

ISKA News

An Update for Members and Friends

Spring 2009

IASWECE

The International Association for Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education is a world association for educators who, working with the pedagogical ideas of Rudolf Steiner, are devoted to the task of meeting the needs of all young children for protection, security, healthy nourishment and loving human beings to nurture and care for them so that they may grow and flourish. The goal of the IASWECE is to offer research, education, training, exchange of experience, and financial and human support to training centres, kindergartens and child care centres that work on the basis of these educational ideals. Some of the work planned for 2009 includes:

- + Support for kindergarten teacher training in ChengDu, near the centre of the recent devastating earthquake, for almost a hundred trainees from all over China.
- + Support for teacher training in Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia, Ukraine and the Czech Republic, where, as in many parts of the world, Steiner educators face growing political pressure for the development of early academic and cognitive abilities at the cost of social, emotional and creative capacities. Further information can be found at www.iaswece.org.

This work of course requires financial support. The way we in Ireland contribute is by ISKA invoicing kindergartens annually €10 per kindergarten child. When all payments are received, we forward one payment to the IASWECE.

The amount collected last year was €1,580, for which I would like to pass on the thanks of IASWECE. Kindergartens may expect their invoices later in the year. If, however, you would like to assist in cutting back on administration costs, please consider this your invoice and forward your contribution to the ISKA office (cheques payable to ISKA) and a receipt will be issued promptly. Individuals are of course also welcome to contribute to the work by donating in the same way.

ISKA Email List

ISKA maintains an email list for the circulation of information relevant to early years care in Ireland, such as research, articles, workshops, talks, events etc. To join the list please email info@steinerireland.org with "Subscribe" in the subject line.

Your Newsletter

This is a newsletter for our members. Please do send me for inclusion in the newsletter:

- + information on events
- + songs or verses
- + articles
- + a few paragraphs about your kindergarten so we can all get to know a bit more about each other.

Information can be posted or emailed to the ISKA office. Newsletters are produced in March, May, September and November.

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Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association

Clai House
Millpool Road
Mountshannon
Co. Clare

Tel:
061 927944
Email:
info@steinerireland.org

Head, Heart and Hands Weekend Workshops

A series of weekend workshops on Understanding our Children from a Steiner/Waldorf Perspective due to take place in Dublin this spring, will now take place this spring and autumn.

The first weekend – an Introductory course for people wanting to understand about the young child and the foundations of subsequent human development – will be held on March 20th/21st at the Sanctuary, Stanhope Street, Dublin 1. The subsequent weekends will take place in the autumn.

To request further information, email steinerireland@gmail.com or phone Sharon on 086 8164983.

Galway Steiner Steiner Na Gaillimhe

A group of people have come together in Galway City to work towards starting a kindergarten there. They have been meeting twice a week: on Wednesdays in a local community space where children and parents have cooking, arts and crafts, songs and a lot of fun, and on Thursdays at the City library, where the focus is more on storytelling but with other elements involved.

Approximately ten children have been involved over the last few months with the ages ranging from one to six.

There is now potentially a space available in which a kindergarten could start so the group is planning a public meeting and the formation of a committee to move this plan forward. Anyone interested in more information on the initiative please contact musicalanne@gmail.com.

Inishowen Kindergarten

We would like to take this opportunity to offer our best wishes for a speedy recovery to Christine Crawford, kindergarten teacher in Inishowen Kindergarten in Donegal who was injured in a crash on icy roads in February. We are glad to hear from Kathleen O'Hara Farren that Christine is recovering well.

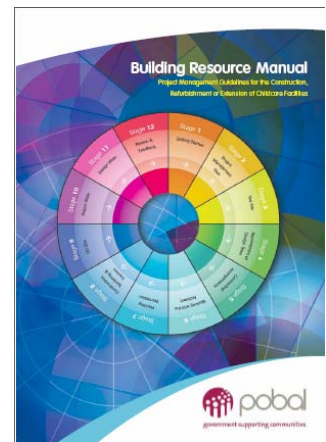
It has been a setback for the ten or so families involved in the kindergarten, but with their help it has been decided to turn the difficulty into an opportunity. They have stopped renting their premises and will spend the next term out of doors, exploring the possibility of having an outdoor kindergarten in the future. We wish them all the best with this and look forward to hearing how they get on.

Building Resource Manual

Pobal has recently published *The Building Resource Manual – Project Management Guidelines for the Construction, Refurbishment or Extension of Childcare Facilities*.

This 82-page manual is specially tailored to support voluntary committees that are embarking on a community building project and aims to provide the tools for effective project management.

ISKA has available a number of copies, which can be requested from the ISKA office. The publication is also available to download from the Pobal website www.pobal.ie/childcare.



Transforming Ireland

Funded by the Irish Government
under the National Childcare Investment Programme 2006–2010



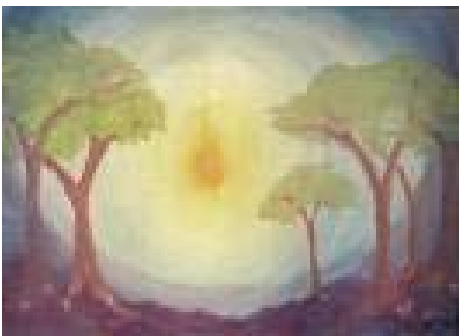
Spring Songs

This selection of Spring songs were found on
<http://musiced.about.com/od/lessonsandtips/a/springsongs.htm>

Pictures are from
<http://images.google.com/images?hl=en&lr=&ie=ISO-8859-1&q=%22Waldorf+school%22+art>

Rain on the Grass

Rain on the green grass,
Rain on the tree,
Rain on the house top.
and Rain on me.



Plant a Little Seed

I plant a little seed in the cold, cold ground
Out comes the golden sun, big and round
Down come the raindrops soft and slow
Up comes the flower grow, grow, grow.



The Gardening Song

First you take a shovel, a rake, and a hoe
Plant a little garden, Plant seeds in a row
Water them and weed them through all the summer heat
And then you'll have some flowers or vegetables to eat.



Daffodils Fingerplay

One little daffodil had nothing much to do,
Out popped another one, then there were two.
Two little daffodils were smiling at a bee,
Out popped another one, then there were three.
Three little daffodils were growing by the door,
Out popped another one, then there were four.
Four little daffodils were glad to be alive,
Out popped another one, then there were five.
Five little daffodils wearing golden crowns,
Dancing in the breeze in their green satin gowns.

Working With Plant Dyes In Kindergarten

Sitting by an outdoor fire on a grey November day, five pots of coloured fleece simmering and with a group of kindergarten children gathered close around me, I felt warmed through – by the fire’s radiant heat and the children’s close attention. The Life Process of Warming was present.

The small wood fire burning out of doors is archetypal, as one small child reminded me: “This fire is ancient.” Working with the elemental forces of fire, water and the alchemy that happens when these are combined with plant materials and sheep fleece is a deeply warming and enlivening experience. The feeling that lingered after a morning spent dyeing fleece on an outdoor fire was of inner calm, mellow warmth and clear perception. I became aware of a deep and even rhythm in my breath. There was a feeling of physical strength and of being fully present. What forces are at work here?

The plant materials are living substances: leaves, berries or bark; holding the pigments are expressions of the plant’s etheric force. It is the living substance that yields the colour – decayed plants produce no pigment.

The quality of water used is important, too. Fresh soft water produces the best colours and a flowing stream, well-water, or clean rainwater will have a stronger life force than chlorinated tap water.

The kindling and logs gathered, sawn and dried are transformed through fire into heat and ash. Choosing firewood from the log-pile daily forged a relationship with wood through the senses of touch, sight and smell.

I developed an unconscious relationship, too, with the fleece. Getting to know its qualities as you would a new friend.

These living relationships stayed alive in me during the weeks spent working on plant dyes and for some time afterwards. Bringing children into a close experience of all these elements and processes is very nourishing. It is life enhancing. It strengthens their etheric body which in turn builds their physical body. This is quintessentially the work of any kindergarten.

The element of time, present in any process, was particularly noticeable. Sheep fleece is sensitive

to sudden changes in temperature, so the dyepot must be brought to temperature slowly, and later cooled slowly before the fleece is rinsed in cold water. A fire that blazes too quickly will damage the fleece and produce poor colour. Letting the process take its time while still fitting the work within the kindergarten’s daily rhythm, was a valuable lesson for me.

For the children, waiting by a slowly simmering pot sometimes alternated with creative play in the garden. One child wondered if it would work at all as the chestnut dyepot simmered and simmered and simmered! But the slowness of the process is ideally suited to kindergarten children, allowing them to breathe into the process, staying within the dream consciousness so appropriate for them. It is not a hurried activity, which could be more wakeful of them. Often, stirring small “sample dyepots” was enough to engage them while the main pot simmered on the fire.

Tending the fire by feeding it more firewood kept them connected to the process. When the dyed fleece was cooled there were many hands eager to rinse it, to hold it, to see the transformation of colour! This taught teamwork and leadership skills as the children decided whose turn it was to fill the watering-can with fresh water, who would rinse and squeeze the fleece and who would empty the basin after the rinsing.

The rainbow of colours (except for blue) that emerged over the weeks was a joy to behold. The colours shone with light yet held a harmony of their own like a musical scale. From the gathering of the leaves or other plant material, through the drying then soaking, to the simmering and straining, then finally simmering with fleece, the children took a journey through both an inner and outer landscape. They followed the path of a very old craft leading them to a new reverence and awe for the world of nature and our relationship to it.

Linda Grant is a professional artist and trained kindergarten teacher working as artist-in-residence at An Grianan Kindergarten, Raheen Wood Steiner National School, Tuamgraney, Co. Clare. She wishes to thank Marguerite Devane and all the kindergarten staff for their support in this project, which is part-funded by Clare Co. Co. Artists Assistance Scheme. Further reading: The Dyers’ Manual, by Jill Godwin.

Available from the ISKA Office

Childhood's Garden Shaping everyday life around the needs of young children

Book and DVD by Helle Heckmann
Price €20.00

These look at how daily life is created and developed in Nøkken Kindergarten with children aged 1–7 years.

The Little Ones

DVD by Helle Heckmann (duration 60 mins)
Price €14.00

This DVD follows on from *Childhood's Garden* and centres around life in Nøkken Kindergarten, which seeks to provide a daily life based on the needs and development of the young child. Pedagogical insight, working with parents, physical and social development, introduction of new children and the transition from nursery child to kindergarten child is described in detail, with emphasis on these fundamentals: that the adult is the most important role model for the child, and that a rhythmical daily life is a pre-requisite for healthy individual development.

This DVD is suitable as teaching material.

HELLE HECKMANN is a Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten Teacher from Copenhagen, Denmark and founder of Nøkken, her 21 year old program for children aged 1-7yrs, where they spend most of their time out doors. Helle is active in teacher education throughout the world, visiting classrooms and supporting teachers in North and South America, and Europe. Her books, "Nøkken" and the newly published book and dvd "Childhood's Garden" and dvd "The Little Ones" have inspired many early childhood teachers.

Order Form

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Email:.....

	Copies	Total
<i>Childhood's Garden</i>	€.....
<i>The Little Ones</i>	€.....
Postage €1.50 1st item, €1 further items to max €4.50		€.....
TOTAL ENCLOSED		€.....

Please make cheques payable to ISKA

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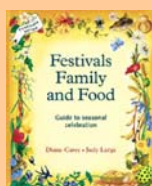
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Tel/Fax 00 353 61 375770

Website: www.ansiopabeag.com

Opening hours: Mo-Fri: 9:30 am – 5:30 pm, Sat: 10:00 am – 5:30 pm

The Irish Steiner Kindergarten
Association and
Galway Steiner/Steiner na Gaillimhe
Kindergarten Initiative Group

Present

a Workshop

with

Grace Burton

**Creative Parenting of Children
under Seven Years**

With an emphasis on child development.



The workshop will also include wool felting as an artistic activity and serve as an introduction to Steiner Education.

Sunday 29th March 2009
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

**above Ard Bia at Nimmo's beside
Spanish Arch, Galway City**

Cost: €50 (ISKA members €25 – it is possible to become a member on booking) *to include all materials*

Lunch available in Ard Bia, *cost not included*

Bookings: Gabrielle, tel: 086 151 4492

followed by **A PUBLIC MEETING** at 4.15 p.m. to form a committee to work towards starting a Steiner Kindergarten in Galway City. All interested parties are welcome.

Grace Burton is a founding member of Morning Star Kindergarten. She is a kindergarten teacher and experienced craft workshop facilitator.

The Irish Steiner Kindergarten
Association

Presents

a Workshop

with

Ulrike Farnleitner and
Linda Grant

Table Puppets

Make simple figures suitable for a nature table, puppet play or imaginative play



Picture for illustration purposes only.

Saturday 21st March 2009
9.30 a.m. for 10 a.m. start – 4 p.m.

**at Crannog na Leanai, Ballymoney,
Gorey, Co Wexford**

Cost: €50 (ISKA members €25 – it is possible to become a member on booking) *to include all materials*

Bring food for a bring and share lunch

Bookings: Cathy Lee, tel: 087 625 4863

Suitable for childcare workers, parents, grandparents, students and children over 10 years.

No experience necessary.

Ulrike Farnleitner is a kindergarten teacher and Linda Grant is an artist. Both love working with natural materials and sharing how easy it is to create simple figures to illustrate a story or decorate a nature table.