

WECAN Shared Principles for Early Childhood Teacher Education

The *WECAN Shared Principles for Early Childhood Teacher Education* form the basis of our understanding of our work together in association and are used in our self-study and membership processes. As a living document, these Shared Principles will continue to be refined through the work of the WECAN Board, the WECAN Early Childhood Teacher Education Committee, and our Member Teacher Education Programs and Institutes.

A. Purpose, Goals, and Educational Philosophy

- A1 In our work with adult students, our training programs support the preparation, ongoing professional development, deepening and renewal of the work of Waldorf early childhood educators and caregivers.
- A2 We are committed to the ideals and essentials of Waldorf/Steiner early childhood education, developed by Rudolf Steiner and based on an anthroposophical understanding of the human individuality as a being of body, soul and spirit, offering protection and respect for the dignity of childhood. (See “The Essentials of Waldorf Early Childhood Education” by Susan Howard in *Mentoring in Waldorf Early Childhood Education*, published by WECAN, and available on the WECAN website).

B. The Educational Program and Faculty

- B1 Our programs are based on the continuing research and practice of Waldorf/Steiner education, and other relevant approaches to pedagogy and adult education.
- B2 The program director or person responsible for the early childhood training program – including review, evaluation and curriculum development - is qualified through experience in Waldorf early childhood education and work with adults.
- B3 Our faculty members are qualified for their positions and responsibilities by education and/or experience in their field.
- B4 Our training programs employ effective practices in adult education that take into account the learning styles of adults and respect creative and independent thinking.
- B5 Our faculty and staff are committed to ongoing self- and professional development as demonstrated by participation in conferences, courses, collaborative research groups and colloquia, meetings of early childhood trainers, etc.
- B6 The training course content includes a balance of conceptual, self-reflective, artistic and experiential/practical activity.
- B7 Our program provides appropriate individual student support and assessment and maintains records of attendance, course completion and other relevant documentation.
- B8 Our program offers a minimum of 450 class contact hours for birth to seven trainings or 300 hours for birth to three trainings. Curriculum and course content includes a balance of the following areas, with the understanding that program elements may be configured in a variety of ways. (See *Curriculum and Course Content* for a listing of specific course content areas.)
 - 1. Anthroposophical Studies and Human Development (20 – 25%)
 - 2. Child Development and Waldorf Education (20 – 25%)
 - 3. Practical and Artistic Activities for the Classroom *or* for the Birth to Three Program (20 -25%)

4. Artistic and Handwork Activities for the Educator (20 – 25%)
5. Professional and Social Aspects of Waldorf Education (10 - 20%)
6. Independent research project

B9 Observation, mentored teaching, practicum or internship in well-established Waldorf early childhood settings is an essential component of the training. In addition to the above course content, our program provides a minimum of the following:

For birth to three programs:

1. In-service students (those working at least 3 days per week in a Waldorf birth to three setting) must have a minimum of three weeks (fifteen days) of observation and practicum in a Waldorf birth to three program, (of which at least two weeks must be in a childcare setting other than their own), and two days each year of mentoring visits in their own classroom.
2. Pre-service students (those not yet working at least three days a week in a Waldorf birth to three setting) must have a minimum of one week (five days) of observation plus four weeks of practicum with experienced Waldorf birth to three early childhood teachers in a birth to three setting and will be visited during a practicum by an Institute-approved Advisor at least once during their training

For birth to seven programs:

1. In-service students (those working at least three days per week in a Waldorf early childhood classroom with children ages three to seven) must have a minimum of three weeks of observation and practicum, (of which at least two weeks must be in classrooms other than their own), and two days of mentoring per year in their own classrooms.
2. Pre-service students (those not yet working at least three days a week in a Waldorf early childhood setting with children ages three to seven) must have a minimum of two weeks of observation and six weeks of practicum with experienced Waldorf EC teachers and would be visited during a practicum by an Institute Advisor at least once during their training

C. Governance, Finances and Administration

- C1** Our program recognizes and complies with applicable legal regulations and does not discriminate against any person in admission, employment, or otherwise, based on ethnicity, race, creed, gender, or national origin, in keeping with federal, state, provincial and local regulations.
- C2** Our program is typically not-for-profit, as an expression of the free cultural life, and is not based on self-interest or personal gain.
- C3** Our program has the physical facilities and clearly defined, effectively implemented organizational structure necessary for the healthy functioning of the program. This includes fiscal, administrative, legal, and personnel policies and procedures.
- C4** Our program has clearly articulated policies and procedures for admissions and dismissal, enrollment, tuition, and program completion.

D. Relations with the Wider Movement

- D1** Our early childhood program director and/or faculty are involved in the broader Waldorf early childhood movement and participate in such activities as teacher trainers' meetings and conferences, collaborative research groups and colloquia, and task force activity on the regional, continental, and international level.