

The Dignity of the Child: "I feel good in your eyes"

How do trust, warmth and autonomy arise in the interaction between adult and child?

International early years conference on pregnancy, birth and early childhood June 15-18, 2022 at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland

Dear Colleagues,

Always when we have a sense of insecurity and fear, the danger is greatest that we will lose precisely the gaze that Matisse reminds us of in this short sentence. Yet taking account of the perspective and needs of the small child is so crucial for the world of tomorrow. The child in this phase of life is as open as a sense organ, all impressions "trickle" deeply into them and are formative.

It is becoming increasingly clear how strongly the maternal experience and the professional support during pregnancy and birth affect the child. In the first phase of life, the parents have the greatest influence on the child. For us as educational and medical professionals, it is important to always be aware of this and to work accordingly.

Many parents are searching anew for their path, and a longing for inner security and a meaningful context for the big questions makes itself felt. Parents at the beginning of their journey are very exposed, vulnerable and often insecure. But one of their characteristics is also that – as described by Matisse – they suddenly rediscover the world as if through the eyes of their child.

- What skills do we professionals need in order to avoid shutting down this space of wonder with hurried routines and the corresponding answers, and instead to support the great opportunity of change in parenthood?
- How do we inspire parents to give their children the right tools for their healthy development and for the challenges of the world of tomorrow?
- How do we succeed in making space for the resilience-creating factors of attachment and security and actively promote them from the very beginning?
- How can we reduce anxieties, strengthen confidence and enable the experience of self-efficacy?

The early phase of life is shaped to a very great extent by the mood of the people who form the surroundings at the beginning. The Covid-19 pandemic has particularly affected parents and children all over the world and has made us even more aware of the importance of protecting this phase of life. Therefore the CARE I working group of the Medical Section (Pregnancy, Birth and Early Childhood) has also launched the campaign "Here you can thrive". Our attention belongs to the child and we protect its developmental space.

We are delighted that it will be possible in 2022 for us to meet internationally at the Goetheanum, share our experiences, strengthen our relationships, and work together on central questions about the healthy development of the young child. Please also mention the conference to people from other professional groups around you who are interested in this topic.

We have reorganized the 2022 program so that the two lunches are a fixed part of it and are included in the conference fee. We would like to use these meals together as a meeting place for the different professional groups and nationalities.

For the preparatory group of the CARE I working group, the Medical Section and the Pedagogical Section,

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