever she wishes to understand. The world becomes known to the toddler through the sense of taste.

There are many children in our care that have limited food choices, sensitivities in the mouth to textures, allergies, eating disorders, and extreme sensitivities to smell. What happened between the toddler phase, when everything went into the mouth in order to “taste the world” and a few years later? For many children, the gate to putting food into the mouth is locked and limited to what it will allow in. How can we as teachers help to find the key that unlocks this gate?

One way to explore this phenomenon is to look through the lens of the twelve senses as described by Rudolf Steiner. An understanding of these senses helps to pave the way towards thoughtful guidance for the children in our care.

The four foundational senses are touch, self-movement, balance, and the sense of life. These senses give us a relationship to our body and, when integrated, help us to feel “at home” and secure in ourselves. In order to feel nourished, a sense of safety needs to be established. When these foundational senses are fully integrated, it provides the grounding for a child to experience a true shelter within herself. This kind of security helps to nurture the ability to take in the world with confidence. For children who are hesitant to move into their bodies, taking in unfamiliar food can be exceedingly uncomfortable.

The four higher senses are the sense of thought, hearing, word, and the sense of the I or ego. These higher senses, or social senses as they are often called, when developed give us the opportunity to relate in a conscious and mindful way to other people and to the surrounding world. When the foundational senses are healthy and assimilated, they can provide a bridge to freely develop these higher senses as an individual matures. An example of this connection would be how the foundational sense of balance carries the transformational capacity to cultivate the social sense of hearing. When we want to deeply understand what another individual is saying to us,

we need to stay balanced in our own soul life in order to truly listen. We might say, “I hear you,” meaning, not just a physical hearing through the ear but that we have remained balanced in ourselves so that we can truly understand what the other person is trying to impart to us.

Sharing a meal together and practicing table manners as a class community is a step towards these social graces. It is important for the children to have the experience that we are all sharing the meal together with the same foods.

The four middle senses are warmth, sight, taste and smell. These senses provide individual, personal experiences that give us the opportunity to experience the self in relation to the environment and the environment in relation to the self.

Warmth is a mysterious sense. It balances the feeling of warmth and cold inside and outside of our body. To keep the child warm is essential in early childhood to protect her life forces. To give a child warm, delicious food provides an inner sense of comfort.

Warmth is also an inner sense. The center of circulation is in the heart, which gives us the sense of feeling and emotion and provides the warmth that establishes the balance between our inner nature and the surrounding world. The warmth that the teacher enkindles in her heart for the child is essential for the child to feel nourished and cherished.

Steiner speaks of something that he calls cosmic nutrition. Being fed involves both the spirit and the body; it is a communion between the heavens (Father Sun) and the earth (Mother Earth). When the teacher feels deep gratitude for the beauty of the apple she is serving the children and engenders an inner warmth for what nature offers, the finest sustenance for the children is provided and enhances the food we serve them. The verses that we sing before we eat, when said with authentic appreciation, are also a nutritious element and bring a feeling of true warmth and healthy relationship towards the food.

The sense of sight is described by Karl König in his book, *A Living Physiology*. He states in Chapter 3, “Through the opening of our eyes, the world in all its glory appears to us. It opens up the light

through which we feel ourselves established here on earth.” The presentation of the food that we serve the children is important. Setting the table with care and making it look beautiful and organized is a delight to the eye. The various colors of the fruits and vegetables put into a lovely pattern in the bowl attract the child to the food we serve. When we cut an apple so that the star in the center reveals itself, a sense of awe arises. Soup that is served in lovely bowls with noodles of various shapes and vegetables cut into small “fairy bites” entices the child to dip his spoon in and taste it.

The organs of taste and smell are right in the center of our face. Smell comes to us through the air and water elements and carries a message about what is coming towards us from the outside world to our inner world.

“A smell can induce a tidal wave of memories. We are never able to remember smells, but as soon as we smell it again, we recognize it immediately,” Karl König wrote (*ibid.*).

The presence of good cooking smells in the classroom helps to open the gateway to eating. The sense of smell is interwoven with the sense of taste. Aromatic foods like basmati rice, pancakes on the griddle, or bread baking, and the smell of delicious soup cooking all entice the taste buds. Various fruit teas that are served with honey when the children enter the classroom are first smelled and then tasted to guess and distinguish which flavor is being served. One of the favorite Celestial Seasoning herbal teas that is available during the winter months that is served in our classroom is called, Sugar Cookie Sleigh Ride Tea. The name of the tea, as well as the smell of sweet cookies it engenders, gives us a delightful start to our cold winter mornings.

The smell of the foods that are prepared for various festivals create feelings that awaken the remembrance of the celebration. The smell of latkes cooking for Hanukkah, the apples cooking with cinnamon in the autumn for the Harvest Festival, and the baking of birthday cakes awaken warm memories. Herbs such as chamomile and lavender can be added to beanbags, small pillows and other toys that the children play with in the classroom to further cultivate the sense of smell.

When we give children many opportunities for smell, there is a transformative element that can mature in the soul life. As Edmond Schoorel tells us in Chapter 4 of *The First Seven Years*, “They have to learn to trust their nose, and to distinguish all kinds of odors. Later on in life this helps the child to ‘have a nose for things.’ This expression refers to the capacity to know about inner qualities of people or situations with ‘instinctive’ certainty.”

When we feel something is not quite right with a situation, we might say, “I smell something fishy.” When something goes very wrong, we say, “This is hard to swallow.” A remind ourselves to remember the positive aspects of life by saying, “Don’t forget to stop and smell the roses.”

The sense of taste is a huge threshold to cross. Food comes from the outside world directly into the body. Taking substances from the earth straight into the body is an intimate and formative experience. When children are able to practice taking in various tastes, it enhances the possibility of expanding their boundaries and refines their relationship to the world around them. Giving tiny bits of food consistently in “ant portions” can help a child not feel too overwhelmed when trying new foods. Of course, we must take into consideration the children who have allergies to particular foods and plan our menus accordingly.

Planning snack time early enough in the morning gives the body a sturdy foundation. Some children eat little or no breakfast and are hungry soon after

arriving at school. Serving a full protein with each snack regulates moods by stabilizing the blood sugar. Adding a protein (cheese, seeds, nuts, or whole milk yogurt) to the various grains that are served adds energy to provide solidity throughout the morning. Offering alternate protein sources to children with allergies is essential.

Through the senses, children digest the world and their relationship to it. Finding the key to unlock the gate to eating involves innovative and creative solutions. When we invite the children in our care to bring the earthly gift of food into their body, it gives them a sense of well-being and builds confidence in their entrance into life. ♦

Laurie Clark is a lead kindergarten teacher at *The Denver Waldorf School in Colorado* and mentors Waldorf teachers around the country. She has been teaching Waldorf kindergarten for 27 years. Laurie is co-author with Nancy Blanning of *Movement Journeys* and *Circle Adventures*, Volumes 1 and 2 (Volume 2: *WECAN* 2016).

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Eva Kudar

— Nancy Blanning



Eva Helene Kudar, a long-time Waldorf early childhood pioneer from Germany, passed into the spiritual world on September 29, 2016, Michaelmas Day. She is fondly and gratefully remembered by colleagues who benefited from her example and mentorship in Thirty-

five years of teaching in Hawaii, the Sacramento Waldorf School, and in her own home program as well.

Colleagues who knew her at the Sacramento Waldorf School and during her time as a WECAN board member have shared vignettes in memory of her. These give a picture of this remarkably courageous, strong, and warm guide and companion to young children who knew their true nature so well.

Nancy Poer remembers—

Eva was strong, brave and true; a splendid, tall, strong German woman with a mighty handshake, open arms; a gentle, modulated voice that she never raised with the children. Her powerful presence and integrity kept them flocked around her. She suffered great deprivation during World War II as her struggling, schoolteacher mother had to put her in an orphanage for a few years. Then for three years she was in a Waldorf school—until the Nazis closed it—and that made all the difference. There were daring escapes from the Russians (see Joan Almon's tribute, below) and she barely missed being killed with 300,000 others when Dresden was fire bombed.

She looked like a singer in a Wagnerian opera—and indeed she was trained as such—but most of all she gave to so many children a wonderful example of high, human qualities for them to imitate in their most formative years.

She was clear, decisive, gentle, just, compassionate, understanding, joyful, cheerful, positive, reverent, steadfast, and courageous. She was a spirit warrior for Michael for our time. Blessings on your journey, dear Eva.

Joan Almon remembers—

Eva shared that at the end of the war, when she was about eighteen, she was living in what would become East Germany. She was riding her bike down a road as the Russian tanks came rolling into the country. In panic she dropped her bike in the road and stood or hid at the side of the road. The first tank rolled to a halt—along with all the rest—the hatch opened and a head popped out asking whose bike it was and to move it at once. She did so but realized this was her last chance to leave the eastern part of Germany.

She was a tall, strapping girl with long blonde braids and wondered how to escape. She reasoned that there would be Russian soldiers at the border with western Germany but that they would probably be fresh, new recruits, not hardened soldiers. They would be looking for documents but would not understand German. So what documents did she have with official German stamps on them? Ah! She had the paper the milkman stamped every week. She took one small backpack of things with her and her milk document and rode her bike to the border as if this was just a jaunt across for a few hours. The Russians let her through and she remained in the West, eventually moving to the U.S.

On another occasion she was sitting in while I taught a session at Rudolf Steiner College. I was going to demonstrate something with a large ball of yarn. I stood in front of the students looking for the loose end of the yarn so I could pull off a stretch but simply could not find it. It was taking quite a while and was slightly embarrassing, so I handed it to Eva and asked for her help. With enormous calmness she looked at the ball and within seconds pulled out the end.

Everyone laughed to see how easy she made it seem.

Both of these memories point to a quality I always admired greatly in Eva—her calm steadiness. I can imagine being a child in her kindergarten and feeling totally secure. She exuded warmth but enormous calm and presence.

From Janet Kellman—

A door opened and there stood Eva Kudar warmly welcoming me into her kindergarten classroom at the Sacramento Waldorf School in 1975. I honestly don't remember any specific incidents from this visit except for a single major one: from the depth of my being everything about what I was experiencing in her kindergarten resounded with a mighty YES! I was thirty years old and had, for many of those years, worked with young children. I felt my own "sense" for who children were and what was supportive to them, but I was always disappointed by the approaches I found in the world. I was keen on searching for what felt true to me. From the day of my visit with Eva and the children, I passionately devoted my professional and personal life to Waldorf early childhood education: helping to found Live Oak Waldorf School, teaching in the kindergarten and later the preschool there, as well as founding the early childhood training at Rudolf Steiner College and teaching there for many years.

Now, forty-two years later, as I ponder my meeting with Eva, I search for the word to describe it. Was it fortuitous, defined as "happening by chance?" Eva was certainly not a "by chance" kind of person. She was

filled with calm and firm intention. Was she aware that our meeting was auspicious: "a favorable meeting promising success?" I don't know. At the time I certainly was not aware of what that open door and her welcoming gesture meant for my life. But then, I found the term heaven-sent, which is defined as "someone or something that arrives, usually unexpectedly, at a time when it is most useful; a blessing in disguise." Clearly, this most aptly describes what happened between us that day. Eva is a being who genuinely met me at a most significant moment in my destiny. My gratitude for Eva runs deep. She has inspired a significant life question: "What is my gesture when someone knocks at my door?"

From Barbara Kloczek—

Eva was a beloved kindergarten teacher for many years at Sacramento Waldorf School. She also was a teacher of teachers through Rudolf Steiner College. It was here I first met Eva. I was impressed with her warmth and her dignity. With enthusiasm she shared her knowledge and experience with the hopeful students. Soon, I was able to spend some time in her classroom. She led the children in a lively circle. Afterwards I was struck by the quiet peacefulness of the children as they became engaged in deep play. She was like a deep note of calm and reverence, which the class reflected. I rarely saw her hurry but she led with purpose and patience.

Her strong, peaceful presence in the classroom has inspired me for many, many years. ♦

For the Classroom, Inside and Out

Nursery Rhyme Bean Bag Fun

— Movements composed by Laurie Clark

These exercises help with spatial orientation, practicing of horizontal and vertical midline crossing, experiencing planes of space, auditory processing, directionality, body geography, balance, movement, tactile sensing, word concepts, impulse control, motor planning, rhythm, and speech with the wisdom and joy of traditional nursery rhymes. It is fun to begin these games by whispering each child's name while tossing him a bean bag.

PAT-A-CAKE, PAT-A-CAKE

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake *right hand to left hand to right hand (same rhythm for next three lines)*

Baker's man

Bake me a cake

as fast as you can

Pat it *pat bean bag*

roll it. *roll bean bag with both hands*

mark it with a b *"draw" with pointer finger on bean bag*

throw it in the oven *small toss in the air and catch the bean bag*

for baby and me. *It is fun to substitute each child's name for the word "baby."*

HEY DIDDLE DIDDLE

Hey diddle diddle. *right hand to left and then left to right*

The cat and the fiddle *right hand to left and then left to right*

The cow jumped over the moon *palms up near knees—toss bean bag from
right hand to left hand over legs*

The little dog laughed to see such a sport

And the dish ran away with the spoon. *right hand picks bean bag up and "runs"
with it and hides it behind the back*

HICKERY DICKERY DOCK

Hickery dickery dock *bean bag goes from right hand to left hand to right hand*

The mouse ran up the clock . . *right hand "walks" bean bag up left arm—bean bag is placed on head*

The clock struck one *hold one finger up with bean bag still on head*

Down he run. *lean head forward, let bean bag drop into both hands*

Hickery dickery dock *right hand to left hand to right*

Tick, tock! *two light tosses and catch*

LITTLE NANNY ETTICOAT

This rhyme is fun to do with a red bean bag.

Little Nanny Etticoat *hold bean bag up in both hands*

In a white petticoat *hold the sides of bean bag between pointer finger and thumb with each hand*

And a red nose *lean head back and balance bean bag on the nose*

The longer she stands. . . . *hold bean bag up high in palm of right hand*

The shorter she grows . . . *lower bean bag slowly down*

JACK AND JILL

Begin sitting with legs out front and bean bag in each hand, moving alternately up the legs to shoulders to the rhythm of the verse.

Jack and Jill went up the hill *legs straight out in front—bean bag slowly “climbs” from toes to shoulders*

To fetch a pail of water

Jack fell down and broke his crown. *lift right shoulder and lean forward a little so bean bag falls off*

And Jill came tumbling after. *lift left shoulder and lean forward so bean bag falls off*

Up got Jack and off did trot as fast as he could caper . . . *pick up bean bag with right hand, “walking” it up left arm and balance it on head*

To old dame Dob, who patched his nob. *stand up trying to keep bean bag balanced on head without letting it fall*

With vinegar and brown paper. *while standing, lean head forward, letting bean bag fall into both hands*

UP THE TALL WHITE CANDLESTICK

Start in the standing position, then bend down while holding bean bag on right foot.

Up the tall white candlestick crept little Mousie Brown . . *move bean bag up body starting at toes*

Way up to the very top *bean bag reaches top of head*

But he could not get down *carefully move head in “no” gesture while balancing bean bag on head*

So he called to his Grandma

Grandma! Grandma! Grandma! *with hands around mouth turn to right/left/behind calling “Grandma”*

So he curled himself into a ball *hands folded round each other*

And rolled and rolled and rolled himself down. *fisted hands roll round each other as body moves to crouching position while still balancing bean bag on head—on word “down” drop bean bag from head into hands that are open together on the floor*

When the bean bag games are finished, a big basket can be placed in the center of the circle for each child to toss the bean bag into as her name is whispered. This helps auditory processing development. Another fun way to collect the bean bags is to have the children stand and put the bean bag on their heads. The teacher comes behind and touches the upper back of each child with the basket as the child leans the head backwards and tries to make the bean bag land in the basket. This encourages the sense of touch and vestibular sensing. Another way to get the bean bags to the basket is to pick them up with the toes and put them in. This helps ground the children by bringing consciousness down to their feet. ♦

Laurie Clark *is the co-author with Nancy Blanning of the two-volume series, Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures, the second of which was published by WECAN in 2016. She has been teaching Waldorf Preschool Kindergarten for 27 years. She mentors Waldorf teachers around the country and teaches in various training courses for teachers.*

Stepping Back

— Trice Atchison

There's a simple children's rhyme that captures an important aspect of the classes for babies, toddlers and their parents I teach at the Great Barrington Rudolf Steiner School:

*The wise old owl, he
sat in an oak*

*The more he saw, the
less he spoke*

*The less he spoke, the
more he heard*

*Oh, why can't we be like
that wise old bird?*

Intentional, well-spoken words—with their rhythm, clarity and meaning—are, of course, important to children's language development, and every class includes nursery rhymes and singing, among other activities. But silence, too, is golden, at least some of the time. That's why, for a portion of each class, the adults quietly observe the children. Parents and caregivers respond to any needs that may arise, while also holding back enough to give the children a chance to become absorbed in an activity, object or interaction on their own. The children soak up this quietness and often play with particular focus during this time. It's interesting to see how some of the babies and toddlers who were vocal and chatty while the adults were talking become silent, while others who were previously quiet begin softly talking or singing. The children move about with a heightened sense of purpose as they create their own play and explore the surroundings, all while being bathed in the warmth and security of the adults' quiet interest.

When during this time a child initiates an exchange with an adult—bringing over a baby doll,

for example—we've discovered together that he can be deeply satisfied by a smile or similar wordless acknowledgment, such as looking at the doll and holding it close for a moment before handing it back. Children don't always need us to remark on how sweet the doll is, ask what color pajamas she's wearing, or wonder aloud whether she needs a blanket. This respite from adult talk seems to be a relief to the children. It's clearly a respite for the grown-ups, many of whom have said that they feel calmer and more connected to the children after slowing down and observing in this way. Some adults at first feel a bit awkward during the exercise, but in time they begin to relish it as they notice all the effective, natural, nonverbal ways in which children do communicate and become engrossed in their play, movement and development.

Sometimes a small conflict over a toy arises during the observation time, but this usually resolves quite easily without adult words (more easily than when we do use words, we've found). Often just moving in close while remaining aware of and available to the children is enough to help them figure out their own solution. Or gently inserting a hand in the air between a would-be grabber and a tuft of another child's hair gives a clear message.

We adults have often remarked that no one would believe that a roomful of babies or toddlers could be so active and yet so peaceful, or that merely watching with interest while the children play could be so engaging. Often I feel that I am watching a beautifully choreographed dance as the seeming chaos of a room full of very young children quickly organizes itself into a harmonious set of movements. Babies and toddlers move with exquisite competence and are wonderful (in the full sense of the word) to watch—something we all come to appreciate over the course of our class time together.

As parent educator Magda Gerber said, "The more we observe, the more we understand and appreciate the enormous amount and speed of learning that happens during the first two or three years of life. We become more humble." This healthy humility helps us understand that we can "instruct" less during these early years because the child herself knows what to do

and when, if given appropriate space and boundaries. This dovetails with the opinion among Waldorf early childhood educators that a powerful, innate wisdom is at work during the first years of life. Sometimes our well-meant commentaries and explanations hinder rather than help, because we can unwittingly layer our own assumptions, expectations and viewpoints over the child's own experience. But when we begin to appreciate the remarkable phenomenon of early childhood growth and development taking place before our eyes, we find ourselves wanting to step back from distracting the children from their self-initiated moving, creating, relating and exploring. We give them more chances to discover for themselves

who they are and what they can do. We live in a culture that fears a gap and over-values constant talk, as though we're all radio DJs who never can allow any "dead air." It can be a luxury, then, to take part in a living pause that lets us relax, observe and appreciate the wonder of a growing human being. ♦

Trice Atchison *leads the Parent Child Garden sessions at the Great Barrington Rudolf Steiner School in Massachusetts. She has taught parent-child classes for more than 10 years, and is a certified Simplicity Parenting group leader. She co-edited A Warm and Gentle Welcome (WECAN 2012). Trice also can be found singing jazz classics in and around the Berkshires.*

For Our Growth

The Call to Self-Care

— Kathy Rinden

The call to become a Waldorf teacher is a very personal experience. In order to realize our goals, each trainee puts in a great deal of time, energy, effort, and personal funds to make our vision a reality. On the day when our careers begin, we feel the honor, privilege, and trust that was put in our loving hands to hold a class of students and their families. Soon after we have taken up this new and exciting work, we also began to experience what it means to work in a "teacher-led school." The rewards of our work are many, and every summer we re-commit ourselves to carrying a new constellation of children and families.

As the weeks and months of the school year pass by, our high standard of dedication can begin to take a toll upon our physical, etheric, astral, and ego bodies. We find ourselves devoting a great deal of thought, energy, and time to helping the young children in our care develop and grow within the four lower senses (life, touch, movement, and balance). Yet the process can lead to a neglect of our own lower senses.

Early childhood teachers work tremendously hard with each child's parents. I have often heard colleagues throughout the United States speak of how the parent work takes up a good deal of their

time, meditation, and energy. It is quite common for the early childhood teacher to help families live into Waldorf Education as a lifestyle choice, supporting their growth and change in significant ways. However, I have caught myself many times giving pearls of Waldorf wisdom only to realize that I had lost balance in my own life circumstances.

As teachers, many of us struggle to find the time, funds, and physical strength to practice what we recommend to our families: healthy rhythms and routines, personal self-care and spiritual renewal. Due to many reasonable circumstances, we are often not able to live a balanced, rhythmic lifestyle ourselves. Consistent demands, busy school and committee schedules, family responsibilities, and financial stresses lead ultimately to a significant drain upon our "wells" of inner resources. When this occurs, we become aware that we are giving from a place of scarcity rather than abundance, resulting in a lack of joy and genuine warmth in our giving.

So many of us have heard the airlines' instructions to secure our own oxygen supply before helping others. We often find it easier to rush to the aid of others before considering the cost to ourselves. While this may be noble on the surface, caregivers

of all kinds know the consequences of making such decisions on a chronic basis. There must be a happy medium where we are able to restore our own wellsprings in order to truly be available to those who need our gifts.

I am very interested in learning how many of you, my early childhood colleagues, find the time within your busy lives to refresh, rejuvenate, and replenish your bodies, souls, and spirits in order to be your best selves for all of those who are in your care. I invite you all to share your tips and strategies for self-care. Please email *Gateways Newsletter* at gateways@waldorfearlychildhood.org, and I will then compile your stories and recommendations for your colleagues in a future issue of the newsletter. Send your emails and offerings by July 15, 2017.

Self-care, renewal, and personal refreshment are never to be considered selfish or superfluous practices. Rather, it is my hope, such activity could be considered to be a positive, nourishing gesture, and essential for all human beings. We can no longer afford to ignore this issue. This must become a topic

that we feel comfortable discussing openly without guilt or shame. If we wish to help our students “breathe” properly, we must model and live this within our own selves first. As we strive for beauty, truth, and goodness in life, we must start providing these basic practices in our lives. Self-care is never selfish. It is necessary nourishment to sustain our work and help us to meet our callings as Waldorf teachers.

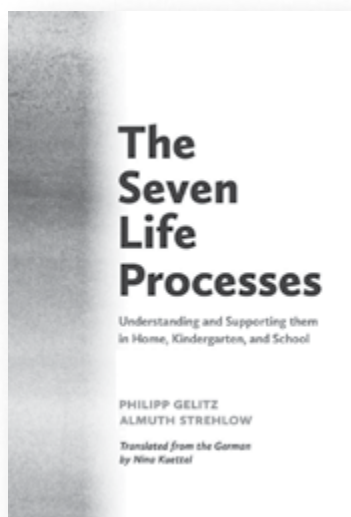
I look forward to hearing your stories and suggestions by July 15, 2017. Through such sharing, we can help to support and care for one another. ♦

Kathy Rinden M.A., has worked in a variety of settings with children and families, including schools, hospitals, and counseling centers. She has had the pleasure of teaching in the Waldorf kindergarten for several years at the Pasadena Waldorf School, and recently at the Maple Village Waldorf School in Long Beach, California. She offers therapeutic storytelling and parent coaching in her continued work with children and families.

***The Seven Life Processes:
Understanding and
Supporting them in Home,
Kindergarten, and School***
by Phillip Gelitz and Almuth Strehlow
WECAN 2016 | 180 pages | \$22
Book Review by Nancy Blanning

I must honestly confess that I did not expect WECAN’s new publication, *The Seven Life Processes*, to be gripping reading. Truthfully, I sat down with a dutiful intention to inform myself because, of course, all early childhood educators want to better understand the perpetually elusive “etheric.” But I could never have guessed how much new information and, better yet, insight this book had waiting for me. What an enormous and exciting surprise was waiting in these pages.

Some background about Rudolf Steiner’s description of how the human being interfaces with



and processes experiences of the world will be helpful start. Steiner pointed out different “numberings” to describe the multiple aspects of human experience and activity in earthly life. There is the **three**-fold Thinking, Feeling, and Willing, connected to the nerve-sense, rhythmic, and metabolic-limb systems respectively. Then there is the **four**-fold insight that the human being has physical, etheric, and astral bodies, crowned with our individual I-being. A **twelve**-foldness

describes our avenues into sensory life through Steiner’s twelve senses. And in the case of this book we are dealing with a **seven**-foldness of Steiner’s “life processes”: *breathing, warming, nourishing, secreting or sorting, maintaining, growing, and reproducing or creating*. These seven affect all of the others in subtle

Book Review

ways and above all are essential to supporting and strengthening the etheric forces of the human being.

This can all be dizzying to think about! Yet this book has helped to distill the picture into an accessible and practical framework of how the life processes weave and dance with and amongst all these other human aspects.

Thinking of a very young child's drawing has been helpful. One of the child's first drawing motives are swirls and spirals in a circular motif. We might imagine these curving, enclosing forms as the four-fold sheathes that surround the incarnating soul so life becomes possible in a physical body. Then into the drawing comes a dot or cross within the circling forms—the awakening of an upright human being who will do, feel, and ultimately think.

As the child matures and steps out into the world, he or she will be surrounded by experiences that come in through the portals of the twelve senses. Humanity has been pictured from ancient times as the upright human being encircled by the signs of the zodiac, each of which is associated with one of the senses. It might be seen an enclosing circle from which the child reaches with the senses into the world and through which the world streams in toward him. The zodiac and the number twelve are associated with qualities of space. Gaining spatial orientation through the twelve senses and a reliable body-geography makes possible an experience of grounded rest and stillness. If there were only rest, however, human life would be static; and that is not its nature.

Human life unfolds through time in constant, dynamic activity and development. And the seven life processes carry us into time and show their selfless service. These we might imagine as seven dancers (eurythmists, of course) who weave within the twelve. These dancers perform both simultaneously and sequentially, depending upon what the life needs are at the moment. Each will step forward for an individual performance at the right time and then step back into the harmonious rhythms the others have maintained so another can show its virtuosity. The tempo may ebb and flow, but each is always dancing.

The first half of *The Seven Life Processes* begins with literal, scientifically-based explanations of how each life process functions on a physiological level.

This gives a helpful understanding of the basic, physical processes from a factual perspective. Then the insights revealed further on in the book become all the more impressive as the subtle transformations that the life processes make possible are described.

From Rudolf Steiner's explanation of the twelve senses, we know that the health and strength of the first four senses lay the foundation for what can happen later in physical, cognitive, social, even moral, and spiritual development. It is the same with the seven life processes. How each process is cared for and nourished on a physical level during the early years of life lays the groundwork for the capacities and sensitive use of our thoughts, feelings, and deeds—"our soul faculties"—that are so needed and sought for in our times. Examples of the soul faculties the book considers include: attention, concentration, interest, enthusiasm, inner connection, selection and sorting, organization, differentiation, questioning, memory, practice and improving, and idea expansion. This list reminds us of so many faculties we see disabled in ourselves and in the children who come into our care. The positive reassurance is that each of these healthy faculties can be achieved "if the seven life processes are able to be anchored in the body during early childhood" (p. 107). Quoting further:

Each of the life processes stands in a living relationship with these unfolding soul capacities. Physical breathing has special influence on lung activity, blood circulation, and heart function. The soul faculties associated with breathing have to do with perception and attention. At the same time, the way a person breathes has an influence on physical digestion and, regarding soul faculties, is associated with being able to make an inner connection with something.

Similarly, for example, physical secretions mainly have to do with sorting or elimination and soul-wise with differentiation, organization, and questioning. At the same time, secretions also have a strong influence on body warmth, through perspiration; the soul correlates are the faculties of perception, interest, memory and so on (ibid.).

To summarize, healthy breathing facilitates clear perception and focused attention. Healthy digestion influences the ability to make inner connections. The sorting process of digestion—what to keep and what to eliminate—is connected to the ability to make clear differentiations, to organize, and to question objectively.

After pointing out these associations, the most practical and encouraging part of the book begins. The authors, Philipp Gelitz and Almuth Strehlow, tell what educators, parents, and other caregivers can do to support the healthy life and functioning of the life processes in practical and concrete ways. The section on “Salutogenic Teaching” is a treasure chest of suggestions. If weaknesses are seen in a particular area, they indicate which of the “dancers” we can invite forward into our classrooms and homes.

Looking at development through the lens of the seven life processes can offer us a whole new way to look at our classrooms. How is the breathing in terms of rhythm? Where is the warmth of soul and enthusiasm? What nourishment is being offered to the children’s senses and feelings as well as at the snack table? Are we, as teachers, able to sort the essential from that which is not? Is there a “hum” of predictability and stability that sustains and maintains each morning? What activities invite the children and teachers to growth? Where does our creativity, our freshness for the new come from?

The Seven Life Processes is factual, practical, and insightful. The book reveals on many levels, from the obvious to the subtle, ways the life processes support our continuing human development. Reading this is an exploration well worth the time. ♦

International News

Waldorf Around the World: Estonia

— Louise deForest

Estonia, a gateway between east and west, is a little-known country that borders the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Finland. Although it is small (it takes three hours to cross the country by car), it includes 1,500 islands. It has a population of 1,325,000 and, until recently, it was primarily an agricultural economy. Today, with the huge growth in the technical industries (did you know that Skype was created in Estonia?), many old farms lie abandoned in the beautiful countryside as young people opt to live in the cities. In this culturally rich country, IASWECE had its Fall 2016 meeting and there met and worked with ECSWE (European Council of Steiner/Waldorf Education), which has representatives from all the EU countries.

Estonia has had a long history of foreign occupation; since the 13th century, Estonia has been occupied by Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Russia and Poland. It wasn’t until 1918 that Estonia declared its independence, fighting Russia on one border and Germany on the other. They reinstated their language (a Finnic branch of the Uralic language family – related to Finnish, Hungarian and Sami) and revived

their national song festivals and Estonian literature. This freedom did not last long. In 1944 Estonia was occupied by the Nazis, followed by the USSR. It wasn’t until 1991 that the country became independent once again, eventually joining the European Union in 2004.

Waldorf education in Estonia began in 1989 with the founding of a school in Tartu, where ECSWE and IASWECE met this year. Today there are nine schools, three of which have upper grades, several with double classes, and two curative education schools. There are eleven kindergartens located in the north and south of the country; there are still no Waldorf schools in the center of the country. The Waldorf movement started out very strongly; with their national independence a mood of enthusiasm for all that was new swept the country. But as they say in Estonia, “It is easy to become a hero; harder to stay a hero.” In 1998 the Waldorf schools were inspected by the state and much was found lacking. Critical articles followed, parents withdrew their children, faculty resigned, and it took eight years for the Waldorf movement to recover. Hard as it was, this

was an awakening moment for the Waldorf schools. They became aware of their weaknesses and focused on rebuilding the schools with stronger foundations. Today there are 1,065 children attending Waldorf schools, up from 399 children in 2008. As with many schools around the world, finding trained teachers is difficult, which means it is also hard for the schools to expand.

There is a part-time teacher training in Tartu, but many people travel to Germany or Finland for their training. The teacher training in Tartu has had a positive and productive relationship with the University of Tartu for many years, and the Waldorf teachers who graduate have a university certificate as well as a Waldorf one. There is now a possibility of offering full-time teacher training, but it has not started yet.

All the Waldorf schools are private schools and as such are funded by the state as well as by the local municipality. Funds from the state are given per student and can be used for renovation of buildings or to put towards a new building, as well as covering teachers' salaries. A proposed new law wants to make municipal funding voluntary. With this new threat, all private schools in Estonia, Waldorf and non-Waldorf, have bonded together to resist this law. Parents, too, are siding with the private schools; indeed, parents are much more aware of the privilege of education than in other European countries; and they are thoughtful about where they send their children. This outer threat has brought all the private schools of Estonia together as a united movement, which can only strengthen the Waldorf movement within the country.

A big challenge that was mentioned often during our meetings was the number of special needs children in each classroom. Because Waldorf education can be helpful and supportive for those children who have different learning styles, many parents are filling the Waldorf schools with children with unusual behavioral and learning needs, and the teachers are not trained to work with these children. As in many schools, the teachers are stressed and overwhelmed and often feel that they are not teaching but, instead, valiantly trying to

deal with the behaviors in class each day. Most of the teachers I met are very dedicated and striving to do their best, but they do not have the tools they need or the enrollment in their schools to be able to keep the number of special needs children down to a manageable size for each teacher.

IASWECE tries to meet in a member country each year but this year we especially wanted to be in Estonia to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of Helmut von K  gelgen's birth there, in what is now Tallinn. Claudia McKeen, one of his five daughters, was there to speak about him as a father; Philipp Reubke was present to speak about him as a class teacher, and Stefan Grosse spoke about him and his role as a religious instructor in the Waldorf school. I was especially touched by Claudia's memory of waking in the night as a small child many times and seeing the light on in her father's study from the upstairs hallway and knowing that all was well in the world. These reminiscences were followed by instrumental and choral performances and skits offered by Estonian teachers and students.

ECSWE and IASWECE and faculty members of the Waldorf school hosted a public conference addressing the questions of media literacy, transition from kindergarten to the grades, and assessments. Three speakers presented different perspectives on the use of technology in education, ranging from an enthusiastic across-the-board endorsement to a cautious age-limited use. Afterwards, three groups were formed to discuss and deepen the above themes; and many Estonian teachers participated.

The presence of IASWECE and ECSWE representatives gave a much needed boost to the local Waldorf teachers and Waldorf schools, reminding them that they are part of a strong and vital worldwide movement that has the potential to renew the culture of each and every country. ◆

Louise deForest, as an independent consultant to Waldorf schools, travels the world offering lectures on early childhood education, mentoring support and early childhood teacher training. She is a WECAN Board member and is one of two representatives of North America to IASWECE.

Supporting Waldorf Education Around the World: Turkey

Waldorf early childhood education is establishing tender roots in turbulent times in Turkey, the cultural and geographic border and meeting ground between Europe and the Middle East. Small Waldorf-inspired kindergartens have opened in recent years in Istanbul on the Bosphorus, in Bodrum and Antalya on the Mediterranean coast, and in Eskisehir in the interior. There are now several small Waldorf-inspired playgroups as well. The first Waldorf school opened this past fall in Antalya, where the Waldorf training courses are located.



Under the current political/cultural circumstances, it takes great courage to take responsibility for founding or teaching in a Waldorf or other alternative kindergarten, running an “alternative” kindergarten training, or, as parents, participating in forming Waldorf communities. The enthusiasm and commitment of Turkish Waldorf parents, teachers and trainers is inspiring. Their Association, the Friends of Waldorf Education in Turkey - Eğitim Sanatı Derneği Türkçe - has turned to experienced colleagues in IASWECE and worldwide to help them establish a strong foundation for Waldorf education in Turkey through training courses and mentoring. Approximately \$6000 is needed this year for training courses, mentoring, and bringing together colleagues to strengthen their work.



We have raised over \$3600 at conferences in Spring Valley and in the Pacific Northwest, and encourage those who would like to offer support for Turkey to send a check to the WECAN Office at the following address: **WECAN - for Turkey, 285 Hungry Hollow Road, Spring Valley, New York, 10977.** Further details at iaswece.org.

Resources

An important part of WECAN's mission is to create and gather resources for educators. We would like to direct Gateways readers to some resources of which everyone might not be aware.

We invite you to visit our website, www.waldorfearlychildhood.org, to explore a wealth of online resources for educators and parents, and to subscribe to our *Research Digest* email newsletter.

Recent uploads to our online resources include "Healthy Organizational Practices" Parts I and II; "Six Gestures for the Waldorf Early Childhood Educator," also published in this issue; "Guidelines for Observing School Readiness;" and "Best Practices with Parents," reporting results of a recent survey of teachers and parents.

You may subscribe to the *Research Digest* email newsletter by going to www.waldorfearlychildhood.org and clicking on the "Join Our Email List" icon found at the bottom left corner of the page, filling out the form, and checking the "Research Digest" box at the bottom.

You may also direct parents to the "Parents and Families" section of our website.

Barbara Baldwin's article, "*The Life Sense Within the Perspective of Point and Periphery*," which leads the Focus topic in this issue, is scheduled for publication to our website later this spring, with enhanced information about point and periphery. To check for it at www.waldorfearlychildhood.org, click on the "Resources for Educators" tab and look for "*The Life Sense: Point and Periphery*."

Finally, we encourage you to visit the International Association for Steiner-Waldorf Early Childhood Education (IASWECE), at www.iaswece.org. See their "News and Events" link for recent research and publications, upcoming international conferences, and more.

Additional Reading. Many of our authors' excellent resources, listed following each article, and additional resources are also available online, in particular through the Online Waldorf Library (OWL). Visit the OWL at www.waldorflibrary.org.

Calendar of Events

Personal and Professional Development

June 18-July 14, 2017, Hawthorne Valley Alkion Center, Ghent, NY: **Summer Courses.** Workshops will include "Lyre Music and Singing in the Mood of the 5th"; "Festivals for Children"; "Introduction to Early Childhood" with simple felting; and "Leading with Spirit: The Art of Administration and Leadership in Waldorf Schools." For information go to the Alkion Center's website at alkioncenter.org or call (518) 672-8008.

June 26-July 7, 2017, Sound Circle Center for Arts and Anthroposophy, Seattle, WA: **Summer Intensives.** Topics include "The Healing Tools of Waldorf Education" with Dr. Michaela Glöckler and "Social Art of the Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher." For information visit soundcircle.org, email information@soundcircle.org, or call (206) 925-9199.

June 26-July 14, 2017, Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene, NH: **2017 Summer Institute.** Topics include "Nourishing and Feeding Young Children"; "Celebrating Festivals with Young Children"; and "Joyful Language and Song for the First Three Years." For more information visit sophiashearth.org or call (603) 357-3755.

July 2-28, 2017, the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute, Wisconsin: **Summer Intensives.** Topics include "Fundamentals of the Waldorf Kindergarten." For information visit greatlakeswaldorf.org or call (414) 616-1832.

July 3-21, 2017, Rudolf Steiner Center, Toronto, Canada: **Summer Festival of Arts and Education: "Dialogue with the Divine."** For information email info@rsct.ca or call (905) 764-7570.

July 11-18, 2017, Italy: **Journey to Italy with the Waldorf Institute of Southeast Michigan.** A voyage tailored to Waldorf teachers. Experience Rome's ancient grandeur, the breath-taking art of Botticelli, Michelangelo, and Raphael; and the flowering Renaissance in Florence. For more information visit wism.org or call (734) 635-4143.

Teacher Training

June 25-July 25, 2017, Sunbridge Institute, Spring Valley, NY: **Summer Series.** Topics cover a comprehensive spectrum for early childhood educators, including introductory pedagogy, handwork, and practical skills. For more information visit sunbridge.edu or contact Helen Lee at summer@sunbridge.edu or 845-425-0055 x20.

June 19-July 7, 2017, Sunbridge Institute, Chestnut Ridge, NY: **Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher**

Education Program: Completion Track. Program directors Susan Howard, Nancy Blanning, and Leslie Burchell-Fox. First Intensive. Subsequent Intensives will take place November 2017 and March 2018. For more information visit sunbridge.edu. Contact Anna Silber, Director of Education, with questions about eligibility at asilber@sunbridge.edu or 845-425-0055 x10.

June 26-July 14, 2017, Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene, NH: **Birth to Seven Certificate: Level II.** The curriculum for this course continues with sessions in Winter and Summer 2018. For details visit sophiashearth.org or call (603) 357-3755.

July 2-14, 2017, Sophia's Hearth Family Center, Keene, NH: **Birth to Seven Certificate: Level I.** The curriculum for this course continues with sessions in Fall 2017; and Spring, Summer, and Fall 2018. For details visit sophiashearth.org or call (603) 357-3755.

The Early Childhood Teacher Education Center at Sophia's Hearth

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for details and on-line registration, visit sophiashearthteachers.org

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

WITH SUSAN WEBER AND
MICHELLE BROOKS

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5

WITH JANE SWAIN

The Pikler Approach to Caregiving

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

WITH JANE SWAIN

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 7, 2017

WITH SUSAN WEBER

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June 26-27 **Painting with Plant-Dyed Wool** *with Judit Gilbert*

July 2 **Eurythmy and the Growing Child** *with Laura Radefeld*

July 17-18 **The Urban Waldorf Kindergarten** *with Meggan Gill*

July 21-23 **Waldorf Weekend** *with Anna Silber*

July 23-28 **Collaborative Leadership** *with Joachim Ziegler and Jessica Ziegler*

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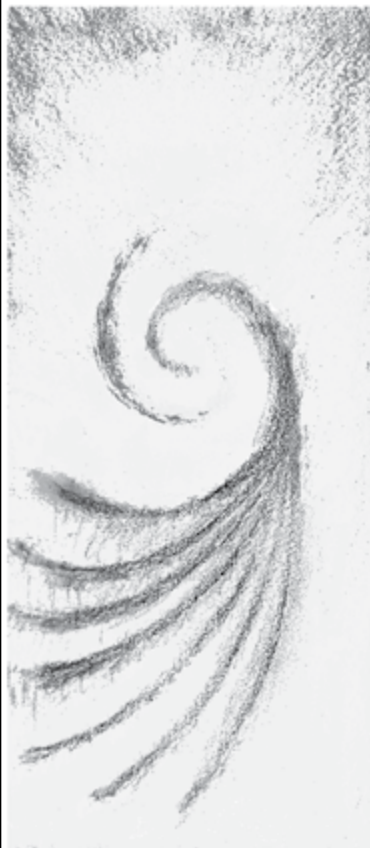
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<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dancing-hands-frolicking-voices-2017-intensive-retreat-tickets-31975943909>

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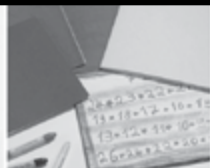
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New From WECAN Books

Let's Dance and Sing

Freya Jaffke (Nina Kuettel, trans.)

A collection of lively pentatonic games, verses, and dances to give children the joy of singing and playing together and experiencing their environment through all the seasons of the year in a rich and formed way. This companion to Freya Jaffke's *Play with Us*, also available from WECAN, is suitable for home to nursery to kindergarten.

118 Pages, Perfect-Bound • \$18

Waldorf Early Childhood Education - An Introductory Reader

Edited by Shannon Honigblum

A new collection of foundational articles for early childhood educators and families. Included are classic accounts by master teachers as well as contemporary educators' observations on topics such as history of the early childhood movement; the developing child in the early childhood classroom; daily rhythm and activities; the young child in the spiritual world; and working with parents.

282 Pages, Perfect-Bound • \$25

The Seven Life Processes: Understanding and Supporting Them in Home, Kindergarten, and School

Philipp Gelitz and Almuth Strehlow (Nina Kuettel, trans.)

Healthy organ growth and functioning support our physical life and affect how the child plays and learns. Seven life processes quietly hum beneath all this activity. Understanding these gives insight and inspiration for how to encourage wholeness, healthy growth, and development in body, soul, and spirit.

177 Pages, Perfect-Bound • \$22

Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures, Volume Two

Nancy Blanning and Laurie Clark

A collection of all new material, plus a reprint of useful essays on the twelve senses and sensory development, building upon the foundation established in Volume One. There are new sections on movement to nursery rhymes, bean bag imaginations for young children, and some pedagogical contemplation on what stands behind the visible movements and activities we do to support the child's incarnation.

154 Pages, Spiral-Bound • \$28

Love as the Source of Education: The Life Work of Helmut von Kügelgen, Edited by Susan Howard

Helmut von Kügelgen (1916-1998) was a champion of the Waldorf early childhood movement and a steadfast supporter of its growth in North America and throughout the world. In celebration of the centenary of his birth, we present this collection of articles, lectures, and essays to carry with us into the future, always keeping in mind his central theme: Love is the source of education.

134 Pages, Perfect-Bound • \$14

Transitions in Childhood from Birth to 14 Years

Pedagogical Section and IASWECE

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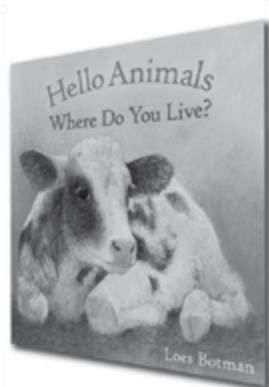




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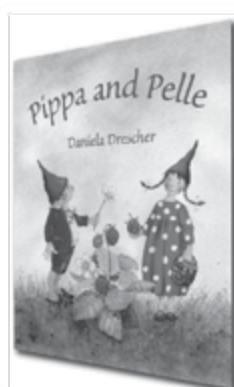
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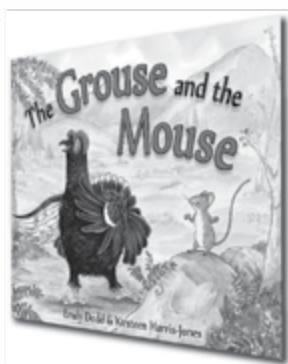
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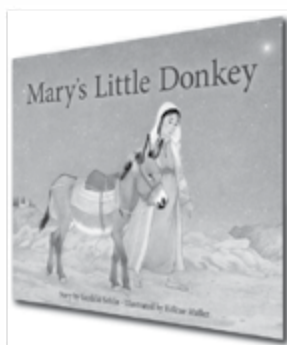
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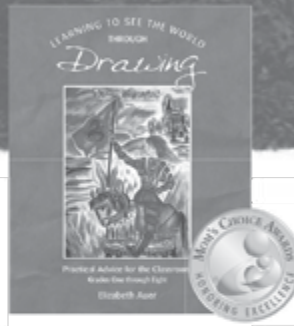
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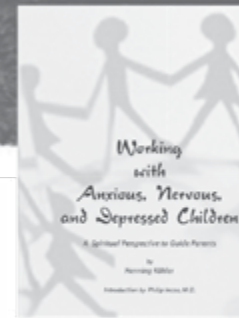
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