

**Waldorf/Rudolf Steiner Education for the First Seven Years of Life:
World Conference at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland
April 15-19, 2019
Prepared by the IASWECE Council in collaboration with the Pedagogical
Section at the Goetheanum.**

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The indications, hints, and suggestions that Rudolf Steiner gave for working with the small child 100 years ago have since been taken up by a very large number of people. His descriptions of the development of the child and the human being have been studied by many educators and parents. Educational skills, artistic sensitivity, and subtle observational skills have been developed by generations of educators and passed on through courses and seminars.

But those of us living today, one hundred years later, what do we want? What do the children who are born today tell us? What skills do we want to develop so that they can develop their humanity in the future?

How do we want to work with Steiner's suggestions and ideas? What seems essential to us in the practice of Waldorf education - and what not?

When working on these issues in the IASWECE Council, one issue kept cropping up: relationships among adult adults, relationships between adults and children, and among children themselves. Here we see tasks that we want to take up:

- The quality of adult relationships is one of the areas that most influences the development of the child, who is "like an organ of the senses". We can surround the child with the most beautiful colors and sounds but if the social tone is cold or oblique, we will not be able to provide the child with a beneficial sheath.
- The quality of our relationships with children depends very much on whether we perceive and understand them. How do we help ourselves through child study, study of the human being, and through friendly collegial support?
- Through free play, children engage in social interaction every day. In an age of increasingly nervous rhythms of life and constant distraction through digital media, it is becoming increasingly difficult to create the conditions needed for harmonious free play. How can we help each other with this?

During discussions about the social tensions so often occurring in Waldorf institutions, we realized that we can only create sustainable, healthier social relationships if as many participants as possible work on the sensitivity and strength of their soul, when we become free from the sympathies and antipathies that arise automatically in us.¹

For these reasons we chose the following working title for the conference:

¹ As a preparation for our discussions we read the lecture by Rudolf Steiner "[Social and Anti-Social Forces in the Human Being](#)", Bern, December 12, 1918, GA 186.

"Inner freedom as social responsibility: childhood as the source of a human future. "

There are soul polarities that we felt we would have to try to cultivate and strengthen at the same time:

Attention to the other - awareness of oneself.

Forgetting oneself - being awake for oneself

Turning one's the interest intensely to the other - resting calmly in oneself.

In the following painting we discovered these same gestures - can you find them?



In the coming months, we will be working intensively on conference preparation and will keep you informed through our e-newsletters leading up to April 2019. If you have any suggestions for the form, the content, or the presenters for the conference, please contact us at info@iaswece.org.

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