

100 Years – Preparing the Soil in North America: An Invitation

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Philipp Reubke, co-leader of the Pedagogical Section and a member of the IASWECE Board and Council, shared in a recent article that children need the right conditions to thrive, just as flowers need good soil, sunlight, and water. In the early years, children don't need to be "taught" in the usual sense, they learn naturally through play, imitation, and the loving presence of the adults around them.

This was the insight behind the word *kindergarten*, first used by Friedrich Froebel: a garden for children. Our task is to prepare the space, through our words, actions, and inner mood, so they can grow freely and in their own time.

The same is true for us. Inner growth doesn't come from pressure or rules, but from deep inner will. Patience, gratitude, self-awareness, and love help us on this path.

As we prepare to celebrate *100 Years of Waldorf Kindergarten and Early Childhood*, the IASWECE Council invites early childhood educators around the world into a shared practice of reflection. As part of this, we are encouraged to read **Chapter V of Rudolf Steiner's *How to Know Higher Worlds***, which describes the inner qualities that support true development.

Out of this work, three guiding questions have emerged:

- How do I grow these qualities in myself?
- How do we support each other as colleagues?
- How do we help the children around us to develop these same qualities for life?

WECAN invites colleagues across North America, in Mexico, the United States, and Canada, to join in this quiet, loving work of tending the soil of our hearts and minds. It is a meaningful way to honor the past and prepare for the future of Waldorf early childhood education.

Throughout the summer, WECAN will also be preparing the ground for the year ahead. **In August, we'll share simple and inspiring ways for you and your community to take part in this centennial celebration.**

We hope these offerings bring rich soil, warm sunlight, and fresh inspiration to your work, as individuals, as educators, and as community leaders.

