

ISKA News

An Update for Members and Friends

Spring/Summer 2011

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

The IASWECE, International Association for Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education is an association of Steiner Early years practitioners working together to:

- + foster co-operation among colleagues throughout the world
- + deepen and renew the work with the young child
- + foster training and continuing development opportunities for caregivers, kindergarten teachers and educators
- + undertake and support collaborative research on contemporary questions regarding the care and education of the young child
- + collaborate with parents, other educators, and the wider society about the needs of the young child
- + protect the freedom and name of Steiner and Waldorf early childhood education
- + provide resources, information and publications on Waldorf early childhood education
- + offer support – human, educational and financial – for projects seeking to foster Waldorf early childhood education throughout the world.

It was decided by the ISKA Council that we in Ireland would support the vital work of the IASWECE by an annual invoice to kindergartens for an amount of €10 per child.

We are aware that finances can be tight for many of the kindergartens, but see this as an opportunity for us all to look beyond our own situations and place ourselves within our international community. The amount could be specially fundraised for or requested from parents, or raised as you decide. Perhaps a bake sale, puppet show, advent garden collection, lunch made for the parents, raffle of a doll, Christmas cards which the children make and sell, and so on... Alternatively perhaps you would like to adopt a project for a year? This has been a very successful way of not only raising funds, but many kindergartens have sent little gifts for the centres or the children, making much more of a personal connection. Details of the initiatives being particularly supported by the IASWECE this year are attached.

Thank you
Audrey Flynn

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INVOICE TO ALL IRISH STEINER KINDERGARTENS/EARLY YEARS CENTRES

Please complete and return this slip with your IASWECE Donation/notification to the ISKA Office by **31st June 2011**

Name: _____

Number of Children: _____

Total Donation to IASWECE @ €10 per child: _____

OR

We have chosen _____

project to support and will be contacting them & IASWECE directly ourselves.

Advertisement

PUDDLEDUCKS

Making Fun of the Weather!

Steiner teachers and parents understand the value of outdoor play for children, but in our damp climate getting outside on a daily basis can be problematic if the children aren't kitted out properly for the weather. But help is at hand with the PuddleDucks range of 100% waterproof clothing for children. The PuddleDucks' Swedish designed clothes are specially suited for children's needs – being soft and lightweight they are comfy to wear, while the durable material is rip resistant and machine washable.

Available in a wide choice of colours and sizes the PuddleDucks range includes all-in-one suits, dungarees, trousers, jackets, mittens and hats, as well as waterproofs for teachers and parents too! The clothes meet the Oko-Tex Environmental Standard 100 and are free from hazardous substances such as PVC, phthalates and Teflon.

PuddleDucks provides fast delivery from their secure website, along with a helpful phone service for queries or orders.



PuddleDucks is pleased to offer parents of children attending Steiner kindergartens a 10% discount, valid on the children's waterproof range. If ordering on-line use the code STEINER10, or if ordering over the phone please advise the discount code. PuddleDucks also offers special rates to kindergartens for bulk purchases.

Tel: 021 437 2917 (Say which Steiner school your child attends to receive the discount.)
Website: www.puddleducks.ie

An Siopa Beag

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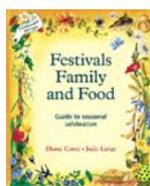
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Opening hours: Mon-Fri: 9.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m., Sat: 10.00 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.

Where Have All the Adults Gone?

The following extracts are taken from the article of the same name on Danya Millers blog – see www.danyamiller-storyteller.co.uk/Blog/Blog.html for the full article.

We live in a world where the pace of life grows ever faster; a world of instant gratification. We have a menu of fast and processed food which means that for the first time the life expectancy of the nation's children is less than that of their parents. At the same time children are driven to grow up faster and faster. The period of a child's life when they should be allowed to explore without external pressure is being eroded.

Since the 1960s there has been a school of thought that has advocated treating children as small adults whose opinion we should seek in all matters affecting them. The natural consequence is that many parents feel ruled by their offspring. From my own friends I hear statements such as, "We all know who the boss is in our house", "She won't do this, or won't eat that whatever I try."

We have put them in charge of their own lives, giving them wide choices in their daily lives: what to wear, what to eat, when to go to bed or how much television to watch, even before they know how to tie their shoelaces. Not surprisingly parents are disheartened, exhausted and along with their children they are confused. What we don't realise is that we are engaged in absent parenting.

Children need clear firm boundaries. They will, characteristically, push at these boundaries to see if they are strong and consistent. A child's early motivation is driven only by one force, to grow, to understand and conquer the environment in which they live. However, strange as it may seem as long as the boundaries are lovingly set, children want and need them. A child's playground of life needs to start small and grow with the child. Its boundaries give the child a sense of security. If a child has what seems to be unlimited choice why should it take "no" for an answer?

It is time for parents to be the adults. Children are not young adults; they are growing and maturing infants. They require very special, individual and kind treatment, they become confused if they are given a free rein; it does not serve their needs. The parent who does not guide, is absent from the child in their most vulnerable area, creating emotional insecurity.

I am advocating creative parenting. We need to act as adults when we deal with our children, although this can be difficult when most of us behave like children in all our relationships. We need to be the captain of the ship, but this does not mean that we should behave like prison officers. We have a natural authority over our children just by virtue of being their guardian. They need us for their survival; they want to be included and loved, just as we all want to be included and loved. So, a firm, but kind, "We don't do that in this family," or "Mummy would like you to do that," will have a much more powerful and positive result in the longer term than saying, "I'm going to take away your favourite toy because you won't put your coat on." Why? because the statement doesn't make sense to a child. It just serves to teach the child that they have to protect themselves, to maybe lie and cheat and watch their backs because their parents, the very people who should be protecting them, seek to punish rather than understand. Such behaviour creates scarcity not abundance, resentment not love.

Real power is displayed when instead of seeking to punish we choose to lead, to educate, to be forgiving, kind and just. Only the powerless strike a weaker person. Punishment is reactive. We need to be the teacher in the relationship and help our children to grow into self disciplined adults. Discipline cannot be imposed by punishment; it is self defeating.

Self-discipline can help to build self-esteem which in turn enables the child to grow into a healthy adult. Children will find boundaries useful, in fact essential, as long as they are consistent and lovingly set; firm, kind discipline will set them free and enable them to grow. But first we need to create a strong relationship of trust and respect within an understanding of the child's needs. They are experiencing the world through us and understanding how to respond to it. They instinctively want to learn how to survive and grow, to express their inner selves and to be all that they are meant to be. If we recognise this as we put in the boundaries, then they will understand the firm "no's" that are essential to their calm and enlightening upbringing. They will sense that we understand them and they will co-operate. In this way the child finds the limits, adapts to them and builds an inner compass that will serve them for the rest of their lives.

Caterpillars and Butterflies!!!

From Suzanne Down

An easy project with little ones is creating caterpillars with a pipe cleaner and wool. I like to use green pipe cleaners – bend them in half and turn the sharp ends under. Curl the ends to make antennae, and to hold the wool on. Wrap small tufts of coloured wool snugly around the length of the pipe cleaner. Good wool will stay put when wrapped tightly. Keep the tufts tiny, or you will have big globs of wool trying to be wrapped around and it will not stay on. I just set out small wisps of colours for the children to choose from...they can put many layers on, but small ones. That is it! Easy and lovely.



Butterflies are equally simple. Cut a pipe cleaner in half – again, I use a green pipe cleaner for this – fold it in half and bend in the sharp ends, and curl them a bit for antennae. Have fluffs of coloured wool out around 4” or so long. Let the children gather some wisps of colours, insert them in between the folded pipe cleaner and wrap the pipe cleaner around the wool... ending up with the antennae ends at the top, and the colourful woolly wings spread open wide. Some children like to use the same colours for their caterpillar and butterfly.

Now use these caterpillar and butterfly puppets with the children to tell a spring story poem.

* * *

A Caterpillar crawled to the top of a tree.
‘I think I’ll take a nap,’ said he.
So under a leaf he began to creep
To spin his cocoon and he fell asleep.

All winter long he slept in his bed,
Till spring came along one day and said,
‘Wake up, wake up little sleepyhead,
Wake up, it’s time to get out of bed.’

So he opened his eyes that sunny day.
Oh! He was a butterfly and flew away!

* * *

Tips for presenting: I use a large spring green silk over my shoulder, tucked in at the back of my neck. The butterfly can be tucked in under the folds of the silk. When the caterpillar climbs up the green tree, and spins his cocoon, he can be hidden in another fold of the silk, right next to the butterfly... this way the transformation is smooth and comes out of the same space. The pipe cleaner can be bent in a curve for the caterpillar to crawl along. The butterfly will of course fly with a light touch.

From:

http://www.waldorfinthehome.org/2006/04/spring_stories_and_craft_kits.html#more

Poems and Songs

Butterfly

Lying in the summer grass
The lazy days so quickly pass.
I watch the bugs and slugs and flowers,
Often it seems for hours and hours.
Once the sunshine made me wink,
And in the quickness of a blink,
A flower rose into the sky!
Oh my, thought I, a butterfly.
It flapped it's gentle angel wings
And danced as fairies in their rings.
Then like a feather gently fell
Into a tulip's nectar well.

Theatre ideas for "Butterfly"

For a lap theatre presentation of this poem with a butterfly finger puppet, use a delicate pastel rainbow silk on your lap as a wonderful flower garden landscape. Use the air and space for the butterfly fairy dance ... it moves lighter than air! Don't be afraid to move your own arm and body subtly and magically to give the sense of moving through the sky. Observe butterflies (and fairies) to capture the essence of their beauty in gesture. Remember, too jerky and fast will break the magic mood and is hard for children's senses to keep up with. Catch their butterfly lightness instead and move them delicately. With your free hand under the garden silk, create a tulip well for the butterfly to go into, hover on, then fly away and disappear to end this piece.

From the website

http://www.waldorfinthehome.org/2005/05/spring_summer_puppetry.html

I am the Sun

I am the Sun -
 And I bear with my might
 The earth by day, the earth by night
 I hold her fast, and my gifts I bestow
 To everything on her, so that it may grow:
 Man and stone, flower and bee
 All receive their light from me.
 Open thy heart, dear child, to me,
 That we together one light may be

Ch. Morgenstern

From the Wynstones series "Summer" book.

The Earth is Firm Beneath my Feet

The earth is firm beneath my feet
 The sun shines bright above
 And here I stand so straight and strong
 All things to know and love

Finger Play

Here is a beehive
 Where are all the bees?
 Hidden inside
 Where no one can see
 Here they all come
 1-2-3-4-5 buzzzzzzzzz – They're alive.



Rinka ranka rosy ray.

Rinka ranka rosy ray.
 Welcome, welcome, golden day.
 I can skip and I can hop.
 I can turn and I can stop.
 I can dance and I can sing,
 With my friends we form a ring.

Goodbye Circle

Who will come to my wee ring?
 My wee ring
 My wee ring
 Who will come to my wee ring?
 And make it a little bit bigger?



Clean-up Song

I met a little dusty gnome
 Who says it's time to clean our home
 Clean our home
 Clean our home

Crannóg na Leanaí

Congratulations to Crannóg na Leanaí Kindergarten on winning the overall first prize in the St Patrick's Day Parade in Gorey, Co Wexford, with their train carrying flower and cape bedecked children. A lovely photo of the day can be found on the kindergarten's web site www.crannogkindergarten.com.

Transforming Ireland

Funded by the Irish Government
 under the National Childcare Investment Programme



A garden for child-hood!

Report from Ulrike Farnleitner ISKA National Development Officer and Siolta Co-ordinator

When I came to the kindergarden I peeped over the wooden fence and saw little coloured hats on little children dressed in rain gear and Wellie boots busily occupied by what was clearly immensely serious work. Some were digging in the sandpit, some were dragging water in heavily filled watering cans into the sandpit, filling the pond, or was it the Irish sea? Together they tried to create a bridge and an island, a ferry to sail. Lots of conversation was going on, attempts were made, ideas tried out and were self regulated by reality. How could a board just stand up by itself? So much learning, oh my goodness! If I had to write it all up as learning outcomes it would fill pages and pages.

While seven or eight children were working out their ideas and imaginations on the ground I walked through the garden. Passing a tree I was suddenly greeted by two boys sitting high in the branches with some ropes hanging down and a few wooden boards artfully fixed around the trunk. "We are pirates and are sailing far away," I was told. All of a sudden I was looking into the far distance as my own childhood memories took me by surprise. I was playing in Nature with my brothers, having similar adventures and remembering vividly how real it all was for us at that time.

So here I am again in a garden of wonder and surprises, fully seeing why preschool is called "kindergarten" – the garden with children. Then a little girl with the most shining blue eyes ever came towards me, "Who are you? Do you want to play with me?" "Oh yes, I am a visitor, I'd like to play." Off we went, passing the next garden corner where two boys were sitting quietly and observing a robin coming and going. Quietly we left them, and arrived in the little girl's den. Here she had gathered lots of grass and was trying to fix the blades together somehow. "I am helping the birds to make nests for their babies," she explained eagerly. "Can you help me? It is really difficult!" Who had shown the child to care for Mother Nature and feel this deep connection with the creatures on earth? Here was I, trying, together with a five-year-old, to be as clever as the birds.

In the meantime another girl dressed in colourful outdoor gear had come by, joining in, and a conversation about eggs and sizes started. "The goose eggs are really big and heavy. Our teacher brought some the other day. But my friend's granny has brought quail eggs, they are so teeny." Lots of laughter. "My daddy likes Easter time and now that we have to bring blown eggs, he can eat more scrambled eggs than ever," again laughter. "You know, I like chocolate cake, and to make that you need eggs too," I said to mutual nodding of heads. In no time we were talking about recipes and the children were well able to tell me the other ingredients of chocolate cake, how to grate the chocolate and stir the dough, how to bake it and smell it and enjoy it! "In the kindergarden we do not get a very big piece, but we always get a gnome's portion on top of ours!"

Suddenly some children started racing through the garden, followed by the younger ones trying to be as fast and as strong as the bigger ones. Again a vivid childhood memory came to me: how long did it take me to be able to catch my brother who was a few years older and therefore always in front of me? Would I ever be able to catch him? And how that felt ...

But I had not very long to consider as a smiling teacher, also dressed in rain jacket, hat and boots, appeared, taking care of the younger ones and involving them in a little race over the green meadow to catch her. How the little ones enjoyed that! Running, stumbling, laughing and falling down, catching – what a lovely game! The older ones came back and it was like magic: suddenly the younger ones had the strength to catch them, or did the older ones run more slowly? So much laughter and playing together. How wonderful.

The saying "To be healthy you have to laugh heartily three times a day" is very well achieved in this setting. They more than reach target, I can assure you!

An adult asking a 4-year-old roaring and zooming through the garden: "Are you pretending to be a dragon?"

The 4-year-old indignantly: "I am not pretending, I AM a dragon!"

Kangarobabies



Babywearing instruction and advice from Ireland's only certified Babywearing instructor and sling vendor. Try out before buying- Slings for Hire
www.kangarobabies.ie



Views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are the views and opinions of the authors of the articles themselves and are included for your interest and information. They are not necessarily the views or opinions of ISKA, its staff or members.

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