



MELBOURNE
RUDOLF STEINER
SCHOOL

Early Childhood Talks/Conversations

With Susan Gould

Tuesday mornings May 1st, 15th & 29th

9.30 – 11.30 am in the Acorn Room

May 1st – What is Eurythmy? Rudolf Steiner developed this new art form of Eurythmy in the early 1900's. From the very beginning of the first Steiner School it was taught to the children. In fact, along with form drawing, it is a subject that is unique to the Steiner Curriculum. It is taught from Kindergarten to Year Twelve. What is this Eurythmy? How does it connect to all the other subjects taught in the curriculum? Why did Rudolf Steiner speak about it with such devotion, and consider it to be an integral part of the child's education?

May 15th - The Twelve Senses.

Both our self-awareness and certain intellectual accomplishments depend on the senses harmonious interaction. In this talk we will look at the unfolding of these 12 senses and discuss how we can nurture their development. It would be great if you could bring something from nature and a small scarf with you.



May 29th – The Unfolding of Movement in the Young Child.

In the first three years of life a human being learns to walk, speak and think. These are truly human activities which arise out of movement. We will follow the course of development of movement in the young child and discuss ways we can support this development. Please bring along any verses or songs you may have sung as a child, and any that you have used as a parent with your own children.



About Susan Gould – *Susan has worked for thirty years with children, and in particular, the child under seven years - First as a kindergarten teacher, then as a Eurythmy teacher and therapist. In the last two years, as well as teaching Eurythmy, she has spent time in Vietnam helping set up kindergartens and mentoring teachers. She is deeply interested in working with parents so that they can feel confident and secure in their decision making and ability to raise their children.*

We hope you can join Susan and share in these informative talks.

There will be morning tea/coffee and Davina will help mind the little ones.

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An interesting article you may like to read:

Waldorf Curriculum: Children Thrive and Learn Better in Play Based Kindergarten
by [Waldorf Moraine](#) | Mar 19, 2018 | [Early Childhood Education](#), [Movement & Sports](#), [Waldorf Education](#) |

Waldorf Kindergartens are unique. Waldorf kindergartens are intentional. Waldorf kindergarten methodologies are now backed by science. They are also unlike any other school setting, both public and private schools alike.



When you first walk into the classroom the difference is palpable. The first thing you might notice is how wonderful it smells. Each day the teachers and children create their snacks and lunches together; from homemade bread to pizza to soup; they all work together using wholesome and organic ingredients and child-friendly cooking utensils. In doing so the children not only practice their fine motor skill development but they learn how to contribute to the good of the whole group as well. The second thing that stands out is the beauty of the physical environment. The walls are painted in calming tones, there are live plants and no plastic or electronic toys; the toys are made of all natural materials such as wool, silk, wood, cloth, and stone. They are open-ended and can become anything the child can imagine. There are very little restrictions on how they can be used during play. Nothing is off-limits when fort building, including the furniture!

But what makes Waldorf Kindergarten so successful?

Waldorf teachers understand the now scientifically proven importance of unstructured free play for the developing young child. They understand children need, and are given, large segments of time for play both indoors and outdoors. Free-play is an opportunity to stretch the child's imagination, a time to explore the boundaries of the social experience, to process what they've seen, heard or thought in a healthful, full-body way. It is where the foundations of creativity are built.

With free play as the main stage for social skills development, the teachers actively work with the children on enhancing their social graces throughout the day. Much time is devoted to working through conflicts and allowing other children space to feel their feelings. It is important for every child to feel heard and seen. Waldorf teachers see conflict as a healthy opportunity to brush off rough edges and to learn more about one another's feelings.

Free play *in nature* is imperative and a cornerstone of Waldorf education. Not only are elements of the outdoor world brought into the classroom through nature tables and as content for daily movement circles and story times, but children are brought outside each day, in all kinds of weather, and once again offered both structured and unstructured playtime. The Waldorf kindergarten playground is equipped with play structures that encourage a wide range of gross motor movement (spinning, swinging, digging, climbing, balancing, running, sliding, etc.). Additionally, frequent nature walks allow the children to explore nature in a free way; the children are free to move in unconscious, instinctual ways to meet the demands of the varying terrain that they encounter in wooded areas, forests, meadows, beaches, riversides, and more! All these opportunities for full body movement develop good core strength, balance, proprioception, and stamina, all in an unhurried, child-centered way that nurtures the child's curiosity, creativity and a sense of wonder. Children are allowed to take healthy risks, such as climbing trees. Even going outside in inclement weather is considered a healthy challenge for the children. There is value in being outside in all weather as it allows children to develop resilience and fortitude. In her article, "Children that Play Outside in All Weather Grow up Resilient," Andrew McMartin states that "(k)ids who play outside in challenging weather are more positive, more creative and more adaptable. They don't let challenges stop them. They rise to challenges and find ways to carry on in spite of them."

While the bulk of movement is brought to the children via the above mentioned free play, the teachers also bring specific gross and fine motor movements to the children by way of a daily morning circle. This group experience is filled with rich language brought through song and verse, which is matched with articulated and developmentally challenging movements. Not only are the children experiencing a fun and imaginative "movement journey" but the teacher is helping the children to gain mastery over their bodies. This is an economical way for the teacher to lay the important foundation for later academic success. If a child can learn to be in control of his body, he can be inwardly still enough to take up the academic content of the grades curriculum.

By Cristan Vineis, Kindergarten Lead Teacher