

# ISKA News

An Update for Members and Friends

Summer 2009

## Childminders

ISKA would like to offer our expertise and support not only to kindergartens, but also to childminders who are looking after children using a Steiner approach. We can offer you the opportunity to be on our website and avail of the support of the advisory service. We do get occasional requests from people looking for Steiner-based childminders.

For more information on being a Registered Childminder, see the website of Childminding Ireland at [www.childminding.ie](http://www.childminding.ie).

For information on the support available from ISKA contact [info@steinerireland.org](mailto:info@steinerireland.org).

## Morning Star Kindergarten

Morning Star Kindergarten has raised its profile recently with a mention in the Mayo County Childcare Committee Newsletter in March as well as a piece in the "Reports from Kindergartens" section of the current edition of *Kindling Journal*.

Morning Star Kindergarten and Toddler Group was established in 2002. It is based in the beautiful surroundings of Temple House estate in south Co. Sligo. They have 15 children aged 3-4 with a toddler group of 2-3 year olds.

Their website is:

[www.morningstarkindergarten.com](http://www.morningstarkindergarten.com)

## Reducing Your Childcare Costs

Co Limerick Childcare Committee has available a leaflet "Reducing your childcare costs – A guide for parents", which explains the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) to parents.

For a copy, contact 061 600918 or [info@clcc.ie](mailto:info@clcc.ie), [www.clcc.ie](http://www.clcc.ie).

Check you are on the mailing list for your local Childcare Committee and those of neighbouring counties where relevant. CCCs are a valuable source of both local and national information for the childcare sector.

## ISKA Conference

The date for the ISKA conference has been set for Saturday 10 October 2009. The theme and speaker are to be confirmed, but please put the date in your diary. The venue is Camphill Community Dunshane, Co. Kildare.



<http://www.buzzle.com/img/articleImages/5582-9.jpg>

## Contents

Childminders.....	1
Morning Star Kindergarten .....	1
Reducing Your Childcare Costs.....	1
ISKA Conference.....	1
Outdoor Kindergartens .....	2
Making Play Stands.....	2
Training Courses.....	2
IASE Update.....	2
ISKA Early Childhood Education Programme .....	3
Learning Support Teacher Training.....	3
Master's Degree in Steiner Early Years Education.....	3
University of Plymouth.....	4
Book Review:	
Janni Nichol: <i>Bringing the Steiner Waldorf approach to your Early Years Centre</i> .....	4
Verse and Story	
Summer Rain.....	4
I Can Turn Myself.....	4
Little Brother.....	4
Charter for Play .....	4
Free Pre-School Year .....	5
Extract from the ECCE Scheme Guidelines .....	5
Workshops 2009 .....	8

## Irish Steiner Kindergarten Association

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## Outdoor Kindergartens

The importance for children of spending lots of time outdoors has always been a cornerstone of the Steiner kindergarten and this is increasingly being recognised across the early years care spectrum. The so-called Forest Kindergarten/Nursery movement is growing worldwide, both within and outside the Steiner Waldorf approach. The following description of Forest Kindergartens comes from the blog <http://mothers-guide-how-to-be-perfect.blogspot.com/2008/02/forest-kindergarten.html>.

Children age 3-6 spend all their time outdoors 4-6 hours daily, all-season long, in the forest. No classroom, no books, no manufactured toys and no such thing as bad weather, Rain or snow. The idea is that the forest can be the classroom and is a natural way for children to discover the world around them. The forest helps them learn to identify with nature, and is said to even support the immune system and physical and mental health. Children gain self-confidence and good balance, running, jumping, climbing and hiking. Playing with sticks, digging in dirt, looking for frogs or climbing a tree, the children learn to enjoy the world around them. Many different variations of this education exist, like Wandergruppe a hiking group and SCHUB-Schule auf dem Bauernhof, "school on the farm".

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a philosopher from the 1700s said, "The child will not enjoy a book about a river or a mountain if he has never actually climbed a mountain or looked for tadpoles in a river."

The Secret Garden outdoor nursery in north east Fife, UK, was described by the Guardian newspaper thus:

When the Secret Garden nursery opens next autumn, the children will have none of the games and equipment seen in a normal suburban nursery: plastic see-saws, cushioned vinyl floors and sterilised building blocks. Their curriculum will be devoted to nature walks, rearing chickens, climbing trees, "mud play" and vegetable gardening. Their playground will be the forest, and their shelter a wattle and daub "cob" building with outdoor toilets.

The children Ms Bache cares for are oblivious to the weather, she said, even sub-zero temperatures.

"We've recently had two full days with seven hours of solid rain, and the kids don't bat an eyelid. As soon as it rains heavily here, there's a stream comes down the wee road outside – they build dams on it. They loved it.

"When it gets particularly cold we light a bonfire and play running around games. In February we were out all day in minus six and the children were perfectly happy. I thought: 'If I can stay out in this, we can stay out in anything.'"

The full article can be read on:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2006/oct/30/childrenservices.earlyyearseducation>.

For a list of research documents on Forest Schools compiled by the Forest Education initiative in the UK see:

<http://www.foresteducation.org/country.php?ctry=u>

See also:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/3357232/Waldkindergarten-the-forest-nurseries-where-children-learn-in-Natures-classroom.html>

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## Making Play Stands

The following link is to a page with free plans for making play stands:

<http://atgcarving.com/freeplaystandplans.aspx>

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## Training Courses

### IASSE Update

The Irish Association for Steiner Education was formed out of a series of meetings in 2008 looking at the growing need for Steiner Waldorf Teacher Training in Ireland. The Board was elected in April 2008 and currently has 10 members representing a wide range of educational settings and experience.

The question of Steiner Waldorf Class Teacher Trainings is currently under discussion. If you would like to be kept up to date on the Class Teacher Training situation, please send your request and contact details to the ISKA office.

For information on other trainings, see below.

## **ISKA Early Childhood Education Programme**

**Foundation Year** beginning September 2009 now enrolling.

**Two year Kindergarten Teacher Training** beginning September 2009 now enrolling.

It is essential to have completed the Foundation Year or its equivalent to enter the Kindergarten Teacher Training. Students from previous Foundation Years are welcome to join this new group in September 2009.

### **Introduction**

This three year part-time training course in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education is offered in response to an increasing demand in Ireland for trained kindergarten teachers and a growing interest in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education more generally.

### **Foundation Year**

The Foundation Year is designed as an orientation year for the kindergarten training but it also stands alone as an introductory course in anthroposophical studies. It will be of interest to those looking for an introduction to the work of Rudolf Steiner combined with a foundation course in the arts. It will also serve as a necessary foundation for those wishing to undertake a variety of anthroposophically based training courses in bio-dynamic agriculture, curative education, class teaching, etc. For further information about the Foundation Year, please contact the Course Directors.

### **Course Structure**

The course will take place in Co. Clare. There are eight weekend sessions throughout the year and three five-day sessions during school holidays. All three years will have largely similar structures with the following elements:

- + Guided study, including attendance at an evening study group. Where possible study groups will be established in different localities for this purpose.
- + Weekend sessions. There will be eight weekend sessions throughout the year, each starting at 7.30 p.m. on Friday and ending at 5.30 p.m. on Saturday.
- + Five-day residential sessions. In the course of the year there will be three longer residential sessions coinciding with school holidays in October/

November, April, and June/July. Each session starts at 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday and finishes at 5.00 p.m. on Saturday.

### **Kindergarten Teacher Training: Years One and Two**

These two years focus on child development in the first seven years and will prepare students to work within a Steiner Waldorf kindergarten. Themes include: creative play, simple crafts, storytelling, puppetry, seasonal festivals, practical work in the kindergarten, child observation, health and parenting issues, work with the angels and inner development. These two years also include a minimum of eight weeks' observation and practice in Steiner Waldorf kindergartens.

Entry to second year is dependent on successful completion of the foundation year or equivalent.

For more details on the course content, dates and times, registration etc., contact the Course Directors at [training@steinerireland.org](mailto:training@steinerireland.org).

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### **Learning Support Teacher Training**

The Healing Education And Resource Teaching (HEART) Course, the only English language Steiner Waldorf-based learning support training of its type in Europe, is now completing its first three-year cycle. A new cycle is scheduled to begin in September, 2010. Over the intervening year, HEART will offer a number of wonderful weekend workshops, open to the public. For more information, contact [Jonathan.Angus@gmail.com](mailto:Jonathan.Angus@gmail.com)

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### **Master's Degree in Steiner Early Years Education**

The Institute of Technology, Sligo is partnering with ISKA to develop an MA programme in Steiner Waldorf Early Years Education, the first of its kind in Ireland. This course will be a combination of face-to-face lessons (in either County Clare, Sligo or Limerick), online work, and practical experience in a Steiner Waldorf childcare setting. It will begin in September of 2010. For more information, contact [Jonathan.Angus@gmail.com](mailto:Jonathan.Angus@gmail.com).

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## University of Plymouth

The University of Plymouth, Devon, UK offers the following courses:

- + a foundation degree in Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Education & Care as a full-time or part-time course.  
Contact Janet Klaar on +44 1384 352177, or email [janet.klaar@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:janet.klaar@plymouth.ac.uk).
- + a BA (Hons) degree in Steiner Waldorf Education – an accredited course for class teachers.  
Contact [education.enq@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:education.enq@plymouth.ac.uk).

Also see

[www.steiner-teacher.org/foundation.htm](http://www.steiner-teacher.org/foundation.htm)  
[www.plymouth.ac.uk/education](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/education)

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## Book Review

I often get queries from people or groups about what is needed to set up a Steiner kindergarten, and in response I send them the ISKA *Starting a Steiner Kindergarten* booklet, which deals primarily with the organisational steps required and support available. While researching more practical information I could include in the booklet, relating to the setting up and kitting out of the kindergarten room/building itself, I came

across a book by Janni Nichol: *Bringing the Steiner Waldorf approach to your Early Years Centre* (ISBN 1843124335).

If you have ever wondered what Steiner Education is, where it came from, and how it can be used with young children in your setting, this book will answer all your questions and more. It includes:

- + an overview of child development from a Steiner perspective
- + an explanation of movement-based learning, imitation and example, reverence, protection of the senses and much more
- + ideas for activities, crafts, truly creative play, singing, music and movement, storytelling and puppetry; the outdoors, festivals and seasons
- + advice on parent and child groups, parenting, and working with parents.

While it is written from a UK perspective and refers to UK education requirements/curriculum etc., it is none the less a very good book to give an overview both pedagogically and practically of the what, why and how of a Steiner kindergarten.

*Audrey Flynn*  
*ISKA National Co-ordinator*

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

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## Verse and Story

Once again thanks to the Archive of The Clearing House Newsletter for the following verses and story (from 1978!) The Clearing House was a subscription newsletter written by

and for Waldorf teachers. Over the years, contributions covering a wide range of topics and classroom experience appeared. As this is an archive some of the material is somewhat dated. It can be accessed on <http://www.waldorflibrary.org/ClearingHouse.htm>.

### Summer Rain

The summer's warm showers are falling like mist  
My face and my hands by their soft touch are kissed  
The dry thirsty ground becomes fragrant and cool  
On every green leaf lies a small shining pool.  
Earth blossoms again,  
I do love the rain.

### I Can Turn Myself

I can turn myself and turn myself  
And curl up when I will,  
I can stand on tiptoe, reaching high  
Or I can hold myself quite still.  
I can be as small as a tiny seed  
Or grow tall as a tall, tall tree.  
I can be as wide as the whole wide world  
Or I can just be me.

### Little Brother

Quite by accident I found the perfect ambassador between school and home. The children often bring a lovely shell, flowers, or some special treat to share and I wanted to acknowledge these thoughtful gifts in some way. So I made a little pouch for a certain lively little purple dwarf whom we call Little Brother. The children help me write little "thank-you" messages, sprinkled with hearts and kisses, which are then placed in the pouch with Little Brother. That evening the child who brought in the treasure takes Little Brother home for an "adventure", to return in the morning. More often than not there is a delightful message for

us, and sometimes even a pouchful of raisins or nuts to enjoy at snack time.

Parents seem to enjoy this little game as much as we, as is evidenced by the care with which they return the pouch, sometimes with drawings or even a colourful original little poem. It serves to give them a peep into the kindergarten and of course Little Brother's adventures ("He helped me scramble the eggs" or "He jumped into the wash basket!") help to bring the home into our circle.

Ella Baker  
*Detroit Waldorf School*

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## Charter for Play

*Children play best:*

*When adults are watchful but not intrusive, when safe ground lends courage to their discoveries and adventures.*

*When their trust in life is whole, when they welcome the unknown, and are fearless.*

*When the world is shared with them. When there are places and spaces they can make their own.*

*When their games are free from adult agendas and when their transformations require no end product.*

*When their senses are directly engaged with Nature and the elements.*

*When they are free to become gatherers, makers, and world creators in their own time and in their own ways.*

*When they can play with others and make relationships.*

*When they can play alone, be solitary and private.*

*When they can become new selves through their play with others and in their own imaginings.*

*When they can reveal themselves, their joys, sufferings, and concerns, without fear of ridicule, and when mystery and imagination are not denied by fact.*

*Sally Jenkinson, from The Genius of Play, Hawthorn Press*

## Free Pre-School Year

On 7 April the Government announced a new free pre-school year in early childhood care and education, known as the **Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE)**, for children aged between 3 years 3 months and 4 years 6 months.. This will replace the Early Childcare Supplement (ECS). (The Community Childcare Subvention Scheme (CCSS) will remain in place to provide financial support in accessing childcare for low income families.)

There is a helpline for parents and childcare providers to ask questions about the operation of the new scheme, on tel. 1890 30 30 39.

The following is extracted from the Scheme Guidelines as at 13 May 2009. The Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions about the scheme are updated on an ongoing basis, so for updates since this date see the website of the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, [www.omcya.ie](http://www.omcya.ie).

### Extract from the ECCE Scheme Guidelines

The free Pre-School Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme will be introduced from January 2010. Some of the details may be amended over the coming weeks, however, final details regarding the terms and conditions governing the scheme and details of how to apply will be issued to all pre-school services by early June 2009 and will also be posted on the OMCYA's website and will also be available from City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs).

Services must be notified to the HSE as a pre-school service and have a satisfactory level of compliance with the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No. 2) Regulations 2006.

*During the period January/August 2010, it is expected that registration with the IMEB will be accepted as meeting this requirement.*

*Satisfactory compliance with the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No. 2) Regulations 2006 for the purposes of acceptance into the ECCE will be determined by the OMCYA in consultation with the CCCs and the HSE Pre-School Inspectorate.*

*Compliance with the Child Care Regulations will include adhering to the appropriate staff to children ratios, that is 1 staff member for every 8 children, in the case of a full- or part-time service and 1 staff member to every 10 children, in the case of a playschool sessional service. Where the number of children enrolled in a*

*service's pre-school year does not exceed the ratio for 1 staff member, the service will be required to have a second competent adult available.*

Services will generally be required to have a minimum enrolment of 8 children in their pre-school year. Subject to compliance with all other contractual requirements, exceptions will be considered in the case of:

- services which have an enrolment of at least 8 children but, for good reason, only 3 or more are in their pre-school year and the remainder will be eligible for a pre-school year in the following year, and
- smaller services which are considered to be appropriate settings for delivery of the pre-school year but, for good reason, have an enrolment of not less than 5 children in their pre-school year.

Services must be trading as either a sole trader, a partnership or a limited liability company and must demonstrate tax compliance by providing an up to date Tax Clearance Certificate.

Services must agree to provide an appropriate educational programme for children in their pre-school year, which adheres to the principles of Siolta, the national framework for early years care and education.

Services will be supported in meeting this requirement through the assistance of Siolta Co-ordinators, funded for this purpose, and by their local CCC.

Services must agree to accept assistive visits and advice from Siolta Co-ordinators and staff of the local CCC.

In addition to meeting the requirements regarding staff ratios, as provided for under the Child Care Regulations, the pre-school year Leader should have a qualification in early childhood care and education at level 5 in the National Framework of Qualifications. This can equate to a FETAC accredited major award at level 5 or equivalent. (Within a reasonable time a qualification at level 6 in the National Framework of Qualifications will be the required qualification for staff in this position).

*In recognition of the complex nature of educational attainment of staff within the early childhood care and education workforce in Ireland, it is proposed that where an individual has achieved a FETAC component certificate of 50% of the minor awards of the mandatory components of the FETAC Level 5 Major award in Childcare, that service may be deemed eligible to participate in the ECCE initiative . Such services will however be required to commit to ensuring that staff become fully qualified within a reasonable timeframe.*

A pre-school year Leader will be accepted for pre-school year provision where the total number of children in each group does not exceed 16 or 20, as appropriate to the service under the Child Care Regulations, and where a second childcare worker is present.

Where a service is provided to not more than 8 or 10 children, as appropriate under the Child Care Regulations, the Leader must meet the qualification requirement.

Services may participate in the scheme on the basis of a number of options.

Option A applies to playschool sessional services and requires the service to provide 3 hours per day, five days a week for 38 weeks per year in return for the capitation grant of €64.50 per week.

Option B applies to full- or part-time daycare services and requires the service to provide 2 hours 15 minutes per day, five days a week for 50 weeks per year in return for the capitation grant of €48.50 per week.

A sessional service may choose to operate as a part-time service and open for 38 weeks of the year, or to provide 2 sessional services. Alternatively, as a sessional service, it may choose to provide 2 hours 15 minutes per day for 50 weeks of the year. A full-day service may also choose to provide a 38 week sessional service (or 2 sessional services).

In all cases, participating services must operate the relevant pre-school provision free to parents in return for the applicable capitation grant and parents should be given access to the service where their child only attends the pre-school element of the service.

Services participating in the scheme may charge parents for optional additions as follows:

- hours additional to the free pre-school year requirement. In the case of a full or part-time daycare service, the service will offer additional hours to the pre-school provision, which they will charge for. In the case of a sessional service an additional 30 minutes per day may be offered as an optional addition which can be charged for. If the service became a part-time service within the 38 week model, it could offer an up to an additional 2 hours and

30 minutes per day as an optional addition which can be charged for, provided it complies with part-time service requirements;

- optional additional services can also take the form of various one-off, or on-going, activities or services such as outings, birthday parties, specific teaching resources such as dance or music or food.

*Note: Services must ensure that:*

- *parents are informed that their agreement to additional hours or to any optional charge, is not compulsory and that agreement is not a condition of initial or continued enrolment; and*
- *appropriate programme based activities are provided to children not participating in an optional activity where this takes place during the required period of pre-school provision.*

*Flexibility is also provided for where a sessional service is, for good reason, unable to operate over 5 days. Such cases will be considered and, where accepted, will be accepted on the basis that they provide a service for 3 hours 45 minutes per day, for 4 days a week for 38 weeks per year. The provision of a longer hours service, will not normally be permitted in the case of exceptions for 4 day services*

All places provided under the scheme by a service must meet the requirements in terms of length per day, days per week and weeks per year. It is not mandatory that children attend every day, however services should prioritise places for children where parents indicate that they intend to avail of the place for at least 4 days each week.

Services may not enrol children under the scheme on the basis of providing a part place (i.e. where more than 1 child share one place and each attends for a number of days per week). However, during January/August 2010, services which have children enrolled in part places (i.e. where more than 1

child share one place and each attends for a number of days per week), will be admitted to the scheme and receive a capitation grant on a pro-rata basis (i.e. by reference to the total number of children attending each day rather than the total number of children attending per week). Where additional capacity arises in the service during this period, e.g. a child leaves to take up a full pre-school year place in another service, the additional capacity available must be made available to another child or children to increase their provision.

Services will be required to make an electronic return to the OMCYA in January 2010 providing details of their enrolments for January/June (or January/August were applicable) 2010. This return will be used to determine the amount of capitation funding which will be payable to the service.

Services will be paid in advance for each term. The payments will be made from the earliest possible date at the start of each term. It is anticipated that transfers of children between services will be accommodated on a term by term basis.

Services will have to adhere to accounting and financial control requirements including audit and verification visits.

Applications should be made to services' local CCC and these will be accepted between early June and mid-July (exact dates to be finalised). The OMCYA will be in contact with applicants regarding contractual arrangements and it is hoped to finalise all applications by end September 2009.

From early October 2009, it is expected that each CCC will have details of participating services within its area and will provide a contact point for parents wishing to obtain information on enrolments. Parents can then contact services in their area to secure an enrolment.

## Workshops 2009

The following workshops are confirmed.

13 June, *Eutony with Helen Roitinger – rebalancing through movement*, at Ballyhall Kindergarten, Co. Kilkenny.  
Contact Ulrike Farnleitner on 087 124 7317.

19 September, *Speaking with Children with Ulrike Farnleitner*, at Thomastown Community Kindergarten.  
Contact Bernie Wemyss on 086 387 0322.

Other *proposed but not yet confirmed* workshops include:

- + June/July 2009, *Knitting for your Child with Ruth Marshall*, in Galway, including the importance of hats and socks for protecting children's warmth, and how to knit them plus a few small animals/flowers/gnomes.
- + May/June 2009, *Felting with Grace Burton*, in East Clare,
- + September/October 2009, *Breathing Circle with Nell Smyth*, in East Clare – exploring how the natural breath so potent in helping ourselves and those we teach to become more receptive and enthusiastic about learning and to find the inspiring and renewing creativity that strengthens development.
- + September/October 2009, *Storytelling for Parents and Teachers with Nell Smyth*, in East Clare.
- + November 2009, *The Special Task of the Kindergarten Assistant with Ulrike Farnleitner*, in Kilkenny.

To be kept up to date about the status of these courses please email [info@steinerireland.org](mailto:info@steinerireland.org) or ring the office on 061 927944.

## Advertisement

### Waterproof Clothing

PuddleDucks is Ireland's specialist provider of 100% waterproof clothing for children. Designed in Sweden, the PuddleDucks range of children's products are chosen specifically for their wearability and durability. The material is soft, lightweight and slightly stretchy, is comfortable to wear and allows freedom of movement. When muddy the waterproofs can be easily wiped down or machine washed. The clothes meet the Oeko-Tex Environmental Standard 100 and are free from hazardous substances such as PVC, phthalates and Teflon. The range includes dungarees, jackets, rain suits, trousers, mittens, hats and wellies, as well as waterproof craft aprons.



PuddleDucks is based in Cork and clothes can be ordered either by phone or through their secure on-line shop. PuddleDucks is pleased to offer parents of children attending Steiner kindergartens a 10% discount on the all-in-one suits and 15% discount on all other children's waterproof clothes.

Tel: 021 437 2917 (Just mention which Steiner School your child attends to receive the discount.)

Website: [www.puddleducks.ie](http://www.puddleducks.ie)  
Use discount code: STEINER09, or STEINERSUIT if ordering the all-in-one.

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