



**Galway
Steiner
National School**

Newsletter

Spring 2018



In the heart of a seed,
Buried deep, so deep,
A dear little plant
Lay fast asleep.

'Wake', said the sunshine,
'and creep to the light.'

'wake', said the voice,
Of the rain drops bright.

The little plant heard,
And it rose to see
What the wonderful
Outside world might be.'

The Little Plant. From the 'plant baby and its friends'.

Kate I. brown

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Leabharlann



We have just taken delivery of new books based on Steiner Education, all of which are in our library which you can find in the oifig (office). We also hold issues of the Kindling Journal for Steiner Waldorf early childcare and education. If you wish to borrow any of these books and magazines, please sign the take out sheet for the book you are borrowing.

The latest Kindling Issue covers the theme of sleep. If this topic is of interest, feel free to drop in and take a copy of any of the many articles.

German Family Looking for au pair

A family from Doettingen / Germany are looking for an Au Pair.

Hello! We are a German family with 3 children aged 10, 9 and 3 years and we would be happy to welcome you to support our family life and to develop yourself.

What we offer:

- ~ a nice family with anthroposophic background (children are attending Steiner school and Steiner Kindergarten, mother is anthroposophic physician, father is engineer).
- ~ your own room in our house, free board and lodging.
- ~ living in a very beautiful German village, located close to the wood and a beautiful river nearby; close to the cities of Oldenburg, Bremen and Wildeshausen.
- ~ an opportunity to develop your German language.
- ~ a bike for cycling trips.
- ~ leisure activities available in our village such as horse riding, art school, choir singing, some sports.
- ~ €200 per month pocket money.

We would be very happy if you were interested. Please contact us for more information and give us some information about you (interests, experiences, expectations):

familiaringermany@gmail.com

FrÁSAÍ NUA

new phrases



Na Laethanta

Dé Luain

Dé Máirt

Dé Céadaoin

Déardaoin

Dé hAoine

Dé Sathairn

Dé Domhnaigh

Days

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

Pronunciation

(Day LOO-in)

(Day march)

(Day KAY-deen)

(DAY-ar-deen)

(Day HEEN-yeh)

(Day SA-ha-rin)

(Day DOH-nee)

An Bosca Lón

The Lunch Box



Sneaic

Snack

Lón

Lunch

Úll

Apple

Oráiste

Orange

Banana

Banana

Piorra

Pear

Cáis

Cheese

Ceapaire

Sandwich

Uisce

Water

Bainne

Milk

Blessings before meal

Blessing our food with a favourite Waldorf mealtime blessing verse before we eat it is cherished everyday tradition that is meaningful in so many ways. And not just for children. Blessing our food is just as meaningful for adults too.

Firstly, it gives us a moment to calm and collect ourselves before we eat. We quieten down and turn our thoughts inwards for a moment so that we can be present in our meal.

It also teaches us to be mindful of what we eat, to spare a thought of where our food comes from and the cosmic energy that has gone into producing our meal.

It reminds us to be grateful for the food we have and for the people or animals who have toiled to bring it to us.

And, it helps us to come together in a united spirit of gratitude. This is a beautiful thing.



thanks

A special word of thanks to Raheen Woods Steiner National School for welcoming our teachers to Gordon Woolard's *Form Drawing Training* in March and Sebastian Kallionaki's *Games Training* in April.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MAY DAY



Although it has been speculated that the maypole originated in the Iron Age, it can be traced back to Roman and early medieval cultures. It is believed to be of pagan origin. It has been recorded practice in many parts of Europe, particularly Germany. It became less popular in the 18th century, but the traditions are still observed, particularly in some parts of Europe and North America.

In many cultures, May Day (First day of May) is celebrated by dancing around a decorated Maypole. In Sweden, the maypole generally appears at Midsummer celebrations.

Mayday dancing includes musicians playing folk music, and dancers carry decorated sticks. Many wear floral crowns and some appoint a May Queen or May fairy to oversee the celebrations and dancing.

May Day brings promise to the farmer (good weather) and to the people weaving the pattern around the Maypole. It is the eternal promise of the future.

This was adapted from an article published in the Spring / Summer 2013 (Issue 23) edition of Kindling and includes more articles on the topic if anyone is interested feel free to borrow from our Leabharlann.

Upcoming Events

We are really looking forward to welcoming our new joiners for September 2018 to our 'Meet & Greet' in May.



A CPD opportunity in Steiner pedagogy

Developing the Whole Child, hands, heart and head – an introduction

Starting on Thursday 26th. April, for six weeks, 6.30 pm – 9.30 pm

The course is intended as a CPD opportunity for education professionals.

Course Fee €90

Spaces are limited to 20.

Booking is essential to cpd@mic.ul.ie

Thursday 26 th . April	Theory and background	Rudolf Steiner biography and controversies; Goethe's theory of knowledge; Theory of child development; Contrasting the developmental and curricular approaches; Steiner pedagogy in the Irish context.	P. O'Shiel M.A in Ed. Chairman of Lifeways Ireland Ltd., (Patron Body for Steiner National Schools.)
Thursday 3 rd . May.	Early childhood	'Doing' as a mode of inquiry; Imitation as a mode of learning; Movement and language.	Niamh Ni Ruiseal, Kindergarten teacher, Raheen Wood Steiner National School.
Thursday 10 th May	Primary school	'Feeling' (affect) as a mode of inquiry; The adult/child relationship in this phase of childhood; Teaching as an art – learning as 'felt experience'	Seamus Devane (Principal, Raheen Wood Steiner National School)
Thursday 17 th . May	Secondary school	Drama as a mode of inquiry; The teacher as 'idealist'; A phenomenological approach to science.	Nell Smyth (author of 'The Breathing Circle')
Thursday 24 th . May	The role of the arts	Art as the language of autonomy; The world of colour – theory; The world of colour – workshop	Pearse O' Shiel. Peggy Boyle
Thursday 31 st . May	Integrating the curriculum	Curriculum as narrative; The Main Lesson	Una Ni Ghairbhith, Former Principal, Mol an Oige, Steiner National School.

DOLPHINS ON THE BAY

CETACEAN (WHALES, DOLPHINS AND PORPOISES) STRANDINGS TALKS

Darren Craig of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group
will be giving a series of FREE public talk on cetacean strandings.

*The events will include a demonstration on what actions to take, who to call
and what information we can learn from events like these.*

ORANMORE Rinvile Pier

14th April 10.30-11.30am

Turn into Commercial Community Centre on 12th April
at 10.45 to learn more about this event.



Clifden Boat Club

22nd April 4.00-5.00pm

Spiddal Beach

beside the pier

21st April – 2.30 – 3.30



Darren Craig is a graduate of Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology with an honours degree in Applied Aquatic Ecology. He has been involved with the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group since 2009 and has experience in cetacean research in Ireland, Australia and Africa. Darren is an experienced MMO and PAM operator and has worked on offshore, inshore and land based projects both for research and for mitigation during seismic surveys.



This project is funded by Local Agenda 21 funding from The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

Follow us on Facebook or keep an eye on our website to keep up to date with events
(www.galwaysteinerschool.com)

WHAT SCREEN TIME AND SCREEN MEDIA DO TO YOUR CHILD'S BRAIN AND SENSORY PROCESSING ABILITY

By Amy and Evelyn Guttmann / March 28, 2018 / 84

In many ways screens have changed our lives for the better. In other ways, they've changed our lives and the lives of our children – and not necessarily for the better.

No screen time for children under two years old.

The original official policy of the American Academy of Pediatrics (made in 1999 and reaffirmed in 2011) states that “pediatricians should urge parents to avoid television [or other media] viewing for children under the age of two years.” Children between 2 and 5 should be limited to “no more than 1 hour per day.”

In 2016 they issued a policy adjustment stating that pediatricians should discourage any media use under the age of 18 months, except for video-chatting (as often happens with far-away relatives). Between 18 and 24 months, if a parent wants to introduce screen media, then they should choose high-quality apps and use it together with their toddlers. (Although the policy indicates that the educational benefits for children under the age of 24 months are low, and come mainly from parent interaction with the child, and not from the media itself.)

While the original policy of the AAP called for children older than 5 to be viewing no more than 2 hours of media daily, the updated 2016 recommendations explains that in today's world, when media is everywhere, a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work. Families need to make themselves aware of the risks and benefits of media use, and create individualized plans for their children, including enough sleep and physical exercise.

Reasons given by the AAP – and other research studies – include associations with obesity, sleep issues, aggressive behaviours, less time spent in developmentally helpful interaction with parents and siblings, language delays and attention issues.

Reference is made to the potentially harmful effect of media exposure during the rapid brain development period of age 0-2, but most studies – and even the AAP policies – don't delve into the details of the impact on your child's brain.

We'd like to give you a peek behind the scenes, and show you what happens to the brain when it's in the process of viewing screen media.

Screens Give Your Body the Blues

We've all been fooled by the "what colour is white light?" question. Answer: all of them! Natural daylight, provided by our sun, is made up of all the colours of the visual spectrum, although there does tend to be a little more blue light emitted than the other colours.

The blue light of natural sunlight does some great things for our body. It boosts attention, reaction times and mood, and it suppresses melatonin (the hormone that regulates your circadian rhythms and makes you sleepy when it increases) so you can be awake and alert during your active hours.

That's great for your body – in the daytime. When your body is supposed to be winding down for sleep, however, it's another story.

Most of today's devices are illuminated by LEDs, which have a much higher percentage of blue light waves than any other light source – natural or artificial. Here's what "white" light is really made of in the following artificial light sources:

White LEDs are almost entirely blue light, combined with a chemical compound to make it look white.

Night-time exposure to LED-illuminated devices (most of the screens out there today: computers, tablets, phones, flat screen TVs, e-readers, video games) suppresses melatonin and disrupts the natural sleep cycle.

This Scientific American article describes the following study where volunteers spent several evenings reading for a prolonged period of time before a 10PM imposed bedtime. Some used printed books and some used e-readers. Those who used e-readers took longer to fall asleep, had less REM sleep and felt sleepier and less alert for hours after they woke up in the morning – even if they had gotten the same amount of sleep.

Blue light before bed makes it hard to wake up in the morning

We repeatedly see sleep cycle issues in the children who come to our clinic. When we probe, we almost inevitably hear that they're playing video games, using social media or watching TV for an extended period before they go to bed. Sleep cycle disruptions are a significant contributor to ADHD and other mood and behavioural issues.

One of the first things we work with these parents and children on is significantly reducing screen time before bed. Blue light – it's not for night!

Fast Forward

Okay, fine, you might be saying. I'll curtail the screens at night, and let my children play their video games, use the computer and watch TV in the afternoon.

We wish it were that simple.

If your child's screen use is focused on reading chapter books off a Kindle or typing in a word processing program, no problem. (Again, as long as it's not at night when the blue wavelengths in the white LEDs will impact sleep patterns.)

But who among our kids spends his primary media time doing that? Our kids are playing fast-paced video games, watching cartoons and TV shows with plenty of action and jumping from photo to chat to status update on social media.

The rapid-fire changes that happen in most screen activities, from video games to recorded entertainment to social media updates, affect two parts of the brain:

- the visual processing system
- the vestibular system

The Eyes Have It

Let's discuss the visual processing system first.

The faster the changes in the sensory information you're taking in, the faster your brain needs to process it in order to keep up.

If the pace required is so fast it exceeds your brain's threshold, you may experience sensory overload. That's the "STOP! TOO MUCH! I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!" feeling – the one we sometimes get when we're trying to cook dinner AND our baby is screaming and smelling like a horrendously dirty diaper AND our 3 year old is yanking on our shirt hem and whining he's hungry AND our 6 year old is shoving a drawing in front of our eyes and yelling, "Look, Mom! Look at it!"

Too much to process. Shut down. Good night. (Well, we wish. We parents usually have to recover pretty fast in situations like that.)

The rapid-fire changes on typical screen entertainment are much faster than the typical visual changes of ordinary, unscreened life – the visual changes that our brain has been wired over the millennia to deal with.

Yet these rapid changes don't often cause perceptible visual sensory overload. They usually come in just under the threshold. The child can keep up with the processing, but their brain is working super-fast to do so.

Often parents of children with ADD/ADHD diagnoses will tell us, puzzled, "I don't understand. My child has trouble focusing on most things, but when it comes to TV or video games, I can't get him to stop. I can wave my hand in front of his face, touch him or say his name loudly and it's like I'm not there. He seems super-focused!"

And he is. Children (especially with ADHD) often get into a state of hyper-focus, because their brain is so super-busy processing all the fast-changing visual information.

What screen time does to your child's brain.

This hyper-focus affects children more than adults (and in younger children more than older children) because the visual system itself is still developing, so the younger a child is, the more they have to focus in order to deal with all the information coming in.

Eventually you pull them away from the screen. And pandemonium breaks loose.

If they were super-focused before, they are now super-UNfocused. They're hyper. They're acting out. They're in an awful mood.

What HAPPENED?

Coming off the Visual Fast-Track

Your child's brain was in super-fast, super-busy mode, processing all that visual stimuli. Suddenly all that visual stimuli stops. There's nothing left to process.

But the brain is still in super-fast, "hyper" mode. Until it readjusts to real life and a normal pace (which takes time), your child will be bouncing off the walls in an unconscious attempt to find stimuli moving at the artificially fast pace of his brain.

Television and screen time causes hyper visual sensory processing. That's not all.

The visual system is closely linked to the vestibular system – the sensory system that controls balance and your perception of where your body is in space. The vestibular system also has a significant impact on mood. The perception of linear acceleration is calming (as most of us have experienced when rocking, swinging, walking or driving a cranky baby to sleep) and the perception of rotational acceleration is arousing.

When your child's visual system was super-busy processing, it locked up the vestibular system, putting mood on an artificially even keel. Remember your child's lack of response when you waved your hand in front of his face? He wasn't in a bad mood; he wasn't in a good mood; he was in NO mood.

Now his vestibular system has been released from its freeze, and it's having just as hard a time readjusting. Mood swings, anyone?

Let's take a look at how to get your child from screen time back to real life without crashes and meltdowns.

Jump My Sillies Out

When you end your child's screen time, don't just let her chill out. Because she WON'T be chilling out. She'll be jumping out of her skin.

To reset the pace of her body and brain, jump her back INTO her skin. Use the vestibular system. Get your child moving. Jump, swing, run around. The linear acceleration will reset the vestibular system and calm the entire body.

Vestibular system jump screen time.

This is even if your child has had "active" screen time, like working out with a Wii or playing Pokemon Go or some other augmented reality game. They may be getting exercise, but they're also overstimulating their visual processing system. The screen offsets the vestibular benefit of the movement, so you'll still need some "unplugged" movement in order to reset the vestibular system and get the body back on track.

Long-term Consequences

Using physical activity is a good short-term technique to reset the vestibular and visual system and get your child back into normally-paced life more smoothly.

As a long-term strategy, it leaves much to be desired.

As we mentioned above, a child's visual processing system is still significantly developing before the age of 2, and final development isn't reached until 8 or 9 years old. It's still unclear exactly what the effects of media exposure with its rapid-fire changes are for a developing system.

There is a concern, however, that repeated incidents of super-busy processing during stages of development could cause permanent changes in the processing pace that the brain seeks. Your two-year old could potentially grow up feeling "comfortable" in the super-fast pace of screen media stimulation and uncomfortable in the normal pace of everyday life.

Her performance might be high in gaming and internet information processing, but what about performance in low-tech activities such as building relationships? Parenting? Achieving greatness at anything, from sports to music to business?

These true, satisfying achievements happen only at the pace of the natural world, not at the artificially accelerated pace of the screened world. They require focus, dedication, persistence and patience – even when the going seems slow, frustrating and boring in the moment.

Set Your Child Up for Success

We appreciate how much parents want to give their child the tools and resources to achieve the most they can.

That's why it pains us. Because while the parent thinks they're doing something positive – or at least neutral – for their child by setting them in front of screen media, they're actually interfering with the child's natural, healthy development. The younger the child is, the greater the interference and future consequences.

You, as a parent, have an even more powerful role to play. You can give your child the best shot at that life from the outset, and minimize the chances of needing external intervention.

As a caring, dedicated parent, we know you want it.

And you can do it.

