

Gateways

Newsletter of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America ♦ Issue 74, Spring 2018



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From the Editor

— Nancy Blanning

Stories fill up countless pages in books. We can find almost any kind of tale we want to read for relaxation, entertainment, and diversion. Look at the *New York Times* bestseller list, filled with thrillers and dangerous detective stories. One wonders if anything listed there will endure beyond its short but glorious run on the “best” list.

We in Waldorf early childhood education are concerned with stories not because they fill up pages but because they can nourish the soul and encourage the spirit. These nourishing stories share images and inspire ideals that guide the striving of humanity. And stories told mouth-to-ear, from human speaker to human listener, warm the space to create relationship. The non-technological sharing of stories is not receiving much attention because spoken stories cost nothing but time. The profit is the creation and support of warm human relationships, which is not quantifiable. But when we tell stories in the classroom, or to our own children at home, we experience that all of this is true.

So this issue of *Gateways* continues the story theme in our lead articles. First, puppeteer and storyteller Suzanne Down shares her original development of the “protection story.” Children are so exposed to the ills and anxieties of the world that they need reassurance and shelter in any way we can provide it. Suzanne has developed the protection story as a kind of balm and protective layering for the listener. As she says, by the end of the story “all is well.” Next we have a serious consideration of fairy tales from Cindy Sudan. Her association with fairy tales over decades of teaching reminds us of the universality of these tales. Janene Ping brings active puppetry to give an imaginative picture to the environmental threats that children may feel swirling around them but not understand. So her story, “The Rainbow,” offers a digestible picture of elemental interaction.

Then our content takes a bit of a turn. Some articles came toward *Gateways* that look deeply at the importance of our work with very young children. Liz Hagerman discusses the importance of having parent/infant and parent/toddler classes in

our school. These gentle, short classes for parent and child offer a valuable introductory experience to Waldorf-style beholding of the child. The songs, movements, and gentle touching games create even deeper bonds between parent and child.

We turn with sadness and gratitude to acknowledge two colleagues who have crossed the threshold in “Transitions.” Kindergarten teacher Patricia Cairns, of Hawaii, Colorado, the west coast, and China has joined the spiritual world. “Farmer Dave” Snow, the farmer, financial manager, and goat-milker at Boulder Waldorf Kindergarten in Colorado also made his passing. They stand as examples of the talent and diversity that we each individually bring to Waldorf early childhood work in our own ways, big and small.

The new feature introduced in the Fall 2017 *Gateways*, “Reading the Signs of the Times,” continues in this issue. That article’s description of the social challenges that we are seeing in our school communities over salary, equity, and value of each person’s contribution to work with the children brought forth additional thoughts. A lecture by Rudolf Steiner is excerpted, which was study material for the WECAN board meeting last fall. Additionally, two readers responded with short contributions on ways we can work toward a healing social life to work respectfully—and artistically—with one another.

Also in this section is an article by Marcia Marquis, a long-time teacher recently retired, reflecting upon her years in the classroom. It is a beautifully written article, describing what the years and the children in her care have taught her about what really matters, about what is important. We think you will find it lovely to read and inspiring. In “Reading the Signs of the Times,” there are positive thoughts and deeds for us to affirm, not only what is troubling. This article provides a wonderful balance.

“In the Classroom” offers a potpourri from all the above topics. Jessica Oswald shares a therapeutic healing story she wrote for some children in her classroom. It is interesting reading both for the story and for her description of the creative process.

There are excerpts from the new WECAN publication, *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life*. Susan Weber, Nancy Macalastar, and Jane Swain of Sophia's Hearth have compiled a resource book of songs, games, and rhymes suitable for children from birth to age three. A few examples are shared in "For the Classroom" to give a sample of the book's content. The selections are perfect as-is for babies and toddlers. But the chosen pieces have some suggestions for adaptation to use with older children in the kindergarten class as well. A movement imagination, "Build a House, Brick by Brick," shared over 20 years ago by eurythmist and friend Steven Moore (now in the spiritual world) is given as a "sheltering imagination" that is easily used in the classroom. Vanessa Kohlhas reminds us, with her article on movement development in very young children, how terribly important it is that children have free opportunities to move through their developmental stages to get to human uprightness.

Book reviews round out this issue. A mainstream work by evolutionary biologist and developmental psychologist Alison Gopnik is reviewed. Her drive to explain everything in terms of genetics and evolution left the reviewer unsatisfied, but her chapters on imitation and play can bring joy to our Waldorf hearts. In these two chapters she is a true friend. Two new WECAN publications are also reviewed. These are *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life* (mentioned above) and *Walking with Our Children: The Parent as Companions and Guide*. This second publication is a collection of WECAN columns published in the magazine *Lilipoh* over the last several years. This is a book also intended for parents, filled with encouragement and gentle advice for the parenting task.

Stories lead us to consider speech and language. February's WECAN East Coast Conference focused on "The Development of Speech and the Human Encounter." Presenters Dr. Lakshmi Prasanna and

Michael Kokinos work with children and young adults who stand in the autism stream. Content from their presentations will be shared in the Fall 2018 issue of *Gateways*, which will focus on speech and language. We invite contributions to do with speech—development of speech in children, use of educators' speech, speech and language that support healthy incarnation for the child, and aspects of speech and its use with young children that we haven't even thought of to ask. Examples of rhymes and verses that invite the children into healthy speaking, listening, and moving will be heartily welcomed as well.

In conclusion, it seems fitting to end with a story from the classroom. As part of Six-Year-Old Games (for rising first graders), each child is asked to tell a story remembered from the kindergarten. One little boy sat pondering. He at first said he could remember nothing, then he stated that his teacher had told a story about a lawyer. The incredulous adult reply was, "I am sure your teacher did not tell a story about a lawyer." The child looked up in wide-eyed indignation and protested, "SHE DID, TOO!"

So the child was invited to tell that story. It took a little while for the listener to realize that the story being told was the Native American story of "Scarface" with the male "lawyer"—a warrior. Goodness only knows what inner pictures this little lad was creating.

This story leads toward next issue's theme of speech and language. Clarity of speech and context are so important for us to attend to. Lovely, sweet misunderstandings such as this bring us laughter and smiles. Through speech and language we can build—or destroy—relationship. We will look at speech as a healing force for social life too. ♦

~ Nancy Blanning
February 2018

The Art of the Protection Story: An Introduction

— Suzanne Down

We, dear friends, who have a love for stories and visual puppet shows, know they can be a healing gift for the children. However, children and their parents have become increasingly overwhelmed and anxious in a very unpredictable world. Deep and rhythmic breathing, the basis for our inner balance and equilibrium, has become endangered. This “shallow breath” epidemic threatens every child’s ability to know the world as a good and safe place.

We can help by telling children stories that intentionally bring back a sense that “all is well in the world.” I have been developing stories for many years that specifically hold children in metaphorical “mother’s arms,” and recently collected some of them in my forthcoming book, *Protection Stories for Young Children*.

This story direction began for me when people started asking me to suggest a healing story after 9/11. They asked again after Katrina; after the great tsunami that devastated Japan; after each instance of the continual violence in this country and after each mass shooting. I increasingly thought, all children need stories that will make them feel safe, that will surround them with story pictures like layered, gently protective sheaths. These stories would give each listening child extra “skins” through which to meet the world of today.

We tell healthy stories all the time, but we can make our intention more conscious. A deeper understanding will guide us in how we hold this kind of story inwardly, how we speak it aloud, and how we reveal it through visual images in puppetry.

For instance, “Mama Bird is making a nest. She carefully weaves in twig and moss, grass and leaf. She is wise in her creation of a home for her baby birds that will withstand wind and rains. The nest is nestled on a sturdy branch up high in a tree, hidden safely by leaves. If she is lucky she has found some thistledown

or sheep’s wool to make the nest soft and warm.”

You see, layer after layer of protective story sheathing is already established, even before the little tale begins. Then Mama Bird sits on the nest, the warmth of her plumped up feathers along with her wings warming the eggs, and later the wee baby birds, like a blanket.

“Mama Bird sings a sweet melody. The warm rays of the golden sunset and a gentle rustling of a breeze through the leaves say, ‘shhhhhh, shhhhhh, time to sleep little ones.’”

This adds further picture layers and offers a soothing quality. Our own observations of the listening children will tell us what is needed. The children’s breathing becomes rhythmical and deep. All is well in the world.

We can create specific protection tales, and we can also rethink some of our favorite or traditional stories to make them more therapeutic. When we see tenderness and vulnerability in the children, or when the hardening of their inner lives arises as the fast pace and intellectuality of the adult world presses in, we can look for stories that incorporate “shelter”: a sturdy and safe home. Old favorites like “The Mitten,” “The Little Clay Pot,” or any number of folk tales tell about animals who, one by one, share a cozy home.

But what of the traditional ending of such stories? A bear comes along and sneezes, sending the cozy, reliable home for all asunder! From the viewpoint of a protection story, we can re-picture the ending image to be something stable and wonderful. Something like this: Rumbly Bumbly the Bear comes along and tries to push his way into the mitten. In the chaos, a Bee ends up on Bear’s nose. Instead of making Bear sneeze, which sends all the animals up in the air and out of their warm shelter, imagine Bee telling Bear, “Follow me, I know where there is a hollow tree full

of honey!" Bear follows Bee to a feast, yum, yum! There is also a hollow log on the ground by the honey tree, covered with soft moss, where Bear curls up for this winter sleep.

You see where I am going. Bee returns to the "mitten" or "clay pot" with his friends. Order is intact in their beloved home, and friend Bear is happy with much more than he had hoped for.

Harmony reigns. All is well in the world.

This is not to say that all your stories will have this intention. But adding protection stories to your repertoire of tales to tell through the year will serve the children well.

In the following story, an old, unwanted pine cone finds new purpose as a shelter for a family of ladybugs. The story pictures soft moss, quiet night, moonlight, and a renewed grandfather pine cone finding happiness. Please enjoy.

The Pine Cone Hotel of Redwood Hill

From *Protection Stories for Young Children*
by Suzanne Down (forthcoming)

Dragonflies zigged and zagged through dappled sunshine right by the edge of the tall, tall redwood forest. "Good early morning, Glory. Halleluiaah." They zipped to the cluster of pale pink morning glory flowers growing in the grasses.

But all was still and silent in the shade of the redwood trees, where a strong boy was looking for pine cones to sell. When he found a perfect one, he put it in his large basket and looked for more.

*Pine cones for me,
Pine cones for you,
Selling at the market,
You can buy some too.*

He picked one up and was putting it in his basket when he noticed it was dry and knottled with age. He threw it down the hill and said, "You are too old and worn, Grandfather Pine Cone. No one would buy you at the market!"

The lone pine cone rolled and rolled down the hill through pine needles and twigs until it was stopped by a moss-covered log that had been lying there for a hundred years. THUMP! The pine cone landed there upside down!

The sound of the pine cone landing against the log woke up twenty-seven baby ladybugs and their mama who had been sleeping in their soft, cozy, mossy nest on the top of the log. They crawled out to the edge of the log to have a look.

Mama Ladybug saw the old Grandpa Pine Cone, and he was crying.

"I am old and ugly and no one likes me," he sobbed.

Mama Ladybug looked carefully at Grandpa Pine Cone and saw only deep, strong rooms with a roof over each one. "Why this would make a good safe house for me and all my babies. Moss is nice, but there is no roof to keep us dry. May we move in to your rooms?" she asked Grandpa Pine Cone.

Grandpa Pine Cone stopped crying and looked up. "You would live in my pine cone rooms? I can be useful to you?" he said, surprised and ever so pleased.

"Oh, yes," said Mama Ladybug. At once, each of the twenty-seven babies and Mama gathered soft bits of moss and flew into Grandpa Pine Cone's rooms. How very nice it was indeed!

Grandfather Pine Cone stood tall, even if he was upside down! He was proud to be useful by this mossy log. He could feel the sweet tickles of the twenty-seven baby ladybugs getting settled in their new home.

Grandfather Pine Cone sighed a happy sigh as a gentle night fell over the forest. By the time the moonlight shone down through the trees, his new tenants were sleeping safe and sound in his Pine Cone Hotel. He did not even mind that he was upside down. He stood tall and strong and listened to the sweet peace of the baby ladybugs in his care. ♦

Suzanne Down has been studying and practicing storytelling and puppetry for decades. She is the longtime director of Juniper Tree School of Story and Puppetry Arts, based in Boulder, Colorado, a center for artistic, therapeutic, and early childhood puppetry arts. Gateways thanks Suzanne for sharing her conception of the Protection Story, her own original, creative work. Email her for more information about Protection Stories for Young Children, as well as other resources and events, at suzannedown@gmail.com, and visit junipertreepuppets.com for more information.

Fairy Tales In Our Waldorf Classrooms

— Cindy Faught Sudan

A fairy tale can be like an old friend . . . one who is always there, dependable, full of advice, thought-provoking, stimulating, humorous, entertaining, and constant. It can give glimpses of life outside of our own world and provoke a wide range of emotions. Fairy Tales can portray love, anger, surprise, sadness, confusion, and joy, as well as show us acceptance, tolerance, and broadmindedness. They are filled with phantasmagorias that can provide imagination, inspiration, and intuition. But is this why we tell fairy tales in our early childhood classrooms?

Fairy, fairie, or faery, according to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*, is defined as "a mythical being of folklore and romance usually having diminutive human form and magic powers." Fairy tales embody a wide range of literary works from around the world, including collected oral pieces and even newly discovered examples. It was interesting to learn that a collection of five hundred fairy tales, collected from the Upper Palatinate in eastern Bavaria by Franz Xaver von Schönwerth (1810–86), who was inspired by the Brothers Grimm, was found in 2009. Erika Eichenseer explains in *The Turnip Princess and Other Newly Discovered Fairy Tales* how she discovered the Schönwerth papers, which had been kept under lock and key in a municipal archive of Regensburg, Bavaria.

The study of fairy tales can be a lifelong work. Historians, researchers, philosophers, authors, and academics have produced a multitude of historical and deeper insightful resources about these stories, what they mean and how they were transformed from oral tradition to written language. One can get lost in all of the philosophy, psychology, oneirology (study of dreams), and symbology of the fairy tales and it is worth the time to research these. But reading and penetrating the fairy tale on a soul level can create a meaningful relationship to the story and provide the connection for sharing these stories with the children.

There seems to be much discussion among teachers and parents in Waldorf early childhood and

*"A world without
fairy tales and myths
would be as drab as
life without music."*

—Georg Trakl

kindergarten classes as to whether fairy tales, specifically Grimm's fairy tales, are relevant for the children of today. We meet parents and teachers who have concerns about the "violent nature" of these tales, or concerns relating to gender roles and how these might affect the developing life of an imitative young child. We also hear that the children are having a harder

time being still long enough to even receive a story or fairy tale.

In his book *Once Upon a Fairy Tale*, Dr. Norbert Glas says: "In our times, it becomes more and more necessary, especially in the education of younger children, that they are given for their fantasy, images brought from a higher world. The soul of the unspoiled child is not interested in the intellectual tales and anecdotes it is so often fed with nowadays. The children become spiritually starved and dry in their thinking." He adds how important it is that parents and teachers "... offer the stories as they are, without speaking to the children, of course, about their meaning!" (p. 9). It remains as important now for the children to be able to access the healing images of archetypes and fairy tales as it was when Dr. Glas wrote his book back in 1976.

When we see how a child can take in a fairy tale, often with his mouth dropped open as if taking it in like food and digesting every word, something tells us that he is taking in much more than the words. When the child has heard the same story for a number of days or even weeks and we begin to see nuggets from the tales in his play and storytelling, something tells us that he is receiving nourishment all the way to his soul.

In "Fairy Tale Language," recently published in a new translation as "Fairy Tale Language and the Image of the Human Being," in *Waldorf Early Childhood Education, An Introductory Reader*, Helmut von Kügelgen describes this phenomenon: "A healthy three- or four-year-old will listen to the fairy tale of *Star Money* on a hundred evenings with only an ever increasing sympathy. There is no more penetrating proof than this: that the child experiences

an imagination, a painting for the soul in the fairy tale” (Waldorf Early Childhood Education, *An Introductory Reader* at 183).

Finding ways for these children to be able to sit through story time so that they can receive these gifts is crucial. It is also the challenge we face. Rhythm is the backbone of our work and will lend itself to preparing the children for this time of story sharing. Starting the year with very short fairy tales not only meets the needs of a mixed-age class, but also begins to help the children understand the expectations for this time of day. Stories with humor can sometimes help to engage the children, as can the use of table puppets or silk marionettes.

If behavioral challenges present during story time, there are many aspects to consider, such as the environment and seating arrangement, story content and length, our own voice, diction, volume, and gesture, and the activity or transition prior to story time. The environment can be changed by closing the curtains, enclosing the story circle with play stands, or dimming the lights. Changing the chair plan is also an option. Circular chair seating can be changed to rows or a “bunch of grapes” model.

We need to consider whether the stories are meeting the children. Are we able to meet the needs of all children in our mixed-age classrooms? Observation is a critical skill for working with young children. By observing the children before, during, and following the story activity, we can begin to perceive the needs of the group and the needs of individual children. Stories can be considered more appropriate for certain ages. Joan Almon, former Waldorf early childhood educator, former WECAN co-chair, and co-founder of the Alliance for Childhood, created “Choosing Fairy Tales for Different Ages,” a resource and helpful guide for teachers (see Resources, below).

In his book *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, Roy Wilkinson touches on the apparently “horrible” that



occurs from time to time in the fairy stories. “One can sympathize,” he says, “with this point of view and wish that everything in the world were roses and honey. Unfortunately there are negative forces (in the world) and the child who is prevented from experiencing these will grow up without a sense of reality. One should bear in mind that the child has different concepts than the adult” (p. 12).

This is so apparent when we observe children hearing stories that depict what adults might consider “violent” acts, such as Grimm’s “The Wolf and the Seven Kids”: “Then the kid had to run home and fetch scissors, and a needle and thread and the goat cut open the monster’s stomach . . .” (see *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, Number 5). Uncommon is the child who, hearing this told in the appropriate manner, becomes distraught. Instead, she takes in the joy of the goat family and delights in knowing that good has overcome evil. When the seven kids see the wolf fall into the well after their mother fills him with stones and sews him up, they cry, “The wolf is dead! The wolf is dead!” and dance for joy round about the well with their mother.

Pediatricians Michaela Glöckler and Wolfgang Goebel, in their book *A Guide to Child Health*, describe how children are much more perceptive than adults when listening to fairy tales. They show us how fairy tales appeal to the young child’s fantasy

and imagination as she is learning how to think. “Fear arises only if the stories are told theatrically. If they are told calmly, the child will feel at home in the events described for they reflect realities of the life of the soul in which evil and the triumph over it play a considerable part. The soul’s development is not helped either by ignoring or by overstating these realities, but it is helped by learning to face up to evil and master it” (p. 219).

Concerns regarding gender roles are increasing. For example, the prince commonly appears as the hero or the princess as a victim. Much has been written about this issue and one can understand the concerns of gender stereotyping, especially seeing how they are depicted in animation and movies. Perhaps if we consider looking at all of the roles in a fairy tale as each being a part of us, feminine and masculine, old and young, mischievous and well-behaved, humble and arrogant, and so on, then we are able to look at these fairy tales and attributes through different colored glasses. This is evident when watching the children as they portray their chosen characters when acting out the fairy tale. It is quite common for the children to select any character, regardless of gender. They will also choose not only to portray human, animal, or fairy characters, but also plants, trees, and even elements such as fire or water.

As Miriam Whitfield writes, “There are many more beautiful fairy tales from all parts of the world. Once you have found the golden key to unlock their secrets, you and your children will be immeasurably rich. Each story is like a map which shows you a new country in lovely picture form. If you study this map, then show it to your children, they will find their way in the turmoil of life much more easily and with much more courage and joy. So good story telling!” (Whitfield, *Fairy Stories*, p. 53).

Beloved kindergarten teacher Ronna McEldowney always began and ended her fairy tales with the following, which were indications from Rudolf Steiner: “Once upon a time, there was. Where was there? Where was there really not? There was once a queen ...

“... and if they have not died, they are living still.”

And the tradition carries on.

“Because fairy tales belong to our innermost feeling and emotional life and to everything connected with it, they are of all forms of literature the most appropriate for children’s hearts and minds” (Steiner, *Poetry and Meaning*, p. 22). ♦

Cindy Faught Sudan teaches at Boulder Valley Waldorf School in Niwot, Colorado. She has taught mixed-age Waldorf kindergarten and early childhood classes for more than 25 years. Boulder Valley Waldorf School is a Pre-K through 8th grade school located in Boulder County since 1993.

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The Rainbow: Exploring Images of Moral Imagination for Our Time

— Janene Ping

Last spring, after a good rain, I was walking with the kindergarten children along the Agawamuck Creek in Hawthorne Valley. We were excited to see the rushing waters and some of the children were straying from the path. Because we were walking through a part of the forest where endangered spring wildflowers grow, I paused with the group and said to them all that we must stay on the path in that part of the forest to help Mother Earth keep the little plant children safe from harm.

My partner, a boy soon to enter first grade, turned to me and said, “How can WE help Mother Earth when the president does not even believe in global warming?” This was the question posed by a child of six. Increasingly in this last year politics have entered the conversations of the children . . . After a pause I answered, “We can help Mother Earth by staying on the path when we know the right way to go.” This answer rang true for me on many levels, but I have thought much about this moment shared in the forest last spring.

Though we may strive to protect our children from the heart-rending issues of the world, these young ones will inherit the future that is being created more so than we. Many of them hear about the challenges facing humanity; some have attended political marches, and others are already trying to make sense of the inequities experienced on economic levels. From conversations shared with colleagues in summer conferences this year, I know mine is not an isolated experience of this reality. Our work strongly embraces the time spirit of our age. In ways that are developmentally appropriate, we must bring to consciousness how we are helping the children understand the world and develop resiliency to meet the future.

Steiner is often quoted as indicating that within the art of the puppet there lies the cure for that which ails modern civilization. This rings true as we seek to explore the moral imagination that lives within the images and meanings of story. In a good story our hearts are moved in resonance with a universal truth

that touches the spirit. We experience this when we witness the far-off gaze and deep breath of a child who has entered the inner journey that a good story will bring them on.

One such story that I have always found has touched the five- and six-year-old kindergarteners that I work with is “The Rainbow” by Dorothy Harrer. Today, with effects of climate change experienced throughout the world, the story rings more poignantly. Below is an adaptation of the story for puppetry, to be brought with simple plant-dyed silks and knotted fleece or silk fairies. Through the process of creation, may insight of what is needed help us to grow wiser.

The Rainbow

*A Puppet Play adapted by Janene Ping
from the story by Dorothy Harrer*

Opening music—silks lifted from the stage

Once upon a time, when was it? When was it not—the great king of the sky, the Sun, who lights the world, looked with love upon the Earth.

King Sun, wise and good, has many messengers and servants who help life to grow upon the Earth . . . There is Brother Wind, whose great breath can encircle the seven seas and all of the land in between. Then there are the sun fairies who carry the Sun’s light and warmth to the earth’s air and soils. The rain fairies then bring the droplets of mist from the earth’s waters up to seed the clouds—and then shower the rain back down again so that life below can be refreshed and renewed.

The sun fairies and the rain fairies love the plant children of the earth and they delight in their favor! But once upon a time they did not know how important each of the others was . . .

Once there was a wee, shining, golden sun fairy who had set about his day’s work carrying his shining spear of light and warmth down to the plant children of the Earth. He was very certain that his was the

most important of all the work there was and thus his spear was very pointed! He was trying to work as quickly as he could so that he could make the fastest journey from Sun to Earth that ever was. He was not careful about where he was going. Thus it was that he flew right into a rain fairy who was bringing the mist from the earth's morning up to seed the clouds! The sun fairy flashed angrily and the rain fairy swelled with blue despair.

"Why didn't you look where you were going?" shouted the sun fairy. "You have made me change my course!"

"You flew into ME!" replied the rain fairy, "And you have made me drop the mist! You have interrupted the most important sky work there is!"

"Your work is not so important for the plant children!" replied the sun fairy. "It is the warmth and light that we sun fairies bring that they need the most!"

"NO! NO! NO!" shouted the rain fairy—who by now was beginning to swell like a big blue bubble. "WE rain fairies ARE the most important!" and she called to the other rain fairies who were beginning to wonder what all of the stormy noise was all about. "Sisters! Come and gather—listen to this! This sun fairy thinks that his work is more important than ours!"

The sun fairy then answered with a call to his brothers. "Sun fairies, bring your spears and gather! This rain fairy thinks the plant children need the rain more than our warmth and light!"

Music as the rain and sun fairies gather

The rain fairies gathered in a great dark cloud, rumbling and grumbling dissent, and the sun fairies came together in a force of lightning flashing with fire across the sky. They were in great disagreement and the sky was filled with stormy thunder and strife.

Discordance

Now it was that King Sun heard the terrible noise. He looked down upon his helpers and sighed for he knew that their fighting would not do. They needed to grow wiser.

So the Sun summoned the wind and commanded, "Go and blow the rain fairies away to the highest of the mountains; stay there until I call you to bring them back."

*Music—blowing winds scatter
rain fairies and clouds*

A great windstorm blew all of the clouds and the rain fairies away so that the sky was clear with not a drop of mist or moisture anywhere.

The sun fairies thought that this meant King Sun knew them to be the most important. They happily and proudly flashed with joy as they brought the warmth and light down to the plant children of the Earth. The days grew warmer and warmer, day after day.

The plant children began to get hot and tired.

"We are so thirsty!" they called. "When will the rains bring us water?"

But the sun fairies pretended not to hear. They just kept bringing their fiery spears down to the earth. The streams and rivers began to dry up. The ponds became puddles. The little plant children wilted and became brown and they called for help.

Still, the sun fairies paid no attention to their cries.

Then many of the plant children curled up and died, all except the great trees who were stronger than the rest. They called up to King Sun, "When will the rain fairies come again? Our littlest ones have disappeared and the Earth has become parched so that we too will soon be no more!"

Then the sun fairies were NOT so proud of their spears of pointed fire. They saw what they had done and knew it to be wrong.

So King Sun called to the wind, "Brother Wind, bring back the rain fairies."

Music—rain stick and wind sounds

Brother Wind blew north, south, east, and west, and all of the scattered clouds and rain fairies came back. They saw what had happened to the earth and its plant children and they shouted to the fleeing sun fairies, “You see, it is US who really bring life to the plant children—not you with your red and yellow fire spears!”

The rain fairies leaped from the clouds, bringing great showers of rain over the earth. The dry, parched earth became moist again. The streams and ponds began to fill. Day after day the clouds covered the sky and the rain fairies splashed down from the sky. Seeds, kept safe in the soil, sprouted and grew. Soon the grasses and plants were green and lush once more. But then the waters began to rise. There was no warmth and light, the earth became dark and too damp.

Music

The plant children needed the warmth and the light. “It is too much water—we are so cold!” they cried. But the rain fairies pretended not to hear.

Then the waters rose high and washed away the soils. The plant children’s roots lost their holding to the earth and they were swept away in a great flood. Only the oldest, strongest trees were still standing. They called up to King Sun, “It is too much water ... we are drowning.”

The rain fairies then knew that they had been wrong. They were saddened to see what they had done.

King Sun called to Brother Wind, “Scatter the clouds and let the rain fairies and the sun fairies meet each other once more.”

Music

Brother Wind scattered the clouds. The sun fairies met the rain fairies in the center of the sky. Each now knew better than to boast and fight. They greeted each other and spoke: “The plant children need the work each of us can do. They need both sunshine and rain to grow again. Together we will help.”

When King Sun heard them speak thus, he smiled. A great peace filled the air.

Music—as fairies begin to dance

Then the sun fairies and the rain fairies began to dance with joy for their new friendship. As the yellow and red sun fairies danced with the blue rain fairies, new colors began to shimmer in the air. A great arch of color—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple spread from earth to sky and back to earth again.

Music—as rainbow silk appears

Thus it is when we see a rainbow in the sky, we remember that the sun fairies and the rain fairies know how to honor each other. The peace that they have made helps all life on this great earth to grow.

Music—ending, cover stage

Janene Ping is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Magical Puppet Tree Theater since 1992. Janene has also been a Waldorf Early Childhood Educator in Hawthorne Valley for almost 30 years. She has taught at various Centers for Anthroposophical Study and is currently on the faculty at Sophia’s Hearth in Keene, New Hampshire. This July, she will lead the 4th Bi-Annual Collaborative Conference for Storytelling and Puppetry Arts in the Hudson Valley.

Parent-Child Classes for Infants and Toddlers: We need them!

— Liz Hagerman

What positive impact does having a parent-infant and parent-toddler program have on a school?

I have observed children of ages four through six peering in the windows of my classroom to catch a glimpse of the babies. They stare, then their gaze turns inward. Are they remembering themselves as babies? As toddlers? Perhaps seeing the youngest ones helps these children connect to the pre-verbal part of themselves. They are growing and moving into the world, but can take this little baby with them, inside themselves.

Often, in one of my classrooms, I have children from the nursery and kindergarten come to use the little toddler-sized bathroom (of course not when I am holding class). I think that in doing so they feel a sense of mastery—of how far they have come.

The teachers of one of the mixed-age kindergartens at Acorn Hill Waldorf Kindergarten & Nursery told me that it is helpful to have parent-infant classes in the school. When the children begin to tease a child with “Billy is a baby,” the teachers can respond, “Oh, there are no babies in our classroom—they are all in the baby class.” This seems to shift the children to a more contemplative mood ... “I used to be in that class—when I was a baby—I crawled around!”

Or the joy of having these little ones in the school, arriving with their mothers or fathers. Does seeing the babies remind them of the baby inside them? A memory echoing from deep within? One day a line of kindergarten children followed their teacher through the Acorn Hill lobby on their way out to the play yard. Some parents were bringing their babies in arms through the front door to my class. The kindergartener’s usual song of “Ho, ho, ho, the children in a row . . .” spontaneously changed to “We

*In every three-year-old
there is a two-year-old,
a one-year-old,
and a baby
waiting to be born.*

D.W. Winnicott

love babies! We love toddlers!” The baby parents certainly got a warm welcome that day.

Perhaps the babies and toddlers allow even the three-year-olds to help someone younger. A heartwarming example of the Waldorf early childhood pedagogy supporting empathy and the healthy social life happened last winter at the Washington Waldorf School.

Snow and ice caused a delayed opening for the school, but the “Moon Garden” parent-infant class started at eleven. When I arrived at school, I found an ice slick stretching from the gate to the yurt, our garden house classroom in the Children’s Garden play yard. I imagined mothers with small babies in arms—yikes! The Forest Kindergarten and the nursery class were bundled up and sliding around happily. I spoke briefly to the teachers to say I would go find some ice melt and come back to hack a path from the gate to the yurt.

When I returned with the facilities manager and some ice melt, I beheld children of ages three through six (and teacher), shovels in hand, hacking and cracking the ice with focus and gusto. “We’re making a path for the babies!” said one child to another. I took up a shovel and together we made a safe, welcoming, meandering path. At one point we saw that a nursery child had made a “path” about two inches wide. “Look! I’m making a path for the babies!” Her teacher smiled. “Let’s make one for the mothers and fathers, too,” and the path was joyfully widened. The sun shining, the ice and snow sparkling, the children so joyfully working to help others—this was a picture of what we want in our schools—a healthy social life. When we care for and show respect for the youngest in our midst, we all feel it in our hearts’ own core. ♦

Liz Hagerman is a faculty member at Acorn Hill Waldorf Kindergarten & Nursery in Silver Spring, Maryland, where she teaches parent-infant and parent-toddler classes. She also teaches these classes at Washington Waldorf School in Bethesda. Liz is a board certified dance/movement therapist, a Waldorf Birth to Three specialist, and a Pikler Pedagogue candidate. The focus of her work is in supporting free, self initiated movement within a secure, warm, consistent relationship. In the summers she is a commercial fisherman in Cook Inlet Alaska with her husband and two sons.

Transitions

Patricia Cairns

— Remembered by Christine Summerfield

Once upon a time, there lived a woman named Patricia Lei-Anne Cairns. She was born on June 12, 1947, and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii. She had many interests and was passionate about music, art, gardening, flowers, and birds. She liked to spend time in nature and go for long walks. She was a seeker in life and wanted to know about life's many mysteries. After graduating from Punahou High School, she fell in love, got married, and moved to Washington state, where she began her Bachelors studies in English. She and her husband soon moved to Colorado, where she continued her studies at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. She completed her degree and began a Teacher Certificate training. It was there that she met a fellow student who seemed to "know more than the professor." This new friend was Eugene Schwartz, a fellow student on the Teacher Certificate program. It was then, at age 21, that she met anthroposophy, biodynamic agriculture, and the teachings of Rudolf Steiner.

This was a destiny moment for Patricia. She then traveled to Mercy College in Detroit for the fiftieth anniversary of Waldorf education in 1969. She took classes in anthroposophical studies and was fully captured by a Swedish teacher named Arne Klingborg, who "brought these teachings to life in full color on the blackboard." This fired her desire to deepen her studies and she and her husband moved to England, where together they completed their Foundation Year at Emerson College.

After this completion, she returned to Hawaii for two years in the early 1970s, but her wanderlust for further study and travel brought her back to Emerson, where she completed her Waldorf teacher training. She then lived in Germany and Switzerland



for many years, studying and traveling all over Europe and the Middle East. She became fluent in German and continually deepened her studies in anthroposophy. Her first Waldorf kindergarten teaching experience was in Kassel, Germany, where she assisted Eva Kudra from 1977-79. There she fell in love with the Waldorf early childhood curriculum, including puppetry, handwork, and singing. She knew that working with young children was to be her vocation in life.

Patricia also had a love for movement and the arts and studied in the eurythmy program at the Goetheanum for two years. It was just outside of Dornach, in Arlesheim, where her son Jeremy was born in 1982. Wanting to raise him in the US, she and her husband settled in Eugene, Oregon, for many years and she delighted in being a mother and a mentor to young kindergarten teachers at the Eugene Waldorf School.

After ten years in the Pacific Northwest, her family moved back to the Colorado Rockies, where she settled in Boulder. It was here where she founded Rosebud Preschool in her little blue cottage on Orchard Lane. She devoted many years of her life teaching and caring for young children and sharing the wisdom of the Waldorf curriculum with families. Her cottage was small, cozy, and full of love—a safe and peaceful haven for children. There were chickens in the back yard, and a big woodpile that stoked the stove in the kitchen. She hosted festivals in all the seasons of the year and was loved by so many.

When her son had grown, the world traveler in her beckoned and she found herself in Hong Kong for two years, teaching in new and emerging Waldorf kindergartens and sharing her love of Steiner's teachings with teachers. Upon her return to the



US, the west coast called her to return to Olympia, Washington, where she happily spent the remaining years of her life in a small cottage surrounded by a lush, green garden. She became friends with many people in that community, including families and teachers at the Olympia Waldorf School. She moved into working with families and founded Stella Rosa, a support organization for parents and educators. She held Parent-Infant and Parent-Toddler classes, and offered sick care for children of working parents. She also continued teaching classes in kinderharp and pentatonic flute and recorder for children and adults. In between, she traveled to mainland China, where she worked as kinderharp teacher and mentor to Waldorf teacher training students.

Throughout her life, Patricia combined her varied passions and wove them into a colorful tapestry weaving together her threads of art, music, travel, language, early childhood, human development and spiritual study. She had a fiery spirit and love of adventure. She traveled to 27 countries! She loved people of all cultures. She devoted her vocational life to serving children and families. After a few years of her journey with cancer, she died peacefully in her home, on July 27, 2017, shortly after her 70th birthday, surrounded by family and friends. One of her final wishes was to have her ashes spread in Boston Harbor on the Puget Sound. She was loved by many and now continues to shine upon her loved ones from her star across the threshold.

Christine Summerfield *specializes in home organization for families. She spent many years working both in the classroom and with parents as a Waldorf early childhood educator.*

“Farmer Dave” Snow

— Remembered by Nancy Blanning

Boulder Waldorf Kindergarten in Boulder, CO, is sad to announce the passing of “Farmer Dave” Snow, a warm, encouraging, practical, fun member of the staff caring for the children. Dave was husband to BWK’s director, Seana Grady. Dave was the program’s financial director through expertise acquired from 25 years in the business world. Dave was always a lover of the natural world, loving hiking, fishing, and animal tending. As their early childhood program became more and more “farm-based” with gardens, chickens, and goats, Dave and Seana tended the gardens and animals. Children joined Dave to milk the goats. After Dave demonstrated, the children took their turns “squeezing hard” to watch the first squirt of milk that would later be made into cheese. Farmer Dave was a living model for all the practical work Waldorf early childhood educators would like the children to see and be able to imitate. One of the highlights of each week was the day of “The Goat Races.” Farmer Dave would bring all the goats—nannies and little kids—out of their pen to a rise at the top of the play yard so they could race down to the other side. The children raced like the wind across the play yard with their goat companions while shrieks of joy and laughter filled the air.

Jointly, Dave and Seana had a blended family of six children. Being a parent was always an important activity for Dave. He is remembered at Boulder Waldorf Kindergarten for patient listening and warm, sympathetic understanding with parents as they navigated the challenges and unknowns of raising small children.

The last several years Seana, Dave, and their two daughters adopted from



Ethiopia made their home in Mexico. After a long journey with cancer, Dave made his passing there, surrounded by his family. His warmth, capacity for interested listening, and his quietly smiling eyes will be greatly missed. ♦



Reading the Signs of the Times

Signs of the Times

— Nancy Blanning

The previous installment of “Reading the Signs of the Times” (*Gateways* 73, Fall 2017) described how our personal social lives, our lives within our communities and our schools, are especially beset with difficult questions. There are questions about economic equity. There are questions of how to understand and respect what all community members—teaching colleagues, administrative staff, boards, and parents—contribute to the entire social, pedagogical, and economic life. To this must be added the question of what each contributes to the spiritual life of these communities as well.

These vast questions stood before everyone in the first days of Waldorf education and other anthroposophical initiatives reaching out into practical life. The struggle to come to grips with them continues and intensifies today. The WECAN board committed itself to study these social questions as beginning steps. Study for the fall board meeting was Lecture II of *The Inner Aspect of the Social Question*. The group study was profound for the participants and challenging in its implications of how we can begin to act personally as well as collectively to find a way forward.

What follows are some excerpts from the lecture to give a taste of these challenging thoughts. I’ve taken the liberty of adjusting some terminology used in this 1950 translation to make the terms used more inclusive. Everyone is earnestly urged to read the lecture in its entirety.

Rudolf Steiner in mid-lecture characterizes some impulses that influence us as we interact with one another in social and practical life in terms of the different spheres of rights, economics, and spiritual/cultural life.

*In the spiritual life ... what is the ruling impulse?
Fundamentally, it is personal interest—an*

interest arising out of the soul-nature, certainly, but none the less egoistic. Of religion, people demand that it shall make them holy. Of education, that it shall develop their talents. Of any kind of artistic representation, that it shall bring pleasure into their lives, and perhaps also stimulate their inner energies. As a general rule, it is egoism, whether of a grosser or more refined sort, which leads a person—quite understandably—to seek in spiritual life whatever satisfies [one’s] self.

In the political life of rights, on the other hand, we have to do with something which makes us all equal before the law. ... We have to ask what our right should be ... But if we are connected with a religious community, or with a group of teachers, then—just as much as in civic relationships—we come up against personal claims, personal wishes. In the economic sphere, it is through the overcoming of self that something valuable, not derived from personal desires, comes to expression—brotherhood, responsibility for others, a way of living so that the other [person] gains experience through us.

In the spiritual life, we receive according to our desires. In the sphere of rights, we make a claim to something we need in order to make sure of a satisfactory human life as an equal among equals. And in the economic sphere is born that which unites [humanity] in terms of feeling: that is, brotherhood. The more this brotherhood is cultivated, the more fruitful economic life becomes. And the impulse towards brotherhood arises when we establish a certain connection between our property and another’s, between our need and another’s, between something we have and something another has, and so on.

Despite these noble ideals, in our social experiences in community, whether in our schools or other associations, we increasingly find ourselves at such differences of viewpoints, thoughts, and feelings that we reach impasses. We come to a standstill when divisions create factions and strife. We can become trapped within our own viewpoint and only insist more forcefully and earnestly upon the validity of our own “side.” How do we find a way forward? How do we find our way to this spiritual/social path to brotherhood that Steiner described above? What he says may seem shocking and radical to our sensibilities. The lecture continues:

We shall not find [this] if we remain egotistically bound up with our own thoughts, but only if we relate our own thoughts to those of other[s], if we expand our interest to embrace, with inner tolerance, everything human, and say to ourselves: “Through the fact of my birth I am a prejudiced person; only through being reborn into an all-embracing feeling of fellowship for the thoughts of all [others] shall I find in myself the impulse which is, in truth, the [Spiritual] Impulse. If I do not look on myself alone as the source of everything I think, but recognize myself, right down into the depths of my soul, as a member of the human community”—then, my dear friends, one way [now] lies open. This is the way which must today be characterized as the way to the [Spirit] through thinking. Earnest self-training so that we gain a true perception for estimating the thoughts of others, and for correcting bias in ourselves—this we must take as one of life’s serious tasks. For unless this task finds place among men, they will lose the way... This today is the way through thinking.

The other way is through the will. Here, too, people are much addicted to a false way, which

leads not to the [Spirit] but away [from it]... And in this other realm we must find again the way... Youth still keeps some idealism, but for the most part humanity today is dry and matter-of-fact. And [humans] are proud of what is often called practical technique, though the expression is used in a narrow sense. Humanity today has no use for ideals which are drawn from the fountain of the spirit... Lack of understanding among human beings is indeed the great mark of our time.

These excerpts can give only a hint of the power and substance of what lies in this lecture. With so much divisiveness in the social and political realms today, these thoughts offer a way to shift our minds and hearts toward those with whom we disagree. A shift must begin somewhere, and Rudolf Steiner points to oneself as the starting place. May we take these on as “leading thoughts” to ponder.



Two replies came to *Gateways* in response to the fall article. Such gratitude is felt when readers share their own experiences.

The first comes from Andree Ward, early childhood teacher, teacher trainer, and mentor in Harlemville, New York. Andy relates that these thoughts about attending to the thoughts of the other with interest came on the heels of a conversation she had with early childhood colleague Stevie Ross, who taught for many years in Garden City, New York. Stevie had recently read a memoir by Alan Alda in which he described the principle of improv exercises and performances. The person in the improv dialog can never reject another’s comment by saying, “That’s wrong” or the like. The improv artist must always take the next step from whatever has been stated.

This reminded Andy of the “therapeutic gesture,” where one begins exactly where the patient or client is. Similarly, in dialoguing with parents, we cannot say, “Oh, no! You have to already be over here where I think you ought to be!” She realized that she has already been practicing this for years in an un-named way. By acknowledging the parent’s view without criticism or judgment, sometimes she has helped lead a parent to a new perspective. Just as often, however, she has found herself led to a new understanding of the child who is at the heart of the conversation.

Andy continues to teach a parent-child class. Stevie is retired from the classroom. Both serve as teacher trainers, consultants, and early childhood mentors. Stevie also consults and mentors on “incarnational support” issues for early childhood.

A second comment came from Mark McAlister in Toronto, who deals in finance from an anthroposophic perspective. Mark was preparing a presentation on social finance and said that considering the article’s description of “the signs of our times”—materialism, commercialism, nationalism, self-interest, disrespectful blaming, accusatory speech, and generally ignoring the universal characteristics that unite us in humanity—gave him encouragement to speak out more boldly about how we view our working together in our anthroposophical endeavors where we strive for a higher ground. Mark’s intention in his talk was to give a call for us all to use our most creative and generous thinking, feeling, and willing, and commit to a path toward social renewal and health. Thank you, Mark. This is an inspiring call to all of us as readers as well.



One of the unique hallmarks of Waldorf education is that it was founded to encourage development of healthy social life within the school community, the

classrooms, and society at large. It seems fitting, then, to end with an example of nurturing healthy social life in the early childhood classroom. The Calgary Waldorf School in Alberta, Canada, has an afternoon class of upcoming first grade children. This afternoon extension of the day is required to meet provincial standards with which the school must comply. Socializing and harmonizing fifteen or twenty six-year-olds in one class can be quite tricky. Yet a visit to the class found an authentic social harmony. The class was appropriately lively and energy-filled; no dampers were imposed on the children. So the source of this harmony stood as a tantalizing interest.

Two baskets of felt-covered stones were noticed on a table. These looked prepared to be given as gifts, as cards were being drawn and written to go with the baskets. My visitor’s curiosity asked about the baskets and felted stones. The whole class had been felting the stones to make as sets for each of the two mixed-aged morning groups. All felted stones from this healthy, tactile crafting had gone into the collection. No individual child had a personal stone and all the stones were given away for the use and pleasure of others. The intention was that the activity was valuable in its own right and the benefit from everyone’s efforts would serve the collective.

In a like-minded spirit, classes in some schools elsewhere do much the same at Lantern Walk time. The teachers and children make lanterns, enough for everyone without any lanterns being identified with ownership. The efforts of the whole group serve the collective, serve “the other.”

These are small but mighty gestures and are initial transformative steps toward a more healthy and generous social life.

Please send your reflections, questions, and experiences to share as we work to find our way together to the healing of social life. Please send contributions to gateways@waldorfearlychildhood.org. ♦

*In the accompanying article, Marcia Marquis shares her reflections on lessons learned over twenty-three years in the classroom. Her article is included under **Reading the Signs of the Times** because it suggests how we can go toward the future. The essential lessons she describes from her years with the children point to ways we can proceed with humility, gratitude, and a renewed sense of wonder—even in these difficult times.*

A Handful of Feathers and a Stag at the Play Yard Gate

— Marcia Marquis

I taught nursery and kindergarten in Waldorf schools for twenty-three years. It taught me many things. I learned to take responsibility for the difficulties in my classroom. Instead of blaming a disruptive child or a difficult day on outer circumstances, I learned to ask myself, “What is it that I can do differently?” When a child was acting out I learned to ask, “What is this child asking of me?” I learned that the most challenging students were often the most rewarding. I learned to be open to inspiration to help guide my actions in the classroom. I realized that in the kindergarten there was no choice but to be in the moment. I learned to respect the struggle and the process and I learned that children respected those that struggled to do better and those who honored the process. I learned that love and compassion for children, parents, and colleagues could shift negative energy into positive energy. I worked to see everyone’s higher angels and learned that focusing on children’s strengths, rather than their weaknesses, lifted them up. I saw their shoulders straighten and I saw them walk with pride. I saw that the older ones craved healthy work and responsibility and challenges. All children crave love and warmth and humor.

The deepest lessons I learned were the ones I learned from the children themselves. I understood that children are living every moment fully. They are not in the past or future. Only that which is in front of them captures their attention. They are in a permanent state of wonder. They are not only keen observers but they are active participants in what they observe. In the rain they jump in puddles and get their boots stuck in the mud. They dig with shovels and with their hands. They pull the tarp so that the gathered rain falls down in torrents. They collect water from the rain barrel.

In the winter they know that the ground is frozen because their shovel chops the snow and ice. They feel the resistance at the end of the shovel, unlike the receptive soil they find when it is warm. They lie on the ground to make snow angels, they eat the snow, experiencing its softness and its cold by the feeling in their mouths. They lick icicles like ice cream cones and are surprised when their tongues get stuck momentarily.

They roll and jump in the leaves in the autumn. Their bodies absorb the crunch of the leaves in every pore. They smell the earth beneath the rotting leaves and collect acorns in buckets.

In spring they run faster and jump higher and get on all fours to gaze at budding shoots and dance around blossoming bushes collecting fallen petals.

The younger ones grab and pull and push, experiencing for the first time “the other” by their reactions. The older ones quarrel and stomp off, experiencing hurt feelings for the first time. Often the play yard was in sync, harmonious ... children doing the work of children. Then there were days when conflict seemed to invade the space. During this time it was important to remind myself that conflict is warming, like a fire when the flames crackle and pop and then settle into a warm glow of embers. After a day of conflict the children seemed more settled in their work and play and in their relationships.

So much about early education in my Waldorf kindergarten was about trusting and honoring children and getting out of their way so they could experience childhood in all its glory. They are given the tools they need to develop. What they need from their teachers is love and compassion and warmth and to be seen and heard. I was the keeper of the rhythm and my invisible arms always surrounded the

children. I was always vigilant and there were times when I was settling conflicts throughout the day. On the other hand, there were many days when the classroom would hum and the children would work out their differences and settle their own conflicts. On such days I proudly looked on as I did my work.

I learned to trust in their play, to trust that they were working things out and that they were learning things that needed to be learned. I understood that this was the period where their life was play and that giving them the time and freedom to fully experience this amazing state of being was the greatest gift of all.

I learned to teach by example and I saw that the gentleness and compassion and reverence I demonstrated was transformed into children who were gentle and compassionate with others. When someone was hurt they would sit by their side and put an arm around them. When the younger ones would stray from the circle the older ones would shepherd them gently back. When I closed my eyes during the blessing I would notice that many others closed their eyes.

I understood that gesture was more important than words in the earlier years and that it wasn't until the children were five, turning six, that the use of words in instruction began to play a stronger role. I understood that children did not react to cold authority. A request that came from a place of warmth and understanding or filled with humor and imagination would be readily received, whereas an order barked in anger, dry and humorless, would be ignored.

I learned the importance of my nighttime work. Simply visualizing a child as I drifted off to sleep would often transform something within my relationship with that child so that I was more able to offer her what she needed. Answers to questions in the classroom would come to me if I left myself open to the inspiration offered in the moment, rather than over-thinking a situation.

It was demonstrated to me over and over again how learning took place in early childhood. Learning came through activity, through doing things, through the lessons of play. Usually there were two or three children in the class that were eager to have me, their teacher, teach them something new. They would come sit by me and ask me to show them how I did whatever it was that I was doing ... They would ignore the others that were playing around them and

watch for a time before taking up the project at hand and trying it themselves again and again until they had learned how. They in turn would become teachers to the rest of the children. The other children would be impressed that their classmate had mastered the task at hand and would ask for their help. There were two six-year-olds who came early one day a week. One of them had mastered many string games and the other wanted to learn. They sat side by side, and the "teacher" patiently repeated the gesture over and over again until finally her "student" succeeded in mastering the game. Both of their faces shone with the joy of accomplishment, with the joy that the hard work of teaching and learning had brought them. There was the year that a group of six-year-olds decided that on handwork days they would teach the younger ones how to one-finger knit and then four- and five-finger knit. They formed the circle of chairs after snack with the stump in the middle with the large basket of yarn. They told the younger ones to get their handwork baskets and gather round. They then began to patiently instruct their "students." One year I had a highly imaginative student who was also very theatrical. She was a benevolent director of play and would organize the entire class so that all were playing together and acting out the scenes she would describe to them in the midst of their play. These descriptions were very poetic and their play was rich in drama.

I witnessed the importance of repetition and the stunning persistence that children used in order to learn. There was a child in my kindergarten class who lacked coordination in her body and found much physical activity to be a challenge. She was determined to learn to jump rope. She would wait patiently on the log for her turn and then courageously she would try over and over to jump the rope. Failing, she would return to the end of the line until her turn came again. The other children seemed to be silenced by her determination and understood her challenge. They did not laugh at her or make fun of her. One day she was able to jump over the rope twice. She smiled widely and her cheeks turned pink and her eyes twinkled.

I learned that sometimes the answers came slowly. Our cubby room at Apple Blossom was a space for transitions. Due to limited space, the cubbies were crowded together and there was no room to spare. This was the one space where pandemonium could

break out. After many years of enduring this it finally occurred to me that my attitude towards this transition could help to make a necessary shift. I realized that I had never truly honored this transition and that in order to honor it I needed to give it the time and space it deserved. I needed to give the transition its due importance, instead of treating it like a passage to get somewhere else. I would sit on my chair in the middle of the cubby room and change from outside clothes and put on my slippers. For those who had finished getting ready, there was a basket of books, a basket of yarn, and strings for string games. I would pick up a string and begin focusing on a string game or I would organize the yarn in the yarn basket. I was there to help those that needed help with pulling off their boots or untying their laces, but otherwise I was engaged in quiet activity. My change in attitude transformed this transition and made it an integral part of our kindergarten day. The children were happier and much more harmonious. I marvel at how long it took me to have this insight, but I was thankful that it finally came.

I observed the power of stories. The children would sit silent and transfixed, gathered around the candle in a circle for story time (it was only the children with disturbances and those with too much media in their lives that could not drink in the sweet elixir of story telling). One day I told the story of a bird with a broken wing that could not fly south for the winter. When the snow came the bird sought the shelter of many trees, but they all turned him away. It was the pine tree that finally offered some shelter. And so, when the winds began to blow all the trees lost their leaves except the pine trees. The next morning many children climbed the tree and asked me for some raffia that they knew was in the shed. They spent the entire playtime hanging the raffia from all the branches they could reach and told me that they were making a home for the wounded bird.

The story of the wounded bird reminds me of another incident revolving around birds. One day

in November one of the six-year-olds asked me if he could bring some Indian corn outside to plant (during this time of year a favorite activity of the children was to pop the kernels off the cob and grind the corn in the mortar). When we got to the play yard Christopher ran off to the garden, shovel in hand. He returned to my side a short time later and asked me for some feathers. I asked what he wanted the feathers for, and he replied that the Indians believed that the corn would grow best if planted with feathers. At that time there was not a bird in sight near the play yard and I told Christopher he would have to plant his corn without feathers. He headed back to the garden, and, as I watched him, suddenly a flock of birds surrounded him, beat their wings and down drifted feathers! He scooped a handful of feathers up and walked into the garden.

Another magical moment in the play yard happened one morning about the same time of year. The ground was frozen but there was not yet snow on the ground. It was a quiet morning, and all the children were spread about, deeply engaged in their play. I looked up from chopping vegetables and there at the garden gate stood a stag staring into the play yard. He could have been a statue or an apparition, so still and majestic with his antlers reaching toward the blue sky above. Some of the children looked up from their play and stared at him, but those that truly saw him stayed frozen where they were and said nothing, as if a spell had been cast. When the stag finally turned slowly and leapt off through the field the children returned to their play. None of us ever spoke about the stag at the play yard gate.

The many years spent in my Waldorf classroom were an immeasurable gift to me, quite as extraordinary as the handful of feathers or the stag at the play yard gate. ♦

Marcia Marquis is a Waldorf early childhood educator and co-founder of the Apple Blossom School and Family Center.

For the Classroom, Inside and Out

A Healing Story for the Classroom

— Jessica Oswald

One chilly morning in late autumn, Father Mouse stepped outside his door. He breathed in deeply so that his chest puffed all the way out and he smelled the north wind blowing. Father Mouse looked at the leaves scattered all over the forest floor. He bent down and picked up one maple leaf, he looked at it closely and then held it up to father sun and admired the ice crystals glittering all over the leaf. “Oh, Jackie Frost has been dancing all around here,” he thought.

Father Mouse quickly scampered back into his house, calling out “Today is moving day.” You see, when the north wind begins to blow through the forest the Mouse family must move to their winter home. They leave their summer home built of twigs, moss, and dried leaves next to the stream and move into Farmer Brown’s garden. Farmer Brown always leaves his biggest pumpkin in the pumpkin patch for one of the forest creatures to make a snug home in the winter. Now the Mouse family must work hard to pack all their belongings and load them onto the wagon.

Matilda, the youngest Mouse daughter, was given the task of loading the wagon with jars of jams, pickles, and all the other food they took great care to preserve all summer long. She was so busy going back and forth from her kitchen to the wagon that she did not notice Sammy Jay watching her from the lowest tree branch. Sammy Jay spread his wings swooped down and landed right on top of Matilda. With his sharp beak he pulled out some of her soft grey fur. Matilda was surprised and yelled, “Go away, Sammy Jay! With you I will not play.” She did not like the way Sammy played with her. And Sammy liked Matilda so much that he only wanted to be with her and no one else. He flew back to his branch and rocked back and forth calling out. “Matilda, Matilda, Matilda!”

Matilda covered her ears with her paws. Mother Mouse stepped outside the front door to see what was the matter. She looked up and saw Sammy Jay’s little beady eyes staring at her. “Good morning Sammy

Jay, today is moving day and we could use your help,” said Mother Mouse. Sammy Jay spread his wings and flew to a higher branch, all the while screeching out Matilda’s name.

Matilda has three brothers and they had all finished with their work. As it was lunchtime, their mother packed them a picnic of cheese pie, wild blueberry muffins, and warm mint tea and sent them outside. All three brothers came tumbling out the door at once and rolled around on the soft grass. The oldest brother called out, “Let’s skip to the riverbank and picnic there.” But no one could hear him because Sammy Jay would not be quiet. “Sammy Jay, would you please stop making all that noise.” They invited Sammy to picnic with them at the riverbank, but he Jay just flew to the very top of the tree. He did not like to have his feathers ruffled or get dirt in his claws. From his perch he could see far and wide.

He watched as the Mouse children skipped down the path to the water. Sammy Jay was not the only one watching the Mouse children. Farmer Brown’s cat Tiger was creeping through the woods hunting for his lunch. He spied the mice from a distance and hid behind a fallen log. As Matilda was getting closer, Tiger crouched low and his tail twitched back and forth. Sammy Jay spied the tip of Tiger’s tail and knew what he was up to. He spread his great blue wings and dove down beak first. Sammy Jay landed on Tiger right as he was about to pounce on Matilda and pecked him on his tail. Tiger was so startled that he turned around and ran right back to Farmer Brown’s front porch and licked his tail until it stopped hurting.

The Mouse brothers were surprised to find Sammy Jay out of his tree and on the ground. His feathers were all dusty and full of dried leaves and he had even gotten mud on his claws. The Mouse children ran back to their home to tell Mother and Father how Sammy Jay saved Matilda. Mother and Father were

so pleased and grateful that they decided to have a party that evening in honor of Sammy Jay and they invited all the creatures of the forest to the party.

The next day Mother Mouse taught Sammy Jay how to knock on their door and ask politely if her children would like to play. Every day Sammy Jay tapped on their door with his beak and all the children would play together.

Author's Note

This story was written for a situation that was occurring in my class during late autumn. I have a boy in my class, who I'll call Timothy, who turned five in the winter. He is an only child and both his parents are physicians and are older. When I went to visit Timothy in his home, his father greeted me, telling me his son is a genius. I laughed, thinking he was just joking. However, Timothy lives completely in his head. He is able to read and write and do arithmetic problems quickly. His parents told me they have not taught him, but rather he has taught himself. He also loves to do art, and creates worlds for himself and by himself. I was told that in nursery he only observed everything, would very rarely enter play, and if he did it was only with one girl. The girl was later sent to a different kindergarten.

At the beginning of the school year Timothy would not play with anyone. He worked with me and stayed close to whatever I was doing. During free play he would often get crayons and paper and draw the whole time. While outside, he would climb into a tree and watch everything. I could get him to work with me at a task like gardening, cleaning, or handwork, but when we finished he would go back up into the tree.

After a few weeks, he began to take a special liking to one of the girls in the class. This girl was full of sunshine and goodness . . . everyone wanted to be with her. However, Timothy wanted her all to himself. During snack, he wanted all of her attention and would say her name constantly and tell her long stories. Outside, he would sit in the tree and wait for her to pass and then jump down and follow her everywhere. Timothy would yank on the hood of her coat and tug her backwards. Also, he was talking about her incessantly at home and drawing pictures for her all the time. The girl soon grew tired of him and could no longer find any kindness for him. So

she would push him away, usually knocking him to the ground, and yell at him to leave her alone. During this time both parents became concerned, as did I, and I told them I would keep an eye on the situation. But in the meantime, I did ask his mother not to admonish him or ask him every day if he had bothered his female classmate.

During all of this Gerald Karnow, our school doctor, paid us a visit—he spent the whole morning with the kindergarten. When the day had finished, we were able to meet to discuss his observations. Timothy stood out and we talked about him for most of the time. Dr. Karnow said, “You have to write a therapeutic story for him.” Great idea!

I went to work right away. I was familiar with the idea and had read Susan Perrow's book, *Healing Stories for Challenging Behavior*. I had also taken a storytelling workshop with Nancy Mellon.

I looked at the situation as objectively as I could and began to make notes. I wanted not only to address what was happening with the boy, I also wanted to help the girl have a healthy response to him. In the middle of a blank page I drew a circle representing the sun and created rays with what could be metaphors used in the story. I wanted to bring it into the realm of nature, so I began to think of characteristics of animals that might be similar to the behavior. This activity took a few days, as I was unsure. During this time I had been watching my cats interact with a blue jay. This bird would torment them . . . diving down right above their heads just low enough for them to think they could catch him, but then swooping right back up. This would go on for quite some time. The blue jays also get into my chicken coop and help themselves to food. As for the mice, they are gentle creatures, industrious, and adorably tiny.

In the story, I used the blue jay, the mouse, and the cat as metaphors. According to Susan Perrow, “a metaphor shows us one thing as another, and in doing so extends the way we see the world, also often refreshing and enlivening our perception” (Perrow at 80). In creating a healing story, we are able to rise above the situation and see it in a brand-new way. I struggled with how to bring it in a way that was not obvious to the children. As Perrow states, “we do not want to moralize or induce guilt, and through the story provide an acceptable means of dealing with the behavior and a positive resolution” (57).

In thinking about all of this, I created a little nature tale that I hoped would bring balance to the relationship, and a story that the whole class could hear and enjoy. I told the story during snack, as that is when I bring nature stories. I told it three times and then put it away to see what would happen. The stalking behavior that Timothy was exhibiting lessened and over time stopped completely. His classmate, the recipient of his suffocation, asked for the story many times. I did help in other ways with their relationship, by having them work with me on tasks in the classroom. That way they could be together, but with my care around them.

I am grateful to be in a position and place where using this type of medium is acceptable and encouraged. Rudolf Steiner said that Waldorf education is a healing education, and using the art

of storytelling is a very sure way of healing. I am sure my story could use more tweaking, and am curious to know what you think of it and where it could use some help.

Please send comments to us at gateways@waldorfearlychildhood.org. We will forward them to Jessica. ♦

Jessica Oswald is a parent and early childhood educator at Green Meadow Waldorf School.

Resources:

- Susan Perrow, *Healing Stories for Challenging Behavior* (Gloucestershire, UK: Hawthorn Press, 2008)

Excerpts from *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life*

— Susan Weber, Nancy Macalaster, and Jane Swain

The new WECAN publication, *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life*, comes from Susan Weber, Nancy Macalaster, and Jane Swain of Sophia's Hearth. This compilation of verses, songs, and singing games is particularly intended for use with very young children under three.

Every classroom, as well as every parent with children at home, needs lovely lullabies. This one, originally published in Nancy Foster's book *Let Us Form a Ring*, is a beautiful picture of stars as daisies in the heavenly nighttime meadow that fall to earth by day to appear as earthly flowers. This lullaby is well suited for use wherever there is a sleepy child.

The section "Lap Games and Jog-Alongs" offers games that are always great fun for tiny children. They love to

Frank Dempster Sherman

Traditional

1. At eve - ning when I go to bed, I see the
 2. And of - ten when I'm dream - ing so A - cross the
 3. For when at mor - ning I a - rise There's not a

stars shine o - ver head, They are the lit - tle
 sky the moon will go, She is a la - dy
 star left in the skies; She's picked them all and

dai - sies white, That dot the mead - ow of the night.
 sweet and fair Who comes to ga - ther dai - sies there.
 dropped them down In - to the mead - ows of the town.

Singing and Speaking the Child into Life at 31

be bounced about. One could picture the following “Father and Mother and Uncle John” with the child sitting on the adult’s lap, facing in. The child would be rhythmically bounced straight up and down for the first two lines, then tipped to one side on the third line, to the opposite side with the fourth line, and then resume steady bouncing on the last line.

Father and Mother and Uncle John
Went to town, one by one
Father fell off.
Mother fell off.
But Uncle John went on and on and on.

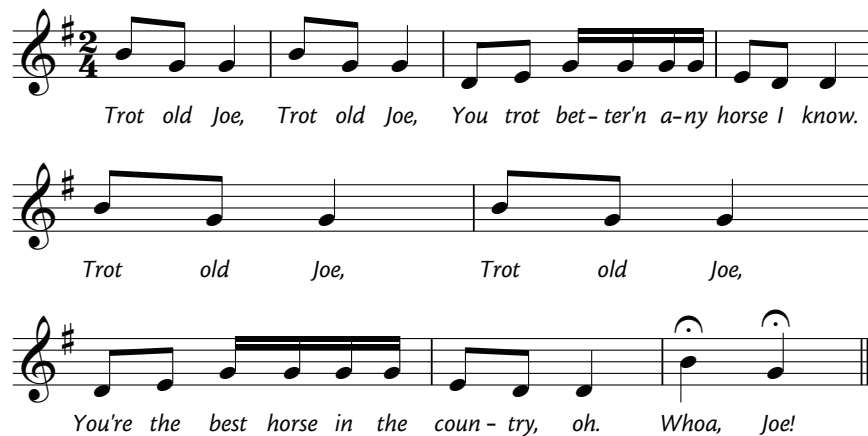
Rhythmic bouncing up and down
Continue bouncing
Tip child to one side
Tip child to the other side
Resume regular bouncing

In the classroom at circle time, one could imagine this transformed into a hand gesture game. Begin with hand lightly closed into a fist.

Father and
Mother and
Uncle John
Went
To town
One by one
Father fell off
Mother fell off
But Uncle John went on and on and on

Stick up thumb and then fold back down
Stick up pinkie finger and then fold back down
Stick up three central fingers then fold down
Repeat with thumb as done with “Father”
Repeat as with pinkie as done with “Mother”
Repeat as with “Uncle John”
Stick up thumb and then hide
Stick up pinkie and then hide
Stick up three central fingers and lift hand rhythmically up and down with the words.

The last jog-along is also a song. One can imagine the little child on the lap being moved rhythmically to the song, one bounce on each quarter note. This also lends itself to use as a trotting song during a circle time. The tempo begins somewhat quickly, slows, and then picks up tempo again, only to end in a quick—and laugh-inducing—“Whoa, Joe!”



from *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life* at 60

Resources:

- Susan Weber, Nancy Macalaster, and Jane Swain, *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life*, (WECAN 2018).
- Nancy Foster, *Let Us Form a Ring* (Silver Spring, Maryland: Acorn Hill, 2000).

Susan Weber, Nancy Macalaster, and Jane Swain are the authors of *Singing and Speaking the Child into Life*. Susan is the Director of Sophia’s Hearth Family Center, at which Jane is Associate Director of Teacher Education. Nancy is a graduate of the Center’s professional development course for early childhood professionals, “The Child and the Family in the First Three Years,” and has completed advanced training at the Pikler Institute in Budapest, Hungary. Visit Sophia’s Hearth at sophiashearth.org.

Protection Imagination: Build a House

— Steven Moore

This was shared at the November 2012 Kinder Saturday, an informal gathering of Denver kindergarten teachers regularly hosted by Nancy Blanning, as we were speaking about images and gestures of protection. It originated with eurythmist Steven Moore, who now graces the spiritual world with his artistry. He graciously shared that it would be fine for non-eurythmists to use the “B” gesture.

This begins with one person sitting on a chair or a few (two, three or four) children sitting together on the floor or on a cluster of chairs back-to-back in the center. All the other children and adults stand in a fairly big circle. The child or children in the center will receive the sheltering that is about to happen. The verse goes:

Build a house, brick by brick,
Higher and higher, tighter and tighter

With each emphasized word, those in the outer circle take one step forward, gradually shrinking and tightening the circle while making a eurythmy “B” gesture with the arms at each step. Start the “B” at about waist level, letting the gesture climb higher. The idea is to suggest stacking bricks, so the hands in the gesture should not be more than about six inches apart, one above the other. With each step, the hand that has been the lower one is placed above the other, so the top hand will alternate right, left, right, while building up the “bricks.” When you have reached the end of the verse, the hands will have climbed up to head level at least, if not above—and you have finished your “building” with the roof. Everyone should now also be standing in a tight circle around the person or people in the center, continuing to stand with their hands creating a sheltering roof and everyone’s bodies collectively being the walls of the house.

Now some individual children are indicated to race around the outside of the circle as the wind, rain, and so on.

And then the wind blew *accompanied by wind whooshing sounds while the child makes one circuit around*

And the rain came down *make any appropriate rain sound—pit pat, tip tap, and so on. One could also insert thunder and lightning to create a stronger picture of outside turbulence and inner safety*

Optional –

And the lightning flashed *those running around can streak their arms up into the air or just run*

And the thunder roared *stomp feet but not too loudly or dramatically*

When all this movement is finished, let it grow quiet and stand for just a moment of quiet hush. Begin to open up the “roof” of the house and step back slowly, as though sunshine is being allowed to flood into the house.

But look! What a good, tight house! No rain got in!

This is the conclusion of one round. A mixed-aged group with a good number of older children can usually and happily sustain this for three repetitions. Make sure always to have each young child companioned with an older one, as this can be too big an experience for very young ones alone. If you have a very timid child for whom you think this would be healing, sit in the middle yourself and hold this child in your lap. You can still speak the verse as teacher while sitting in the middle. ♦

Steven Moore *was a eurythmist and speech formation artist. He passed into the spiritual world in 2004.*

On the Move: The Development of Movement

— Vanessa Kohlhass

When a child is learning a new skill in movement—whether learning to walk or climbing a tree—parents often worry that he might fall and hurt himself. But sometimes it is our own reaction that causes a child to lose his focus and fall. When a child falls, he has lost the ground underneath him. If we quickly swoop him up, he loses his relationship to gravity a second time.

In 2001, I attended the 2nd International Professional Conference, The Dignity of the Small Child, which included a presentation of the concept of the small child according to Emmi Pikler. In the 1940s, Pikler, a Hungarian pediatrician, founded a unique orphanage, the Emmi Pikler Institute in Budapest, Hungary. After the conference I visited the Institute.

Pikler's work was brought to the United States by Magda Gerber, a student of Pikler's and an infant specialist, who together with Dr. Tom Forrest, a pediatric neurologist, founded Resources for Infant Educators (RIE). I took the RIE Foundations course to further my understanding of this approach to supporting infant development.



Illustration by Klara Pap from the Pikler Institute

The work of Pikler and Gerber has been a major influence on my work with children, both as a teacher and as a parent. One of the guiding principles of Pikler and RIE is that an inherent wisdom allows

children to develop movement skills, from lying on their backs to walking. We need only remove hindrances to allow this natural development to happen. We achieve this by *not* putting the child into a position she can't get into herself, *not* telling her how to move, and *not* focusing on arbitrary motor development milestones. Instead, we *can* provide space and time for movement, observe the quality of the child's movement, and recognize and celebrate transitional postures.

"Be careful what you are teaching the infants, it may interfere with what they could be learning."

~ Magda Gerber

Here are some ways we can support children through the development of movement as they progress from lying on their backs to walking.

Reflexes

The development of movement begins long before birth. Primitive reflexes emerge in utero and play a vital role in healthy development. They provide protection, support, and stimulation, allowing the child to fully explore the movements of her body. Reflexes cause the child to involuntarily respond to a stimulus and set the foundation for later stages of motor development. A reflex is usually suppressed as a new skill is developed. In this way the reflex is integrated into the higher skill. We can support this process by allowing the natural development of free movement.

Lying on the Back

The baby spends much of her time asleep as she adjusts from life in the womb to life on earth. This is the time to provide warmth and protection and to avoid unnecessary loud noises, intense smells, bright lights, and sudden movements.

We can prepare the infant for what is coming through words and action. For example, before picking the child up, we can show the child our hands and say, "I am going to pick you up now." We

can then pick the baby up in a slow and calm way. If this is done in the same way each time, we will begin to feel the baby adjust and prepare in anticipation of being picked up.

Discovering Hands

Still lying on the back, the infant begins to develop more control over her movements. Then one day she makes a great discovery: her hands. These become her greatest plaything. This is the time for the infant to begin spending more time lying on her back exploring her movements and environment.

It is very important that we not move the child into a position that she cannot get into herself. It is tempting to want to prop our child up using pillows or a contoured chair so she can see out into the world. But when a child is put into a new position that she has not yet mastered, she loses the freedom to control her own movements. Lying on her back is the position of most competency for the infant at this stage of development. It allows her readiness to evolve.

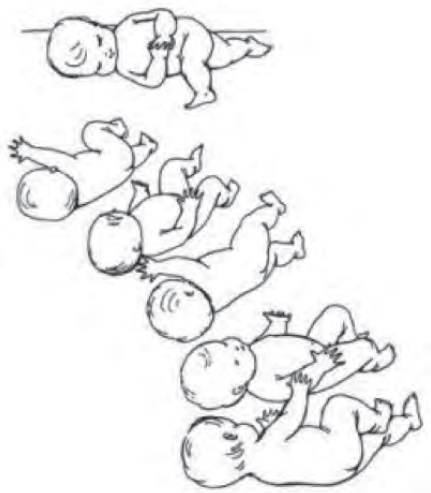


Illustration by Klara Pap for the Pikler Institute

Rolling Over

The infant progresses to slowly turning and rolling over onto his belly. This does not happen all at once, but through trial and error. He stretches and flexes his muscles this way and that. He lifts one leg and crosses it over to the other side. Then one day he turns himself all the way over. At first, his arm may

get caught underneath his body. This can be very frustrating. He will have to return to lying on his back and rest a while before trying again. When he is able to roll over, in his own time, he will have developed the skills needed to lift his head and move his limbs while lying on his stomach. He may sometimes lift his head and all four limbs at the same time, as if flying like a bird.

At this stage, it is important to give the child uninterrupted time and ample space to move. The RIE practice of “wants nothing quality time” can create a mindful moment of observation of the child. This is such a wonderful gift to both child and parent.

Crawling

Once the child can roll over and play in the prone position, she begins to develop more control over her body movements. She can easily lift and hold her head and chest off the ground. Her legs extend and develop more muscle tone. She begins to crawl with her torso on the ground, pulling herself along and using her legs like a lizard in the desert. Then she progresses to creeping on her hands and knees, and sometimes on her hands and feet, like a bear. Creeping provides important movement patterns that will have far-reaching effects on her visual and cognitive skills, as well as her continued development of movement. Infants learn eye-hand coordination skills by watching their hands as they creep across the floor. Eye-hand coordination is part of the foundation for learning to read later in life. Now the child has the ability to move across a room using a wide range of movements.



Photo taken at the Pikler Institute by Marian Reismann

The play space needs to continue to adapt as the child learns to crawl. Playing outside is a wonderful opportunity for all children, bringing with it many interesting play materials such as leaves, dirt, sticks, and rocks. It also brings grass, hills, and logs to climb over and around. Effort should be taken not to restrict movement. This is often the time that parents will consider using walkers or jumpers. Such equipment puts children in developmentally inappropriate positions and takes freedom away from their movements. It has even been suggested that the use of walkers can lead to delays in motor and mental development. Free time on the floor spent creeping, rolling, and playing while lying down allows the child to practice a wide variety of movements that help her motor skills develop naturally.

“Dr. Pikler reassured the parents that choosing to go down stairs head first is a smart choice for the young child. This way the child can see where he or she is going and use the movement of the hands, arms and elbows to stop themselves.”

~ Eileen Henry

Sitting

A child first learns to sit on his own around the same time that he learns to stand up. Lying on his stomach, he first leans on one side with his torso still on the ground. Then, using one arm, he lifts himself into a half-sitting position. Finally he sits up without using either arm as a support. With a little more practice he can sit with his legs stretched out and his arms free to explore the objects around him. A child who is given time and space to learn to sit on his own, instead of being put into a sitting position before he is ready, is often more at ease with his posture.

When the child is ready to start sitting on a stool or chair, it helps to provide furniture that allows continued ease in movement. One suggestion is to offer a low tray that the child can use as a table while sitting on the floor. Later he can graduate to a small table and chair that allow him to come and go independently. If you want to have a high chair at a family table, the type with adjustable seat and foot plates will grow with your child.

Standing and Walking

The day finally comes when the child stands by herself and takes her first step. In order to walk, she must be able to support her own weight, balance on one foot, and shift her weight from side to side. This is no easy task, but she has been practicing hard for a long time, through all the previous stages of motor development. We can support her by not distracting her, so she can concentrate on the task at hand. It is important to focus on the *quality* of each stage of development, instead of worrying about how quickly the child progresses. Babies always do what they can do and what they are ready for. ♦

“The most important thing has not been mentioned: namely that an infant’s own movements, the development of these movements, and every detail of this development are a constant source of joy to him.”

~ Emmi Pikler, MD

Vanessa Kohlhas is a faculty member at the Sound Circle Center for Arts and Anthroposophy in Seattle, Washington. She is a certified Waldorf early childhood educator and has studied at the Pikler Institute in Budapest, Hungary as well as at Resources for Infant Educators (RIE) in Los Angeles, California. Vanessa and her husband live on Whidbey Island and have three children. She has found parenting the most humbling and inspiring path of learning.

Resources:

- Compassionate Sleep Solutions, compassionatesleepsolutions.com.
- “Struggle Happens” by Eileen Henry, compassionatesleepsolutions.com/struggle-happens.

Book Review

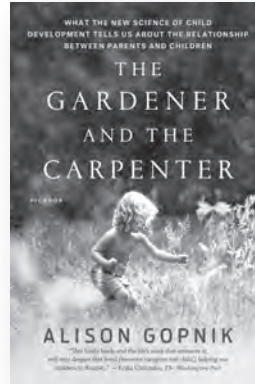
The Gardener and the Carpenter

by Alison Gopnik

Review by Nancy Blanning

Alison Gopnik, professor of developmental psychology and philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley, writes widely about early childhood development, in particular how young children learn about the world. She is a mainstream scientist; her approach is rooted in evolutionary biology. She is also an advocate for helping children grow up into flexible, innovative, creative thinkers and doers. And in this way, she offers support to the way Waldorf education sees and respects early childhood.

Gopnik's latest book, *The Gardener and the Carpenter*, is about "parenting," a fairly recently invented term for what's characterized as a goal-oriented activity. Gopnik tells us that, according to the "parenting" paradigm, "being a parent is like being a carpenter. The parent's job is 'to shape the material into a final product that will fit the scheme you had in mind to begin with.' " Carpentry is a precise craft, all its steps tightly controlled to yield a perfect end product. If applied to children, Gopnik sees, this model stifles children and makes them rigid. She asserts that parents should be less like carpenters and more like gardeners: "Instead, parents and other caregivers are designed to provide the next generation with a protected space in which they can produce new ways of thinking and acting that, for better or worse, are entirely unlike any that we would have anticipated beforehand." This picture comes from evolutionary biology as well as recent studies in child development. The image of the gardener suggests more caregiving and less controlling. The gardener creates rich soil in which the seeds can grow and flourish. The outcome is less predictable, but the surprises delight.



The most enjoyable content of this book for Waldorf-oriented readers comes when the author validates through scientific research how children develop into these flexible, adaptable, imaginative, innovative individuals who will create their own lives and mold the future. In short, the first essential element is that children need adult role models who are worthy of imitation. The children watch and then *imitate*. They take in the processes of adult work and then repeat them in their *play*. The chapters "Learning through Looking," "Learning through Listening," and "The Work of Play" are mainstream affirmations of what we know and practice with young children in our Waldorf classrooms. Reading these chapters is well worth the time. Gopnik recognizes that imitation and play are essential to healthy human development. She supports her view with mainstream research and explains how neurological studies confirm that the activities of imitation and play build the young brain. It is good to have such research to share with parents whose thinking is more receptive to mainstream science than to the insights of Waldorf education.

Gopnik celebrates the joy and wonder of the bond that can exist between children and their parents and other loving caregivers. Deep learning about self, others, and the world is achieved unconsciously through watching and listening, imitating, and playing. Gopnik urges us adults to honor this process and get out of the children's way so they can create something new—which the present and future so badly need. ♦

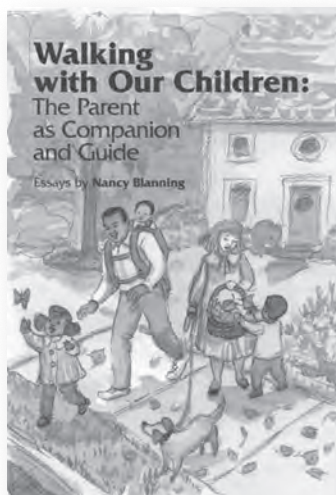
Walking with Our Children
by Nancy Blanning
Review by Lory Widmer Hess

During the ten years I served as managing editor for the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN), I had the privilege of working with and learning from many amazing early childhood educators. One of these was Nancy Blanning, a longtime member of the WECAN board and for the last several years editor of *Gateways*. I worked closely with Nancy on realizing her vision of making the journal a richer and more useful resource for Waldorf educators, and was blessed to experience her humor, her knowledge, her humility, and her deep, compassionate concern for the healthy development of the young child.

In order to fully address this concern, we must go beyond the child to the family, and indeed to our entire world, which is so tragically confused about the very question of who we are as human beings, and thus can hardly be expected to provide healthy learning experiences for our most tender and vulnerable members. But how to meet this confusion with knowledge that enlivens and inspires, rather than creating more confusion and defensiveness? How to connect the spiritual principles that alone can bring healing, with the practical needs of everyday life? It became a wish for us in the WECAN publication program to move in this direction, expanding our mission from that of purely supporting Waldorf educators, in order to reach out to a wider audience of parents, families, and others who shared a concern for young children as representatives of our human future.

It was with this goal in mind that Nancy took on the task of writing a series of articles for *LILIPOH* magazine, very short, practical essays that were grounded in her deep spiritual practice and years of experience. We didn't at the time necessarily intend to compile them into a book, not knowing how long the series would last or what direction it would take, but after several years it became clear that this was a treasure which needed to be made even more widely available.

Walking with Our Children: The Parent as Companion and Guide is a slim volume collecting



all of Nancy's articles, accompanied by beautiful monotone illustrations by Sheila Harrington. Arranged in four thematic sections—"Quality Time with Young Children," "Work and Play," "Supporting Healthy Development," and "Guiding Childhood's Inner Life"—it covers a wide range of topics including storytelling, transitions, discipline, practical work, touch and boundaries, technology, addiction, gender identity, and much more, including the question many harried parents never feel free to ask: "What about me?"

Each of these themes is touched on with incisive brevity, not superficially, but with a penetrating understanding of the central core of the matter. Each one can become a springboard for further pondering and exploration, and the many examples from Nancy's life as a teacher, therapist, mother, and grandmother give living pictures that can help readers find ways to apply her experience in their own lives. There are occasional references to Waldorf education in particular, but it is not necessary to be a Waldorf parent to benefit from the ideas presented, which arise from closely observing and learning from the nature of the young child rather than from any dogma or "system."

Nancy seeks to inspire in us a vital sense of the challenge presented to us by our children, who ask us to wake up to a new sense of responsibility, and to be willing to change ourselves in order to care for them. And to our surprise, when we do change ourselves—taking the time to do a few things well rather than many things quickly; learning to read subtle, nonverbal cues; becoming conscious of the importance of transitions and rhythm; filling ourselves with warmth, positivity, and joy—we may find that it is we ourselves who are being healed and transformed by these small messengers, who remind us of what is truly important in life.

This book is a companion and guide that can help us as parents to undertake our mighty, incredibly challenging task, for which almost none of us has any training or support. There's nothing we need more than a wise, empathetic friend, who can point out our mistakes without blame and give us the courage to try again. Thank you, Nancy, for putting yourself into this book, which I hope will become such a friend to many. ♦

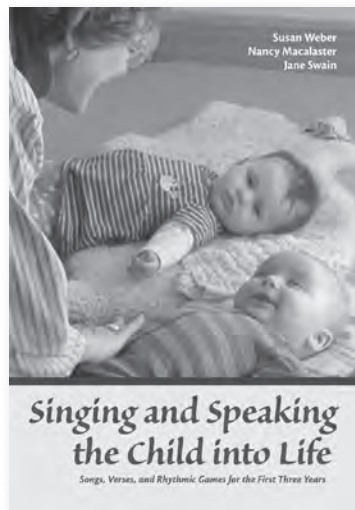
Singing and Speaking the Child into Life

by Susan Weber, Nancy Macalaster,
and Jane Swain

Review by Nancy Blanning

The first wonderful thing about this new WECAN publication is the title. As we Waldorf educators penetrate more deeply into our understanding of human incarnation, we discover that sound and speech are formative forces. These forces literally affect the shaping and forming of the human body. Beautiful, reassuring speech and gentle human singing invite the child into life and healthy incarnation. Thoughtless, superficial, hasty speech or raucous music offer no help and can even be damaging. With this truth in mind, Sophia's Hearth director Susan Weber and core faculty Nancy Macalaster and Jane Swain have created a valuable resource for the parents of young children. It also has much to offer all Waldorf early childhood educators, irrespective of what age group we may work with.

The book is arranged in three sections. The first is a rich summary of child development from birth to age three. This readable and comprehensive survey gives a warm and rich picture of sensory, motor, and speech development. Parents will find this reassuring and informative. Few resources bring this content so accessibly and with such warmth and sensitive understanding of the young child. This summary is "gold" as well for educators. No matter what our age grouping of children, it is essential that we know what stages of development the children have passed through or are journeying towards. The



quotations from Rudolf Steiner and other Waldorf authors confirm that the maturation achieved in these early years lays an essential foundation for that comes later. Literally, these first years give the grade school years their "ground to stand on."

The second section is a collection of songs, rhythmic verses and hand gesture games, lap games, and nursery rhymes. These games and rhymes are almost a dying heritage. This collection offers examples from the cultural tradition that today's young parents may have not encountered in their own childhoods but can reclaim

for their own children. There are also examples of Ellersiek hand gesture games that are new and lovely. This collection will be a good place for new parents to start building their own repertoire of songs and spoken verses.

Concluding the book is a section with supplementary articles by Jane Swain, a movement specialist and trained physical therapist. Here is a more precise explanation of early infantile reflexes, hand development, circle games, and speech. These help to take the introductory section even deeper.

This book has been long anticipated. Deep thanks to the authors for bringing their years of experience and deep consideration about what supports children toward health, confidence, and joy in living in a body here on earth. ♦

Calendar of Events

Personal and Professional Development

June 17-July 22, 2018, Hawthorne Valley Alkion Center, Ghent, NY: **Summer Course Weeks 2018**. Workshops will include “The History of Human Consciousness through Art”; “Arts Immersions – Stone Carving, Meditation & Color [Painting]”; and “Leading with Spirit: The Art of Administration and Leadership in Waldorf Schools.” For information go to the Alkion Center’s website at alkioncenter.org or call (518) 672-8008.

June 25-July 13, 2018, Sophia’s Hearth Family Center, Keene, NH: **2018 Summer Institute**. Topics include “Introduction to Waldorf Early Childhood Education”; “Creating and Strengthening Parent and Child Work in Your Community”; “Child Development” (2 parts, register individually); and “Storytelling with Young Children.” For more information visit sophiashearthteachers.org or call (603) 357-3755.

July 2-July 13, 2018, Sound Circle Center for Arts and Anthroposophy, Seattle, WA: **Summer Intensives 2018**. Topics include “The Wisdom of Fairy Tales, Storytelling, and the Therapeutic Story in Early Childhood”; and “Journey Through the Year in Verse, Song, and Seasonal Activities”. For information visit soundcircle.org, email Kimberley Hiner at information@soundcircle.org, or call (206) 925-9199.

July 9-27, 2018, the Great Lakes Waldorf Institute, Wisconsin: **Summer Intensives**. Topics include “Early Childhood: Meeting the Needs of the Young Child in the Kindergarten” and “The Inner Life of the Waldorf Teacher and Biography.” For information visit greatlakeswaldorf.org or call (414) 299-3820.

July 9-27, 2018, Rudolf Steiner Center, Toronto, Canada: **Summer Festival of Arts and Education**. Workshop topics will include “Celebrating Festivals”; “Indigenous Waldorf”; “Introduction to Early Childhood”; and “Waldorf Education Essentials.” For information visit rsct.ca, email info@rsct.ca or call (905) 764-7570.

Teacher Training

June 18-July 6, 2018, Sunbridge Institute, Chestnut Ridge, NY: **Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Education Program: Early Childhood Summer Intensive**. Subsequent Intensives will take place Fall 2018 and Spring 2019. For more information visit sunbridge.edu. Contact Anna Silber, Director of Education, with questions about eligibility at asilber@sunbridge.edu or 845-425-0055 x10

June 24-July 27, 2018, Sunbridge Institute, Spring Valley, NY: **Summer Series**. Topics cover a comprehensive spectrum for early childhood educators, including introductory pedagogy, classroom activities, handwork, practical skills, time management, and leadership. For more information visit sunbridge.edu or contact the Summer Office at summer@sunbridge.edu or 845-425-0055 x20.

June 24-July 14, 2018, Sophia’s Hearth Family Center, Keene, NH: **Birth to Seven Certificate**. The full certificate course is taught in two sections: Level I and Level II. Level I focuses on birth to three and Level II focuses on ages 4-7. The Sophia’s Hearth Teacher Education Program is recognized as a developing member of WECAN. For details visit sophiashearthteachers.org or call (603) 357-3755.

The Early Childhood Teacher Education Center at Sophia's Hearth

2018 Teacher Education Programs

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

An Introduction to Waldorf Early Childhood Education

JUNE 25 – JUNE 29

Explore the special elements that make this approach to early childhood education so meaningful and so joyful—especially the qualities of rhythm, both subtle and obvious, and how to seamlessly weave them together in the classroom.

MEGGAN GILL, JANENE PING

Creating and Strengthening Parent and Child Work in Your Community

JUNE 25 – JUNE 27

Gain insights and capacities for leading groups with parents and their infants and toddlers. This course will offer the insights of three master teachers who have been pioneers in this work.

SUSAN WEBER, NANCY MACALASTER, KATHERINE SCHARFF

Storytelling with Young Children

JULY 9 – 11

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Community Workshops

- The Living Arts with Mary O'Connell (April 13, CT)
- Developing Therapeutic Deepening with Laurie Clark (June 26-29, PA)

Online Courses

- Discipline with Loving Awareness (May 2, CEUs)
- The Living Arts (May 30, CEUs)
- Starting a Home Childcare Program (Ongoing. 25 CEUs)
- Creating Your Family Culture – An Elemental Approach (Ongoing)
- Healthy Home Rhythms (Ongoing)



See www.LifeWaysNorthAmerica.org for details

Week 1:

June 24th to June 29th

*Become a Facilitator in the Child Study:
Deepening Our Understanding of the
Young Unfolding Human Being*
With Christof Wiechert

*Grade 1: Once Upon a
Time...The Journey Begins!*
With Regine Shemroske

Grade 2: Noble Knights are We!
With Robert Lanier

*Grade 3: Living and Growing on the
Earth: Transforming Guests into Hosts*
With Shannon Wiley

*Grade 4: What are We Now?
Gods, Goddesses, Giants,
Gnomes, Human, or Animal*
With Christopher Sblendorio

*Grade 5: The Turning Point...
the Final Glory of Childhood: The
Youngster as Self-Learner at Last!*
With Patrice Maynard

*Grade 6: The World as Seen by a
Roman, Experienced by a Knight*
With Lynn Thurrell

*Grade 7: In the Face of
Indifference...discover Wonder!*
With Alison Henry

*Grade 8: Revolutions,
Discoveries, and Justice*
With Helena Niiva

*Imaging The Feminine: Veil Painting
the Beauty & Mystery of Love*
With Charles Andrade

Also Featuring:

Drawing, Painting or Clay

With Elizabeth Auer (weeks 1 & 2)

Eurythmy With Cezary Ciaglo (weeks 1 & 2)

Daily Morning Lectures

With Christof Wiechert (week 1)

Science With Roberto Trostli (week 1)

Singing and Recorder

With David Gable (week 1)

Movement With Julianna Lichatz (week 1)

Singing With Meg Chittenden (week 2)

Movement With Connie Helms (week 2)



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Week 2:

July 1st to July 6th

*Our Sensitive Children on the Autism
Spectrum: Spiritual and Practical
Approaches*
With Lakshmi Prasanna, MD

*School of Elemental Beings:
Learning to Speak with Nature*
With Karsten Massei

*Exploring Star Wisdom:
Cosmic Evolution, Biography,
and Birth Charts*
With Brian Gray

*Fundamentals of Anthroposophy:
Observation, Contemplation, and
Self Development*
With Signe Motter and the Faculty of CFA

*The Roadmap to Literacy: Creating an
Artistic and Effective Language Arts
Curriculum in the Lower Grades*
With Janet Langley

*Strengthening the Whole Class:
Foundations for Academic Progress*
With Jeff Tunkey

*The Art of Teaching Mixed and
Combined Grades: A Focus on the
Lower Grades*
With Scott Springer

*The Art of Teaching Mixed and
Combined Grades: A Focus on the
Upper Grades*
With Ian Chittenden

Projective Geometry
With Jamie York

Living Thinking
With Michael D'Aleo

*Communication and
Dispute Resolution*
With John Cunningham, Cat Gilliam,
and Leonore Russell

*Working with Polarities in Copper
and Iron: Experiencing Empathy
between Sympathy and Antipathy*
With Daniel and Colleen O'Connors

*Painting out of the Color: Pastel
Foundations in Color, Value, and Form*
With Charles Andrade

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Nature Stories and Eurythmy
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w/ Andree Ward and Lynne Stolfo

WEEK II - JUNE 24 - 29

ART IMMERSION WEEK

Stone Carving *w/ Patrick Stolfo*

Painting with Meditation &
Interaction w/Nature Processes
w/ Martina Angela Müller

FOR COURSE DESCRIPTIONS
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ALKIONCENTER.ORG

WEEK III - JULY 18-22

Leading with Spirit:
The Art of Administration and
Leadership in Waldorf Schools:
Understanding the Social and
Spiritual Foundations
w/ Lisa Mahar and Michael Soulé



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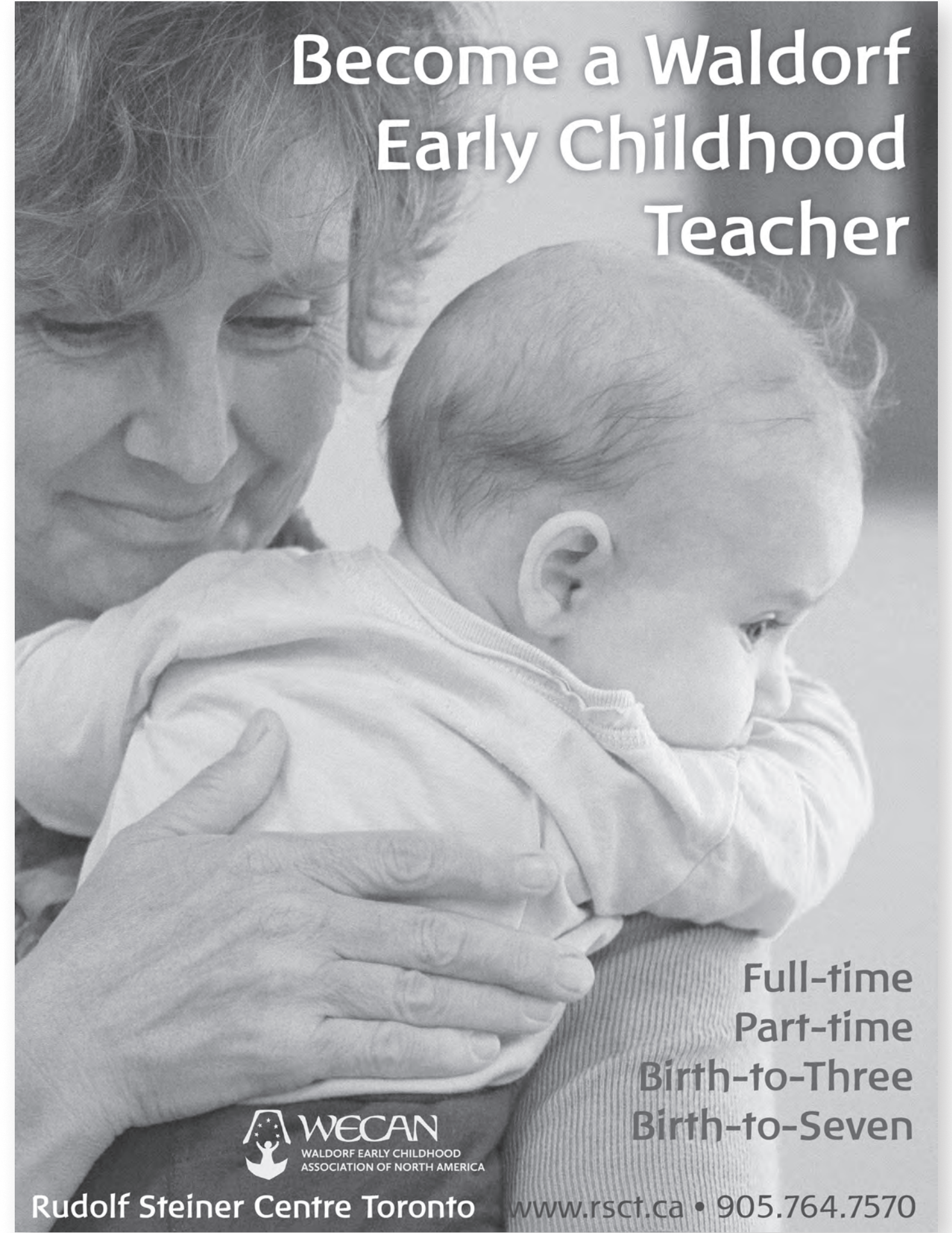
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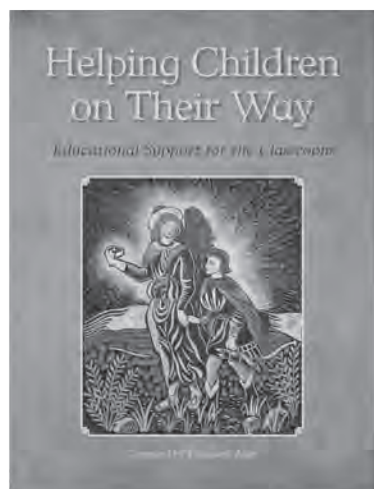
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The Journal for Steiner Waldorf
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ISSUE 33 Spring/Summer 2018

THEME: Sleep

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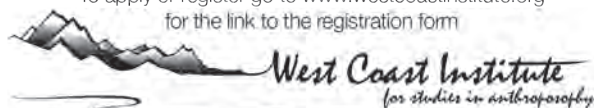
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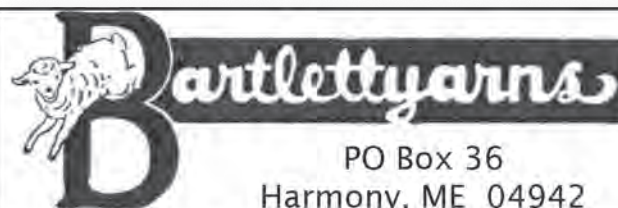




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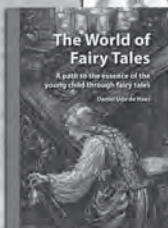
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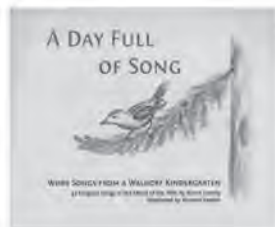


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