

BLÁTHÚ Newsletter



An update for members and friends

Spring 2020

Dear Colleagues,

What extraordinary times we live in.

Not allowed to go out to work; Children not allowed to go to kindergarten or school; Children being seen as some sort of contagion: a group of silent deadly disease carriers! We have heard of cases in the cities of people tutting when children are out for walks. Strange times indeed.

So how in these times of fear and wide scale panic can we help ourselves and serve the children that are, or have been, in our care?

What did Rudolf Steiner say about fear and its effect on the body?

*“When you can't think of anything else for yourself, than fear of the diseases that are taking place around you in an epidemic, and go to sleep at night with these thoughts of fear, then unconscious after-images and imaginations - imbued with fear - are created in the soul.
And this is a good seedbed in which pathogenic germs can nestle, thrive and find a pleasant breeding ground.”*

[Rudolf Steiner, GA 312]

CONTENTS

	Page
Editorial	1
Letter to Parents	3
Story: The Tree That Rewilded Itself	4
Storytelling	5 -7
Storytelling Resources	8
Home-schooling - a parent's view	8
How to stay healthy in these times	12
Story: The Cracked Pot	10
Creating a Herb Garden	11
Book Review	12
Is the World a Good Place?	13
Adverts	15

This is so true. If we are stressed or living in fear we do not breath, sleep or eat properly and our immune system does not function properly.

The better we manage ourselves in this time, the better we are able to help others. Many of the simple things we do in kindergarten every day will help us in this lockdown situation.

Set yourself a daily rhythm, start a routine waking and sleeping time, eat well, take rest and exercise. Get out into the garden, or plant up

some pots. Have a small space that you can control (part of your garden, or even your sewing basket!). Being able to have control and order in one area, gives us a sense of control over our lives.

Read, do some handcraft, help others. In reaching out to others we are lifted out of ourselves and always feel better for caring for someone else. But also do not set your expectations too high!

What can we do for the children that we care for every day? I would suggest that they are the group that will be happiest in this situation: at home, hopefully at play, and oblivious to all that is going on around them.

What I have been doing each morning is greeting each child in my mind's eye, as I remember them arriving to school. I then take time to envisage each child who sits at my table at snack time and imagine them playing happily at home. For children for whom being at home all the time might be challenging, I suggest we bring them into our sleep

at night and continue to carry them even though we don't see them.

I think this quiet time where we are forced to stop running will bring many revelations for people. I think it can bring many positive changes in our lifestyles and our work-life balance. We just need to be awake and see what is being asked of us in this time.

Niamh Ruiséal, Chairperson

Thus to the World-All speaks,
In self-forgetfulness
And mindful of its primal state,
The growing human I:
In you, if I can free myself
From fetters of my selfhood,
I fathom my essential being.

- Calendar of the Soul, April 21-27)



Meet the Board of Directors:

Top L to R: Fiona Coady - CEO; Ulrike Farnleitner - National Development Officer Niamh Ruiséal - Chairperson

Below, L to R: Ziva Ellis - Treasurer; Claudia Juncal - Director; Marguerite Devane - Director

A LETTER TO PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

from Ulrike Farnleitner, April 2020

Dear parents and educators,

We all have landed in unexpected and stressful times which leave us restricted in many ways. Activities that were firmly embedded in our daily rhythm and routine cannot take place anymore. Schools and kindergartens remain closed for the moment.

I am writing this letter to offer some suggestions for how to cope with the challenges this entails. As educators/parents of young children you are probably the person who spends the most with your child now. This might be a new situation for you. And: Your attitude will profoundly influence the mood of your children and your home.

We hope you are healthy and that despite this situation being forced on all of us you can see some positive aspects. What is asked of us is: courage and an attitude of surrender. Both will enable us to accept what is happening and open a way to deal with the present moment constructively. Let's take it day by day, step by step. In this process, we do get help from nature. We can currently witness nature breathing colours into all the beautiful flowers of the earth.

Can we set aside some time every day and every hour to actively practice letting go of worries and stress? Breathe in freedom and breath out everything else! Every hour for a few seconds, every day for half an hour! Let us actively create healthy minds and healthy bodies!

Here are some thoughts that might help with the rhythm of the day:

As adults we are in charge and as soon as we establish a rhythm and routine our children will follow and demand sameness ... pizza every Tuesday, ... spaghetti on Fridays ... fresh apple slices every morning ...

- Structure and plan the day: play time, snacks, cooking and tidying-up, but also clear times for rest, going for a walk and, of course, normal

bedtime. Also: time for Mom and Dad to work in their home office (see the little film at the end of the letter)

- Make it clear how tasks around the house will be shared. Let the children help in drawing up the plan. Little drawings can help to clarify all agreements within the family: who will be responsible for watering the plants, who will decide what cake to bake, who will write down the menu for the week ...
- In the evenings check in with your children and state where you as a family have struggled and what has worked really well. Check off the tasks of the day, depending on age of the children. Then set intentions for the next day: "Tomorrow we will make a drawing for granny!"
- Create a clear bedtime routine and reinvent your own inner storyteller! All children love stories. Make them up! Let your imagination come up with stories! What better way to deal with all the anxieties swirling around than giving them to various characters in a story? There could be a giant stomping around or a roaring dragon. Those can be fought by clever and courageous young boys and girls ... there could also be a healing remedy, a herbal potion ... whatever comes to your imagination is good. Allow yourself to be creative and full of imagination!
- Take a daily walk and pay close attention to all the birds and insects. Enjoy the growing fauna and flora.
- Let your children play freely and have fun! Have a good laugh and share stories from your childhood. Invent new games and have an active and happy time. Start singing again!
- Some families re-discover old toys in storage boxes. You can make a game of it and play "shopping" for "new" supplies. Relive memories from the past.
- How about sharing recipes and stories with each other? If you are interested in a group email, please let me know so we can set it up. (I will be mindful of GDPR.)
- Your early years teacher will support you at this time and BLATHU is planning regular Zoom meetings to stay connected. In times where we

cannot shake hands, we can still open our hearts to each other.

- Please find below a video of a professor who is also working from home but forgot to lock his office door. Good fun!

Links:

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/staying-sane-while-working-from-home-with-kids/>

For a commercial free childhood experience:
<https://commercialfreechildhood.org/social-distancing/>

Warm greetings

Ulrike Farnleitner

National Development Officer

Bláthù Irish Steiner Early Childhood Association

Email: ndo.blathu@gmail.com T: 0871247317

The Tree that Re-wilded Itself



Once there was a pear tree, that became a cherry tree.

No, really, it's true. It was a gift from a friend, who'd grown it in a huge big planter in a small town garden, and thought it might like to put down roots here, where there's space to grow.

We dug a hole and planted it where I would see it from the kitchen window. I looked forward to the blossom in spring. It took a year or two to settle, and then it was just glorious!

One particularly fierce cold winter froze it back beyond the graft. Once the fruiting branches had died away, and become nothing more than handy branches for birds to sit and sing upon, new growth began from below the graft line.

Years passed by, and leaves and blossoms came in late March, early April. Year after year, the tree recovered and grew taller and broader. Its blossoms multiplied.

One year shiny red cherries hung on long stalks, beautiful decorations to brighten dull days.. like earrings, or a chunky necklace with a plain frock.

Today, I watched more blossoms open by the hour. Beauty and wonder filled my heart, as the birds sang from the hedges, and even the family of crows from the tall trees called out in a kind of laughing song.

The domesticated fruit tree, brought low by circumstances, recovered, and traced its way back to its wild origins.

We can do that too. Remember who you are, and blossom in this time.

Ruth Marshall, April 2020

STORYTELLING – A CREATIVE COURAGE

An antidote to electronic communication

by Ulrike Farnleitner

In the current situation it is a given that we are in constant contact with our families . Many of us adults are searching for ways to entertain our children; to rekindle many dormant skills of hand crafts and to find ways to create a mood of joy, interest and adventure. Engaging our creativity may help us to overcome our unease about the restrictions and on the other hand, to find ways to appreciate what Nature is offering in our Northern hemisphere.

In the mood of listening to one another and to oneself, some truths and some dreams need to be spoken. How about nourishing our deepest humanity? What better way than to tell stories? So let's use this time actively and find our inner story teller every day and every moment!

With this current opportunity of a steady practice we can learn to “breathe” images and bring them alive. And most importantly we can allow ourselves to speak from the heart. We all know that both the content and quality of stories have a huge effect on all of us, each story carries its own magic and reaches into our Souls and minds, it wakes up our whole being and stimulates our sense of well- being.

In ancient times stories were told in a sort of sing-song chanting way with a bodily rocking or swaying movement. These magic storytellers could recite for hours on end and not forget a word that had been passed on over generations to them.

Storylines with interesting characters can become the most cheerful and joyful warmth wave of the day. Children of all ages will look forward to a certain repetition and to a continuation of the story line.

Some years ago while sitting in a hammock with my then 5 year old grandson I invented a character whom we called “The Wild Pirate” and over the last three years he was always the centre of our attention when we met.

Just to tell you this much, this character, the Wild Pirate, became the most famous cook of the Caribbean! Of course he owns a pirate ship and a homely island but I will not tell you where he stores his most valuable treasure, namely his cooking recipes...☺

My personal way of creating stories is quite simple, I will see and feel the characters and really imagine them in detail, I “see” the landscape, smell the season, can describe the colours and forms in detail, in which case it becomes so alive that my audience is mesmerised by the images and the ways I portray what I invent. I love what I tell.

One possible method for creating a story with your family members, is for someone to begin a story with a single sentence, then everybody in turn says a consecutive sentence as an continuation to the previous one, starting with the words :” Yes exactly”. These “Yes exactly” stories can become really funny, and it is more than surprising to say “Yes exactly” to an imagination that astonishes oneself and challenges our own imaginative reply. Of course the very first sentence starts with: ”Once upon a time.... The first sentence is particularly important as it should stimulate the imagination of the hearers, many good stories begin with an element of surprise, e.g. the owl hooted loudly from his cosy nest in the good ship “What If?”..... which then begs the question of how he or she came to be there, in addition to any adventure which may take place on the way.

My advice would be, go through the landscape of the story in small steps and enjoy all the twists and turns. Do not try to control the story, but let it evolve and you will feel when the story has arrived at its peak and also its natural ending.

Creative expressions from these stories, like drawing, paintings, puppet shows, shadow theatres etc. could follow in any case. Now we have time to be creative on all levels.

If you should decide to write down your story In case you are writing down your story, Blathu will be more than happy to share it in our next newsletter. We also looking forward to seeing photos of your creative expressions!

Good luck and “Once upon a time.....”

TELLING WAX STORIES IN KINDERGARTEN

By Niamh Ruiséal

Every Thursday in kindergarten we draw our chairs into a circle, and we tell what we have come to call Wax Stories. By this we mean that we compose a story made up from an object made in bee's wax by each child. The adults take it in turns each week to tell the story

In preparation we place bee's wax into warm water to soften it. The softness of the wax depends on the time of the year! In September we make it quite soft to guarantee success. As the year goes on, and they get more proficient, we let the wax a little firmer allowing them to use their will-forces a little more.

The adult makes a story-scape with silks and pieces of wood, stones or whatever they are inspired to use. Of late we have started getting the older children to set the scene. Just make sure that there are enough props to attach or lean their creations on.

With the scene set, using the warm wax the children form something that becomes part of the story. As we collect the wax creations, we try to anchor the object in our memory. To ensure no-one has forgotten (a great memory exercise!).

Then we just open up to what I call the Story Angel and let the story begin to formulate in the mind.

The important thing is to remember to include every child's creation.

Sometimes we can weave a message into the story: for instance, sharing or not hitting. But some of the most satisfying stories have just arisen without being contrived.

The more relaxed and unself-conscious we are the better the story.



A STORY FOR KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

By Niamh Ruiséal, March 2020

Once upon a time there was a land in which three queens lived.

Now these three queens were very happy. They sang, they painted, they baked, they sewed, they cooked, they cleaned, they planted and they harvested all day long.

But they were happiest of all when the children from far and wide came to spend their mornings with them. The children came and they sang and they painted and they baked and they sewed and they cooked and they cleaned and they planted and they harvested and they played and they tidied and they ran and they skipped and they climbed trees and they built dens and they walked in the forest.

One spring evening, a naughty elf named Atchoo fell through the clouds and landed into this beautiful place with a pop.

As he lay on the ground he opened his eyes. Then he stood up, dusted himself off and began to laugh. Now *this* was a place in which he could do a lot of mischief, he thought.

He went around sneezing in every corner of the garden. Now he was having so much fun that he whistled for his friend Ahem to come and join him.

Ahem peeped through the clouds, spotted his friend and jumped into the beautiful land below. Well, the three queens watched these mischief-makers in their garden and they said, "Now those little elves do not know the meaning of fun. They are here to make trouble."

Well, the queens knew exactly what to do. They spoke to the parents of the dear children and said, "Let's trick those naughty elves and stay out of the land until they get tired of waiting for us."

And that was exactly what they all did. The children stayed at home with their parents. They sang and they baked and they cooked and they cleaned and they played and they tidied.

Some children turned their table upside down and made a ship. Some took all the cardboard boxes they could find and made castles. They all spent time in the garden and everyone remembered to have a quiet time each day.

Meanwhile, those elves had great fun thinking of all the mischief they would make when the children arrived.

Now, you may not know this but elves are very, very patient. They can wait a very long time. They waited and watched as the chestnut tree buds began to peep; then they watched as the buds opened and showed their leaves. And they waited and watched as the white candles on the chestnut tree burst into flower. And *still* they waited patiently!

Eventually Atchoo said to Ahem, "I don't think those children are going to come at all."

And Ahem said to Atchoo, "I do believe that you are right. Let's go somewhere else to play." And in a puff of smoke, they were gone.

Well, the three queens came back to the beautiful land. They opened the windows, shook the dust off the furniture and began to sing and cook and clean and paint and plant and harvest as they had always done.

One by one, when the time was right, the dear children returned to the beautiful land.

They had many stories to tell the three queens. Some had had birthdays. Some had lost teeth. Some had learned to skip or to cycle. Some had learned to sew and *all* were taller and wiser than before.

Everybody was overjoyed to be back together again. As for Atchoo and Ahem, they realised there was no point in ever visiting that land again as the children living there were far more patient and clever than they were.

The End

Some Storytelling Resources:

Here are some books, people and places that I think may help you as you begin to flex your storytelling muscles:

Ruth Marshall: is a storyteller, author and heritage specialist, who visits schools, museums and festivals around Ireland, and gives storytelling workshops for adults.

My books include: Celebrating Irish Festivals; Clare Folk Tales; Limerick Folk Tales
www.ruthmarshallarts.weebly.com

Nancy Mellon:

- Storytelling with Children, Hawthorn Press,
- The Art of Storytelling, Element Books
Website: <http://www.healingstory.com>

Susan Perrow:

- Healing Stories for Challenging Behaviour
- Therapeutic Storytelling: 101 Healing Stories for Children
Website: <http://susanperrow.com>

SCHOOL of STORYTELLING

Short and long courses at Emerson College, England:
<https://www.schoolofstorytelling.com>

HOME-SCHOOLING - A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Fiona Coady

"No way! When? Are you sure? I didn't even know that there was going to be an announcement! Seriously, are you sure? Wow. I can't believe it!"

This was my reaction when the post man came into my office at 2pm on Thursday March 12th, 2020! It was official..... SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED!!

I then left my office, picked my children up from school and drove home. And frankly, I don't remember much of the next 2 weeks! It was like I went down a tunnel, and life was happening on a parallel track. I was obviously still working, cooking and randomly doing something that resembled schoolwork/activity with the children, but I wouldn't be able to give details.

Total overwhelm. And guilt levels off the charts!

Lucky for me, we live in the countryside, and are away from other people so Isabelle and Nicholas Óg are used to having the place to themselves! They could be outside, keep themselves occupied and in many ways, take care of themselves and each other.

But then I started to look at what Úna, Isabelle's teacher was sending home to support parents and the children. I printed things off, started to get myself a little clearer and more organised. A few days later I cleaned out the spare room,

created a space for Isabelle and she made it her own.

Slowly but surely, rhythm was coming back into our lives.

Morning verse. Morning verse with movement. Songs. Tin whistle. Poems. Puzzles. Maths. Irish.

So much choice!

It was on that first day of our new rhythm, when Isabelle stood up to do the verse with movement, that I saw it!

I watched as she purposefully stepped into her power and created her world, such that she was ready to learn and experience life completely. By witnessing her do what she does every day in class, I was part of something beautiful and inspiring and feel privileged to be let into this wonderful world.

I connected with Isabelle in a new way and am so grateful that I got that glimpse of her life.

And then Easter came..... And my rhythm was gone..... Such a fragile, simple part of life, that can hold so much power and certainty for all involved. When it is not there, I am pushing a rock up a hill with everything I do. When it is present, I am sailing on a warm summer breeze.

So now I shall go find my rhythm again, and again, and again...

Fiona Coady

HOW TO STAY HEALTHY IN DEMANDING TIMES?

By Ulrike Farnleitner

When I mentioned to colleagues that I observe exhaustion and stress in early years educators, I received their agreement saying, “Stress and burnout are becoming a constant in our profession and are definitely impacting on the quality of relationships and interactions with children and their families.”

We all know that being overloaded by work is challenging and robs one of energy that could be used in working with children in a cheerful and joyful manner. The questions are how to manage these demands carefully and wisely?

When we talk about reflecting about the days and what happened throughout, one very important truth to remember is that one needs “to know oneself”, as Rudolf Steiner endlessly states.

We are important role models for the young child. So let us fine tune our instrument as an educator by reflecting and acting.

Susan Howard wrote about the “essentials of the Waldorf Kindergarten”. I took these ideas up and hope that some of these questions will help your reflection. Furthermore you might find it worthwhile to integrate intentions for creative work that will lead to your rejuvenation and health.

Inner Development - a path

How are you engaged in your inner development as an early childhood educator, and as a human being?

What do you do on a daily basis?

Continue with your anthroposophical path if you are engaged with one, but if you would like to begin, here are some ideas.

Your first challenge is to get up 5 minutes earlier every day, next *acquire a sense of gratitude* for everything in your life... Be curious what the day might bring! Write your experiences in a daily diary. Do this for 3 weeks and then assess your progress. What has changed?

Cultivating a relationship to the children in your imagination. This might mean to imagine the group of children you are working with once a day. You might do this in the evening. You will bless them, imagine a rainbow-like colour around them for protection. Henning Köhler mentioned in his book “Working with Anxious, nervous and depressed children”, to pose a question while you are relating to the children’s angel. Our challenge is to bring a clearly thought out problem that concerns one deeply for the children’s sake rather than of our own. (p7) And with that we really form a clear image of the child.

With this work we foster an environment of spiritual striving. All these efforts will flow back to me as a gift of strength. Any steps towards a deepened study of child and human development, creates understanding and respect of human destiny and karma.

The best way to not burden children by unresolved issues in one’s personal life is this amazing image that in the morning when we change into kindergarten gear, we consciously pass on our personal burdens onto the mantel hook. After that we are free to be the best adult ever for this day. Everybody who works with this concept will confirm the health-bringing joy in such an attitude of working with the young.

Our appearance and even our clothing express our worthiness of embodying beauty. Betty Beck so beautifully explains how being dressed aesthetically for the children enhanced in her the joy of beauty, goodness, and truth. It had a wonderful effect on all visitors big and small over many, many years of her working in the kindergarten. The kindergarten children benefitted by the aesthetics of the environment.

How do we express our joy and love towards children? How do we integrate the working with families and the environment? The world? In this

realm we are completely individually creative, be it with our skills of creating art in any form, organising social occasions, festivals. It is an important experience for parents to plan, to prepare and to become integrated into the community.

Sometimes we need tools to implement ideas and to change patterns after we had reflected on them. One amazing tool is called **S.T.O.P.**, Timothy Gallwey mentioned this in *“The Inner Game of Stress - outsmart your life’s challenges and fulfil*

your potential”. He says so simply about any problem: just stop consciously, step back between you and the situation. Think – what is really the truth what is happening? What is causing stress? Organize your thinking. What could the plan of action be? Proceed-move forward, with understanding, clarity of thought and interest. A must successful tool, indeed.

I wish you all wonderful walks in Nature, either doing so silently, or while telling stories.

The Cracked Pot

A traditional folktale from India and China

An old woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walks from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it could only do half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. 'I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house.'

The old woman smiled, 'Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other



pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house.'

Each of us has our own unique flaw. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding.

You've just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them.



Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in
- Leonard Cohen

CREATING A HERB GARDEN

Extract from "Spring and Summer Nature Activities for Waldorf Kindergartens" by Irmgard Kutsch and Brigitte Walden. Floris Books ISBN 978-178-250-581-5

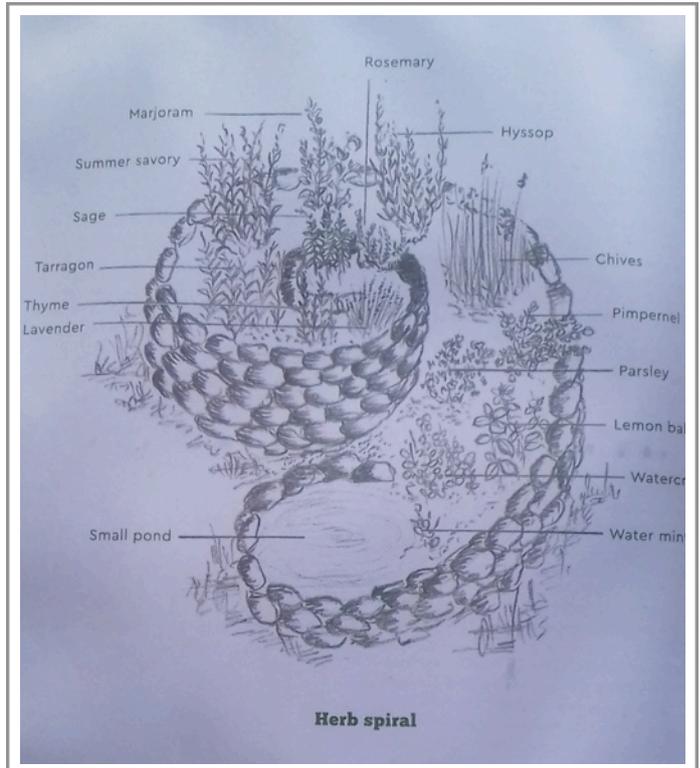
Herbs can be used in many ways. Often, they are both healing and seasoning plants, whose essential oils and other components offer distinct fragrances and flavours. Fragrant herbs can have positive effects on feelings and are useful in healthcare. In the garden, they are good for attracting insects and enhance the health of the soil.

Many kitchen herbs come from the Mediterranean and grow best in full sun. Bearing in mind, a south-facing bed is a good place to position a herb garden. In addition, stones used to build walls around the bed will absorb and retain extra heat.

Preparations for planting the bed should be made in the autumn when the ground is porous and rich in humus. You should not need to regularly add fertiliser to the soil, which can affect the taste of the herbs. However, you can mix heavy earth with sand to make it more porous; or mix stones into the soil for plants that flourish on dry stone walls. Some herbs love calcium, and calcium-rich stones can also be mixed in where needed. When planning your herb garden, try to position large or bushy plants at the back of the bed so they don't get in the way of the smaller plants. You should plant annual and biennial herbs in the spring.

A HERB SPIRAL

Although some herbs like sunshine and a dry position, others need shade, damp ground or even



shallow water. A herb spiral can provide appropriate living conditions for a variety of smaller plants.

First, build the surrounding dry-stone wall in a sunny spot. Fill the inside with calcium-rich stones. Put a thin layer of topsoil in the upper part of the spiral, for herbs like thyme, which enjoy warmth. Fill the lower section with garden soil and compost; herbs that need some shade and more nourishment, such as parsley, can be planted in this area. At the foot of the spiral, make a small pond for water-loving plants such as watercress and water mint.

Wild Garlic Pesto

Ingredients:

50g wild garlic leaves
200ml olive oil
40g cashews or other nuts
25g parmesan cheese
Salt & pepper to taste
1 clove garlic
A little lemon juice



Put all in a food processor and whizz for a few minutes. Enjoy it straight away on crackers, bread, pasta, etc.

To store: covered with a layer of oil, it will keep in a clean jar in fridge for 2 weeks. It can also be frozen in small quantities in ice cube trays or chocolate moulds.

*Are you going to Scarborough Fair?
Parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme
Remember me to one who lives
there,
She was once a true love of mine.*

- traditional folk song

BOOKS

“Growing Up Healthy in a World of Digital Media”

by Michaela Glöckler and Richard Brinton

Summarised here by Ulrike Farnleitner

Teachers and parents know that each child is a tiny miracle, a complex puzzle needing to be solved. I would like to introduce you to this book which is a gem and provides a clear digest of resources and practices to avoid the worst effects of screen technology on the young.

It will give strength to those who are concerned about guiding young children and teens in the use of technologies. How do we cope? Many ideas offered will help us do just that – so children can grow up healthy! Dangers and risks to children will be explained while we adults must clearly think about our responsibility for dealing with this new media.

The critical developmental phases in childhood are well described, which have a bearing on the introduction of media technology. Of course not everybody will be able to follow the same approach. However it advises us how we can think through step by step what is best for the well-being of our children. This book illustrates safety measures as well as possible actions needed to prevent dangers. Adults/educators are asked to provide an educational standpoint. The task is to represent an appropriate balance between the needs of children, clear boundaries, healthy routines, movement, and rhythms as measures to safeguard against the inherent dangers of the digital world.

“It is a paradox of our digital future: brain development needs time and skilful play, work and action within the real world throughout the first 15 to 16 years. The result is the faculty of self-control and independent thinking, which is fundamental for media competence. The authors of this book, all specialists, offer practical advice for age-appropriate brain stimulation, encouraging teachers and parents to find ways to protect their children from the unnecessary and damaging too early use of electronic devices. They advise helping children develop their unique creativity and to learn how to learn out of own initiative.” — Dr. Michaela Glöckler, Paediatrician



It is crucial for later life that children learn to be creative and imaginative. The child needs suggestions so that their imagination is stimulated and later their independent, logical, and abstract thinking can emerge from it. To nurture the parent-child bond, it is helpful to arrange a fixed time in the daily routine in which the father or mother do something together with the child. It depends on the quality of what we do together. A good attachment is the secure basis from which a child can explore his environment. Every child needs beloved people close to him talking to him and telling stories and tales. Parents are role models and examples. Therefore it is obvious that while chatting or phoning their mind is taken up by different thoughts. And it depends on many factors, but children react to this manner/behaviour with their behaviour. So what to do?

Growing Up Healthy in a World of Digital Media
InterActions, ISBN 9780 9528364 14

IS THE WORLD A GOOD PLACE?

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE KINDERGARTEN FOR YOU AT HOME

By Philipp Reubke

This is an extract from the IASWECE Newsletter <https://www.iaswece.org/iaswece-newsletter/>

Dear parents with small children,
The kindergartens are empty, the indoor plants went home with the teachers, and the children are with you

Assessment 1

What luck to finally have time and peace with the children at home. No more stress due to appointments, obligations, travel and long car journeys - just occasional shopping and enjoying the company at home - there is nothing better for children! Of course, there is a lack of exercise and play in the forest or park - wind, water, earth and the delicate green of beech leaves that have just hatched from their buds. But apart from that: isn't it so beneficial for your children and for all of us that the constant rush of work, school and leisure activities finally comes to an end? Those who are in the happy position of having a garden can see it: it sprouts and grows green like rarely before, because we are always there and can take care of the beds every day. And for the children, who are happy and reassured. At last the people who are most loved by the children have time: the parents and siblings!

Assessment 2

What a catastrophe: more than three billion people are locked up in their homes. Many apartments are narrow and dark, many children suffered from lack of exercise and too much screen usage before, now it's getting really bad. Due to too few physical-sensory experiences and too much intellectual-nervous stimulation, many children are emotionally unbalanced. Spending the whole day in the same apartment with others who have similar problems and with frustrated adults is not an ideal situation to positively transform a tendency to aggressiveness, fearfulness or depression. Especially indigestible for children is also what now takes place for hours in all apartments - talking about the number of sick and dead, about people and powers that are responsible for the mess and about catastrophic future prospects.

Which assessment is correct? In any case, you, dear parents, are currently at home with your children at a time when everyone is very much aware that the health of nature and humanity is under threat. Hopefully you have already received a lot of good advice from your child's kindergarten teacher for your "round-the-clock kindergarten" at home. Here are a few more suggestions, perhaps there is something here that you have not yet thought of.

Is the world a good place?

Surely you've heard of the idea how important it is for the little child to have the adults around him or her in the right mood: The world is good. But many of us are in a situation in life where the assessment 2 seems fully justified. The world is not good, in which alone a difficult-to-control global pandemic with unforeseeable consequences is capable of halting the collective tendency towards the destruction of nature and self-destruction of humanity for a few weeks.

20 years ago the film "Life is Beautiful" by Roberto Benigni came to the cinemas. Some people thought the story was exaggerated or kitschy, but you could feel how a father's unwavering optimism and humor can affect his child. Together they have been arrested by the Nazis and are sitting on the train that the father knows is going to the concentration camp. In his own way, he tries to convey to his child, even in this situation, the mood: "The world is good".

It is not a question of whether the world is really good or bad. It's about whether we as adults have a project that we believe can make the world a little bit good. For the father on the train to the concentration camp, it is the wonderful and cheerful life together with the mother of the child. For Berenger, the main character in Ionesco's play "Rhinoceros" in which all people gradually turn into rhinoceroses, it is the love of art and improvisation; for Michel Vaujour, a French gangster sentenced to several life sentences, it was the development of

mental abilities which he noticed grew in an unimaginable way through certain exercises. For me, it could also be the radish bed in the garden or the kitchen shelf that I build myself.

As kindergarten teachers we know how positive it is for the children when we have a project. When we feel like doing concrete work in the immediate surroundings. Through the project and through the work we generate emotional and physical warmth. Suddenly, we are able to deal with quarrels or conspicuous behavior of children much more confidently, release tension and develop confidence.

This is exactly what has a positive effect on the children: Through our work they are encouraged to play freely, get involved themselves, have their own projects that they want to carry out. The warmth spreads - it ignites with the idea of what we could do to make something in our environment a little better or more beautiful, flows into our motivation to do something concrete, lives in our joy at work and finally jumps over to the children, who stop making comments about the corona virus and are encouraged to be self-active. In doing so, they develop a tremendous warmth that far exceeds ours.

We (and especially the children) urgently need warmth when we experience a situation that creates fear: when all the people in the city gradually turn into rhinos, when songbirds and bees die or when a contagious unpredictable virus passes by. Warmth is created when the abstract belief that the world is good is transformed into concrete work that I believe makes the world a better place.

This article is an extract from the IASWECE Newsletter.

For the full newsletter, go to:

<https://www.iaswece.org/iaswece-newsletter/>

Suggestions from the kindergarten for you at home:

Radish bed: The children see and feel how "good" we are to the earth crumbs, how delicately we handle the cotyledons.

Kitchen shelf: The wood is nice and smooth after sawing, rasping, drilling and sanding, and the spice tins, which used to lie around in the cupboard untidily, are now doing really well on the kitchen shelf.

Doll's bed: The doll is also doing well when she no longer sleeps in a corner but has her own bed. It doesn't have to be made of wood, it can also be a cardboard box or a basket, which you have to work on for a while until it is nice.

Clothes cupboard: Because it is much too narrow, the clothes are very cramped there. We could say hello to them all, spread them all out on tables, chairs and beds, and then, choose the ones we like and are not too small, fold them nicely again and put them in the cupboard, and put the others in a nice box to give away. Then they will be really well!

Bookshelf: All the books and little things that have been on shelves for months and are now coughing with dust, we could all carry them to another corner of the living room and pile them up and then wipe the shelf and polish it...

Festive meals: One or more days a week we could declare a festival day, that will be prepared in every possible way one day before: Through cleaning, ironing, baking, roasting, cooking, learning songs, making decorations...

Don't rush: If the warmth you generate is to spread to the children and motivate them to play, it is important that you do everything with a degree of calm. But since we have time now, you can take your time...

Can the living room become a playground?

Yes, children need space and materials to build and play, and building houses and hiding places is a particularly important activity. But it's good if you insist that at certain times of the day it belongs to the adults, who will furnish it to their taste again. Cleaning up the playground is best done together and you should take your time for that too.

Dear parents, I'm sure you have many interesting practical ideas yourself. Perhaps some of you have enjoyed life with your children so much that you would like to work in a kindergarten after the epidemic. And maybe you have noticed how important Erich Kästner's well-known saying is for life with small children:

“There is nothing good unless you do it. “

TRAINING FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN ANTHROPOSOPHY

Ulrike Farnleitner

www.soulscape.eu is a training body that offers an annual introduction to Anthroposophy. It is a foundation course that covers many aspects of the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. The course aims to educate, to nourish and to inspire all those who seek to refresh their knowledge or to deepen their understanding of Anthroposophy. It is also a foundation course for interested teachers, parents, assistants or administrators as well as the first steps towards becoming a Steiner/Waldorf kindergarten teacher.

Testimonials from people attending the course

"The big questions are addressed on The Anthroposophy course. For me this is such a pleasure and a luxury as a parent at Kildare Steiner School to have time, a small parcel of time once a month, set aside to consider such questions as ... the conundrum that we are clearly individuals yet we are interconnected in our spirit into a collective unconscious, the angel of the school. So how do we make choices? Can we change ourselves in our choice-making to make the community stronger? To appreciate everyone in their strengths? We can never resolve such questions, we are open to them and we grow in ourselves by having them there in our heart and in our heart when we are connecting with our children." - Nick

The Foundation to Anthroposophy is providing the Kildare Steiner School with the type of deeper Anthroposophical answers that we as teachers, can never provide as we usually speak to a mixed audience of parents, most of who are not interested in the philosophy. The course addresses all the basic concepts in an engaging manner. The people attending are open to spiritual insights and keen to learn more. This will enrich our school and hopefully create a new type of parent who understands the community building principles of Anthroposophy and is willing to work at acquiring the skills needed to deepen their insight and thus their understanding of what lies behind all the education that their children receive. For the first time our school may become a thriving community based on common principles. I sincerely hope that there will be a second year added to the Foundation year. - Gale Pullen

"his course has given me the opportunity to reflect, explore and think about the life that I lead helping me to ponder on what has influenced me thus far. Each weekend I feel nourished as a human being returning home to my family thoughtful and grateful for having had the opportunity to be part of this course and part of this experience.

The overarching theme of the weekend is woven deliberately through drama, art, crafts and song as well as lectures and discussion and it is beautifully punctuated with little nuggets of gold that appear in the guise of kinship, wonderful food and nature." - AnneMarie

"This is a wonderful course. It's great to have mentors teaching a variety of deep teachings while leaving room for art and play. This course is helping me understand about myself and others. It has put being a human being in a new light". Thank you so much for the course." - Yuri

EURHYTHMY4YOU

is an online service for people with courage and joy of movement.

What can eurythmy do for you in 2020?

Our courses and videos are for those who wish to take care of themselves.

We help you to cope with themes like stress reduction, hypersensitivity, regulation of emotions (such as anxiety, sadness, impulsivity), and general aspects of human well-being.

- Our self-help courses for daily practice are based on practical exercises that work in combination with the mindful movements of eurythmy.
- Our eurythmy courses provide important insights into the inner mobility of your body, enabling you to move more effortlessly than you may think possible.

Eurythmy affects every level of your being. It wants to help you in a way that all parts of your being develop. Since a human body is not only confined in its physical skin, you do this work not only for yourself, but for the world in which you live. All aspects of your being are at work and are affected by what you do. Your body consists of inner wisdom, the interwoven music of your organs. It is so easy to achieve that all parts of the body start to breathe and harmonize with the soul. Being in touch with our inner forces frees them to grow and develop.

Our self-help courses, webinars and workshops are designed to help you face challenges as an opportunity. That gives meaning to everything you encounter.

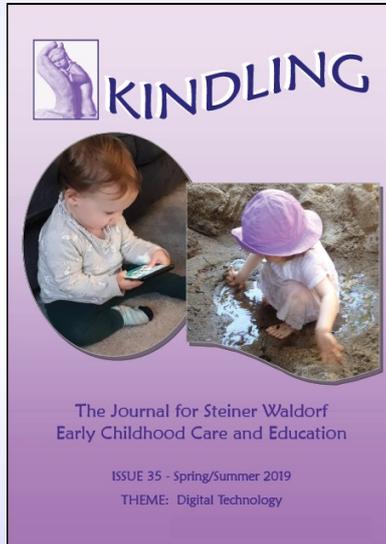
Please go to our website for further information. <https://www.eurythmy4you.com>

Your newsletter contributions are welcome! Thoughts, articles, book reviews, adverts, photos, stories or verses that you would like to share via our Newsletter are welcome.

Please send your contributions and suggestions to: Fiona Coady at nc.blathu@gmail.com

KINDLING Journal for Steiner Waldorf Early Childhood Care and Education

Published twice yearly in the UK in printed format only, this Journal contains themed articles, songs, stories, crafts, puppetry, research, health, news, book reviews, and more...



For more information and to subscribe please email your name and address to earlyyearsnews@aol.com (one 'y') or phone 00 44 1223 890988

AN SIOPA BEAG

Environmentally friendly and ethically sourced products for the discerning shopper

For your baby, for you and your children: Sheepskins, Sheepskin Car Seat Inserts, Eco nappies, Solmate Socks, Giesswein Wool Slippers

We also stock a wide range of children's and educational books, art & craft-materials, musical instruments, toys and gifts.

For Information contact

Maria Castles, An Siopa Beag, 5 Abbey St, Killaloe, Co. Clare

Tel/Fax: **00 353 61 375770**

Website: www.ansiopabeag.com

Email: ansiopabeag@gmail.com

Opening hours: Mon-Sat: 9.30 am - 6.00 pm

BLÁTHÚ

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Please check the **BLÁTHÚ** website for news of upcoming events

www.blathu.org

Or contact Fiona at nc.blathu@gmail.com for more information

Join

The Wheel



for Excellent advice for non-profit organisations.

<https://www.wheel.ie/>

BLÁTHÚ

Croílár, Mountshannon,
Co. Clare V94D9X9

Tel: **089 2411816**

Email: nc.blathu@gmail.com

Web: www.blathu.org

Views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are the views and opinions of the authors of the articles themselves and are included for your interest and information. They are not necessarily the views or opinions of **BLÁTHÚ**, its staff or members.