

Essential Elements of Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Education

Anthroposophical Studies and Human Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Evolution of Consciousness ♦ Karma, destiny and biography ♦ Anthroposophical view of the human being ♦ Spiritual foundation of the human being ♦ Path of inner development of the adult/educator
Child Development and Waldorf Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Child development pre-birth to 21 ♦ First grade readiness ♦ Overview of Waldorf education ♦ Sensory development/emphasis on the foundational senses ♦ Role of imitation and play ♦ Development of movement, language and thinking in the first 7 years ♦ Incarnational support, child study and observation ♦ Health and nutrition
Professional and Social Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Education towards social renewal ♦ School organization ♦ Working with colleagues ♦ Working with parents ♦ Outreach and advocacy for children ♦ Meeting the needs of families of diverse backgrounds
Artistic Activities for the Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Eurythmy ♦ Painting ♦ Sculpture – beeswax, clay modeling and/or woodcarving ♦ Instrumental music and singing ♦ Speech ♦ Handwork and crafts-sewing, knitting, soft toy making (dolls, marionettes, etc.), plant dyeing, felting and working with natural materials
Practical Experience with Children	Mentored teaching, practicum and observation in an established Waldorf early childhood setting
Independent Work	Independent research project

Beginning the Journey

The following WECAN Member Teacher Education Institutes and Programs offer recognized full-time, part-time, or practitioner-based Waldorf early childhood teacher education courses (450 hours for 3 to 7 training, 300 hours for birth to 3):

Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Education Institutes and Programs

Full Member Institutes and Programs

Bay Area Center for Waldorf Teacher Training, CA www.bacwtt.org
 The Early Childhood Teacher Education Center at Sophia's Hearth, NH
www.sophiashearthteachers.org
 Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto, ON, Canada www.rsct.ca
 Sunbridge Institute, NY www.sunbridge.edu
 Waldorf Institute of Southern California, CA www.waldorfteaching.org
 Waldorf Teacher Education Eugene, OR www.wtee.org
 West Coast Institute, BC, Canada www.westcoastinstitute.org

Associate Member Institutes and Programs

Alkion Center at Hawthorne Valley, NY www.alkioncenter.org
 Centro de Desarrollo Antroposofico, Cuernavaca, MX
www.antroposofiamexico.org
 Great Lakes Waldorf Institute, Milwaukee, WI www.greatlakeswaldorf.org
 Institut Rudolf Steiner au Quebec, Quebec, Canada
www.institutsteinerquebec.org
 Little Lions Waldorf Education Centre, Ontario, Canada,
www.littlelionswaldorf.ca
 Sound Circle Center, WA www.soundcirclecenter.org
 Waldorf Teacher Education Eugene, OR www.wtee.org

WECAN-recognized Birth to Three Trainings

Early Childhood Teacher Education Center at Sophia's Hearth, NH
www.sophiashearth.org
 Rudolf Steiner Centre Toronto, ON, Canada www.rsct.ca
 West Coast Institute, BC, Canada www.westcoastinstitute.org

Please see the WECAN website for a regularly-updated list of WECAN Associate and Full Member Institutes and Programs.

Continuing the Journey

Further study programs and professional development courses are also offered by Member Teacher Education Institutes and other organizations. For a detailed listing, please see the calendar listings on the WECAN website at www.waldorfearlychildhood.org.

For more information on Waldorf education contact:

The Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN)
 Tel: 845.352.1690 email: info@waldorfearlychildhood.org
www.waldorfearlychildhood.org
 The Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA)
www.waldorfeducation.org/awsna
 The International Association for Steiner/ Waldorf Early Childhood Education (IASWECE) www.iaswece.org

A Journey of Becoming Working as a Waldorf Early Childhood Educator



What young children need most of all is ample time and space to explore the world and discover their precious human capacities through joyful play and imitation. This reality stands in sharp contrast to the dizzying pace and complex technology offered by modern life today.



How can we help protect childhood?

Waldorf early childhood educators understand the essential needs of the young child and support both children and parents by creating life-nourishing environments that enhance growth and development during the critical first seven years of life. A healthy early childhood provides a strong foundation for the future development of individuals and humanity as a whole.

Becoming a Waldorf Educator

Waldorf training programs are based on Rudolf Steiner's insights into the nature of the human being and on his world view, referred to as anthroposophy. All early childhood courses include the study of child development, artistic work, development of relevant skills,

and opportunities to observe and practice in early childhood classrooms and childcare settings.

Essential qualities for working as a Waldorf early childhood educator that are cultivated through Waldorf training and ongoing professional development are:

- ♦ Love and respect for children as spiritual individuals who bring with them their own life destinies
- ♦ The ability to create warm, nurturing environments that serve the needs of the young child
- ♦ Skills in building collaborative relationships with parents and colleagues
- ♦ A commitment to life-long self-development in order to become a model worthy of imitation by the children.



Waldorf early childhood educators work in a variety of settings, including Waldorf kindergartens, school and home-based programs, parent-child programs and childcare centers. They work in large cities, small towns and rural communities, serving families of diverse economic, ethnic, racial and gender backgrounds.

WECAN Expectations for Teacher Education

For early childhood educators who carry responsibility for the care and education of the child from birth to school entrance, completion of a Waldorf early childhood teacher education program recognized by WECAN is expected.

Recognized Waldorf early childhood teacher education programs offer a minimum of 300 class contact hours for birth to three training and a minimum of 450 hours for birth to seven training. Mentored teaching and extensive practicum and observation are an additional expectation.

The WECAN Shared Principles for Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Education, available on the WECAN website, describe the course content and criteria for recognized Waldorf early childhood teacher education programs.

These are the expectations for birth to three practitioners, parent-child class leaders, lead nursery, preschool and kindergarten teachers and extended care providers in Waldorf schools and early childhood settings. These expectations are consistent with the guidelines of the International Association for Steiner/Waldorf Early Childhood Education (see www.iaswece.org)

For assistant teachers, introductory coursework of at least one week (or its equivalent) in Waldorf early childhood education is expected. For those who intend to continue in this position, further coursework is expected, and a full WECAN-recognized training is recommended for all birth to seven practitioners.

Ongoing participation in mentoring, evaluation, conferences, deepening courses and workshops is an essential part of the continuing professional development of the Waldorf early childhood educator.



The Path of Waldorf Early Childhood Teacher Education

- ♦ **Introductory courses** focus on basic knowledge and skills, and provide an excellent preparation for early childhood teacher education.
- ♦ **Full-time programs** generally provide students with greater opportunities for personal development and a more extensive knowledge of the anthroposophical foundations of Waldorf education.
- ♦ **Part-time programs**, ranging in length from two to four years, offer students more time between sessions to digest and practice what they are studying.
- ♦ **Practitioner-based programs** blend course work with ongoing experiences with children and mentoring by experienced educators.



A Never-ending Journey

The professional journey of an early childhood educator may begin with his or her training, but the process of learning, changing and growing continues throughout an educator's career. There are opportunities for specialization and deepening in such areas as birth to three, child care, and early childhood therapeutic approaches.

Professional development courses help teachers deepen their understanding and renew their commitment to becoming worthy models for the children in their care. The children themselves bring educators many challenges and opportunities for growth. Meeting the children's life questions with honesty and compassion never ceases to enrich the Waldorf educator's own journey of development.

Waldorf in the World

By becoming a Waldorf teacher you are joining a global educational movement. There are nearly 2000 Waldorf kindergartens, home programs, childcare centers, and preschools in more than 60 countries throughout the world.

