

BIRTH TO THREE

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The Birth to Three Working Group is looking forward to the activity awaiting us in 2024.

Parent Evening Series

2024 began with the third of our Parent Evening Series on *Parenting in an Anxious World* with Dr. Adam Blanning and Nancy Blanning. These will be followed by gatherings with Jane Swain and Keelah Helwig on movement in the first seven years and charting a path to support Racial Identity Development and its unfolding, respectively. These evenings are offered to support educators and parents together in deepening an understanding of the needs and experiences of children in our time. (Please note that Keelah's talk will be a live offering only. There will not be a recording; save the date!)

CARE 1 Conference and Future Conference Planning

The Medical and Pedagogical sections will host The Dignity of the Child, International Conference for Pregnancy, Birth and Early Childhood, May 29 – June 1, 2024, at the Goetheanum in Switzerland on **Life Forces**. Midwives, gynecologists, pediatricians, general practitioners, nurses, 0-3 educators and caregivers, physical therapists, and all other specialists and interested people in the field of early childhood education are warmly invited to attend.

The Birth to Three Working Group is also working with Dr. Adam Blanning and other medical professionals who care for the youngest children to host an international CARE 1 conference in the United States in the summer of 2025. We are excited to participate in this medical/educational collaboration toward the deepening of care and practice for young children.

WECAN Birth to Three Conference 2023 and 2024

Approximately 80 colleagues gathered in Keene, NH this past fall for the second WECAN Birth to Three Conference. Keynote speakers, Anna Ruth Meyer and Elizabeth Hagerman shared insights on the development of play in the first three years. All enjoyed workshops on the conference theme and a delicious homemade lunch.

The Birth to Three Working Group now turns its attention to the fall 2024 conference, which will very likely be held in another part of North America, providing more access to an in-person conference and the opportunity for colleagues to deepen their learning together.

Childcare Training Expectations and Birth to Three in Mexico

We will be working with the WECAN Teacher Education Committee to continue to adjust and address the teacher training guidelines for those working in childcare settings. Challenges exist for childcare teachers to meet expectations for practicums and training due to the full-time nature of the work in a childcare setting. Our goal is to provide the highest level of training for Waldorf carers and educators while having realistic expectations that integrate the unique needs of work in childcare centers.

Reports from Mexico share that many Waldorf programs currently care for children in the first three years. More training and conference activity is needed for these teachers. The Birth to Three Working Group will work with WECAN board member and WECAN regional representative for Mexico, Gaby

Núñez Plata, to offer support in this area. We are excited about the opportunity to work more closely with our Mexican colleagues this coming year.

Spring Professional Development Offering for Birth-3/Parent Child Teachers

We are eager to offer an online gathering this spring for Birth-3/parent child teachers. There is an ongoing need to generate and share offerings in the area of stories and lap games grounded in a true understanding of the developmental needs of the youngest children. Please let us know if there is a specific area that you would like to explore or if you feel you have something that could serve as a resource to your colleagues. Stay tuned for details on this professional development opportunity.