



Receive the children with reverence  
Educate them with love  
Let them go forth with freedom

—Rudolf Steiner

## Parent Handbook

Dearest Parents,

A warm welcome to you from Acorn Waldorf School! I am so happy that you have chosen Acorn, and look forward to working in partnership with you to make this time rich and rewarding for both you and your child. I hope that this handbook will help to create a harmonious transition between home and school in the weeks and years to come. My purpose is to present you with comprehensive information about the school and Waldorf education and to offer guidelines for navigating within the AWS community. Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook and to keep it in a convenient place for future reference.

Motria Shuhan  
Director

## Arrival and Departure Times

### Arrival

8:30 am Monday through Friday

### Pick-up

12:30 pm (half day) **or** 3:00 pm (full day) Monday through Friday

## Philosophy

Waldorf education is based on the work of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian-born philosopher, artist, scientist and teacher. Steiner offered penetrating insights into a broad spectrum of human endeavors based on a spiritual vision. Steiner called his work Anthroposophy or Spiritual Science. He emphasized that faculties lie dormant in the human soul, which, if properly nurtured, can lead to knowledge of spiritual reality, to self-knowledge, and to a new understanding of the world. He described a path of self-development using clear thinking, acute observation, refinement of feeling, and transformation of the will.

Anthroposophy is not taught to students. In the words of Rudolf Steiner, it is not our intention to teach growing human beings our ideas or the contents of our world conception. We are aiming at education for the sake of any special dogma.

Author of dozens of books, Steiner also gave approximately 6,000 lectures on a wide range of subjects. In addition to Waldorf education, he initiated biodynamic farming, an approach to the care and education of those with developmental disabilities, and a movement art.

### **Waldorf Early Childhood Education**

The Waldorf approach to education emphasizes protecting the realm of early childhood in all its wonder and magic. Waldorf educators carefully nurture the creative play by which young children have always done their most profound learning. By example, teachers and parents encourage a reverence for all life, enthusiasm for work and compassion for each other.

Understanding that young children live in the world thoroughly and deeply through their senses, Waldorf education provides each child with environments that are beautiful and rich with natural healthful materials such as wood, stones, shells, cotton, silk and wool. The simplicity of the toys invites young children to engage in their actively growing faculties of imagination. From imaginative play a foundation of artistic and creative abilities is established that later promotes clear thinking.

Children grow through creative and open-ended play. They try on every imaginable situation. They serve tea, build houses and villages, sail ships, care for baby dolls and drive fire engines. They explore life in homes and farms, forests and mountains, underwater caverns and outer space. They create these worlds through simple natural materials. In the course of play, the children grow in all areas: physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively and spiritually.

Waldorf education encourages artistic expression in a variety of mediums. The use of quality art materials is very satisfying for the children and indicates respect for their creative selves. Music is celebrated with joyful singing, in groups and individually throughout the day.

The Waldorf approach offers a wealth of beautiful language experiences in the form of circle time, verses, poems, and songs. The telling of fairy tales, folk tales, nursery rhymes and stories developed by wise humans over the centuries, nourishes the spirit and the moral development of children. These traditional stories also offer children glimpses into various cultures around

the world. The use of language draws children in to the wonderful rhythms of the spoken and written word.

Recognizing the importance of each child, becoming a loving member of the human family, Waldorf education actively seeks to encourage the qualities of compassion and moral courage. The teachers guide the children in social skills such as problem solving, negotiation, inclusiveness in work and play, and acceptance of individual differences as well as pleasant conversation and manners at the table. Waldorf educators support and encourage community building within the school and amongst families.

The natural world is an everyday part of Waldorf curriculum. Children and teachers reverently and enthusiastically engage in outdoor explorations. Children are encouraged to spend time in the garden, to dig in the earth, explore fields and woods, nature crafts, pressing of cider in the fall and maple sugaring in the spring, making bread from wheat to grain to flour to table, are all important activities within the Waldorf model. The changing seasons are celebrated with festivals that include the whole family and the wider community, as well.

In Waldorf education, each day has its rhythm of active outgoing and energetic activities balanced by more quiet and inward times. Daily, weekly and yearly rhythms are internalized by the children and give them strength and security.

### **Rhythm of the day**

**Children may be dropped off any time after 8:30 a.m., no later than 8:45 a.m. Each day is planned with the children in mind.** If you will be delayed, or your child will be absent, please call AWS as soon as possible.

The teacher greets each child individually as they arrive. It is hoped that parents will establish a consistent, short leave-taking ritual at the inside door of the classroom. Meal preparation and free play begins our day. There may also be a seasonal craft in various stages of completion. Between 9:20 - 9:40 a.m. we have our snack time. Snack, prepared with the children is enjoyed family style. At 10:15 a.m. we will clean up our room and gather for circle time. Following a short rest time teachers and children will enjoy an extended outside playtime, which may include walks on trails, outdoor gardening, nature collection and investigation, and active play.

Pick-up for the morning program is 12:30 p.m.

Afternoon pick-up is 2:45pm – 3pm.

### **Inside Acorn Waldorf School...**

A child will gradually become accustomed to working within a group, listening to stories, interacting with a teacher and following a daily routine, while at the same time being aided in his or her

development as an individual through the encouragement of creative play, practical life skills and artistic opportunities. The teacher deeply understands the young child and the need for movement, as well as the child's devotion to learning about the world through imitating everything he or she experiences.

Here are some of the core activities of the AWS program and the significance of each in relationship to lifelong learning:

### **Creative Play Time**

The children have a long period of time where they are encouraged to imagine and play with a wide variety of natural materials and playthings, following their own initiative. During this time, the teacher is involved in preparing the snack, sewing, cleaning, making toys or any of a number of practical activities with which the children are welcome to participate. An atmosphere of work and play permeates the room. Being able to follow a train of thought or carry a task to completion is very important for later academic life, such as solving complicated math problems or writing a report. This is a skill children will need throughout their lives.

Within the activities of play, children integrate the world and practice their life skills such as movement and balance, sensory integration, speech and language capacity, social and emotional interactions, and imaginative and cognitive development.

### **Circle Time**

The class is brought together to sing songs and recite verses with the teacher. These may be connected with the seasons, a particular fairy tale or story, or just part of the general lore of childhood. Circle time also includes developmental movement activities with the songs and verses.

Repeating and remembering verses sets the stage for the more intense memory work that will be required in elementary school. Repetition is also recently lauded as a foundation for healthy brain development. Rhyming sounds and alliteration found in poems and songs educate the ear, forming the beginnings of spelling and phonics. Directed movement is a basis for healthy brain development.

### **Artistic and Craft Activity**

Wet-on-wet watercolor painting, beeswax modeling, crayon drawing, as well as various forms of handwork such as finger knitting, simple sewing and woodworking are done as group activities or at the individual initiative of a child. High quality, organic materials are used for these activities.

These activities encourage the child's natural sense of beauty, color, and form, as well as laying the groundwork for artistic techniques that will be needed later. They also aid in the development of fine motor skills.

### **Music**

Singing is woven throughout the day and is often used for transitioning from one activity to another. Sometimes simple instruments, such as chimes and kinder-harps, are also available for the children's use. Simple singing games provide songs and rhymes for parents and children alike to enjoy. The

children learn to mark the seasons, develop their sense of rhythm, and enhance their memory skills through the singing of specifically chosen songs. Music lays the foundation for future math and engineering skills as well as a soothing influence throughout life.

### **Outdoor Play**

Similar to the indoor creative playtime, the group is taken outdoors to experience the natural world in all its different seasons. You will find our Kindergarten class outside in all but the most formidable weather. A child who has had an experience of the seasons of the year can enter very deeply and comfortably into later studies of plants and animals, the weather, geology, astronomy and other natural sciences. Extensive outdoor experiences also hone the child's observation skills.

### **Snack Time**

This is another group activity where the children eat together family style with their teachers. It is likely that they have also helped to prepare the food and set the table. Afterwards, they clear the table and wash their dishes. An emphasis on gratitude for the food and on table manners sets the stage for a lifelong social skill. Wholesome and organic snacks are prepared by the teachers with the participation of children. Some of the groceries for snack are provided by the parents on a weekly rotation; you will be notified of when your family has their turn.

### **Story Time**

During the course of the day, the children are gathered together to hear the teacher tell a special story. The ability to sit and listen to an adult for a sustained period of time is a skill that is gradually developed. The oral tradition of language arts development in the Waldorf school and the content of the stories expose the children to the beauty of language and literacy.

### **Festivals**

Seasonal festivals are celebrated, establishing a connection to the natural rhythms that sustain us. The celebration of a festival is the culmination of some weeks of preparation and anticipation. As this picture slowly fades, preparations for the next festival slowly begin. Celebrating together lays the groundwork for cultural and social diversity. The rhythmic experiences help parents as they seek to find their own balance with their children in home life.

### **Life Arts**

Part of the daily experience is tending to the domestic life (cleaning, cooking, repairing) and self care (toileting, hair brushing, hand washing). It is a process-oriented approach. For example, the children may grind the flour that they will later mix into their flour for breadmaking. Involving the children in

the practical activities and care of their materials, their environment, and themselves lays the groundwork for organizational skills needed in adult life.

### **Food in the classroom**

Warm snacks and lunches are prepared and served family style each day with organically grown ingredients whenever possible. Snack is served but it is important that the children eat a hearty breakfast at home. If for some reason, your child has not eaten before coming to school, please inform one of the teachers, so that we can be attentive to his or her needs.

### **The Festivals of the Year**

Waldorf education has its roots in the Christian tradition but does not seek to teach a particular religious view. Rather, the human spirit in each child finds its universal expression in seasonal festivals celebrated through story and artistic presentation in the classroom and in family festivals.

Families from a wide range of religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds are welcomed at Acorn Waldorf School, and differences are honored. If you are interested in celebrating special holidays within your child's classroom, you are welcome to talk with your child's teacher.

Children enjoy preparing for the festivals by making crafts, baking special treats, learning seasonal songs, and more. Nature stories and thematic tales help bring the deeper significance of each season to the children in a pictorial way.

### **Birthdays**

On or shortly after a child's birthday, we invite the birthday child's family to join us in our celebration from 9:00 – 9:30 a.m. The birthday story is presented as a picture of the child's own birth and growth. This can be a reassuring, satisfying story for the young child. In its simple pictorial beauty, it answers many of the child's questions and wonderings in a way that is suited to their imagination. The birthday child may bring simple little treasures to share with the other children – shells, feathers, shiny stones, flowers or handmade treats – so that the birthday is a celebration of sharing and giving as well as receiving. Children with summer birthdays will be celebrated at the end of the year as a group.

### **Clothing**

Young children have not yet developed the temperature controlling ability that enables them to make decisions about the appropriate clothing for the day. It is our responsibility as adults to ensure that the children are adequately dressed. In cooler temperatures children need long sleeves and leggings for the girls at almost all times for both indoor and outdoor protection and should keep an outer layer (vest, shirt or sweater) with their extra clothing at school.

Along with the sweater, each child should have at school:

- A pair of strong secure non-slippery indoor shoes with backs. No crocs or clog types please.
- A complete change of clothes (socks, underwear, pants, and shirt) marked with her/his name. These are kept in the cubbies and need to be replenished regularly by the parents.

**Please label each item of clothing clearly and check the baskets in the cubby room for lost & found items.**

We go outdoors every day, through the seasons. It is of the utmost importance that the children be dressed appropriately and warmly. Perhaps the most valuable items of clothing are wool or silk/wool undershirts or vests, long johns and hoods (balaclavas). Wool has the ability to breathe and does not need to be laundered as often as cotton. Wool will also generate warmth when wet, and make it possible for a child to be comfortable and confident in going outdoors even on the coldest day. Woolens can become a second skin and parents have reported that when worn to bed, even a restless child can sleep through the night. In the autumn, parents find that a group co-op order of woolens makes these items more affordable.

Please note that our school location will have snow, rain and wind. The children need coats and snow pants, raincoats and rain pants, mittens, hats, and boots for cold or rainy weather so that their experience of nature and the elements is a rewarding one. Layers are essentials! Please keep in mind that body heat escapes most rapidly from the head and neck. When in doubt, make sure your child has more than enough clothing. Sturdy clothes for active children are in order. We bake, paint, play in the mud, etc. We ask that children do not wear jewelry or watches. These are easily lost or broken which can be upsetting to the child.

We also ask that children not wear garments with neon colors, strong graphic designs, or media images. We have found that those can be distracting as well as over-stimulating.

## **Toys**

The early childhood classroom is developed carefully to support the work and play life of the children. Highly formed toys with one role are less conducive to imaginative play, thus our emphasis is on natural, simple toys that lend themselves to easy transformations according to the child's imagination. Over a period of time, they child will discover many possibilities for each object. It is natural for children to wish to show friends things that are precious to them. It is our experience, however, that bringing toys or books from home can create difficult situations. We therefore request that the children not bring such items to school but wait for the opportunity to share their own toys during friends' visits at their homes.

Some children may wish to bring a small blanket, stuffed animal or doll to school to help the transition from home. The teacher can assist the child in finding a safe place for these objects to live for the morning.

## Behavior Guide

At Acorn Waldorf School, we take many measures to prevent behavior problems. Our goal is to support the development of self-discipline within each child and to help him or her develop social skills. Our own professional and inner work brings understanding of childhood developmental issues and gives us realistic expectations for the children. We strive to model ideal behavior through our interactions between each other, as teachers, with the children, and with you as parents. The rhythm of our day goes a long way toward helping the children develop inner form and the impulse to care for others, their playthings, and their environment. The classroom environment also affects behavior, therefore utmost consideration is given to the physical space of the classroom.

We will always share any concerns, or specific incidents we have about your child with you as we hope you will share with us any events that may be stressful in the life of your family that would affect your child's behavior in school.

We will use behavior guidance that is fair, reasonable and suited to the age of the child. We will not use any corporal punishment (spanking) in my program. If a child persists in problem behavior (hitting, biting, breaking toys, etc.), we will ask you to come and pick up the child from school for the remainder of the day.

- Approaches to discipline that are used at AWS are:

- ***Gesture*** - Without calling or speaking, we indicate with a gesture what we would like the child to do (i.e. sit down, quiet, etc.).
- ***Royal "we"*** - Speak in "we" rather than individualizing the children. This helps them to learn to participate and takes the personal out of the equation. Ex: "Now we are sitting down," or, "We are putting on our shoes."
- ***Privileged "may"*** - When asking a child to do a task or deed, we speak with truthfulness. We don't phrase a request as a question if we do not truly want to receive a yes or no response. Ex: "You may close the door."
- ***Pictorial Language*** - Children live in pictures. When we make a request through the use of creative language, children often respond with delight and enjoyment. Ex: to encourage a child to help put all the "food" back in their play kitchen we might say: "Let's collect all the muffins in the basket," or, "Don't let the ice cream melt—let's put it in the freezer."
- ***Even, objective tone of voice*** - When our voice wavers and escalates to urgency, we lose ourselves (our consciousness) and the child loses respect for us. Discipline is for the benefit of the child and is done with love and respect.
- ***Save "NO" for harm to self and others*** - Otherwise, we tell the children what they may do rather than what they may not. We describe what we want to see the child doing.
- ***If NO, then when YES?*** - What are the underlying needs of the child? Is there a more appropriate way for them to have that need met?

Ex: If the child is knocking another child's block castle over, we can create a place where things can be knocked over and broken down.

- **Create healing relative to the deed** - Ex: Have the child who hurt another help with the healing of the injured child by giving them an ice pack or just a kiss on the boo-boo.
- **Objectify the deed** - By seeing the inherent good in each child, we can then separate their behavior from who they are. This prevents the child from seeing him or herself as "bad." Ex: "I see those hands are knocking into things, let's make them warm, or help them do good work."
- **Healing stories** - Stories are told that provide examples and models of how to treat one another with kindness and gentleness. These moral lessons, told through stories, sink deeply into the child's consciousness and provide a way for them to check their behavior.

## Parents and Acorn Waldorf School

AWS encourages parent participation in the life of the school. Time, skills and creative ideas are welcomed! Volunteer activities, including helping to spruce up the grounds during a Family Work Party, coordinating a group order of woolens, taking home a basket of laundry at the end of the week or creating crafts for the outreach events provide a mantle of warmth for the school and the children.

## Parent/Teacher Conversations

Parent/Teacher conversations are scheduled twice a year to provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to share their impressions and concerns. Individual conferences can be arranged with teachers at any time if parents have a special concern about their child. Teachers appreciate being informed of significant changes or circumstances in your child's life.

## Parent Evenings

The kindergarten teacher holds at least four parent evenings a year, an important way for parents to meet one another and to discuss questions about their child's education. Attendance is very important for building the healthy communication needed in support of the child in the classroom. Children are not permitted at these times.

## The Teachers

In the Waldorf approach to early childhood, the teachers build a bridge between home and elementary school. They meet the children in their miraculous world, in their innate connection with life, and from there gently coax them into ability and self-awareness, without sacrificing their sense of wonder in the process. The teachers strive to be worthy of imitation and to create a naturally rich environment in an atmosphere of purposeful activity.

## Procedures for Addressing Concerns Raised by Parents

Parents who have concerns about any aspect of their child's school experience are asked to voice those concerns directly and in a timely way to the child's lead teacher. It is important that the meeting to discuss the matter be scheduled for a time when both parent(s) and teacher can devote their full attention to the concern brought forward. At the time of scheduling, the parent(s) should make clear to the teacher the essential nature of the concern. That way, the teacher can prepare for the scheduled meeting in a professional, reflective manner.

## Safety

To protect our school and children, parents are asked to submit a list to your child's teacher of all persons who are authorized to pick up your child from school other than other AWS parents. Please update this list as necessary. Anytime a child is to be picked up by someone whose name does not appear on this parent-approved list, parents must send a note giving special permission. The specially approved driver must then identify himself or herself to the teacher before taking the child. ***Under no circumstances will children be released to unauthorized adults.***

Playground supervision after dismissal times is not provided. The following AWS Safety Guidelines must still be observed on campus outside of school hours.

### Safety Guidelines

1. Parental Responsibility - Parents are responsible for their children until the teacher greets the child in the morning of a school day, and as soon as the teacher says good-bye to the child in the afternoon of a school day. Parents who accompany their children in the Roots and Shoots Parent-Child program are responsible for their children at all times.
2. Traffic - Children are to remain on grassy areas or paths behind the yellow rope and not in the driveway. Adults are asked not to stand in the roadway.
3. Adults are asked to help children return all playground equipment—sleds, tools, and so on—to the shed at the end of every outdoor period.

## Health Policies

Because at AWS we are concerned with the whole child and find a relationship between health and child development, you will find your child's teacher receptive to any comments you wish to share about your child's health, illnesses past and present, sleeping and eating habits, stresses, and home-life rhythms.

If a child receives a minor injury during school hours, he or she will be offered a homeopathic dose of arnica, a band-aid or salve as needed. If a child requires more significant first aid, the parent will be contacted.

Any child who is ill with an infectious or contagious condition must not be brought to school until the end of the infectious phase. If your child is ill and will not be attending that morning, please call Motria at 845-443-1541 between 7 and 8:00 a.m. If there is some question about your child's state of health, it is often better to keep your child at home.

Children who have the following symptoms or illnesses may not attend school:

- an illness that includes vomiting
- a virus
- a temperature over 100 degrees
- pink eye
- diarrhea
- a parasitic infection
- chicken pox (The child may return when all the blisters have dried and formed scabs, usually about 6 days after the onset of the rash.)
- any communicable or contagious disease

*We request that parents give their children at least one full day of rest at home after a fever.*

Parents will be contacted if a child develops any symptoms that suggest illness such as:

- Unusual listlessness
- Excessively red or draining eyes
- Skin rash
- Severe cough
- Persistent nausea, with or without vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Persistent headache, stomachache, or sore throat
- Elevated temperature

Communicable Diseases - Children with the following communicable diseases will be excluded for the time periods stated below.

- *Impetigo*: There must be no draining lesions, and the child must have received 24 hours of treatment.
- *Head Lice*: The child must be free of all lice and eggs before returning; treatment alone is not sufficient for re-entry. The child's head will be checked before the child may return to class. All blankets, pillows, and articles of clothing that may have been exposed to lice should be taken home and washed thoroughly.
- *Scabies*: The child must stay home until at least 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- *Throat/Scarlet Fever*: The child is to have 24 hours of antibiotics or equivalent treatment before returning to school.
- *Chicken Pox*: The child will be excluded from school until all lesions are crusted over and no new lesions have developed for 24 hours.

- *Ringworm*: The child will be excluded until treatment has been started.
- *Conjunctivitis*: The child is to have 24 hours of treatment before returning to school.
- *Mumps*: The child must stay home until he or she is without fever for 24 hours, and all facial swelling has resolved.
- *Measles*: The child must stay home until he or she is without fever for 24 hours and the rash has resolved.

## **Immunizations**

We are required by state law to keep a current record of your child's immunizations in our files, along with a medical form reflecting a physician well-visit within the previous 12 months. Each time your child is immunized, you must promptly provide an updated copy of your child's immunization record or notify the school so that we can update our record of your child's immunizations. We are required to update our records of your child's immunizations each year. If you have chosen not to immunize your child, we must have a copy of your religious exemption letter in our files.

## **Privacy Policy**

- We will do all that we can to protect your family's privacy and will abide by the state privacy laws. We will keep all records and information about your child and your family private and confidential, unless we have your written permission to reveal specific information.
- You may contact Motria to discuss issues about your child up until 9pm on weeknights.
- We do not discriminate based on race, color, sex, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, or public assistance status.

## **Mandated Reporting**

AWS teachers are state-mandated reporters and are required to report any suspected cases of physical or sexual abuse or neglect. If we have reason to believe that your child has been abused or neglected, we will report the situation to our licenser or to the local child protection office.

## **AWS Records for Your Child**

We will keep the following records for your child; you are responsible for updating these records immediately when any of this information changes:

- emergency contact information, including the name of a backup person in case we are unable to reach you, and the phone numbers of the child's doctor and dentist, and consent to obtain emergency medical or dental care

- a list of everyone who is authorized to drop off and pick up the child
- Medical form including current immunizations and record of physician well-visit within previous 12 months
- a signed and completed enrollment form
- a signed agreement regarding tuition payment arrangements
- any special care or health requirements for your child
- Photo permission form
- Field trip permission form (this is especially for Kindergarten children who attend Afternoon Adventure)

### **Snow Days**

Assuming teachers have internet service, they will send email and Remind App notice (see below) to all parents regarding any closings or delays, usually by 7AM. On rare occasions, decisions may be made later in the morning, but always before 7:30AM. In the event of an early dismissal from school, teachers will call and send Remind App texts.

### **Tuition Payment Dates, Late Payments, and Interest Fees**

A detailed tuition payment policy is included in the enrollment and contract package and is available upon request.

### **Withdrawals and Late Entrances**

Enrollment is made for the entire year, and school expenses are budgeted accordingly. Therefore, no reduction in tuition is made for absence due to illness or vacation. Tuition for children enrolling after the start of the school year will be prorated from the date of entrance.

One month's notice is required prior to withdrawal from any AWS program. After conversing with the teacher, parents must give notice in writing of their intention to withdraw their child. Tuition is due for the coming month whether or not the child attends AWS during that period.

If a child is withdrawn before March 15, the Director may refund a prorated portion of the year's tuition. If a child is withdrawn after March 15, the full school-year tuition is due.

### **Rhythm and Home Life**

A key element of Waldorf education is rhythm: the rhythms of the day, the week, and the year, including the seasons and festivals. Simple rituals help to mark the rhythm of the school day: the lighting of a candle at story time, a blessing at snack time, a good-bye circle or song. A rhythmic home life harmonizes with the school experience, strengthens the child, and makes

life easier for the entire family. Regular times for meals, chores, play, homework, and bed help build a rhythm and lead to healthy child development.

## **Screen Time**

Acorn Waldorf School is dedicated to nurturing the children's capacities for imagination, healthy feeling, independent thinking, and active willing. It is our experience that these capacities develop best through warm human interaction and the children's enthusiastic immersion in the natural world, with all of their senses fully engaged. The debilitating effects of media on children's developing capacities are increasingly apparent to us, and are well documented by independent researchers. By screen time we mean the full array of visual and aural electronic devices, including, but not limited to handheld devices such as iPhones, videos, DVD's, video games, iPods, CD walkman units, computers, computer games, television and radio.

Of equal concern are large-screen movies, whether in the theater or at home. We fully recognize the prevalence of media in our culture and the need that many adults have for this in their vocation and leisure time. We must also recognize, however, that the adult has the ability to absorb and consciously process these experiences. This a child cannot yet do. It is not only the content that is harmful, but the actual physical and psychological processes involved. The passivity inherent in media viewing runs counter to children's active engagement with the world, and deprives them of the full use of their senses. The fast-paced imagery and fragmentation works against the more gradual development of their own concentration and imagination. After a day filled with creative play, children need a quiet time to work through their experiences, rather than additional stimulation. We find that Waldorf education works best with children who experience little or no media at all. We strongly urge the elimination of all media in the first six years of life, and with parental involvement through fifth grade. This is especially important on school days. When children are actively and imaginatively engaged with the natural world, they experience the joy of their own energy. Their energy soon becomes will power, self-discipline and ultimately, self-direction. With a will, they apply themselves to all artistic endeavors - the painting that nourishes it, or the drawing that enlivens it. Children's thinking also becomes mobile and imaginative: their capacity for living vividly into the stories they hear becomes the capacity of empathy for their fellow humans in adulthood. As adults, too, they become independent, creative individuals, feeling at home in the world. Seen in this light, it is not so much a matter of avoiding media, as it is one of simply allowing the natural capacities of children to unfold unimpeded.

Our teachers are happy to work with you to offer support and suggestions for reducing and eventually eliminating your child's media exposure. We have found that when adults work together on this issue, it becomes less of an issue for students.

## **Sources of Books, Toys and Supplies**

To explore or purchase books, toys, art supplies, and anything Waldorf, the following web sites will lead you to many other sites of interest: [anthropress.org](http://anthropress.org), [waldorfinthehome.org](http://waldorfinthehome.org), [bellalunatoys.com](http://bellalunatoys.com), & [waldorfsupplies.com](http://waldorfsupplies.com)

## Library

AWS has a number of books about education, parenting, family life and child development. Several books are displayed on the shelf in the mudroom. Parents and friends are encouraged to borrow books. Please sign them out and don't forget to return them.

## Reading List

Below are suggested titles for adult reading about Waldorf education:

Beyond the Rainbow Bridge - Barbara Patterson

You Are Your Child's First Teacher — Rahima Baldwin Dancy

Nokken - A Danish Approach to Waldorf-based Child Care - Helle Heckman

The Hurried Child: Growing Up Too Fast Too Soon — D. Elkind

Waldorf Education: A Family Guide — P. Johnson Fennert and K. Rivers

Simplicity Parenting – Kim John Payne

"The various activities of later life are carried out by the child in their play, which they conduct in full earnestness. Out of intellectual efforts by adults, all sorts of occupations and toys have been conceived for children, but children merely want to re-enact the actual work of adults. At kindergarten age the child really has the urge to imitate what the grown-ups are doing. It is therefore the task of kindergartens to introduce the activities in life in such forms that they can enter into the play of the child. . . . What one brings to the education of children should be taken from life itself."

Rudolf Steiner, 1923

