

Gateways

Newsletter of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America ♦ Issue 71, Fall 2016

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285 Hungry Hollow Road
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(845) 352-1690 / Fax (845) 352-1695
info@waldorfearychildhood.org
www.waldorfearychildhood.org

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Editor Nancy Blanning
Editorial Advisor Susan Howard
Administrator Melissa Lyons
Copy Editing Donna Miele & Bill Day
Layout Jennifer Siegrist
Cover Art Angela Koconda

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About the Cover Artist:

Angela Koconda grew up in Switzerland. She attended the Rudolf Steiner School in Basel, was a eurythmist at the Goetheanum, and remains active in training. Since childhood she was fascinated by colors and shapes. Her illustrations have been beloved for many years among Waldorf educators, children, and parents.



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From the Editor

— Nancy Blanning

We celebrate several things with this issue of Gateways. 2016 marks the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Dr. Helmut von Kügelgen, dedicated Waldorf class teacher in Stuttgart for thirty years and then advocate, champion, and protector of early childhood until his death in 1998. He was a major advisor to the development of Waldorf early childhood education in North America and also founded the International Kindergarten Association, which is now known as the International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education (IASWECE). He was a man of incredible warmth and generosity who reassured others of the ever-present support of the spiritual world. It is an honor to celebrate his life in a brief biological sketch and share one of his lectures, “Love as the Source of Education.”

To mark the occasion of Dr. von Kügelgen’s anniversary, WECAN has published *Love as the Source of Education: The Life Work of Helmut von Kügelgen*. Lectures and articles accompany a more extensive description of his remarkable and very fascinating life. As a child he and his family were refugees. He later became a journalist, a conscripted World War II correspondent, a prisoner of war, husband and father to five daughters, beloved teacher and soul-friend and protector to young children. We think you will be delighted, moved, and inspired by the collection of articles and remembrances of this very special man.

With every issue we offer gratitude to our contributors, but there is something new to celebrate with this one. We took advantage of our ever-growing email list and sent out an invitation for submissions. The result was wonderful! We received many submissions, some from authors who are well known to our readers and some who are published for the first time. Thank you so much to those on our staff who worked to open the way to for the wider Waldorf community to share the insight and richness of their work. And thank you so much to those who responded to the call for articles. This issue has been especially blessed with your work.

As announced, the theme of this issue is Sensory Development. We had anticipated opening this issue with a report of Barbara Baldwin’s presentations on

the Life Sense from the February 2016 WECAN East Coast Conference. It was not possible to have this material ready with full richness for this issue; we can look forward to this article in Spring 2017. The main submitted articles seemed to cluster around Point and Periphery and the Sense of Self-Movement. We have Jane Swain, Aimee de Ney, and Lani Hill coming to considerations of Self-Movement (integrated, of course, with other senses) from different perspectives. Jane’s article deals with the process of the very young child moving between point and periphery to find the way into spatial security. Aimee addresses the sensory and postural development of our adult, teacher selves standing as imitative models before the children. Lani describes some of her work as an EC therapeutic teacher at the Washington Waldorf School. Louse deForest asks the question, who are the children coming to us? What is “normal?” She points out that these are the children of our time, and we just “gotta love them.”

On the “not healthy side” of sensory development comes an article from myself titled “Preventing Addiction.” So much of health in all regards—physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual—is related to the strong, integrated development of the senses that orient the human being with interest and initiative toward the outside world. Yet we see our children’s (and our own) development and activity being hijacked by screens. This article shares insights presented at the Transitions Conference at the Goetheanum in Spring 2015 about screen use and predisposition to addictive behavior. We hope the information here will provide more information to share with parents about the ego-weakening effects of screen use. This article was first published in slightly different form in *Lilipoh* last winter.

Articles on gardening, cooking and baking, and quiet rhythm and routine bring in further pictures of supporting the senses. Cindy Faught Sudan describes the many sensory opportunities that the Soup Kitchen Garden makes possible for her mixed-aged kindergarten class. Marcia Marquis shares how she has brought more sensory opportunities to class cooking and baking. She inspires us to love squishy, goopy, dough-covered hands on baking day as a

sensory, pedagogical delight. Astrid Lackner helps us to get a more fine-tuned picture of the elusive Life Sense, what it is and how to support it. This main topic section concludes with a contribution from Anne-Marie Fryer-Wiboltt called “Being within Sensing: Adult Meditative Thought.” This is a fitting, semi-contemplative piece for consideration of our sense lives in general.

Under **For our Growth**, we have an article from Holly Kouteen-Soulé on “Six Gestures for the Early Childhood Educator.” This was originally published in the *Research Bulletin for Waldorf Education* for Spring/Summer 2015. This wonderful article helps us to look more toward archetype in our gesture toward young children rather than curriculum specifics about “what we do.” We also include a harmonizing exercise created by Brigida Baldszun, therapeutic eurythmist. It involves an adult and child alone, so it is not “for the classroom” in the usual sense. But it is a therapeutically calming and relationship-building interaction between the two partners. It is pedagogical and practical. Put it into whatever category you find useful.

For the Classroom, Inside and Out has three offerings. Rose Maynard describes how she was inspired to join indoor circle time to more expansive circle-type movement during her class’s daily walk outside. Joanie Lackie-Callighan gives us examples of how she has added movement to nursery rhymes. Her article speaks about the pedagogical rationale and sensory integrating support that stand behind

these fun games. This section ends with a “Story for Advent” by Mary Knighton. We understand that we want our festival celebrations to hold universal content embracing a diversity of cultural and religious streams. This story was written with this intention in mind, blending archetypal images together into a lovely story.

The Spring issue of *Gateways* will continue with the theme of sensory development and health. We have more good content to share and invite your submissions about how you are understanding and working to encourage healthy sensory development in your classrooms.

Finally, there is one more important thanks to express. The last issue of *Gateways* on Gender Issues—particularly gender vs. biological identity and gender fluidity—has received more comment than any issue in my tenure as editor. It is so encouraging to those who prepare the journal to receive feedback—both questioning and supporting. Hearty thanks to each of you who took the time to write and share your questions and offer your gratitude that this topic is being addressed. This is a conversation we have just begun and must continue. Please write in to share your questions and experiences as we meet and companion these amazing, perplexing, challenging, endearing children of our time.

Best wishes to all,

— Nancy

FOCUS: Sensory Development

Sensory Processing: Having the Courage to Accept

— Louise deForest

Recently a student asked me if I thought there were any “normal,” i.e. healthy, children anymore in the world. I answered that I always strive to see every child as healthy but now there is no more normal.

Parents and early childhood educators have seen changes in the children over the last decades and it is obvious that incarnation is increasingly difficult for these new souls “wishing to form their lives in these difficult times,” as Herbert Hahn says. And yet something draws them here and they pour themselves into earthly life, filled with trust that we will meet them with open hearts and support them as best we can. Incarnation is a voluntary journey of the unborn to the earth, of the individual dimensions of destiny of human souls, each of which arrives on earth and is born into a meaningful life. The special relationship that the child has with his or her surroundings, the devotion and trust and their imitative capacities—becoming one with everything—their ability to absorb the essence of the other—their gestures, habits and moral disposition—all come from what took place in life before conception in the spiritual world.

In this age of defining and categorizing and diagnosing, these souls are often met with a world that wants to fix them—to name and define their difficulties and then to make them “normal.” It’s a measure of how dysfunctional our world is that we want to make children fit into what is obviously not working. Instead, we must remember always the human individuality and its meaningful and particular journey to earth. Each one of us brings our specific pre-birth experiences and missions into the present life. As Steiner said, “Life will only be understood if we see it in its entirety, not if we consider only the short segment of time between birth and death, for that particular segment depends intrinsically on spiritual occurrences before birth. In our entire essence we depend on what happened in the spiritual world before we were born” (GA 140).

I recently read an interesting interview with the psychologist James Hillman in *The Sun* discussing

what he perceives as weaknesses in today’s mainstream psychology. In this interview, Hillman urges us to look at the myths we are enmeshed in presently and try to perceive what we call “reality,” or “science,” or “fact” in a different way. “Let’s say that what matters is that you have an acorn in you, you are a certain person, and that person begins to appear early in your life, but it is there all the way through your life. Winston Churchill, for example, when he was a schoolboy, had a lot of trouble with language and didn’t speak well. He was put in what we would call the remedial reading class. He had problems about writing, speaking and spelling. Of course he did! This little boy was a Nobel Prize winner in literature and had to save the Western world through his speech. Of course he had a speech defect; of course he couldn’t speak easily when he was eleven or fourteen—it was too much to carry!” Who (and how) we are now is an intrinsic element in who we are becoming! The soul knows who we are from the very beginning.

Of course we must offer support when it is needed, always with the understanding that the child will take up this support if it is in his or her best interest to do so. But I believe that the best support we can offer the children of today is our trust and confidence in them. In my lectures and classes I often speak about a child in one my classes who was one of my many teachers. He was a child who had severe sensory processing disorder; he could not trust the information coming to him from his senses and the fear and anxiety of not being able to orient himself in the world caused him to be aggressive and disruptive. One day he was listening to his classmates speak about their relationship to me: “Mrs. deForest loves me,” said one. “Mrs. deForest loves me,” said another. Finally he stepped forward—probably he swaggered forward, knowing him—and said, “Yes, Mrs. deForest loves you all, but she adores me.” Can we surround these challenged (and challenging) children with our heartfelt warmth? Often we spend a lot of time worrying about certain children in our classes and

we pray nightly that we will be guided in helping them; may I suggest that we orient ourselves instead to thinking of these mysterious children with wonder and joy. Let them occupy your thoughts, but in such a way that they get the message—my teacher adores me! When they live into our thoughts, as all children do, let them find there reverence for the mysterious workings of the spiritual world and utter and total confidence in the rightfulness of being of the child in front of us. Our confidence in the child and in the wisdom inherent in each biography will give the child strength and hope and will provide her with a healthy self to grow into in the future.

One of the major tasks of our times is to overcome fear and one of our biggest fears is that of the unknown. These “different” children are from the future, I think, and one of their generational karmic tasks is to help humanity change its consciousness. Because of who they are and their efforts to incarnate, they invite us into collaboration with others; because of their social awkwardness, they invite us to move towards selfless patience; because of the way they have chosen to incarnate, they invite us into a willingness to not-know. I once worked with an Alzheimer’s patient named Miss Emmy. She was very disoriented and often frustrated and confused. After a particularly frustrating day she turned to me and said, “You

don’t have to know where you are to be there.” This is the reality today for those of us working with young children. We are all “there” and sometimes it makes us afraid. But these children are also inviting us into the future; to step forward with courage to NOT know and willingness to accompany them, not filled with judgments from our clumsy intellects, but rather profound respect and joyful wonder. It is then that we, as educators, can take up both the Raphaelic and Michaelic gestures—Raphael gently laying hands on the shoulder of the child and saying, “I know your pain,” and Michael, standing beside the child, sword raised, saying, “You can do it!” ♦

Louise deForest *WECAN board member Louise deForest, mother of four grown-up children, has been a Waldorf kindergarten teacher for many years and also involved in parent and teacher coordination. She is also a North American representative to IASWECE.*

Resources:

- Hillman, James and Michael Ventura, “We’ve Had a Hundred Years of Psychology—and the World’s Getting Worse.” *The Sun Magazine*, issue 487 (July 2016).
- Steiner, Rudolf, *Life between Death and Rebirth*, René M. Querido, trans. (Great Barrington: Steiner Books, 1975).

The Spatial Ins and Outs of Proprioception

— Jane Swain

Why do classic dance studios have mirrors? In dance classes, students try to imitate the teacher's movements. Some students are able to accurately reproduce the teacher's movements, and some are not. The ones who are not generally have no idea that they are inaccurate, often because they are not adequately sensing where their body parts are and what their body parts are doing. If these students are made aware that they are inaccurate, then they can check the position of their body parts by looking in the mirror. They can compensate visually.

These dance students are making conscious what is normally unconscious—the dynamic and resting positions of their arms, legs and spines. For example, we aren't usually aware that we are bending our elbows, we simply bend them; and we aren't usually aware that our elbows are bent to a particular angle. Rudolf Steiner refers to this sense as the sense of self-movement. It is not the ability to move, but rather the ability to sense our movements and the positions of our forearms, fingers, shins, etc. Two medical terms for this sense are kinesthesia and proprioception. They are technically a little different but generally have the same meaning.

If children can't fully sense their movements and positions, they are likely to have poor coordination and move clumsily. They may have difficulty sensing how much force a muscle needs to generate for a particular task. These children tend to break Easter eggs when dyeing them, or hit a friend too hard when they don't mean to, or wind up a ball of yarn too tightly. These children tend to seek out heavy work in which their muscles generate a lot of force, because then they can better feel what their limbs are doing (at an unconscious level).

Our bodies as spaces

The normally unconscious senses of proprioception, touch, and life combine to provide us with our overall body scheme or body map. Proprioception gives us the positions and movements in space of our body parts in relation to each other. Touch gives us the boundaries of our bodies. The sense of life gives us the sense of having contents—of taking up space inside those boundaries. If we don't have a well-defined

body scheme, we don't fully know our inner spaces. As we live in the context of our surroundings, it then becomes hard to know where we are in relation to the objects and people in the spaces outside us. Poor timing and bumping into people and objects may result. When adolescents are going through large growth spurts or when people quickly gain or lose weight, they may be awkward for a period of time until their body schemes catch up with their new inner spaces.

Spatial gestures of the threefold human being

Years ago, I learned about Rudolf Steiner's description of the threefold nature of the human being with the nerve-sense system being the seat of thinking, the metabolic-limb system the seat of willing, and the rhythmical system the seat of feeling. This threefoldness is present throughout the entire body. However, our thinking has its quarters in the head; our willing dominates in the arms, legs and abdomen; and the rhythmical system is centered in the chest.

In my Spatial Dynamics training with Jaimen McMillan, we explored the spatial gestures of each part. For the nerve-sense system, the spatial gesture of the head is to come from the periphery into the point. When we try to grasp someone else's thought, we say, "What's your point?" We talk about our thinking with phrases like, "it came to me out of the blue" or "this idea fell out of the sky." Our heads receive sense impressions from the periphery such as sights, sounds and smells.

The spatial gesture of the metabolic limb system is to ray out from the point into the periphery—the polar opposite of the head's gesture. The bodily fluids, urine, feces, menstrual blood, and semen move out of the body into the periphery. Babies are born and come out into the world. In coordinated movements, the limbs ray out and meet the world. We knock on the door with our knuckles, not with our heads (unless we are knuckleheads). In contra dances, we link elbows, join hands and stomp our feet, and optimally our heads just sit there, still and quiet, and get carried around, free to receive from the periphery. Unfortunately sometimes our heads have excessive



movement—our heads become limbs—and then we have a harder time in the dance.

The rhythmical system repetitively weaves the two gestures together—come to a point, ray out, come to a point, ray out, etc.—as manifested in the heartbeat and in breathing. The rhythmical system separates and holds the two polarities at bay, and there may be unfortunate consequences if this doesn't happen. If the head has the gesture of the limbs, this may be a preparation for attention disorders. If the gesture of the head is in the metabolic limb system, the person may experience muscle cramps in the limbs, constipation, or menstrual disorders. If the gesture of the chest moves into the head, the person may experience a throbbing headache.

Do you get it?

Let us consider proprioception in more detail. A classic indication that children are having difficulty with proprioception is that they “don’t get it.” Early in my career I worked on a rehabilitation unit in a hospital as a physical therapist. One time I was teaching a patient’s husband how to transfer her from the toilet to her wheelchair. I demonstrated the transfer, and then asked the husband to try it. The husband looked at me with a blank look, and said, “I don’t get it. What do I do?” I responded with an equally blank look, as I honestly didn’t know what I had done. We are aware of our thoughts, but I wasn’t in my head—I was in my limbs. This is an example of Rudolf Steiner’s assertion that we are awake in our thinking and asleep in our willing—in our limbs.

My limbs had sensed the patient's muscle tone and knew when she was ready to begin the transfer. My limbs had sensed what direction she was moving in, and knew how much I needed to guide her. My limbs had sensed how much weight her legs were taking and knew how much support I needed to give her. The patient and I had been involved in a limb-to-limb type of communication, in which our intellects were not involved. In order to accommodate the husband, I repeated the transfer, this time translating it step-by-step to my intellect and verbally describing it to him. Then he was able to adequately do it.

There were other patients with family members who learned directly from my movements, bypassing their heads. These people did not learn well from verbal cues. In fact verbal cues irritated some of them. These family members had a higher degree of "limb intelligence," i.e., they had more refined proprioception. Their limbs had rayed out and were able to perceive my movements, and they "got it" without needing to compensate with their intellects. They could imitate me limb-to-limb. I didn't fully understand the significance of this until years later when I studied Spacial Dynamics. But at the time I did recognize that if a family member could learn nonverbally, his transfer was usually more skilled and the patient was safer than with those who needed the verbal instruction.

Proprioception involves not only sensing our own movements and positions of our limbs, but also the forms and movements in our environments.

In a classroom setting, children with delayed proprioception often have difficulty during transitions such as clean-up time, where movements of their classmates can be quite haphazard. If a child's limbs are not raying out sufficiently to perceive the movements in the environment, then he especially may have difficulty following unpredictable movements, and may have a meltdown or other such behavior. Similarly, this child may have difficulties imitating movements of others, and reading nonverbal cues of others. He might "not get it."

Difficulties with proprioception can profoundly affect the soul. Another time, I had an adult stroke

patient who had lost proprioception in one leg, but she could move that leg perfectly well if she looked at it and paid full and continuous attention to it. (Remember the mirrors in the dance studios.) She was extremely insecure, insisted that she use a walker, and did everything she could to avoid moving. Her family did not understand why she was so hesitant and anxious. After all, her leg was not paralyzed. However, I explained that her behavior was understandable. Sensorially, she really didn't have a leg to stand on and compensating with the intellect was exhausting.

The spatial development of proprioception

Proprioception develops over time in the early months and years of life. Newborn babies don't know the positions of their body parts; they hardly even know they have bodies yet! When

babies are born, they have no mature coordinated movements. Instead, their movements are dominated by the primitive reflexes. In each one of the primitive reflexes, there is a stimulus and then a particular, predetermined response. Each response strengthens the pattern of moving from the periphery into the point. Spatially, infants are coming from the vastness of the spiritual world (the periphery) into their little tiny physical bodies (the point). The movement gestures of their whole bodies are functioning as one big head, i.e., they come to a point. The primitive reflexes facilitate this spatial migration into their bodies.

This is good. However, this is not the end point! They also gradually learn to get back out into the periphery of the earthly world in order to interact with it sufficiently.

Over time, the initial single gesture of the entire body (of coming to a point) is transformed into the three distinct gestures of the threefold human being. The metabolic limb system is liberated from the tyranny of the head and takes up its own gesture of raying out, and the rhythmical system modulates the two polarities. The head retains its initial gesture of

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coming to a point. *It is the liberation of the limbs from the gesture of the head which is the critical underlying factor for the healthy development of proprioception.*

How does this transformation occur? It can happen naturally as infants, through their own efforts, come from the horizontal up into verticality. This process involves lying on the back; rolling to the side, to the tummy and across the room; belly crawling; hands and knees crawling; kneeling; and on up to standing, cruising and walking. Sublime wisdom is working throughout this developmental sequence. For example, not only are infants learning to reach for a toy while playing on their tummies, their heads are learning to be still and quiet, and they can attend to the toy. Their arms are learning to ray out, and they are developing proprioception. Their rhythmical systems are learning to hold the space between the two, and they don't spit up as much.

How can we help?

Providing infants with the time and space to negotiate their own unique motor sequences from the horizontal up into the vertical is an excellent way to support proprioception.

This is contrary to the modern, common practices of constraining infants and placing them in upright positions before they can get there of their own accord. However, if a child's motor development is less than ideal, all is not lost. Our spatial development continues, and we have the potential to change our space over the entire courses of our lives.

If the early childhood teacher understands the spatial ins and outs of proprioception, she has a very powerful tool. *The key question for supporting*

healthy proprioception at any age is: "How do I support spatial development?" It is helpful if the teacher learns to "read" the spatial configurations of the child over time. When is the child experiencing the successful polarities of raying out and coming to a point in their optimal locations in the body, and conversely when he is not? Out of skillful observation comes helpful doing. Through these observations the teacher can choose activities and sculpt the environment so as to support the child's healthy spatial development, and in turn, his proprioceptive development.

It is also very helpful for children if the mature threefold spatial gestures are living in the adults who care for them. We can't change someone else's space for them, but we can influence it. In fact we are influencing each other's spaces all the time—for better or for worse. The younger the child, the more susceptible he is to our spatial influences. Like the dance students who need the mirrors, we aren't usually aware of our spatial signatures. Fortunately, it is possible to learn to perceive how we are living in our spaces and how to change it. We can come to wear the archetypal spatial patterns most conducive to proprioceptive development and to so much more as well. This is one way that we can truly serve as models worthy of imitation for the children in our lives. ♦

Jane Swain is a physical therapist and a graduate of the Level III training in Spacial Dynamics®. She is the associate director of the teacher education program at Sophia's Hearth Family Center in Keene, New Hampshire and also has a private practice.

The Importance of a Large Movement Vocabulary: Reflections on the Sense of Self-Movement

— Lani Hill

With observations from the author's classroom. The students' names have been changed to protect their privacy.

Rudolf Steiner's view of the twelve senses is a radical and profound examination of the phenomenon of human perception. The fascinating complexity of the interrelatedness of the twelve senses could be a life-long study. Of the four foundational or will senses, self-movement, touch, balance and life (well-being), I have come, through both research and observation, to consider self-movement to be perhaps the most basic sense.

The nerves responsible for both producing actual movement and for the perception of it are the first to become myelinated in utero. Our survival depends on our ability to move and to perceive ourselves moving: to eat, to breathe, to communicate and to relate to others. Life is movement, and only in death is there complete stillness. While healthy movement development was once common in young children on the whole, for some years now early childhood teachers have been seeing increasing numbers of children with hindrances and disturbances of this vital sense.

The sense of self-movement gives us the internal feedback regarding the level of effort being produced by the muscles, whether the muscles are shortening or lengthening, that is, overcoming or going toward the direction of gravity; and also the position of the limbs and angles of the joints. Different neuromuscular excitation patterns, which involve the number and pattern of nerve fiber stimulations in muscle fibers, give different sensations. As Edmond Schoorel writes in *The First Seven Years*, "We cannot separate the sense of movement from the actual movement, because the sense of movement does not perceive anything when there is no movement."

***"When movements
and the sense of
movement are well-
developed, the sense
of freedom will
arise as a capacity
of the soul."***

*- Edmund Schoorel,
The First Seven Years*

Young children must learn through trial, error and exploration, ideally through play, what degree of effort and precisely what joint angles are optimal for the various skills and tasks they encounter, be they stirring dough, hammering, picking up a baby chick, jumping rope, or stomping in the snow. They must also learn to integrate their movement sense with the other senses such as balance and touch. I have come to refer to this process as "building the movement vocabulary." It is especially interesting to think in terms of "vocabulary" since, in Rudolf Steiner's view, the sense of self-movement is closely linked

to the sense of language—one of the higher senses described by Steiner. It's easy to see this link whenever one observes someone gesturing while talking (even on the phone!). I have often thought how amazing it would be if parents and educators were as concerned about children building a solid movement vocabulary as they are about their linguistic vocabulary. There is concern if Jimmy is five and has not yet mastered basic grammar, syntax and verb conjugation, but how about mastering running, stopping, gesturing and jumping with appropriate effort and spatial awareness?

~

Remy "floated" around the classroom, visiting the play scenarios of others briefly, but seldom interacted with the other children. She hung on the fringe of whatever activity was happening. Outdoors, she continued to float lightly around the playground, hovering close to me until I invited her to move a small wheelbarrow filled with sand, alongside me with my big one. She took hold of the handles and, beginning to lift, suddenly dropped them, a look of shock and surprise on her face. The sensation was interesting enough that she was curious to try it again. It seems that the perception of engaging many muscle fibers

firing at once in order to lift a heavy object was a new experience for her. She eventually succeeded in mustering the necessary force to lift the handles and propel the wheelbarrow, but had to stop to rest several times along the way. Her triumphant, beaming smile at her own accomplishment was a delight to witness. Over the next few weeks she branched out to some other brand-new experiences such as walking the stump circle, at first tentatively and with help, then finally alone with confidence. Not long afterwards she embarked on the process of mastering the rope swing. As her physical prowess grew, so did her social skills and her general engagement with the life of the class. By the time a new, friendly, girl arrived in the class, Remy was ready to play.

In the early 1980's I was involved in a research project in the field of Movement Behavior that, although small in size and not terribly momentous, has influenced the way I look at movement in adults and children to this day.

The study's hypothesis was that people who ranked high in scores of self-actualization as described by psychologist Abraham Maslow would also have high levels of capability in a wide range of movement qualities. In other words, the subjects who were well-rounded and well-developed human beings would also have at their disposal a wide variety of physical adaptations and responses. To test the movement aspects, we asked the subjects to perform tasks ranging from pretending to push a piano to carrying a tray full of feathers. They also had to flick water off their hands and do very light, airy movements as well as strong, precise actions. There were several others that I can no longer remember, but the point is that we did discover a strong correlation between high levels of self-actualization and a broad movement vocabulary.

Willi Aeppli, in *The Care and Development of the Human Senses*, cites Steiner as saying: "That [you can] experience yourself as a free soul is due to the radiation of the sense of movement, that is, the raying of the muscular contractions and extensions into your soul" (p. 47). That is certainly something to ponder as we work with the incarnating child. The healthy development of this essential sense has a huge and long-lasting impact on the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual wellbeing of these future adults. Aeppli continues, "Today's children have

to be furnished with quite different forces than hitherto, so that as adults they not only strengthen the life of civilization that has progressed further, but that they can master it" (ibid.). That's quite a call to us as early childhood educators, especially given the conditions we humans have created for today's children to inherit.

The mixed-age class ventured out of the playground gate for the first forest walk of the school year. While most of the children gleefully careened or rolled down the big hill that dropped away in front of us, Isa stood frozen in her tracks, eyes wide at the sight of the steep slope. After much hand-holding and reassurance, she made it to the bottom and even agreed to try it again a couple of times, holding tightly to the teacher's hand. A bit further on into the walk another small slope had her stuck again, this time whimpering "help, help." Although she was six years old and quite tall, Isa's apartment-living, sidewalk-traversing lifestyle apparently had offered few experiences of slopes or uneven ground. Stepping over roots and logs was a novelty for her, and it took several more walks until she could manage the hill by herself without fear and trembling.

Edmond Schoorel speaks eloquently about the sense of self-movement: "It is very important that children can develop their own movement pattern, in their own way, and at their own pace" (Schoorel, p. 193). He cautions educators and caregivers not to try to teach movement skills before the child is ready for them. His recommendation for optimal development of this sense is that "[a] mood of joy and lightness around the child will stimulate it, as this mood indicates that those around the child have a well-developed sense of movement themselves" (ibid.).

As imitation is by far the strongest learning mode for the child under age seven, our task as teachers is to model a wide range of movements for the children. We also will seek ways to provide opportunities for free movement development with objects to climb over, under, or through, objects of various weights to lift, and so on. Is there a light, precise gesture in circle somewhere—perhaps contrasted by a strong, slow heavy one? Fortunate are those who have eurythmy and therapeutic eurythmy available in their school communities. These offer precise and archetypically true movements for the children's imitation.

When we are outside, the teacher can make a point of doing some wide-arcing, full bodied swinging of a rake or a broom. So many of these types of movement used to be easily observed in daily life. Children walked (or skipped or ran) to school past the farmer working or watched the baker making some delicate piece of pastry or mom shaking out the rugs. So much work is now done by machines that there is a paucity of good, solid physicality for today's child to imitate. One boy I know only ever sees his father do any gross motor movement on the treadmill and exercise machines in their basement. Otherwise it's just fingers tapping on a keyboard. Then there is a whole list of topics, too long to do more than mention here: the increase in C-sectioned births, the results of a few generations eating processed food, pesticides, the loss of the childhood illnesses due to vaccinations, the impact of screen usage, etc., that all affect the development of healthy senses. It is no wonder that a healing education is so necessary nowadays.

So it appears that these children who come to us with movement and sensory integration issues are calling for all of us who work with them to be ever more conscious of our own movement and our own sensory integration. We are called upon to be more aware of developing embodied intelligence (a burgeoning field of research) in ourselves in general.

Some of these little ones come to us with a type of sensory malnutrition, just as if they had tried to develop a verbal vocabulary but hadn't heard enough spoken language.

I have no doubt that the stories of the children above are repeated in various forms in classrooms around the US and other so-called developed countries. The situation calls us to grow beyond our own current capacities and to increase our ability to serve those children who appear before us. My hope is that we can find ways to stretch to meet their needs and, at the same time, be grateful and rejoice in the self-development towards which they push us—toward more freedom. ♦

Lani Hill is the Educational Support teacher for the Early Childhood Department at the Washington Waldorf School, Bethesda, Maryland.

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The Sense of Life

— Astrid Lackner

The foundation of our waking day consciousness is built upon our senses. Rudolf Steiner indicated twelve interconnected senses that make up the human being. Through them we experience ourselves, our fellow human beings, and the world around us. These senses begin with the four “lower” or foundational senses, which include touch, life, self-movement and balance. These senses are directed toward and experienced in one's own body and are also called physical senses. They are developed and nourished in the first seven years of life.

We experience the world around us through smell, taste, sight and warmth, the “middle senses.” Rudolf Steiner called the final four the “higher” social or spiritual senses. They are: hearing, speaking,

perceiving the thought of another, and perceiving the ego (the individuality) of another. The health of these higher senses depends on the health and development of the four foundational senses. As such, balance is connected to hearing; movement to speaking; life to thinking; and touch to ego perception of the other. While recognizing the importance of all senses, especially the lower ones in our work in the early childhood classrooms, this article focuses on the sense of life.

The sense of life can be the most elusive and mysterious of the senses described by Rudolf Steiner. How do we experience it and how is it connected to the sense of thought? With the sense of life we experience a feeling of well-being within our own

body: how did we sleep, are we hungry, feeling sick, too cold or too warm? We often don't notice this sense until something is not right.

If the sense of life is not developed in a healthy manner, a person's perception of pain is askew. My daughter is one of these people. Her sense of life is underdeveloped. She does not feel pain as other people do and I worried when she was small. When she was three years old, she had an abscessed root in one of her molars. She wanted to suck on a frozen tortellini each evening when going to bed, because it felt so good. It took us three months and two dentists to figure out what was wrong. A child whose sense of life is not functioning well needs to be observed closely, as she experiences no warning system within her own being.

Another aspect of this sense gives us the experience of ourselves, of us filling the space of our bodies. We feel ourselves inwardly; as Rudolf Steiner states in *Spiritual Science as a Foundation for Social Forms*, we feel that "we are we." How does this sense come about? Anthroposophy takes into account both the visible and invisible/spiritual aspects of the human being without neglecting findings of natural science.

And so it is with the twelve senses. Each has a material and a spiritual aspect. Rudolf Steiner gives some indications in his 1909 lecture series, *Psychology of Body, Soul and Spirit*, of the fundamental spiritual aspects regarding the senses. He defines the sense of life as "life feeling," "vital sense," or "life sense that makes itself evident in feelings of freedom, energy or faintness."

In these lectures, Steiner describes how the life sense has come into being in a way that is beyond the scope of this article. Yet a naturalistic, scientific illustration of the sense of life was described by Dr. Susan Johnson, an anthroposophical doctor in California who assists children with behavioral and developmental challenges.

Drawing from the work of Dr. Karl König, she identified the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems as the seat of the sense of life. These two systems belong to the autonomic nervous system and are responsible for "fight or flight" (when the sympathetic nervous system responds) and rest and digestion responses (as directed by the parasympathetic nervous system). The sympathetic nervous system will activate all large muscles (preparing them to either fight or run) and increases blood flow to organs used in intense physical activity. The parasympathetic

nervous system is responsible for slowing down the heart rate, stimulating stomach/bowel motility, and preparing us for rest.

Dr. Johnson described the parasympathetic nervous system as creating the "Buddha state." It is only possible for children to engage, to learn, to create new neuropathways in the brain when they are in this relaxed state. Children will not take in new information, retain, and integrate it when they are anxious and nervous. They need an environment that is supportive, warm, and calm. Here we find a connection of the sense of life to the sense of thought. We are only able to learn when we are in a place of trust and warmth, when our sense of life is in a place of wellbeing.

How can a healthy sense of life be supported in the classroom? Children feel comfortable and secure when they are exposed to a rhythmical, predictable morning and have enough rest, healthy movement, time outdoors, wholesome foods, and healthy relationships. Children need enough time to play; and they love to participate in practical work, like sweeping the floor, folding laundry, baking, gardening, etc. Artistic activities, such as painting, crafting, and listening to stories further nourish their souls. Warmth, love and humor provide the foundation upon which our children can flourish. ♦

Astrid Lackner has been inspired by young children and families for over 25 years in both Canada and Austria. She is currently an early childhood educator at Cedar Valley Waldorf School in Squamish, British Columbia, Canada. She has also recently joined the faculty of the West Coast Institute for Anthroposophy. In her free time she enjoys roaming the back country of the West Coast Mountains.

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Sensory Opportunities through Baking and Cooking

— Marcia Marquis

First published in From Family to Feast: A Seasonal Cookbook by the Apple Blossom School Family Center (2012).

On the first day of school the Apple Blossom kindergartners bring a vegetable from home to add to our vegetable barley soup. This links their home life with their school life. It is a gesture of generosity and giving. The combination of all the vegetables together creating a warm and nourishing soup represents the Apple Blossom community. The children chop and dice and peel with small cutting boards and appropriate knives and peelers. There is much pleasure and laughter while we do this work, and yet there is a purposeful seriousness about the task at hand. It is real work being done. The next day, after the candle is lit and the blessing is said, the warm soup is ladled into wooden bowls and passed to each child and teacher. How warming and nourishing it is! The knowledge that we have all worked together to create such a meal rises in the steam of the broth and envelops us.

In the fall and spring, fresh market cream is churned into butter outside while the children grind the rye and millet into flour for the bread dough that they will make the next day. In the kindergarten a “master baker,” chosen from amongst the children, washes hands thoroughly and places her hands in the bowl. Over the hands is poured the warmed yeast (with oil, water, and a touch of honey). Then the soft flour is introduced and a bit of millet. The master baker mixes and squeezes and pinches the dough by hand. Then, when it can be formed into a ball, she divides it for the other children to knead. The master baker rubs hands together with flour to get clean.

It is hard to imagine that I was once doing all the work of the master baker myself, with a spoon, until a fellow colleague in another Waldorf school shared her bread day activity with me. I realized that I had overlooked the wonderful sensory opportunities in these activities. The children each get one “tidge” (pinch) of dough to eat when they are finished. The next day they devour the delicious bread with lots of butter and a bit of honey. Warm mint tea is a perfect accompaniment.

We cut apples outside before making apple crisp. Inside, one master baker mixes apples, cinnamon and maple syrup with bare hands, while the other one mixes oats, butter and honey in the same fashion. What delicious ooey-goeyness! There are so many textures to feel and so many smells. The next day there is warm apple crisp to eat with chamomile tea.

Children are more open and have fewer defenses and disturbances when the senses are enlivened and supported. They have fewer anxieties and are less fearful, are more capable of giving and receiving love, and are more open to expressing gratitude for the daily gifts they are given.

There are so many wonderful opportunities to support the essential need for healthy sensory stimulation in the process of cooking and baking. The sense of smell, touch and taste are enhanced, as well as the sense of life—with baking there is rhythm and warmth. There is the rhythm of a spoon stirring round and round in a bowl, the warmth of the oven baking fresh bread. There is the gift of healthy food and attention given by the mother, father and teacher. Cooking is indeed a treasure to share. ♦

Marcia Marquis is a kindergarten teacher and co-founder of the Apple Blossom School and Family Center.

The Tiniest Seed

— Cindy Faught Sudan

Offering opportunities to young children to nurture their sensory development and cultivate the formative senses is probably the most important part of our work as caretakers of young children. It is even more critical in today's world, which is saturated with screens and where adults are increasingly fearful of allowing children the freedom to explore the world.

A walk in the forest, around a pond or even through the neighborhood park can rejuvenate, invigorate and enliven our senses and give us a feeling of being “full of life.” Feeling the breeze on our skin, smelling the sweet or pungent foliage, and hearing the sounds of the birds or insects have a way of stimulating our own senses that can bring levity, calmness, centeredness, and a sense of well-being.

In my efforts to integrate sensory opportunities into my Waldorf mixed-age early childhood classes, I try to be ever mindful and awake for possibilities that can be presented to the young children in a natural way. We are fortunate to be located on a rural campus with thirty-eight acres of school property and additional surrounding land for plenty of uninhibited natural movement and discovery on our daily walks and during our outside play time.

A few years ago, the early childhood parents created a garden with the children. The “Vegetable Soup Garden” has presented many opportunities for natural and healthy experiences as the seasons pass. We have been happy to embrace them. Watching the young children exert themselves with gusto, busying themselves with digging, filling baskets, hauling compost in the wheelbarrows while keeping them balanced, and then seeing the delight of their accomplishment of emptying the filled wheelbarrows into the garden has filled many watching adults not only with joy, but with the satisfaction that the children are fully engaged in developmentally appropriate activity. There is a communal sense of pride in knowing that the experience is a vital component of a healthy development.



Photos courtesy of Cindy Faught Sudan

*Willst du dich selber erkennen,
Blicke in der Welt nach allen Seiten.*

*Willst du die Welt erkennen,
Schaue in alle deinen
eigenen Tiefen.*

*To find and know yourself,
Look all around you in the world.*

*To find and know the world,
Look into all the depths
within yourself.*

- Rudolf Steiner



Tending a garden requires large and small motor activity, both of which stimulate development through natural, fun experiences. The children can be found spreading and mixing compost, sowing the tiniest of seeds, weeding, and harvesting, all of which are superlative skills for developing healthy bodies and nurturing the senses.

A portion of the school property contains fields with native plants and weeds such as wild amaranth (also known as “pigweed”) and yellow dock. One spring, some amaranth reseeded itself into our garden. We left it there to grow. We watched and waited as the amaranth grew taller with the dark red, bulbous cluster getting larger at the top of the stalk. In the fall, we tested a few for ripeness and when the seeds easily fell from the cluster, the children could hardly wait to have their turn to shake the tiniest black seeds from the plant and watch them fall into our white bin. We then separated the amaranth seeds from the bits of the red fern-like seed head. Though the yield was not much, when all was accomplished, we washed and soaked the dark shiny seeds, added them to our oats for a special treat, and enjoyed them at snack time. Amaranth seeds are considered a complete protein, similar to quinoa.

One morning in the spring we were blessed with rain. Wearing our rain gear, we headed out for our morning walk with buckets in hand and traveled the gravel service road. As we headed down the road, there were squeals of delight as the children

ran back and forth across the road, quickly running from one wiggly, squirmy worm to another, picking them up and collecting them in their buckets. They probably collected over three hundred worms that day, which we happily delivered to our vegetable and flower gardens.

Harvesting garlic is especially popular with the children since the bulbs are not visible like many other vegetables. By turning over the earth, the children expose the bulbs, and they also delight in sifting through and finding the garlic bulbs, sorting some smaller ones to replant in the fall, and saving the others for Vegetable Soup Day.

There are endless possibilities to find sensory experiences for children, especially in nature, and being awake to these opportunities is a good practice for all of us. In the changes that present themselves throughout the cycle of the year, we have immense opportunities to share in nature’s beauty and bounty. Natural experiences provide us with moments in which we can both assist and guide children to live in a healthy way in a world filled with wonder and imagination.

In a 1923 lecture series published as *Harmony of the Creative Word*, Rudolf Steiner helps us understand the connection between the human being and nature. He says, “Yes, any walk in the world outside is in reality a true education in all questions of nutrition, of healing, of the spiritual; for in the world of nature illness is continually being induced and is continually being cured” (Steiner, Part Four, “The Secrets of the Human Organism”). Taking time to really observe what is happening all around us in nature will help us not only in our path as adult human beings, but also in our work with young children. ♦

Cindy Sudan has taught mixed-age kindergarten classes at the Kauai Waldorf School in Hawaii and Shepherd Valley Waldorf School/Boulder Valley Waldorf School in Colorado for over twenty-five years. Boulder Valley Waldorf School, PreK-8th Grade, is located in Boulder County, Colorado and has been in existence since 1993.

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Being within Sensing: Adult Meditative Thought

— Anne-Marie Fryer-Wiboltt

From an ordinary, everyday perspective, sensing the world means being present to the world through our various senses and sense organs. The world seems to be “in front” and appears separate from us. “Over there” is the lovely, round, green cabbage that I am about to pick for making sauerkraut. I see it a few feet away. I recognize it; it is already known to me. It is a green cabbage that I can smell, taste and touch. My attention, formed by the senses, reaches out to perceive the beautiful world of nature. Such is our usual perception of the world. We see “things out there,” and they are isolated from us.

There is another aspect of our being we can call “the embodied awakened self” or “embodied awakened I,” through which we experience this world of things, plants and people entirely differently. Through meditative and contemplative practices—within a mode of complete stillness attending with conscious focus—the embodied, awakened I reveals itself as intimately united with the creative presences and forces of the earth and cosmos, with the unfolding of all life. From within this holy bodily presence, we discover that sensing is not really inside us as we are so accustomed to think. We are within sensing! This intimate experience of being within sensing, as experiencing what another person is sensing, is sometimes named empathy. And this is very much how a very young child unconsciously experiences the world.

Before and during the time the child is learning to speak, sensing is experienced as wholeness, wholeness of “light.” The attention of a young child is all receptivity, all “listening,” entirely sensing. The young child is experiencing herself within sensing as a kind of “field of senses” or “field of light” in which all the senses are together. When a child sees her mother, she sees not the details but the light from within; and

she smiles. The smile is a gesture of joy. She is joy itself. This is before later development in the child when this “sense field” is differentiated into distinct senses: hearing, touch, smell, etc. To experience, for example, a specific color while disregarding all other qualities requires selectivity in attention and repeated experience of doing so. It is generally known that this selective sensing happens quite late in the life of the child.

As the sensory development matures, the child gradually isolates himself from the “light” and becomes a citizen of the world of “things.” He becomes attentive to the separate sense impressions in the world, feeling as if he is “here” and everything else is “over there.” Later in his life, as an adult, he may freely decide to take up the necessary inner development to again intimately, and now consciously, experience sensing as united into whole presences. He can strive to sense again within holy wholeness, with the “light” of the world. ♦

Anne-Marie Fryer-Wiboltt, *WE CAN* Regional Representative in the Great Lakes area, is a retired Waldorf kindergarten and class teacher.

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Preventing Addiction

— Nancy Blanning

This article first appeared in the 2015 Winter issue of Lilipoh, directed to a public audience rather than to teachers, per se. It is reprinted here to offer an approach as to how we might bring to parents thoughtful consideration to screen usage by children, especially very little ones, without moralizing, lecturing, or scolding. Hopefully the argument speaks for itself.

Discussing addiction prevention is something that usually comes along toward middle school, perhaps fifth grade these days. It may seem strange to discuss this with regard to early childhood. But it is in the earliest years of life when addiction prevention forms its bedrock. It is urgent that we see what helps to strengthen our young children to meet dangers that may lie ahead.

Addiction prevention begins when the child is very young. This realization was startlingly emphasized at an international Waldorf educators' conference in Dornach, Switzerland in spring, 2015. Teachers from all levels of Waldorf education—early childhood, grades, high school—gathered with physicians to discuss how to support critical moments of development in our children's lives. The once-typical landscape of childhood has changed with life's fast pace, use of technology, fearfulness, and general sense of uncertainty and insecurity that surround our lives. That children will achieve healthy development in our modern world is not a given at all anymore.

One change intruding more and more into daily life is the use of screens. It is common to see very little children with screens in hand, totally still and absorbed in whatever they see in this tiny, virtual world. The child's first seven years is the essential time to develop a sense of inner strength, initiative, confidence, and competence that can protect them when facing the challenges of the future. Adults consider screens as useful tools. They can also be fascinating, even alluring. But this media use with young children can whisper them away from developing strong and independent selfhood.

Screen use is a crucial question we must consider for our children. It is subtle to consider, but exposure to screens can play a part of this picture of addiction. This is a bold and challenging statement, no doubt offensive to some. But please read on. The following picturing of child development will describe where pitfalls await but also where possibilities to support a healthy sense of self and resilience also lie.

A first question addressed at the educators' conference was, "What is addiction?" Dr. Bettina Lohn, school doctor with Waldorf students for grades 8-12 in Switzerland, defines addiction as dependency upon a substance or a behavior. There develops a compulsion for an external experience in order to "feel good." A surprising statistic indicates that addictions to substances—alcohol, tobacco, coffee, chocolate, marijuana—are not increasing. But behavior addictions—such as gaming, internet media use, video gaming, shopping, self-injuring, cutting, and anorexia—are all on the rise. Participation in some of these activities is common in moderation in ordinary life. But a threshold has been passed when the consumption or behavior becomes a compulsion. It is hard to discern where addiction actually starts. But once established, there can be enormous consequences to health, finances, personal development, emotional and psychological well-being, and social relationships.

To "prevent" means to do something to keep the addiction from happening. We have substance-abuse education programs in schools to inform children of the dangers of experimentation with different substances. We know that young people, particularly adolescents, have not developed the discernment or maturity in neurological development to make sensible decisions. They tend to be risk takers and feel invulnerable. Many young people experiment with substances or risky behaviors, but only a few develop addictions. Why do others not? What makes the critical difference that some can "taste" but then say "no, thanks," and move on?

We want to protect our children from harmful influences. These education programs are important, but something more must come much, much earlier as a general prevention for every child. Warning and moralizing about the dangers of addictions will have little effect if the foundation of inner strength has not been supported very early in life. We have to consciously encourage and allow our children to strengthen themselves.

Here is where we touch upon the nature of early childhood. When we think about young children, we see that they are *doers*. They want to *do* everything, sometimes to our frustration and chagrin. The child has a natural drive to explore and discover the world. In doing so, the child begins to develop his or her own experience of individual competence. To push and pull, take apart and put back together, to dig and fill, to lift and carry, to dump and pick up, to twirl and spin, to climb and jump, to fall and stand again are things children repeat over and over until they feel competent. This is one way that they develop confidence and “feeling at home” in their physical bodies. To feel confident and trust that the body will do what the child intends allows her to “feel good” as a result of her own actions. No outside substance or distraction is necessary. The child has strengthened her own will and sense of competence through doing. Being active in the world rather than passively receiving or timidly holding back is a first step in preventing vulnerability to addiction.

All children have a natural drive to find their own independence. This is a gradual process that needs approval and support from the caring adults around them. To begin with, little children are at the mercy of their environment. They have no discrimination. All is interesting and equal to their experience. They cannot discern what is good or bad, and they imitate what they see around them. We adults have to play that discriminating role in their lives so this inner, independent self longing to grow is not “hijacked.” Screens may make life seem easier by engaging children’s attention to keep them quiet. But screen time is a will-breaker. It supplants the independent

self that is longing so deeply to establish itself in this earthly life with something artificial, something “in place of self.”

The first seven years of life particularly is the time for the will to develop. We speak about will power, which needs to develop in two directions. We speak on the one hand of having the will power to restrain, to hold back, to “just say no.” The other side of will power is having the will to *do*, to have initiative and follow through, even if the task is not inherently fun or interesting. To resist is an act of will that is born out of the will to do. **With screens, the only real act of will is to turn it off.**

All human beings seek confirmation that we have a meaningful place in the world around us. We want to know that it matters that we are alive on this earth and that the things we *do* contribute. Many people who fall prey to addictions do not see how their lives have meaning. They turn to substances or compulsive behaviors to distract themselves from the feelings of meaninglessness. In addition to our parental care and nurturing love, we show our children that they matter by giving them meaningful work to do that contributes to our social welfare. As soon as it makes sense, engaging our children in the work and running of the home is a step in addiction prevention. Small chores to begin with—silverware on the dinner table, carrying one’s plate to the sink, washing dishes by hand, folding napkins, sweeping with whisk broom and dust pan, and so on—help the young child begin to develop habits that strengthen selfhood.

Children want to be self-sufficient, so they need the opportunity to develop self-care skills. Allowing them to do this takes lots of time. In our fast-paced lives with tight schedules, this is hard. But allowing the time in these early years to struggle into snow pants and boots again and again is a step toward addiction prevention. A three-year-old little girl proved this strongly. She struggled and struggled to take off her snow wear, hang her sweater on a hook hard for her to reach, and put on her indoor shoes. It took time, but it was the most important thing happening in the world for her at that moment. When

she had succeeded, she turned with a smile and said, “I do it myself.” Being both challenged and allowed from early childhood onward “to do it myself” strengthens the child against the lure of seeking this satisfaction from something external in the future.

Young children are naturally imitative and mirror back whatever they see others do. If what they see is purposeful, this is what they will reflect back to us. If they experience what looks to them like passivity, doing nothing, they will imitate this too. Children are hard-pressed when they mostly see adults speaking and texting on cell phones or working on computers. If children do not see steps of preparation in cooking a meal, shoveling snow with shovels, clearing leaves with rakes by hand instead of using leaf blowers, mending something that is broken, or stitching closed a tear in a piece of clothing, they have few examples of meaningful things to do. Watching people use technology has no content or result in practical life to the children’s perception. Children are longing for what is real and purposeful, not for what is virtual. To help our children strengthen here, we must give them examples of real activity where something is accomplished through human effort. This means that we have to shovel the snow ourselves with the children at our side with their own shovels, and so on. We may have to come out of our technological, convenient life-style habits to go out of our way to give children these experiences. Yet anything that will help our children toward a healthy future and strength in personhood is a huge investment and a small sacrifice in the long term.

Modern technology has relieved us of much arduous work that kept earlier generations busy from dawn to dusk. We have more time and energy to explore opportunities to develop our humanity in fuller and richer ways. We have leisure time. How will we use it? Media producers of all sorts are waiting to fill that void for us with videos, electronic games, educational programs, and films. The things we see on screens are alluring, fascinating, exciting—and addicting. As described above, early childhood especially is the time for activity, to develop one’s own

will forces to purposefully *do* and experience one’s effectiveness in the world. It is the time for reaching out into the world to explore. It is the time for seeing and imitating purposeful activity as a template for acting purposefully in the future. It is the time for strengthening self-initiative.

When our children sit in front of a screen, they are not reaching out into the world through their own initiative and activity. They are being *pulled into* a world created by someone else’s intention. They are not moving; they are not exploring and creating their own experiences of the natural world. They are not strengthening their independent will forces. They are being carefully enticed to enter more and more deeply into a virtual world created by someone we do not know, whose motivations are not revealed to us.

To the defenseless children who innocently accept everything in the environment as of equal value, screen time predisposes them to look outward for engagement and “feeling good.” It distracts them from growing strength inwardly. It predisposes the child to depend upon a substance or to engage in a behavior that directs and controls him, instead of directing himself from his inner place of strength.

So we come back to where we began. The foundation for preventing addiction lies in early childhood. We give our children strength to face perilous future temptations if we give their forces of will meaningful and potent chances to develop. We do children a service by protecting them from technological distractions that rob them of the opportunity to be active. The possibility of addiction for any of us is frightening, most especially when we think of our children. We all wish to give them the chance to develop their own self-confidence and competence, so that to addictive invitations to “feel good” through something external, they can say, “No, thanks. I do it myself.” ♦

Nancy Blanning, *Editor of Gateways Newsletter, for many years was a Waldorf teacher in early childhood and beyond.*

Pioneers

Remembering Dr. Helmut von Kügelgen: Pioneer, Guardian and Protector of Young Children

— Nancy Blanning

The year 2016 marks the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Dr. Helmut von Kügelgen. He was born in Estonia on December 14, 1916, after his father, a German journalist in St. Petersburg, and family were expelled from Russia at the beginning of the First World War. The family's refugee journey took them to Finland, Germany, and Romania during his childhood.



Finally settling in Germany, Dr. von Kügelgen finished his schooling as a journalist and editor. The beginning of the Second World War coincided with the conclusion of his professional training. Conscripted as a war correspondent, he spent seven years covering the war and was ultimately taken as an American prisoner of war. His biographical reflections express gratitude that, since he was a correspondent, he never had to use weapons to harm another human being.

After the war he needed to find a livelihood. A new and different wish awakened, to “become a teacher and work with children, with young people. In the face of ruins everywhere, could there be something of greater importance today than human beings themselves?”

His introduction to Waldorf education came through his wife's family and meeting his wife's former teacher, who had been a student at the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart. The resolve was clear.

From the age of thirty, he spent the next thirty years as a class teacher and took four classes from grades one through eight.

As a gifted and dedicated Waldorf educator, his life path led him on further wanderings, along with his wife and five daughters. He traveled to North America, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Chile to mentor Waldorf education. Further trips took him to South Africa, Namibia, Egypt, and then Australia and New Zealand.

When he retired from class teaching, he turned his attention to fostering and protecting the welfare of young children. He guided the founding of the International Waldorf Kindergarten Association (now known as IASWECE—International Association of Steiner-Waldorf Early Childhood Education). In “To the Workers, Parents, and Friends,” published upon Dr. Von Kügelgen's passing, colleague Jürgen Flinspach remembered this of his work in the International Association: “The work in the Board of Trustees of the International Association of Waldorf Kindergartens was especially intense. The inner work of this group was distinctively molded by his contributions, which he communicated to those present like a vision concerning the future tasks of the Kindergarten Association. He then called on us to work for it. It was always his special concern that Waldorf education be practiced not just as a method, but that its spiritual roots be seized by the educators and are worked out in the smallest actions each day, so that especially during the first seven-year period the children can develop through imitation of gestures, of language and of thinking.”

Dr. von Kügelgen was also a very active teacher in the Early Childhood Teacher Training Seminar in Stuttgart. For the yearly festivals and for the study for the day, the week, the month and the year, booklets came into being directly from his lessons at the Seminar. These booklets he revised, expanded, and edited as *The Little Series*. These valuable writings appear like a legacy. The contents of the booklet “Spiritual Gifts for the Educator,” published as *Spiritual Insights* by WECAN (1999), were a particular concern for him for the work of educators in kindergartens worldwide.

Joan Almon, co-founder of WECAN with Susan Howard, had much opportunity to interact with Dr. von Kügelgen over the years. Joan describes him as “much loved as a man of great spiritual insight. His lectures were stirring and the way he helped Waldorf’s roots go more deeply into anthroposophy was especially inspiring.” At the last Whitsun international kindergarten conference he was able to attend, “he spoke with immense power about the spiritual world. He said, ‘You must realize that the spiritual world is not somewhere far away. It is right here!’ These were the words of one who was near the threshold of death and sensed the spiritual all around him, but they were also the words of one who intimately knew that the spiritual world is in each one of us.”

In 1989, Dr. von Kügelgen was one of the European “greats” of early childhood who came to Pine Hill, New Hampshire, for a North American early childhood conference. In the company of Freya Jaffke, Margret Myerkort, Elisabeth Moore-Hass,

Bronja Zalengin, and Werner Glas, he spoke about angels and our relationship to them. Whether we are aware of their presence or not, the angelic world is there—always—to help us. Those privileged to hear his lecture were embraced in his human warmth and sincere caring for humanity—young children in particular. Perhaps even more important than that was experiencing with him his absolute certainty in the inspiring and guiding presence of the spiritual world. When he spoke of this, one could see joy shining from his eyes. ♦

Nancy Blanning, *Editor of Gateways Newsletter*, is honored to have known Helmut von Kügelgen during her many years as a Waldorf teacher in early childhood and beyond.

Resources:

- Joan Almon, “In Memory of Helmut von Kügelgen”; Jürgen Flinspach, “A Memorial to Helmut von Kügelgen”; and Helmut von Kügelgen, Claudia McKeen, trans., “Eightieth Birthday Address”; from *Love as the Source of Education: the Life Work of Helmut von Kügelgen* by Helmut von Kügelgen, Susan Howard, Ed. (Spring Valley: Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America 2016).

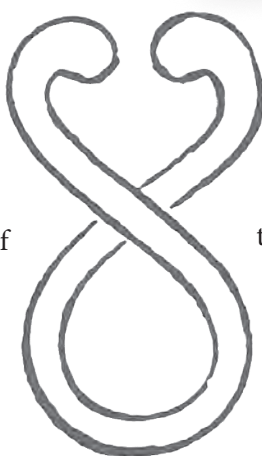
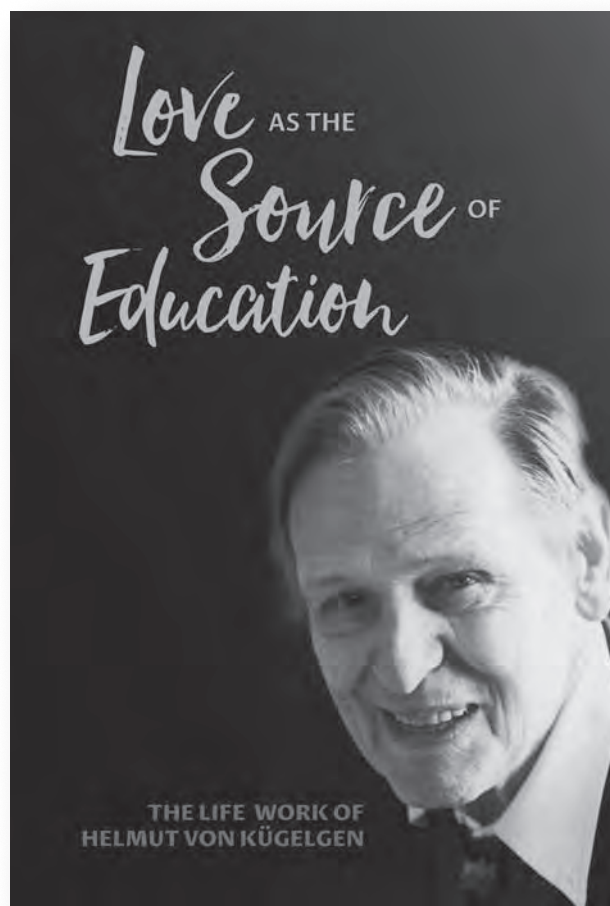
Love as the Source of Education

— Dr. Helmut von Kügelgen

From Love as the Source of Education: the Life Work of Helmut von Kügelgen, Susan Howard, Ed. (WECAN 2016).

Without a deepening and internalizing of the idea of destiny, it will become increasingly difficult to come to terms with the questions of education. One sees in every child an individuality, whose path is neither confined by the gateway of birth nor the gateway of death. When a teacher receives pupils in the mood of “having a destiny with them,” a new sense of responsibility is strengthened. When in quiet reflection one directs one’s attention to what is brought into this life individually, and to the capacities and impulses that these children should one day carry from this life over the threshold of death, one obtains an immense power as an elder to support, bear, and help to solve the problems of these youths. The source of strength in the internalized idea of destiny can only become effective, however, if the “modern learning methods,” the technical intermediaries, the cleverly contrived, improved performance programs do not replace the speaking human being. For the sake of a contemporary spiritually and artistically formed teaching process, Waldorf pedagogy holds human-to-human interaction as the “most modern” educational method. The communication of knowledge through the creatively fashioning human being can alone radiate edifying forces, wisdom, and warmth into the lesson.

When Rudolf Steiner still led the school (according to people who were there), he was for teachers, pupils and parents the source of wisdom and warmth for the prosperity of the school. He stepped into the center of the school community, attended classes, gave the teachers examples, confidence and advice, worked in the teachers’ conferences on the inner structure of the school organism and on the spiritual permeation of the whole work, spoke at monthly festivals and parents’ evenings. From him there went forth enthusiasm, momentum, and heartfelt warmth. In all difficult



situations he asked first and foremost for that spiritual-human contact between teachers and pupils; indeed, he demanded it. Where this contact was given, where work was done with enthusiasm, where in the upper school the love for the teacher turned into love for the subject matter, into interest in the world—then he was thankful, because he saw that his work was rooting itself in humanness. What human beings alone can give to one another, so that we learn the art of becoming human, he showed in exemplary fashion. This is why he repeated so often the single question in his addresses to the pupils: “Do you love your teachers?” and he was satisfied with the joyful “Yes!” of the hundredfold chorus of children.

The science of the human being that Rudolf Steiner placed at the foundation of Waldorf pedagogy bears the power within itself to awaken love. It is love that on the one hand always wishes to become deed and true action in daily life and on the other hand strives to become knowledge, “real spiritual atmosphere.” It is love that Rudolf Steiner integrated in the foundation stone of the school, so that in the Free Waldorf School, the spirit of love could hold sway and lay its foundations wherever it builds places for childhood and youth in the world.

Every teacher rejoiced (as Karl Schubert describes) when he came into the class. “It meant so much for the children. The classroom was filled with a festive mood. He always gave motivation and encouragement. He trusted one more than one trusted oneself...It suited him when one sought and entered upon new paths out of one’s own strength, in connection with the spirit of pedagogy in which one stood...he allowed much to happen because he wanted much to happen and much to be done. I heard him once say: ‘I am not in accord with much that happens, and yet it seems right that it happens, because otherwise nothing would develop.’ He laid great value on the artistic element, which he would like very much to have seen represented by us. ‘Go, go’ was his admonition, and then came the pleading emphatically spoken word, ‘warmth, warmth...’”

Rudolf Steiner once came into the drawing lesson of Wilhelm Ruhtenberg, who had given the assignment to express in lines “hatred and conflict.” Soon the opposite assignment followed to draw forms that resembled “love and friendship.” That was the moment when the door quietly opened and Rudolf Steiner entered. He saw that a girl had tried to represent love in round yet melancholic, inwardly directed forms. Ruhtenberg describes in

***“We need as teachers
an awakening of
living human nature
that experiences
again within itself the
whole child, insofar
as we come into a
spiritual connection
with the child.”***

—Rudolf Steiner

his journal from 1927: “He took her drawing book in hand and drew very plainly with a couple of lines two forms that wrapped around each other: above they wish to touch almost tenderly, neither wishes to offend the other, one appears to wish humbly to bow, and the other, as if shielding, wishes to lean over.” A fellow pupil, Berthold Faig, reports the same situation: “In another lesson Pastor Ruhtenberg had given us the task to bring “love and hatred” to expression in an artistic form, and once again Rudolf Steiner came to us in the class. In the blue drawing book in landscape format with colorful tissue paper between the pages a girl had brought “hatred” to expression in a jagged

form. We had not used colored pencils, but only the usual black pencil. Rudolf Steiner drew “Love” in the book, as it is reproduced here from my memory. My late class teacher also remembered this drawing in the same form.”

Of the three most commonly used motivating forces in education—fear, ambition, and love—Rudolf Steiner felt that in Waldorf education we must leave out the first two. The logo of the International Association of Waldorf Kindergartens has to do with the third force. We are often asked what it means and who gave it to us. Rudolf Steiner drew the symbol of love before the eyes of the children in a book. We chose this symbol at the foundation of the International Kindergarten Association in the autumn of 1969. ♦

Helmut von Kügelgen *was a champion of the Waldorf early childhood movement and a steadfast supporter of its growth in North America. Along with the IASWECE and Waldorf educators everywhere, WECAN celebrates the centenary of his birth in October 2016.*

For the Classroom, Inside and Out

The Wandering Circle

— Rose Maynard

Recently during a workshop at our Gateways conference, I spoke about the elements of the kindergarten day. I suggested that many aspects within the early childhood curriculum are creative opportunities awaiting research and deepening. During this time I highlighted the various musical genres within our pedagogy, which led us eventually to circle. What are the intentions behind circle time? This is when we can consciously plan for specific therapeutic movement and integrate activity supportive of the foundational senses. Movements are placed strategically within imaginative, musical journeys. The pioneering work of Nancy Blanning and Laurie Clark continues to inspire Waldorf early childhood teachers to develop circles addressing the senses of touch, balance, life and self-movement.

A circle with therapeutic activity is worthy of incorporation into weekly if not daily routines. One challenge I have is that often the time designated for circle attracts other activity into its midst, all of it equally rich, but there are weeks when a traditional game or a dramatization of a story is the better fit.

Limited space can pose a challenge. It can be difficult to accommodate expansive movement. Nevertheless, it is important to incorporate movement that supports the foundational senses on a daily basis. After wrestling with planning and the important task of fitting in daily movement tasks, the following question may arise: Where else can I consciously plan for movement involving the whole group?

For me, the answer emerged slowly over a couple of years during the working and reworking of my class's daily walk. Even formulating a walk can be a creative activity. I realized that I could approach our walk as a wandering circle, incorporating activity and song as we journeyed along. Teachers in warmer climates have likely mastered the art of outdoor circles and activity. My challenge, as a Canadian teacher living

near the mountains, has been to embrace my outdoor environment and truly incorporate it into the day throughout the seasons. We are blessed to have grand spaces around the school to run across and hills to roll down. How better to ignite the sense of life than by galloping as fast as we can across the field? Why not embark on daily "puppy rolls" on the big hill by the garden? Is this not ideal for the sense of touch? And where else can twenty-two children comfortably circle round and crawl without bumping? Crawling while wearing winter pants on soft snow is actually more comfortable than the indoor equivalent.

In my mind, our daily walk is now a wandering circle. Songs, games and imaginations permeate this time. Stops along the way inspire new ways to move and may often provide balance challenges. Our wandering circle does not take away from outdoor imaginative play, nor does it replace indoor circle time. I suppose it could be viewed as a lengthy, intention-filled transition, one that I continue to shape, reshape and expand. ♦

Rose Maynard *has been involved at the Calgary Waldorf School since 1991. Recently she attained her Master's degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Alaska South East. The Canadian Association for Young Children published a piece of her graduate work entitled, "Computers and Young Children." Currently she is in her eighth year as a lead kindergarten teacher and continues to build on her love for nature, children and movement.*

Resources:

- Blanning, Nancy, and Laurie Clark, *Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures* (2006).



From *Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures, Volume 2* by Nancy Blanning and Laurie Clark (WECAN 2016).

Sensory Integration through Nursery Rhymes and Song

— Joani Lackie-Callighan

Facilitating the healthy integration of children's sensory systems is a high priority for any early childhood teacher. Using the vehicle of nursery rhymes and song, teachers can target Rudolph Steiner's lower four senses of touch, life, self-movement and balance by weaving among the three dimensional planes of the body, adding a variety of limb gestures and utilizing dramatic play.

In mainstream vocabulary, the movement sense correlates with the body's proprioceptive system, through which information received by the contracting and stretching of muscles and the compression of joints gives information about body position and body geography. The sense of balance is also known as the vestibular system. The sensory organs for balance are the semicircular canals and cochlea located in the inner ear. Touch or the tactile sense through Steiner's lens becomes an avenue to learn about physical boundaries between oneself and the world, not just about textures and temperatures. The life sense provides an awareness of general well-being and comfort in the body.

I awakened to the importance of nursery rhymes for language development and phonemic awareness through a workshop presented by Suzanne Down of Juniper Tree Puppetry in Colorado. Further research led me to Jessica Griffen's Intellidance in Alberta, Canada, and her use of rhymes with movement. These led me to want to develop some movement games and activities of my own.

An approach that works well in pairing movement with nursery rhymes includes working with the three planes of the body and their midlines, using a variety of lateral arm and leg movements, and focusing on each specific sense of touch, movement and balance.

Guidelines about the Body's Three Midlines

The *horizontal midline* separates the top half of the body from the lower half of the body at the waist. Movement that encourages the head to be placed below the waist, either from a sitting or standing position, works with this midline. A standing position is used most often.

The *vertical midline* separates the left side of the body from the right. Integrating movement for this midline encourages arms and legs to crisscross in front of or behind the body.

The *sagittal midline* separates the front of the body from the back. Helpful movement with this midline brings a child forward and backward.

Familiar Rhymes and Movements for Working with the Body's Three Planes

We want to engage each of the senses of touch, balance, and self-movement.

To engage *touch*, the children can tap, poke, brush, squeeze, tickle, or pound their bodies or floor. Touch can be administered from light to heavy or from continuous to intermittent.

To engage *balance* children can shift weight from side to side; spin the entire body; rotate the head around while sitting, standing or kneeling; or change direction or tempo of activity.

To engage *self-movement* or the proprioceptive system, use movement that contracts or expands the body. Work with polarities, such as up/down, left/right, small/tall, stop/go, etc.

Because nursery rhymes are short, you can fit them into your day whenever necessary.

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Traditional Song

This is a fun social song where everyone sits in a huge circle, spaced comfortably for sitting cross-legged. Begin with legs extended in front of body.

**Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream.**

(pretend to have oars in hand leaning forwards and then pulling back, leaning backwards, repeat till end of stanza)

**Rock, rock, rock your boat,
Gently to and fro.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Over the side you go!**

(sit cross legged, hands on knees, and rock side to side switching weight from one hip to the other)

(tuck chin and rock backwards with spine along floor)

**Swim, swim, swim about,
Gently down the stream.
And if you see a crocodile,
Don't forget to scream!**

(lying on your back, do the backstroke moving arms in a circular backward motion, while kicking legs)

(on the word scream . . . sit back up and scream)

Arm and leg actions can include:

Symmetrical movement where hands, arms or legs are doing the exact same thing at the same time. For example, both hands up, both legs jumping, both hands tapping on thighs, etc.

Bilateral movement using both sides of the body in a coordinated way. For example, using “scissor arms,” tapping or chopping right hand on to the left arm, etc.

Reciprocal or alternating movement of hands or legs, exemplified by rocking or swaying from one side of the body to the other, lifting one foot off the ground while planting the other, or switching arm positions.

Cross-lateral movement, crossing any of the three midlines, for example, leaning forwards and backwards, swaying to left then right, crossing arms and legs in front or behind one another.

Jack in the Box

Author unknown

**Jack in the box in his own little house,
Curled up asleep as quiet as a mouse.**

**Knock on the door and give a little bump,
Wake Jack up, and up Jack jumps!**

*(children begin curled up on the floor on their knees as small as they can be, while I go around and gently rub everyone’s back)
(gently tap on top of heads, then with fist, pound on floor)
(Everyone pops up and jumps up and down.)*

Working with these lower senses builds a strong foundation for academic learning in the future. These senses do not develop without help through the auditory and visual systems, too. Each gesture, action and word builds connections in the brain.

But most importantly, nurturing the lower four senses helps to transform and develop the companion higher four senses of ego, thought, language/word, and hearing, which emerge later in life. So when viewing your work with children through that lens, sensory integration is a gift given for the hope of the future, one child at a time. ♦

Joani Lackie-Callighan *has been an early childhood educator for more than twenty-five years, bridging Waldorf-inspired methods into mainstream education classrooms. In the spring of 2016, she presented a workshop on Nursery Rhymes in Movement and Story Boxes at the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Child annual conference.*

Resources:

- Ayres, A. Jean, *Sensory Integration and the Child* (Torrance: Western Psychological Services, 2005).
- Down, Susan, *Juniper Tree School of Puppetry Arts*, visit www.junipertreepuppets.com.
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A Story for Advent

— Mary Knighton

The time of Advent is also a season of light for many traditions, including Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. A goal in Waldorf education is to be inclusive in our festival celebrations through offering archetypal pictures that convey truths of universal human and spiritual experiences. This story was created with this intention. It and others like it can be shared with all members of our school communities.

Long, long ago in a small village there lived an old light keeper. Every day he cleaned and polished his lantern so the light would shine brightly. He tended the flame carefully so it burned tall and strong. Whenever any village people needed to light their own lanterns, they could always go to the light keeper to receive a new spark.

However, the light keeper was getting very old. It was harder and harder for him to keep the light shining brightly. He called for someone new to tend the light. But any new young light keepers did not last long at the job. They did not want to sit and tend the light all night. They wanted to dance and play and eat and drink. And they left the lantern unattended. Slowly the lantern began to get dimmer. Soot built up in the windows, and the flame burned low. It was harder and harder for the villagers to light their own lanterns from this dim light. The village grew darker and darker.

One evening in midwinter, a young girl from the countryside came into the village seeking a light for her lantern. But when she came to the light keeper, the last tiny flame flickered, faltered and died out. The girl stood alone in the dark. "Where can I find light?" she wondered. The old, feeble light keeper was sitting in the corner. He spoke. "Deep in the forest you will find the light. But you must walk carefully and listen closely. Only then will you find the way."

The girl thanked the old man and walked out towards the forest. She shivered as she stepped

***"May I be a
light-bearer
in the world's
wintry night."***

—Source Unknown

into the dense woods. It grew darker and darker, and she had to feel her way between the trees. Her foot hit something hard in the path. It was a big stone. She pushed and rolled the stone to the side of the path. "Thank you," said the stone. "So many people have kicked me on their way, but no one has bothered to move me to make it easier to pass by." Now whenever a stone stood in the path, she gently moved it aside.

The girl continued on. After some time, she felt a small fir tree blocking her path. It had fallen over in the wind. She propped it back up and patted the earth down around its roots. "Thank you," said the tree. "Now I can grow straight and tall."

On she went. She heard a slight whimpering sound below her. She knelt down and felt something soft and furry. It was a little squirrel with a hurt foot. Carefully she wrapped a soft cloth around its foot. "Thank you for your kindness," said the squirrel. "If you will put me into my hole, I'm sure my foot will be better soon." She lifted the squirrel up into his hole in the tree and gave it a little nut she had in her pocket.

Now she was in the deepest, darkest part of the forest. She stopped to gather her courage. She did not know where she would find the light. Then she heard crying. She ventured forward and there on a stump sat a very young child. "I've lost my way," cried the child, "and I'm so cold and hungry."

"Here, take my cloak." The girl wrapped her cloak around the small child. She reached into her pocket and took out a bit of bread and gave it to the child. "Sit on my lap and I'll keep you warm." She put the child onto her lap and sat down to rest. She closed her eyes for a moment and felt a warm light stream into her. When she opened her eyes, it didn't seem quite so dark anymore. She looked up into the sky and saw all the stars as they shone brightly in the night sky. She looked at the ground and the stones seemed to glow with a soft light. The leaves on the plants and

trees shimmered and glistened. All around in little holes and burrows she saw the bright eyes of the night animals glowing.

Then she looked into her hand and she saw that her lantern was burning brightly with a strong, tall flame. "Oh," she cried, "I can take you back to the village now." She led the child by the hand. It was easy to see the path now. Her lantern shone brightly and all the stones glowed, leading the way.

Soon they were back in the village. She found the child's home. His parents rejoiced at the return of their son. Then, as she shared the light gathered on her journey, they rejoiced at the glow that began to shine from their own lanterns. The young girl went from door to door and shared this light with everyone in the village. Soon the village began to glow again.

The young girl became the new light keeper. She tended her flame with care, and she taught all those who came to her how to care for their lanterns so the light inside would always shine brightly. ♦

Mary Knighton *has been an early childhood teacher at Madrona School on Bainbridge Island, Washington, since it opened 17 years ago. She has focused for the last several years on therapeutic movement in the classroom.*

Let it shine,

Let it shine,

Let it shine . . .

For Our Growth

Six Gestures for the Waldorf Early Childhood Educator

— Holly Koteen-Soulé

This article first appeared in the Research Bulletin for Waldorf Education, vol. XX, no.2, Spring/Summer 2015. Reprinted with permission.

In this elaboration on the principle of Waldorf methodology, I have chosen to describe the work of the early childhood teacher as a set of qualitative gestures, because this approach is more closely aligned with the nature and orientation of the child before the age of seven than a typical set of guidelines.

Accompaniment

In Lecture 1 of the series published in *The Foundations of Human Experience*, Rudolf Steiner speaks about the task of educators as a continuation of the work of higher beings. He also tells us, in Lecture 1 of *The Spiritual Guidance of the Individual and Humanity*, that before a child says “I,” before experiencing him- or herself as separate from parents or the surrounding world, spiritual beings that guided the child before birth are still active in the life of the young human being, especially in the child’s learning to walk, the acquisition of speech, and the beginning of thinking.

The quality of this activity could be described as a gesture of accompaniment. Early childhood teachers accompany and support the child’s coming into the physical body and developing these primary human capacities, sometimes by placing ourselves behind the child, sometimes by placing ourselves at the child’s side, and sometimes by leading the child. When the teacher leads, it is primarily through movement—either outward physical movement or inner soul movement.

Accompaniment to me means a gentle hand, a warm heart, and a keen sensitivity to when and how to be helpful. In recent years this responsibility to observe and be aware of the developmental needs of

individual children requires a deep understanding of the role and importance of the senses of touch, life, self-movement and balance and the kinds of activities that support the critical development of these foundational senses.

Worthiness of Imitation

This second gesture is intimately connected with the first. In Waldorf education we recognize that young children learn through imitation and that this capacity is especially potent during the first seven years. It diminishes as a portion of the child’s etheric forces (also called life or formative forces) become available for conscious memory and learning.

We can observe that young children imitate not only what they take in through their senses, but even very subtle aspects of their environment, including the mood and thoughts of the people around them. This requires that the early childhood teacher be dedicated to self-awareness and self-improvement in order to be a positive model for the children. Young children continually mirror back the lesser selves of the adults around them and show us where we need to be more diligent!

Early childhood teacher education courses emphasize developing awareness of our movements and speech. No matter whether we are moving artistically in circle time activities or purposefully in practical life tasks, our movements need to be clear, appropriate and meaningful, so that we are offering the children healthy nourishment for the development of their own movement potentials.

Correct and beautiful speech is equally important, as it works deeply into the being of the young child, and can even have an effect, as Steiner noted in 1923, on a child’s maturing organs (“Education and the Moral Life”). Because the young child’s consciousness

is not yet enclosed within its bodily form, we must also be mindful that our thoughts and feelings are nourishing and not harmful to the children.

The Life-Embracing Gesture

The openness of the young child means that we must also prepare the environment with care. The Waldorf early childhood setting should be more like a home, even if it is connected to a school, with a focus on real-life activities. In early childhood we are working primarily to support the growth and development of the physical body as a foundation for further social-emotional and intellectual growth and this requires an abundance of life forces.

Our early childhood classrooms are usually abundant in beautiful things. It is my experience that creative activity—the doing and making of things that are needed by the community of the classroom—generates more sense of life than ready-made things. Being in nature and being conscious of our relationship to nature and nature beings in an authentic and unsentimental way is also a key to a lively environment. While beauty and artistry were important to me in the classroom, I regularly asked myself, “Is what I am bringing to the children simple, essential and life-embracing?”

Joy and Delight in Transformation

Play is the creative activity of the young child and the heart center of each day in the early childhood classroom. Children are masters of improvisation.

*From the first
to the seventh
year, gesture
predominates in
the life of the young
child, but gesture in
the widest sense of
the word, gesture
that in the child
lives in imitation.*

*Rudolf Steiner,
“Human Values in
Education,” Lecture 3*

We can serve their rightful focus on process if we have cultivated and are able to renew our own joy and delight in transformation. This gesture allows us to watch and listen more openly and attentively to the children, to respond more creatively and effectively, and not be overly influenced by our past assumptions or judgments. It is a protection against getting stuck and can help us practice open-mindedness in our work with parents and colleagues, as well as with the children.

We can also apply this gesture to our work on ourselves and to the revitalization of classroom traditions, especially in the celebration of festivals. This impulse, of course, must be kept in balance with our other equally important task as keepers of form in time and space.

Creating Space

This gesture includes the creation of safe physical spaces, clear social-emotional spaces, and implicit moral-spiritual spaces. A space is created when its perimeter is bounded. Boundaries can be fixed and permanent, like the walls of the classroom, or invisible and situational, like the established habits of the class when they are walking together in nature.

A mother’s womb is a space for the growing child that adapts to the changing needs of the baby. Boundaries will be moved as children become more capable. However, children feel most free when they can sense the protection of whatever surrounds the created space. The creation of space includes order

within the space, such that everything has a place and at the end of playtime can “go home.” The picture of a walled garden, open to the sky, connected to the porch of the house on one side, with a gate to the wider world on the other side, is a helpful image to me.

We also work with time and create temporal spaces during the course of the day with our breath-like, alternating rhythm of child-directed and teacher-led activities. Young children do not yet live in “clock time” and these predictable rhythms help them to feel free within these secure spaces of time, in the same way that the boundaries of a physical space provide them with the possibility of free exploration toward the goal of healthy will development.

Class habits (learned by imitation, of course) are the social boundaries that offer individual children the opportunity to explore relationships and learn how to move with and become a part of the group. The self-discipline and striving of the teacher is an aspect of the moral-spiritual space that is unconsciously perceptible by the children and perhaps by other adults, too.

Gratitude for the Goodness of the World

The creation of a moral-spiritual space is closely connected to this final gesture. Rudolf Steiner emphasized gratitude as an essential influence during the first seven years in Lecture 6 of *Human Values in Education*. The young child enters life with tremendous openness. Many aspects of modern life are not supportive of the needs of the young child, to the extent that some children tend to withdraw inwardly or are otherwise hindered in their course of development. If the early childhood teacher meets this openness with a genuine feeling of gratitude, children can feel invited to connect themselves with their physical bodies and earthly existence.

Steiner further notes in Lecture 9 of *The Foundations of Human Experience* that goodness, beauty and truth belong respectively to the first

three stages of life, with the feeling that “the world is good” being the most important for the child from birth to seven. In these times, it is also increasingly important that the early childhood teacher feels a deep trust in the goodness of life and the goodness in other people. Children will learn trust just as they do other lessons during the first seven years, through imitation. For a young child, the teacher’s trust serves as an affirmation of the child’s intention for life and can be a helpful bridge between the spiritual world and this world until the individual is able to consciously connect to his or her own sense of purpose and destiny. ♦

Holly Koteen-Soulé, *WECAN board member and coordinator of Teacher Education, taught kindergarten for 18 years, first at the Seattle Waldorf School and then as the founding teacher of the Bright Water School, also in Seattle. She has led courses in early childhood for several teacher training centers and has served as an AWSNA consultant for developing schools. Holly has been on the core faculty of Sound Circle Center in Seattle, Washington since 1995.*

Resources:

- Steiner, Rudolf, “Education and the Moral Life.” In *Waldorf Education and Anthroposophy* (Great Barrington: Steiner Books, 1995).
- Steiner, Rudolf, *Human Values in Education* (Great Barrington: Steiner Books, 2002).
- Steiner, Rudolf, *The Foundations of Human Experience* (Great Barrington: Steiner Books, 1996).
- Steiner, Rudolf, *The Spiritual Guidance of the Individual and Humanity* (Great Barrington: Steiner Books, 1992).

Center and Periphery: The Path of the Present Teacher

— Aimee de Ney

Can't you become dancers . . .? Why, you should be leading lives of joy—deep inner joy in the truth! There is nothing in the world more delightful, nothing more fascinating, than the experience of truth. There you have an esotericism that is far more genuine, far more significant than the esotericism that goes about with a long face. Before everything else—and long before you begin to talk about having a “mission”—there must be this living inner experience of truth.

~ Rudolf Steiner, from *The Curative Course Lecture 10, 1919*

As teachers of young children, it is imperative that we fully inhabit not only our bodies but also the space around us. We are set with the task of helping children to incarnate into their physical bodies and to learn to be a part of the world. Young children learn primarily through imitation. Thus we can set an example for them by truly incarnating into our own centers. We form clear and safe boundaries for them by inhabiting the periphery of the space in which the children can be free to learn, grow, and explore.

In *The Curative Course*, Rudolf Steiner gave the founders of the first curative school a meditation on point and periphery, instructing them to meditate each evening and morning on the point and the circle. In the evening, one can meditate with the words “God is in me” along with the image of a blue circle with a yellow point in its center. Then in the morning “I am in God” is carried along with an image of a yellow circle with a blue point. This can bring one to a place of understanding in which the point and the circle are one and the same, uniting and forming the polarity of center and periphery within us. This polarity “is everything,” according to Adola McWilliam, Camphill pioneer and adult educator. We come before birth from the far expanses of the cosmos and are born into the physicality of the world, drawn down even by the forces of gravity. Through incarnating into our bodies in the first seven years through the reflexes and foundational senses of touch, life, self-movement and balance, we are able to overcome gravity and find a place of balance between the earth and cosmos, our deepest human

experience of center and periphery. As educators, we must understand our own relationship to this polarity and to the forces that form us in the world.

Center and Periphery and the Four Foundational Senses

In *The First Seven Years: Physiology of Childhood*, Edmond Schoorel says of the twelve senses, as indicated by Rudolf Steiner, the “. . . T” experiences both a center and a boundary” (Schoorel, p. 128). In early childhood, children are learning how to enter their physical bodies through the four “will senses,” also known as the foundational or lower senses: touch, life, self-movement, and balance. These four senses are directed toward the development of the physical body. When this development is completed in the first seven years, these senses can later be directed to the outer world, transformed to the four highest “social” or “spiritualized” senses (p. 148).

One of the primary duties of early childhood teachers is to provide education to integrate these senses before the child enters grade school. For these senses to work together in an integrated, mutually supportive way is essential toward grade school readiness that facilitates future uninhibited learning and growth. Our modern culture and times often act as deterrents to healthy sensory development. So it is increasingly common for children to enter the grade school with one or more of these senses left un-integrated, forming obstacles within their physicality that can impede the ease of their development. If this is true for our students, it is likely true that many adults may have sensory challenges as well. How, then, can we fully inhabit our bodies if we are not fully integrated into our physicality? We support the children's sensory development through the curriculum and conscious support toward sensory health. As adults, we have the opportunity for self-observation and self-work in these areas. When this work is complete, one can truly become “a citizen of the world” (Schoorel p. 125).

When we are standing firmly in our center, each of our lower senses is engaged. The skin is the organ for the touch sense and, as the periphery of our

physical body, creates a boundary between ourselves and the outer world (Schoorel p. 133; see also Albert Soesman, *Our Twelve Senses: Wellsprings of the Soul*, p. 14). In order to be fully present in our bodies, we must know where we are in space, which is the duty of the senses of movement and balance. If these senses are left un-integrated, it is very difficult for the body to know where it is in space. It becomes a challenge to be present in our center or aware of where in space our consciousness is living. The life sense allows us to experience peace and vitality. This sense is instrumental in being centered and present in our physical bodies and aware of what is happening around us. When a challenge arises with any of the former senses, the life sense, too, is thrown off balance.

Experiencing the periphery as a tangible boundary is primarily a movement and touch experience. We must be able to move our consciousness to surround, encompass and enliven the space we are building around the children. As we do this, we must touch each inch of the surrounding space with our living forces. This is accomplished through our awakened will.

When we are living actively in our center and our periphery, awake in our relationship with our lower senses, the space that we form is filled with vital, healthy life and clean-feeling soul energies. This in turn soothes the children's life sense, allowing them to feel contentment, clarifying their touch sense, and offering a sense of security. Our healthy soul energies clear the way for the development of the children's movement sense, permitting them to feel freedom, creating a balanced environment for their balance sense to emulate, and freeing them to feel their uniqueness, the joy of being themselves.

In childhood and in everyday life, we are asleep in the realm of these will-based senses. As educators, it is imperative that we raise these senses into our waking consciousness, into our conscious will activity. In this way, we can be sure to offer the children the opportunity to emulate us in our mature sensory functioning while also forming the space around the children in order to best serve their education and needs.

Practices to Enter One's Center and Periphery

There are many activities teachers can do to better inhabit their center and periphery by working consciously with their own four foundational senses. Ultimately, it has to be the decision of the teacher to hold the intention and vision of taking up this work. It is the duty of the striving teacher to be self-aware and to work on oneself when taking on the task of being a Waldorf teacher. Working through one's center out to the periphery is foundational in forming a safe and nurturing environment for the children in our care. This work intimately affects the mood of the class, the presentation of the curriculum, and the development of the children.

As Jane Swain describes in "Pikler, Point, and Periphery," the most important thing one can do in preparation for entering into this work is to have a meditative practice to help settle the mind and body toward peace and clarity. From there, the activities that bring the most joy to the teacher will often be the activity that brings one into one's center and frees us to be able to move out into our periphery in an awake manner.

The activities that support moving into one's center will likely work strongly with each of the foundational senses. A few examples from my experience are hiking, gardening, yoga, kayaking, and meditation. Activities in which we must sense others and move in fluidity with them, such as dancing or playing music, bring us to the periphery where we meet the world around us. Puppetry is an art form that requires the puppeteer to move her center into the puppet by willfully enlivening the puppet with her own etheric life forces. This is a practice of both moving one's center and of forming a periphery through the puppet's relationship with its audience. Many disciplines work with the forces living in center and periphery. There are endless activities that we can pursue actively to engage our will and find joy in our bodies and the world. The essential element is to find the activity that one loves and practice it regularly. It is all the better if one becomes conscious of how this activity is affecting one's lower senses and their relationship to their center and the periphery!

Uniting the Streams

As teachers, it is essential that we have clear boundaries. These boundaries offer the children safety, educate their senses of touch and life, and make it possible to bring more substance to the curriculum by setting up a culture of a joyful, managed classroom. The teacher who can offer the children both the advantages of center and periphery simultaneously offer the children the safest and clearest space to develop joyfully. Conscious breathing between point and periphery creates a space that is educating the children's senses of balance, touch, movement, and life. The very state of the balanced teacher, spreading herself to the periphery while also maintaining a clear center, offers a healthy model of the sense of balance which the children can imitate, subtle as it may be. When a teacher is clear within herself as to where she is in space (connected to the earth and spread out to the periphery, with angelic support above), the children are better able to locate themselves in the space that is created for them. When she buffers the periphery with light and intention, the children are wrapped in a touch experience. All of these enlivened senses and spaces allow the children to sense that they are well and safe in the world and that this is a good place to be.

Learning to form a palpable periphery can be experienced as a will activity. When the teacher can learn to create before and behind herself an invisible yet stable support that she can step into, feeling grounded down into her feet, she consciously enlivens and strengthens her will. The teacher is then empowered and strengthened to form boundaries that inhabit the periphery. Willfully living in the periphery makes possible a warm, loving boundary around the children.

I recall being told in teacher training that early childhood teachers come from one of two streams:

the kingly stream or the shepherd stream, as per the wise men and shepherds coming to see the baby Jesus. Could it be that it is time to unite those streams? We can stand simultaneously in the upright stream of the kings and in the protective, nurturing stream of the shepherds, and indeed, the children in our care will reap the benefits of the effort we put towards uniting these streams in joy, love and presence. ♦

The author would like to thank Jaimen McMillan, Adola McWilliam, and Jane Swain, whose personal communications over the last two years contributed significantly to this article.

Aimee de Ney After teaching kindergarten in Waldorf schools in Washington State for many years, in 2012 Aimee de Ney founded Bird Song Children's Garden, a developing Waldorf early childhood school in Olympia, Washington, where she currently teaches and mentors. This article is an excerpt from a paper written for the new Masters of Healing Education program at Antioch University New England.

Resources:

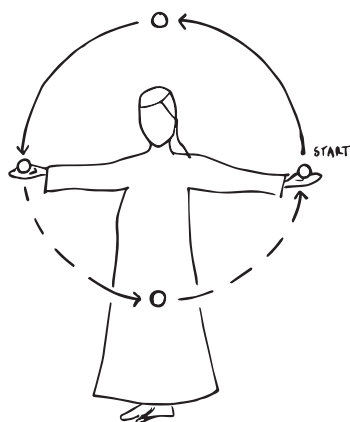
- Schoorel, Edmond, *The First Seven Years: Physiology of Childhood* (Fair Oaks, CA: Rudolf Steiner College Press, 2004).
- Soesman, Albert, *Our Twelve Senses: Wellsprings of the Soul* (Stroud, UK: Hawthorn Press, 1990).
- Steiner, Rudolf, *Education for Special Needs: The Curative Course* (Forest Row, UK: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1998).
- Steiner, Rudolf, *The Balance in the World and Man, Lucifer and Ahriman* (The Rudolf Steiner Publishing Company, 1948). Retrieved from wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA158/English/RSPC1948/19141120p01.html
- Swain, Swain, "Pikler, Point, and Periphery," *Gateways Newsletter Issue 60* (Spring 2011). Retrieved from www.waldorflibrary.org/journals/15-gateways/586-springsummer-2011-issue-60-pikler-point-and-periphery

Creating Harmony

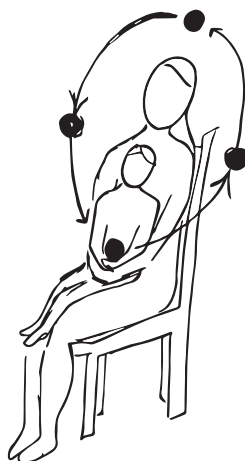
Eurythmy Adapted for the Home by Brigida Baldszun

How about finding a peaceful connection with your child after a “rough day”? This exercise is ideal to practice with any partner, whether child or adult.

You can start with a seed. One person, probably the parent, has to be able to guide a ball, orange or stone in a circular motion around your head and heart.



Once you are comfortable with this movement you may invite the other person into your circle. Both of you may stand or sit as shown, and from now on you will share the circle.



You will move the ball (starting from your left hand) through the upper part, pass it to the other person who will move it through the lower frontal part and

will return the ball to you. It will be only natural that you desire to guide the ball with accuracy and perfect balance over your head and it will be likewise natural that the child will not do so but instead start playing with the ball. This play should be short, only to be repeated three more times.

As you complete this interaction a total of four times, you might use the words by the English poet William Blake (1757-1827).

Upper half

*To see a world
And heaven
Hold infinity
And eternity*

Lower half

*in a grain of sand
in a wild flower
in the palm of your hand
in an hour.*

You might realize when doing this movement that you are constantly building transitions between the elements of above and below, back and front, eternity and a moment, invisible and visible, trust and control, breathing out and breathing in, expectation and letting go, yourself and the other. The goal is for both partners to build smooth transitions and move independently from each other and yet in precious harmony. ♦

Brigida Baldszun is a therapeutic eurythmist who serves Waldorf students and schools in New York. She is also an active artistic eurythmist in Spring Valley, NY. This exercise was created while she was assisting Barbara Baldwin in a therapeutic seminar in China this past summer.

Resources:

- Blake, William, “Auguries of Innocence,” in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, David V. Erdman, Ed. (New York: Random House, 1997).

Book Review

The Importance of Being Little: What Preschoolers Really Need from Grownups

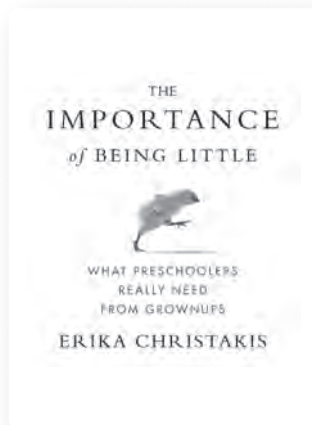
by Erika Christakis

Penguin Random House 2016, 400 pages

Hardcover, \$28

Reviewed by Nancy Blanning

Young children have an ally in Erika Christakis. This Gateways book review section usually features new WECAN publications. But when a book in mainstream educational literature supports and encourages our own work, we should know about this resource. *The Importance of Being Little* is such a publication.



Erika Christakis is an early childhood educator at the Yale Child Study Center. There she teaches classes on child development and education policy. But her path to early childhood education was not direct. She was always drawn to young children but was discouraged from becoming a preschool teacher; she was told to “aspire to something higher.” After graduating from Harvard, she worked in public health in many capacities. But her work always led her back to questions about the healthy development of children and families. Having her own children reoriented her to directly working with children in mainstream settings. She did not like what she saw and increasingly observed that the emphasis on the “push down” of academic tasks to younger and younger children was not working. More importantly, this approach defied the innate creative, dynamic, exploratory, curious, interested-in-all-things nature of young children. She has come more and more to speak out against the current system of worksheets, phonics drills, and direct instruction. These things suck the life and joy out of early childhood. She is a recognized expert in child development and has truly

observed children. Young children have confirmed to her the wisdom that exists in their very being. They are not already “behind” or “deficient” when they join early childhood classes. They will flourish in the right environment. As she states in her conclusion, “the environment is the curriculum.”

In the eleven sections of her 300-page book, Ms. Christakis affirms that learning arises out of relationship with the adults, not from the purchased curriculum materials. She confirms that children need opportunity to play and explore. She describes her “top list” of elements that support good early childhood experiences. These include: close, affectionate interactions between caregivers and children, including frequent laughter; natural, spontaneous conversational language between children and teachers; opportunities to learn socially from peers rather than didactic (preaching) instruction; staff who enjoy children and are knowledgeable about child development milestones; classroom materials that invite open-ended, not closed forms of play and exploration; and adequate time for children to do all the things we know they are capable of. To Waldorf ears, this describes the environment we strive to create for children. Our practices coincide with this list.

Ms. Christakis is also a researcher. This book is full of references to studies that support the importance of the points listed above. The reader will find research to validate the importance of play for young children and the ineffectiveness (and inappropriateness) of academic instruction before first grade. Information in this book can give us new material to bring to our parents who love Waldorf education with their feelings but are anxious in our fear-filled world for “real research” to validate our positions.

The book discusses topics related to academic instruction that do not affect Waldorf early childhood programs directly. However, I found reading the whole book valuable and instructive. While we do not teach phonics in kindergarten, it is important for all Waldorf early childhood educators to know what the society is moving children toward. We can see that the rich language environment we provide through circle rhymes, verses, stories, and carefully chosen

speech is the foundation for linking together sounds, letter forms, and meaning in the years to come.

Her concluding summary speaks eloquently.

“The miracle of early learning is simply this: if we prepare a responsive learning environment, we won’t have to break educational objectives into bite-sized pieces; we can feed a child a whole meal. We don’t have to continually poke and prod and monitor and assess young children. We don’t have to harass their teachers and parents either. It’s the learning environment, not the preschoolers inhabiting it, that needs correction if found wanting. The environment is the curriculum. Fix that, and we can leave young children to thrive.”

Erika Christakis is an advocate for seeing the child as “whole” and for allowing the child’s experience of the world be whole as well, not fragmented into discrete skills and learning objectives.

As Waldorf educators we cannot feel complacent or delude ourselves into thinking that we have “the right answer.” We are challenged daily to respond to the children’s changing needs and developmental questions they pose to us. This book confirms that, in Ms. Christakis’s view of a program striving toward quality, we have an excellent foundation. This book, from a mainstream source, is one we can share with parents to reassure them with “research” that they have made a sound educational choice for their child. ♦

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.

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.

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.

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 some of the additional resources listed here are also available online, in particular through the Online Waldorf Library (OWL). Visit the OWL at www.waldorflibrary.org.

- Blanning, Nancy, and Laurie Clark, *Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures Volume 2* (2016).
- Köhler, Henning, “Exploring the Life Sense,” in *Working with Anxious, Nervous and Depressed Children* (Chatham: Waldorf Publications, 2013).
- The Spacial Dynamics Institute: Learn more about the Spacial Dynamics Institute and its founder, Jaimen MacMillan, at www.spacialdynamics.com.
- Steiner, Rudolf, “The Twelve Human Senses,” in *Toward Imagination: Culture and the Individual* (Great Barrington: Steiner Books, 1990).
- Von Kügelgen, Helmut, *Spiritual Insights*, Susan Howard, Ed. (Spring Valley: Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America 2013).

Calendar of Events

Personal and Professional Development

October 28-29 and November 18-19, 2016, Arcturus Rudolf Steiner Education Program, Chicago, IL: **Focus Weekends**. Themes this fall will include Life Stories and Human Freedom. For more information visit www.arcturus.info or contact the Program at (773) 761-3026 or arcturus@arcturus.info.

November 17, 2016, Sunbridge Institute, Spring Valley, NY: **Open Day: Early Childhood Education**. Discussions and Q&A with Director of Education Anna Silber and an Early Childhood Program Director on what it means to be a Waldorf early childhood educator, and details on Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Education at Sunbridge Institute. For more information visit www.sunbridge.edu or contact the Institute at (845) 425-0055 or info@sunbridge.edu.

November 18-20, 2016, Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, CA: **Early Childhood Symposium**. The 7th Annual Symposium will be a weekend full of singing, puppetry, and inspiration. Workshops will include multicultural storytelling, child study, Ellersiek hand gestures, mood of the fifth, wet felting, and more. Movement groups as well as discussion groups will include the role of the assistant versus lead teacher, the art of the transition, singing games, and circle work. Keynote speaker Louise deForest. For more information visit rudolfsteinercollege.edu or contact the College at (916) 961-8727 or rsc@steinercollege.edu.

January 28, 2017, Sunbridge Institute, Spring Valley, NY: **The Work of the Teacher Development Committee: A Pedagogical Leadership Workshop**. Join three experienced Waldorf professionals in exploring best practices in Waldorf teacher development. For administrators, teachers, committee members, and pedagogical, faculty, and section chairs. Featuring Sabine Kelly, Karen Crandall, and Jessica Heffernan Ziegler. For more information visit www.sunbridge.edu or contact the Institute at (845) 425-0055 or info@sunbridge.edu.

Conferences

November 4-5, 2016, Rudolf Steiner Center, Toronto, ON, Canada: **The Waldorf Development Conference—Partnering with Parents: Finding New Ways of Working in Collaboration**. We invite educators and administrators to join us for two days of exploring how to partner with parents more effectively. Main speaker Liz Beaven, EdD, is a member of the faculty of the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, where she is working to develop programs in Integral Teacher Education. Liz is Board President of the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, and is past President of Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, CA. She consults with a number of schools on a range of topics, including the role of parents. For more information visit www.rsct.ca, or contact the Center at (905) 764-7570 or info@rsct.ca.

February 19-21, Rudolf Steiner College, Fair Oaks, CA: **Western Waldorf Educators Conference**. For information visit rudolfsteinercollege.edu or contact the College at (916) 961-8727 or rsc@steinercollege.edu.

February 10-12, 2017, Sunbridge Institute, Spring Valley, NY: **WECAN 2017 Early Childhood Educators Conference**. Keynote speaker Susan Perrow will address the theme of therapeutic storytelling. Beginning December 9, 2016 and through January 23, 2017, visit www.waldorfearlychildhood.org to register online. For more information contact Andrea Cooper at conference@waldorfearlychildhood.org.

Teacher Training

Fall-Spring, 2016, The Early Childhood Teacher Education Center at Sophia's Hearth, Keene, NH: **Weekend Workshops**. The Workshops, held between September and April, offer a convenient training option. Most six-hour workshops are eligible for New Hampshire Early Childhood Credit. This fall, themes will include seasonal crafts and storytelling techniques, classroom techniques for supporting healthy sensory development, and more. For more information visit www.sophiashearth.org or contact the Center at (603) 357-3755 or info@sophiashearth.org.



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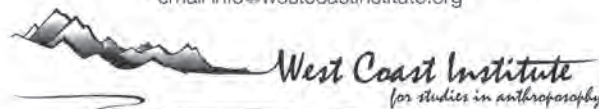
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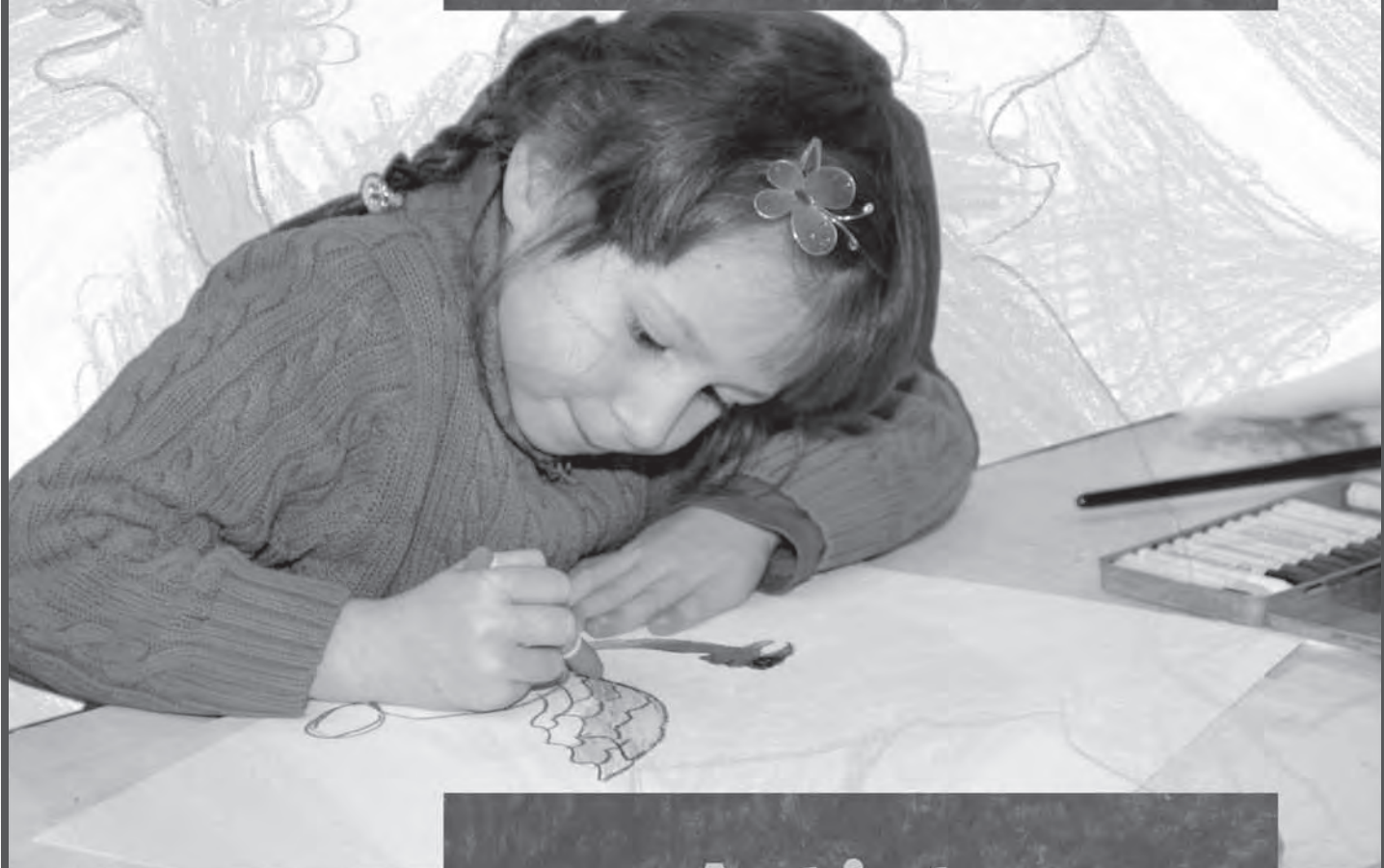
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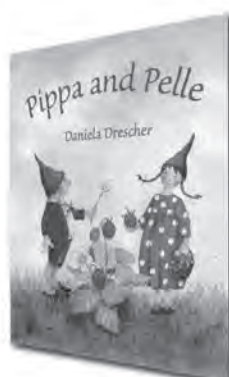
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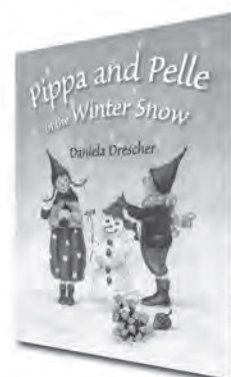
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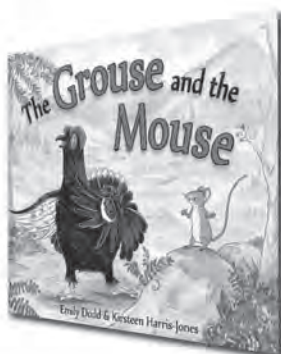
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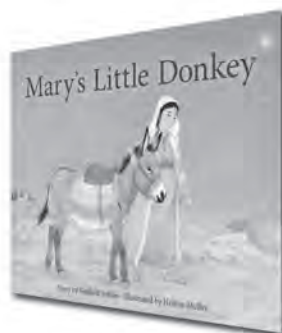
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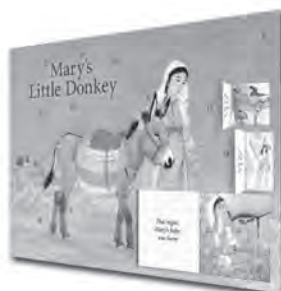
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