

GUIDELINES FOR THE TRAINING OF STEINER/WALDORF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS WORKING WITH THE CHILD FROM BIRTH TO SEVEN

IASWECE Expectations for the Training of Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Educators:

For early childhood educators who carry responsibility for the care and education of the child from birth to school entrance, the completion of a full Steiner/Waldorf early childhood training program is expected. Such early childhood training courses foster the development of the qualities and competencies needed by Steiner/Waldorf early childhood educators.

The guidelines for such trainings are as follows:

A. Purpose, Goals, and Educational Philosophy

1. Training programs support the preparation, ongoing professional development and deepening of the work of Waldorf early childhood educators and caregivers.
2. It is expected that the educator is committed to the ideals and practices of Waldorf early childhood education, as developed by Rudolf Steiner. This education is based on an anthroposophical understanding of the human individuality as a being of body, soul and spirit, and offers protection and respect for the dignity of childhood.

B. The Educational Program and Faculty

1. The training programs are based on the continuing practice and research into Waldorf education, as well as other relevant approaches to pedagogy and adult education.
2. The person responsible for the early childhood program (e.g. program director) is qualified through their experience in Waldorf early childhood education and work with adults. (Including review, evaluation and curriculum development).
3. The teaching faculty members are qualified for their positions and responsibilities by education and/or experience in their field.
4. The training programs employ effective practices in adult education that take into account the learning styles of adults and respect creative and independent thinking.
5. The faculty and staff are committed to ongoing self and professional development. (e.g. participation in conferences, courses, collaborative research groups, meetings of early childhood trainers, etc).
6. The training course content includes a balance of conceptual/academic, self-reflective, artistic and experiential/practical activity.
7. Substantial mentored teaching, practicum or internship in Steiner/Waldorf early childhood settings is an essential component of the training.

8. The program provides appropriate individual student support, assessment and maintains records of attendance, course completion and other relevant documentation.
9. Curriculum and course content include a balance of the following areas, with the understanding that program elements may be configured in a variety of ways. See the section on Curriculum and Course Content below for a listing of specific course content areas. The training course should include a minimum of 400-500 class contact hours plus mentored teaching practice/ internship/practicum.
 - Anthroposophical Studies and Human Development (20 – 25%)
 - Child Development and Waldorf Education (20 – 25%)
 - Practical Methodology (20 -25%)
 - Artistic and Handwork Activities (20 – 25%)
 - Professional and Social Aspects of Waldorf Education (10 -20%)
 - Mentored teaching, Practicum or Internship in addition to the above coursework

C. Program Organization

1. The program recognizes and complies with applicable legal regulations and does not discriminate against any person based on ethnicity, faith, gender or culture.
2. The program, as an expression of the free cultural life, is not based on self-interest or personal gain.
3. The program has a clearly defined organizational structure, effectively implemented.
4. The program has clearly articulated admissions, enrollment, tuition, and program completion policies and procedures.

D. Relations with the Wider Movement

1. The program directors and/or faculty are encouraged to become involved in the broader early childhood movement and participate in such activities as trainers’ meetings and conferences, collaborative research groups, and task force activity on the regional, continental, and international level.

Curriculum and Course Content (Specific areas and program elements)

Curriculum and course content include the following areas, with the understanding that program elements may be configured in a variety of ways.

1. Anthroposophical Studies and Human Development (20 – 25%)

Evolution of Consciousness
 Karma, Destiny and Biography
 Anthroposophical view of the human being
 Spiritual Foundations of the Human Being
 Path of inner development of the adult/educator
 Life and work of Rudolf Steiner

2. Child Development and Waldorf Education (20 -25%)

- Child development pre-birth to 21
- School readiness/Transition from kindergarten to school
- Overview of Waldorf Education
- Development of the senses
- Role of imitation and play
- Development of the will
- Development of movement, language and thinking in the first 7 years
- Child observation and study
- Health and nutrition

3. Practical Activities (20 – 25%)

- Rhythm of the day, week and year
- Festivals and their celebration
- Indoor and outdoor environments
- Meaningful purposeful work and domestic arts
- Language arts – speech, verses, hand gesture games, storytelling, puppetry
- Music and mood of the fifth
- Rhythmic games, movement, gesture
- Working with mixed-age groups
- Bodily care of the young child
- Gardening and working with nature and the elements
- Developmental difficulties and therapeutic approaches

4. Professional and Social Aspects of Waldorf Education (10 -20%)

- Education towards social renewal
- School organization
- Working with colleagues
- Working with parents
- Outreach and advocacy for children
- Diversity and inclusion

5. Artistic and Handwork Activities (20 – 25%)

- Eurythmy
- Painting
- Sculpture - clay modeling and/or woodcarving
- Instrumental music and singing and Speech
- Handwork and crafts – for example, sewing, knitting, soft toy making (dolls, marionettes, etc.), plant dyeing, felting and working with natural materials

6. Substantial Mentored Teaching, Practicum or Internship