

THE OLDER CHILD IN THE STEINER WALDORF SETTING : THE EMBEDDED CURRICULUM

Indicative outline & some examples showing the curricular purpose of activities for children of 5 and 6 years and what adults could do to support learning and development.

(Read in conjunction with SWSF *EYFS/STEINER Interpretation and Readover Document 5 – 7 years*. This links to the EYFS L&D requirements)

The Steiner Waldorf ethos involves providing an extended early childhood, where children have the opportunity to embed the basic skills (physical, emotional, social and cognitive), and develop lifelong learning habits which enable them to become enthusiastic, imaginative, resilient, creative students who are eager to learn.

Steiner kindergartens include a broad age range, and children remain within the 'kindergarten phase' (the first phase of childhood) until they are rising 7. The curriculum for their last year in the kindergarten should be differentiated, and there are certain expectations of the older child which are outlined in the chart below – although some of these might be what younger children can already do, the adults differentiate and extend the activities, and they have different expectations of the older children.

Children are not 'made ready' for school, but skills are embedded in order to facilitate a gentle transition to the formal learning stage which we believe should take place in the 7th year.

Adults carefully monitor the all-round development of all children, and thought is given to the older children in providing specific and differentiated tasks and activities across all areas in order to develop, strengthen or enhance skills and abilities such as:

Physical co-ordination and integration, social and emotional relationships, imagination and fantasy (scientific enquiry), aesthetic appreciation, ability to stick at a task/maintain focus, independence, confidence, resilience and love of learning.

The charts below list **some** of the activities and practices in the setting, and relates them to what and how the children learn. The setting itself is an enabling environment, not only through the equipment provided, but in the activities, songs, stories, rhythms and content provided by the adults, who begin to address the older children with more authority and guidance.

The children build on what they already know and can do, however the expectation is that they show progress, take leadership roles, extend their own learning through exploration and discovery, become more articulate, are able to self-regulate and be empathetic, become physically aware and grounded, and are resilient, keen learners.

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE (Speaking, Listening, Attention & Understanding, Reading, Writing)

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
Listen and respond appropriately to adults and their peers	The rich language used throughout the activities in our curriculum give plenty of opportunities to extend development of; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly articulated speech New languages Listening skills Widened vocabulary Understanding behind the meaning Empathy with the speaker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to children Model good clear speech Respond appropriately to questions Remind children to use their ears for listening Model the flexibility, subtlety and fun of language
Build vocabulary and use it appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriate ways to respond to both adults and children Respect for each other Negotiation Introduce own ideas Play with rhythms, rhymes, puns, nonsense words etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help understanding by using alternative words/phrases Use wide vocabulary Correct language or speech by repeating words/mirroring correct speech
Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions.	<i>Some activities older children are competent in and lead on:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Story-time/Puppet-shows – organising others, telling stories, setting up show 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee situations while allowing children opportunity to take a lead in resolving everyday disagreements etc. Provide alternative suggestions
Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ring-time – fluent in songs etc. Play/theatre – acting out parts, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model good listening skills Allow time and encouraging others to speak or respond if necessary

Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> directing Craft activities- helping others, developing own ideas Domestic activities – explaining to younger children how and why, including setting the table and other sequences Tidy up - sorts and sequences, shows others Snack time preparation – e.g. explains why jam or butter, or what the food of the day is, and leads on preparation Role play (real world situations e.g. family, shops, garage) Garden time- shows possibilities Eurythmy – is competent Age appropriate drawing – initiates drawing ideas and explains them Form drawing and shapes and patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model appropriate narrative
Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pays attention to conversations and guides where necessary
Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesizing, imagining and exploring ideas. Sharing ideas with others and adapting and incorporating new concepts in play and other activities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use 'I wonder' Introduce new activities to support play, such as 'what about building...' or 'do we need tickets?'
Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model good spoken English, particularly for EFL children
Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce new topics in story form Support enquiry
Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storytelling skills
Learn verses, songs and rhymes in other language Appreciate that others may use different languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to other languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce verses, songs and rhymes in other languages where possible
Manipulates writing and drawing materials with confidence and correct grip, forming letters and sometimes words such as names	Children are encouraged to hold drawing and writing materials properly, and when they write name, or ask to do so, are shown appropriately by the practitioner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models and corrects pencil grip, handling materials Provides materials Supports child initiated enquiry/writing etc.

MATHEMATICS (Numbers, Shapes, Space and measurement)

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
Count – orally	Through our daily work/curriculum the children practice and learn through practical and hands-on, everyday activities. They develop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> love of number form, patterns problem solving, shape, space and measures mark making or early writing of number Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baking – weighing, measuring flour/liquids etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce counting rhymes, games etc
Identify one more and one less of a given number		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support children's interests in number
Join in with number rhymes and/or games involving addition/subtraction		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plays number games
Use language of more/fewer/less		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models mathematical language in daily activities
Use language such as; more than, less than (fewer), most, least		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses mathematical vocabulary, models language
Recognize and use words and/or shapes of 'half' and 'quarter'		
Recognize and use language of long/short, longer/shorter, tall/shorter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduces maths in daily activity such as counting in baking, measuring in cooking etc. 	

Recognize and use language of heavy/light, heavier than, lighter than	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting the table – right number of chairs, cups, bowls etc. Free play including role-play of; Shops, Banks, Bus journeys – use of money, quantity, time etc. Drawing - mark making and early writing (letter recognition) Building 'houses', dens, vehicles etc. – shapes and geometry, size and weight Craft activities – geometry, size, shapes etc. Finger knitting, plaiting, knotting, weaving etc. Garden work – geometry, weight, measures Ring-time & Games – numbers, geometry, shapes, weight, size etc. Eurythmy – includes songs/stories/movement for quick, slow, tall, short, numbers etc. Tidy time (sorting, patterns, weights) 	
Recognize and use language of full/empty, half, more than		
Recognize and use language of quick, quicker, slow, slower, early, earlier		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model language
Recognize and use language of time – hours, minutes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timekeeping
Recognize the value of money		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play, shopping
Recognize and use language of days, weeks, months, years		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily activity, register
Recognize geometry and different shapes Use positional language, Under/over/behind/round		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models language when drawing, tidying, ringtime, etc. Demonstrate and discuss finger knitting, plaiting, knotting, cord making, weaving etc.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (Seasons, Environment, Everyday Materials & Mechanical Equipment)

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
Show care and empathy towards humans, animals and the environment	Through modelled expected behaviour from the teachers, the children learn:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Model behaviour
Observe, explore, question,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care and empathy towards each other, animal, plants and our environment. mend broken toys & equipment grow, prepare and make their own food Use equipment such as a manual grain mill to grind wheat for the bread baked in kindergarten. pick, clean and press apple juice, using a manual apple press. help in the garden and learning to identify plants Where does dust/dirt come from, and go Composting and recycling <p>Activities:</p> <p>Craft and everyday activities – scissors, needles, weaving looms etc. Woodwork - saws, drills, hammers etc.</p> <p>Children spend time outdoors - all year around. In this way they become aware of weather, temperature, seasons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show awareness in general observations
Use manual equipment such as hand drills, saws, beaters, knives, grain mills, apple press, spinning tops, weaving looms, carding machines or carders,		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mend and care using a variety of equipment (wash windows and cloths, dust and sweep, polish, prepare food)
Recognize plants and animals		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulate
Recognize and use a variety of materials including; wood, wool, water, stone, clay etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide equipment and model use, (e.g. collect sheeps wool, clean, card, dye, wash, felt or spin into wool for weaving or making cords)
Experience the four seasons through everyday activities, ring times, stories, crafts, festivals, celebrations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce seasonal activities Decorate room prepare nature tables (including collecting seasonal materials)
Experience all kind of weather and learn about weather and appropriate clothing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunity for outdoor experiences of weather Take children on outings Introduce processes, (e.g. from planting wheat, to harvesting, winnowing, grinding, making flour, to baking bread, eating, putting crumbs for birds or composting)

Takes responsibility for certain specific tasks and activities	<p>Light candles - use tapers, be aware of the dangers of fire and correct use of equipment</p> <p>Set the table and serve others, wash up and tidy after snack or meals</p> <p>Take leadership roles including run errands - fetch materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model and explain dangers of fire, burning, and correct use of equipment to light candles for instance. • Give suitable tasks on regular basis such as running errands or watering plants, setting the table, washing up, tidying the cloakroom, supporting younger children, fetching materials/food supplies etc. • Provide opportunities for older children to model behaviour and take leadership roles
--	---	---

EXPRESSIVE ART AND DESIGN (Exploring and using a range of materials, Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Being Imaginative and Creative, Music, Eurythmy, Crafts)

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
Use a range of materials creatively.	<p><i>Our entire curriculum is built on experiential learning. The older children are also examples for the younger children, and take a lead in many of the activities.</i></p> <p>Story-time/Puppet-shows & Ring-time – lots of poems, rhymes, singing and use of instruments</p> <p>Play/theatre – set up and take part of a play, singing, play instruments, plays out real world situations – journeys, birth of sibling, holidays, building house, plumbing, harvesting</p> <p>Craft activities – sewing, cutting, modelling, drawing, painting (wet-on-wet painting) wood work</p> <p>Domestic activities – chop vegetables and fruit, prepare and cook food to share, bake, clean, mending</p> <p>Role play & Free play – in-doors and out – plenty of opportunities to be imaginative, build structures, set up plays/puppet-shows etc.</p> <p>Garden time – garden play, climbing, digging (use of correct tools), wood work, mending tools and equipment, skipping</p> <p>Building small worlds in sand or garden out of natural materials taken from the environment</p> <p>Eurythmy – includes songs, poems, music, silks etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares the curriculum content • Learns stories to tell • Provides and performs puppet shows • Models crafts, painting and drawing • Models correct use of tools and activities • Provides for seasonal, cultural and religious festivals and engages families in the process • Provides an enabling environment, including suitable equipment and toys • Provide appropriate seasonal displays
Draw to express their experiences and out of imagination		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models drawing and correct pencil grip using a variety of implements
Paint to express their experiences and out of imagination		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Models painting and correct preparation, cleaning and use of paints and brush
Sculpture in wood, sand, wax		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a variety of modelling materials and models use

Design of different projects in different materials (textiles, felt, wool, wood, clay)		
Singing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepares seasonal ring times
Poems and rhymes		
Use / make / listen to instruments		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides opportunities to use musical instruments such a lyre, glockenspiel, recorder and other percussion instruments

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD (Design & Technology, Cooking and Nutrition, Geography, History, Science)

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
Design	Our curriculum encourages children to explore, make, design, build and evaluate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide suitable activities and equipment and model use
Make & Evaluate	In their play the children build, knock down and build again – improving parts that were instable/unsafe etc. before.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide help with activities
Use real, manual tools (scissors, saw, drill, needle, knife, wheelbarrow etc.)	Children bring in fruit and veg to share with the group. They take part in the daily preparation and cooking of the food we share in kindergarten and with that learn the important of nutrition and wholesome food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support children to explore use of different buildings, such as constructing houses, castles, boats
Build structures		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure H&S and risk assessments are done
Explore safety, stability etc.	Story time/puppet-show and ring times brings knowledge about past and present, seasons and weather, people from far and near, living in huts or castles, village or city, work on a farm or in a shop etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare food, cook and model equipment use
Appreciate and take part in cooking and nutrition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go for walks and outings
Locational knowledge	Craft activities – designing and making by sewing, cutting, modelling, drawing, painting (wet-on-wet painting) wood work Domestic activities – chop vegetables and fruit, prepare and cook food to share, bake, clean, mending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe and remark on clothing or weather
Identify seasonal/daily weather patterns		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model language
Recognize physical features including; beach, cliff, coast, forest, mountain, sea, river, season, weather	Role play & Free play – in-doors and out – plenty of opportunities to be imaginative, build structures, set up plays/puppet-shows, build train/car tracks, construct obstacle courses etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of and interest in environment or travel
Recognize features including; city, village, factory, farm, house, office, harbour, shop etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore or enquire, e.g. holidays
Aware of maps (countries, seas etc.)	Garden time – Enhances physical co-ordination in garden play, climbing, digging, wood work, mending tools and equipment, skipping. By spending extensive time outdoors every day, the children learn about weather and seasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model with bean bags or circle games
Be aware of near/far, left/right		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection, use language • Organise festivals • Explore local culture and surroundings
Be aware of the past, using common words and phrases relating to the past time	Eurythmy – supports the children to experience left/right, up/down, near/far	
	Festivals provide learning, understanding and experiences of different seasons, cultures, countries etc. Children can be examples for the younger children.	

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT (Moving and handling, Health and self-care)

The children learn to:	How they learn:	The adults:
<p>Move freely, using their whole body</p> <p>Jumping</p> <p>Throwing and catching</p> <p>Participate in games and dances</p> <p>Participate in activities which help develop small and large motor skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our curriculum offers extensive opportunities to move and become confident in a range of ways, practicing both small and large motor-skills, coordination, agility, balance and co-operation and developing these until children become competent, balanced, aware of risk and able to take risks in a safe way. Physical integration is vital for later formal learning. • Ring-time – physical movements including dancing and games, bean bag games and exercises • Free play – moving things, building, co-operation • Domestic activities – cutting, chopping, cleaning, tidying, baking, cooking • Garden activities and play – garden work, wood work, sand work, digging, climbing, skipping etc. • Eurythmy – includes physical activities of all sort – small/large, quick/slow, dances and games, detailed imitation of complex movements • Outings – routes, road safety, characteristics of and interaction with local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eurythmy (music and movement) • Go for walks or provides and extends activities outdoors and in • Provide skipping games • Provide games with bean bags • Provides outdoor games • Includes and prepares ring time games and dances • Moves and handles large and small equipment, e.g. building structures • Monitor that older children can climb specific heights or trees • Provides suitable activities such as skipping, or more complicated tasks such as drilling, using woodwork tools, or specific complicated equipment • Encourages older children to take the lead in games, dances, plays
<p>Recognise when they need the toilet, washing hands or cleaning themselves or environment</p> <p>When they are hungry and thirsty Put on/take off appropriate clothing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of warmth and cold, clean and dirty, how to keep things clean and tidy, take a lead in tidy time • Take care of their own and others belongings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages the older children to help younger with dressing, toileting, washing • Encourages older children to take the lead in tidying or cleaning • Encourages older children tasks such as serving food, pouring drinks, clearing after food, washing and drying, sweeping and cleaning, showing younger children what to do

FURTHER READING

Kindertherapeuticum doc. Dr Edmund Schoorel (SWSF)

The Tasks and Content of the Steiner-Waldorf Curriculum Floris Books

EYFS / Steiner Interpretation and Readover Document (SWSF)

You are not the Boss of Me, WECAN

First Grade Readiness (Resources, Insights and tools for Waldorf Educators) WECAN

Developmental Signatures AWSNA

Ready to Learn, Rose and Rawson Hawthorn Press

Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship www.steinerwaldorf.org