

## Prekindergarten and Kindergarten – Waldorf-Inspired Approach – An Overview

At TRCCS, we believe that the early childhood (birth to age seven) is a unique period of life that deserves respect, guidance, nurture and time. We believe that children have not only a physical nature, but a soul and spiritual one as well. Meaningful work and creative play in a structured environment are the pillars upon which a healthy life can be built. Of utmost importance is the development of social skills, which serve the children in one day realizing their potential in relation to others.

The goal of the Waldorf-inspired prekindergarten and kindergarten is to integrate young children into their individual physical body, the social body of the classroom, and life as a whole. Thus, the children's education takes place primarily through an active participation in the "Living Arts." These include:

- benefiting from the **nurturing arts**, such as well-structured and consistent daily, weekly, and yearly routines, healthy nourishment, daily rests, and clearly-held boundaries
- imitating and partaking in meaningful, purposeful, **practical work**, such as cooking, woodworking, cleaning, and gardening
- exploring the **creative arts**, such as imaginative play, watercolor painting, puppetry, handwork, and storytelling
- developing **social/ relational skills**- learning to share with, wait for, ask, thank, help and work with others in a mixed-age environment
- experiencing daily, extended time in nature, the seasonal cycles, the earth and the elements first-hand

In our classrooms, a multi-sensory, experiential foundation is laid for the abstract learning to come in grade school and beyond. Key to the Waldorf-inspired approach for children ages 4-6 are the following concepts:

- Young children have a natural awe and reverence for the world and the adults who care for and teach them; thus, children readily imitate what they experience in their environment. Consequently, the teacher embodies and demonstrates the behaviors, knowledge, attitudes, and habits for the children to learn and acquire through imitation.
- Young children develop a sense of security and confidence in the world that leads to clear thinking and emotional stability later through consistent relationships with their primary adult caregivers and teachers and through rhythm in their daily, weekly and yearly life.
- Young children's bodies are in an intense process of forming inner organs, growing bones and brain tissue, and developing physical gross and fine motor coordination, which should be honored and actively supported. Consequently, young children will ideally be purposefully given a significant amount time for free play that encourages a variety of physical activities, imitative make-believe play acting, and imaginative and social problem solving.
- Young children do not have the filters adults do with regard to their sensory experiences; they are like sponges absorbing everything in their environment. Consequently, the classroom environment is rich with healthy sensory experiences incorporating natural materials, texture, warmth, and the fragrances of cooking and baking. In addition, outdoor time in nature immerses children in the sights, sounds, colors, smells, and tactile experiences of the ever-changing seasons.

Unlike the grades, the Waldorf-inspired kindergarten does not teach in main lesson subjects. There are 3-6 week seasonally-oriented themes that infuse the content of each day, but literacy and language arts, mathematics, science, social skills, social studies, music and the arts are integrated into each theme.

### Literacy and Language Arts

The Waldorf-inspired prekindergarten and kindergarten classroom offers a rich language environment. Circle time builds a love of language as the teacher brings a wide range of poetry, songs and verses in an imaginative theme or story to the children accompanied by suitable gestures and movements. As they “sing and dance,” the children’s capacities for auditory processing, speech articulation and feeling for rhyme and rhythm are strengthened and nourished.

Story time provides another opportunity for language skill development. “Cultural literacy” is schooled through the telling of classic fairy tales from many cultures. Stories are told rather than read and are repeated often so as to build the child’s vocabulary, comprehension and ability to follow the sequential story line. In both of these activities the teacher strives to use clear pronunciation, proper grammar and a broad, rich vocabulary. Picture books are rarely used because we want to engage the child’s inner picturing capacity. We want to encourage the child’s ability to synthesize information that in turn strengthens his overall comprehension. This ability to see the whole can be damaged by introducing the decoding process too early; hence, the introduction to the alphabet and reading is reserved for first grade. Synthesis must be deeply rooted in the child’s conceptual framework before analysis can be properly introduced. This symbolic picture forming ability (imagination) is an essential foundation for all future conceptual work; the ability to form images later develops into creative thinking.

The teacher’s oral telling of fairy tales and multicultural stories rich in vocabulary strengthens the children’s imagination and creativity and supports their language development and listening comprehension capacities while fostering concentration skills. Story sequence and character development are introduced when they are given the opportunity to watch and perform puppet shows, as well as act out the stories that have been told to them by their teacher.

### **Mathematics**

For young children, math is experienced in the world around them and number awareness exists in its most basic form. Children love to count and do so out of imitation. Children gain experiences of ordering, sequencing, adding, subtracting, and dividing by the direct manipulation of objects. In the social experiences of play, they gather and they share. Through the practical activities of baking, cooking and doing handwork, the children experience measurement and counting as they watch one step follow another. Children delight in simple sequential stories often repeating the order of characters or events as the story is told. Circle time offers the opportunity to match rhythmical counting both forward and backward with body movements such as clapping and stepping that help form the basis for learning math later. Counting games, number songs and rhymes that incorporate the gesture of counting on one’s fingers add enjoyment to the experience of the world of numbers. As children move in space, developing their sense of spatial orientation, the foundation of geometry is laid. As they explore nature, they find numerous examples of geometric shapes and forms as well as number.

### **Science**

The kindergarten student’s exposure to science is experiential. Science is all around us. The children naturally experiment with the laws of physics when they engage in play building fulcrums, obstacle courses, pulleys and balance beams. The properties of materials are observed, measured and predicted. Students will be able to know what objects are composed of. Two examples of this are that ceramic is made from clay and paper is made from trees. Students will also be able to describe the physical qualities of objects. This includes the object’s color, size, shape, approximate weight, texture, and so forth. Students will be able to easily describe the various qualities of water, including its’ solid, liquid and gaseous forms.

There is chemistry in the dipping of candles or felting of wool as well as in cooking and baking. The children are exposed to botany by way of indoor plants and outdoor gardening. Feeding the chickens, finding animal tracks and discovering the homes and habits of the animals outside introduce the

children to zoology. The cycle of the year is experienced deeply by the children through outdoor play, the nature table, and through seasonal activities, songs, poetry, and nature stories.

TRCCS has the benefit of being located at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station and consequently, prekindergarten and kindergarten students will be given valuable experience in the sciences through interaction with the natural world. The student's awareness of and appreciation for the life and earth sciences are developed through outdoor experiences and the presence of nature tables in the classroom, where seasonal objects are brought in for attention and observation. Nature holds a place of honor in the kindergarten classroom, and the children enjoy stories that heighten their awareness of the natural world and change of seasons. Additionally, the children participate in festivals that emphasize and mark the seasons, such as the Harvest Festival, the Lantern Walk, and the Festival of Lights. These experiences in kindergarten serve to lay the foundations for developing a sense of time, provide an awareness of the Earth's cycles, recognize the traditions of other communities, and create a connection to the natural world. The physical properties of objects such as mass, density, gravity, balance, and leverage are explored through the observation of these natural materials.

The observation of nature provides opportunities to notice various plants and animals. By the end of kindergarten, students are able to observe and describe similarities and differences in the appearance and behavior of plants and animals. A garden provides numerous opportunities to interact with the plants and enjoy the harvest therein. Students will know about the major structures present on plants and animals through direct and personal experience. Students will know about the various materials that compose the earth. They will be able to describe the differences and characteristics of local land formations. Students will notice the changes in weather and the general changes in the seasons. This is reinforced through songs and stories that represent the changing seasons.

Classroom recycling and composting programs teach children about the importance of conservation and care for the earth. Throughout the day, observation of and investigation into the natural sciences is steadily encouraged through outdoor creative play. Meaningful questions are explored through peer interactions and both student and teacher directed inquiries.

### **Social Skills & Developing Autonomy**

A sense of community and social awareness are developed with the kindergarten practice of sharing daily verses, participating in traditional circle games, and celebrating birthdays and seasonal festivals together. In creative play, children are guided to develop their abilities to demonstrate problem solving. Sharing, taking turns, and self-regulating are all integrally infused in the day. Through group harmony during morning circle and shared meals, through daily and weekly chores that they participate in, through being given as much opportunity as possible to do things for themselves the children begin a path toward personal responsibility and respect for others.

### **Social Studies**

Kindergarten children are taking their first steps away from home, broadening their social experiences. The children learn about people and places near and far through story sharing and storytelling. They gain an appreciation and understanding of the many people that make up the world and the important roles they play. They learn about the people in their community through neighborhood walks and field trips and visits to the classroom by various craftspeople. Through experiencing natural processes, such as growing wheat through to the baking of bread, they get a sense of the history of food production. They sing songs, play games and hear stories from many cultures, getting a taste for their language and concepts, both unique and common. The storytelling curriculum of fairytales and multicultural stories provides, in picture form, a glimpse of far away places and often long ago times. Verses, songs, nature stories and immersion in nature reveal the plants and animals that are part of the young child's world.

### **Music, Handwork, and Artistic Expression**

An important component of the Kindergarten program is the practice of many hands-on activities. Artistic activities such as watercolor painting, beeswax sculpting, drawing, and seasonal crafts, along with the practical activities of chopping vegetables, shaping dough, and washing dishes enhance the children's ability to focus, concentrate, and complete tasks, while fostering hand-eye coordination, as well as a sense of accomplishment. These accomplishments, along with sewing and finger-knitting, also develop the students' emerging fine-motor skills, all of which are essential when learning to read, write, and perform academically, and contribute to the development of the child as a whole, so that he or she is fully prepared to undertake the more arduous tasks of the first grade.

While teaching various **visual arts** weekly, the teacher models the correct technique and use of materials, which the children imitate. Emphasis is on the process as opposed to the product. Much time is spent in preparation and clean up, allowing the children to do as much as possible. The children color freely with a spectrum of both block and stick beeswax crayons, experiencing large strokes of color as well as line drawing. They paint using the wet-on-wet watercolor technique, exploring the primary colors of red, yellow and blue and how they may blend together. Color play on paper and in the water jars is new every time. Modeling as a weekly activity is often brought for a block of four to six weeks. Beeswax is used for its pleasant smell, texture and ease in warming. The children work right down into their fingertips to warm the beeswax and begin the process of thinning and modeling. Simple forms are shaped, e.g. leaf, nest, bird, and snake. Hot beeswax is also dipped to make candles.

As for working with **music**, there is singing throughout the day and the seasons in support of the development of rhythmic breathing. Songs introduce activities, support the children through transitions, accompany circle time activities, etc. The children live in the mood of the fifth, centered on the tone of A, where melodies and rhythms float freely fostering the dreamy nature of the young child. The children learn songs by imitation. The kindergarten teachers also model the use of various musical instruments occasionally, such as the lyre, which may be used to provide a quiet mood at rest. Xylophones, drums, flutes, bells and other instruments can embellish circle time, storytelling and puppetry. The children have access to these instruments during their free play for further exploration and enjoyment.

Regarding **handwork**, prekindergarten and kindergarten provides daily experiences in the realm of the domestic arts including, for example, snack preparation (baking, chopping vegetables, and grating) and clean up (toys, dishes, and laundry) all in support of fine motor development. In addition, the children are involved in specific handwork projects from time to time as modeled by the teacher and learned by way of imitation. Projects may include paper crafts, yarn projects, sewing, woodworking, felting, and candle dipping all with an emphasis on the process as opposed to the finished product.

### Physical Education

Development of the physical body is fundamental to the kindergarten. Children are encouraged to move freely through space and explore a large range of physical activity, often through practical daily work such as grinding grain, sawing, kneading and chopping. During free play, there are large blocks to move, balance beams to explore and bean bags to toss. The lower senses of touch, movement and balance are supported through rhythmic circle time activities that employ large and small motor movements. These range from hopping and skipping to rolling and often incorporate classic children's games. Outdoor play also supports the development of the lower senses by providing opportunities to explore a wooded area and/or playground equipment on a daily basis. Sand play, gardening, swinging, sledding, hiking, climbing and running all provide for healthy physical development.

### Daily Schedule – Example

8:15-8:30	Morning greeting
8:30-9:30	Artistic activities and/or practical projects
9:30-10:10	Free play, snack preparation, playtime clean up

10:10-10:30	Circle time with rest
10:30-11:00	Snack
11:00-12:00	Outside play, nature exploration
12:00-12:45	Lunch
12:45-1:00	Story time
1:00-2:00	Rest time
2-2:30	Homemaking, chores, book time, preparing for departure
2:30-2:45	Dressing to go home, goodbye song

### **Weekly Rhythm – Example**

Monday – Painting, crayon drawing, beeswax or clay modeling  
 Tuesday – Baking  
 Wednesday – Craft or practical project  
 Thursday – Craft or practical project  
 Friday – Cooking

### **Seasonal Themes – Example**

September – Autumn—courage, knights & dragons, apples  
 October – Autumn—colors, fading & blossoming, squash  
 November – Autumn—harvest, abundance & gratitude, native Americans, corn  
 December – Winter—light in darkness, giving & receiving, wood/trees  
 January – Winter—warmth in coldness, hard work & play, wool  
 February – Winter—fire and ice, transformation & change, family & teamwork, beeswax  
 March – Spring—Mother Goose, silliness & seriousness, maple syrup  
 April – Spring—rebirth, waking-up, life processes of plants, planting seeds, eggs  
 May – Spring—celebration of growth, flowers, dancing  
 June – Summer—caterpillars & butterflies, circus arts

## **Common Core Standards for Kindergarten – Mathematics**

### **Counting and Cardinality – K.CC**

#### **Know number names and the count sequence**

1. Count to 100 by ones and by tens.
2. Count forward beginning from a given number.
3. Write numbers from 0 to 20. Represent a number of objects with a numeral.

#### **Count to tell the number of objects.**

4. Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities; connect counting to cardinality.
  - a. When counting objects, say the number names in the standard order, pairing each object with one and only one number name and each number name with one and only one object.
  - b. Understand that the last number name said tells the number of objects counted. The number of objects is the same regardless of their arrangement or the order in which they were counted.
  - c. Understand that each successive number name refers to a quantity that is one larger.
5. Count to answer “how many?” questions about as many as 20 things arranged in a line, a rectangular array, or a circle, or as many as 10 things in a scattered configuration; given a number from 1–20, count out that many objects.

#### **Compare numbers.**

6. Identify whether the number of objects in one group is greater than, less than, or equal to the number of objects in another group, e.g., by using matching and counting strategies.
7. Compare two numbers between 1 and 10 presented as written numerals.

**TRCCS:** Throughout the TRCCS prekindergarten and kindergarten day, counting and cardinality are addressed in a multitude of ways. Practical activities, such as setting the table for lunch provides an opportunity to count objects. It also provides an opportunity to problem solve by modifying the number daily to accommodate the correct number of children present that day. Counting apples picked at the orchard, pears for a snack, or raisins for eating or baking are also examples of this. The children may learn number names to 100 while baking bread, as the teacher and children count communally to 100 while simultaneously kneading the dough to ensure its proper consistency. Rhythmic movement during circle time is another time in which the children are expected to count and do hand clapping to a given beat. This strengthens their developmental brain capacity and increases their ability for success in mathematical concepts later as they progress through the grade levels. They will count and walk forward and backwards with various rhymes and learn to sing songs and to play games in which counting is included. *However, numbers will not be drawn until 1<sup>st</sup> grade.*

### **Operations and Algebraic Thinking – K.OA**

**Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from.**

1. Represent addition and subtraction with objects, fingers, mental images, drawings, sounds (e.g., claps), acting out situations, verbal explanations, expressions, or equations.
2. Solve addition and subtraction word problems, and add and subtract within 10, e.g., by using objects or drawings to represent the problem.
3. Decompose numbers less than or equal to 10 into pairs in more than one way, e.g., by using objects or drawings, and record each decomposition by a drawing or equation (e.g.,  $5 = 2 + 3$  and  $5 = 4 + 1$ ).
4. For any number from 1 to 9, find the number that makes 10 when added to the given number, e.g., by using objects or drawings, and record the answer with a drawing or equation.
5. Fluently add and subtract within 5.

**TRCCS:** Setting the table for lunch provides an opportunity not only to count objects, but also to problem solve by modifying the number daily to accommodate the correct number of children present that day. In various practical activities, children will be able engaged in addition and subtraction and even division and multiplication: figuring out how much of an ingredient to use when cooking, sharing a pie or quiche, determining supplies for projects, gathering and distributing items for play or work. By the end of Kindergarten, the children are expected to reason abstractly and quantitatively through deciphering intervallic relationships between musical notes. For example, a chime is played at clean-up time and, as the year progresses the children take turns playing the clean-up song on the chime, thus learning intervallic relationships in music. *They will not be asked draw or write equations until 1<sup>st</sup> grade.*

### **Number and Operations in Base Ten – K.NBT**

**Work with numbers 11–19 to gain foundations for place value.**

1. Compose and decompose numbers from 11 to 19 into ten ones and some further ones, e.g., by using objects or drawings, and record each composition or decomposition by a drawing or equation (e.g.,  $18 = 10 + 8$ ); understand that these numbers are composed of ten ones and one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, or nine ones.

**TRCCS:** *The children will not be asked work consciously with place value until 1<sup>st</sup> grade.*

### **Measurement and Data – K.MD**

**Describe and compare measurable attributes.**

1. Describe measurable attributes of objects, such as length or weight. Describe several measurable attributes of a single object.
2. Directly compare two objects with a measurable attribute in common, to see which object has “more of”/“less of” the attribute, and describe the difference. *For example, directly compare the heights of two children and describe one child as taller/shorter.*

**Classify objects and count the number of objects in each category.**

3. Classify objects into given categories; count the numbers of objects in each category and sort the categories by count.

**TRCCS:** Again, through practical activities, such as gardening (working with various types of seeds) and harvesting produce, objects and their attributes will be compared with regarding to its various measurable attributes, including size, shape, color, and weight. Natural materials such as driftwood, logs, blocks, stones and seeds of various sizes and shapes are used in the kindergarten classroom for building and other imaginative play. Imitative activities, such as cleaning and tidying the classroom, provide children opportunities to sort, pattern, compare, and classify these natural objects by attribute.

**Geometry – K.G**

**Identify and describe shapes (squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, hexagons, cubes, cones, cylinders, and spheres).**

1. Describe objects in the environment using names of shapes, and describe the relative positions of these objects using terms such as *above, below, beside, in front of, behind, and next to.*
2. Correctly name shapes regardless of their orientations or overall size.
3. Identify shapes as two-dimensional (lying in a plane, “flat”) or three- dimensional (“solid”).

**Analyze, compare, create, and compose shapes.**

4. Analyze and compare two- and three-dimensional shapes, in different sizes and orientations, using informal language to describe their similarities, differences, parts (e.g., number of sides and vertices/“corners”) and other attributes (e.g., having sides of equal length).
5. Model shapes in the world by building shapes from components (e.g., sticks and clay balls) and drawing shapes.
6. Compose simple shapes to form larger shapes. *For example, “Can you join these two triangles with full sides touching to make a rectangle?”*

**TRCCS:** Shapes are created with the children when forming their bread dough into hearts, triangles, squares, circles, and other straight and rounded forms. They combine smaller shapes to form larger ones, such as several small spirals combining to form one larger spiral. The children will be able to identify shapes by using pattern blocks as well. They will be able to identify mathematical spatial concepts including above, below, next to, in front of, and under in relation to pattern blocks and other objects in the classroom.

**Common Core State Standards for Kindergarten – English Language Arts**

**Reading Standards for Literature**

**Shows appreciation of books and understands how print works.**

**TRCCS:** Much of the literature in the prekindergarten and kindergarten will come directly through the teacher as he or she tells stories from memory, presenting a puppet play, or helping the children act it out for themselves. In addition, there will be many beautiful books in the classroom. Children will be encouraged to look at books after their rest time and the teacher may read books aloud to the children at that time of the day.

### Key Ideas and Details

1. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
2. With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.
3. With prompting and support, identify characters, settings and major events in a story.

**TRCCS:** Prekindergarten and kindergarten includes the recitation of poetry and nursery rhymes, songs, stories and numerous fairy tales. By the end of Kindergarten, the children are expected to retell key details within a story, including the characters, settings and major events therein. To accomplish this, stories are often recreated as plays with the children acting out the parts and contributing to the narration, staging and mood. In addition, children out scenes during their circle time activities and witness and imitate their teacher's puppet plays, all the while having many opportunities to ask and answer questions about story details, to retell the stories and identify details and events of the story. The children are also expected to listen to a sequence of events and recall this sequencing accurately.

### Craft and Structure

4. Ask and answer questions about unknown words in text.
5. Recognize common types of texts, e.g., storybooks, poems.
6. With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.

**TRCCS:** During the time that the teacher and children are engaged with books rather than oral or dramatic storytelling, they will be given the opportunity to discuss these aspects of the books.

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear.
8. (Not applicable to literature.)
9. With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

**TRCCS:** During the time that the teacher and children are engaged with books rather than oral or dramatic storytelling, they will be given the opportunity to discuss these aspects of the books. During the time that they are acting out a story with a puppet play or dramatic play, such comparisons will be explored.

### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

**TRCCS:** *The focus on the children reading texts will come in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.* In prekindergarten and kindergarten, the focus is on being immersed in the story experience in all the ways described above.

### Reading Standards for Informational Text

#### Shows appreciation of books and understands how print works.

**TRCCS:** Much of the information in the prekindergarten and kindergarten will come directly through the teacher as he or she accompanies their various projects with supportive and engaging information. In addition, there will be many beautiful books in the classroom as well. Children will be encouraged to look at books after their rest time and the teacher may read books aloud to the children at that time of the day.

### Key Ideas and Details

1. With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
2. With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.
3. With prompting and support, describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.

**TRCCS:** Prekindergarten and kindergarten will incorporate informational texts into activities. For example, children may get to peruse seed and plant catalogs when preparing to plan their garden. They may follow along as an adult reads an instructional manual to build something for the classroom. They may help their teacher find the right recipe for a cooking or baking project. *In these situations, the focus will not be on the text but on the activity.*

### Craft and Structure

4. Ask and answer questions about unknown words in text.
5. Identify the front cover, back cover, and title page of a book.
6. With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a text and define the role of each in presenting the ideas or information in a text.

**TRCCS:** During the time that the teacher and children are engaged with books rather than oral presentation, the focus generally will be on what the book is about rather than on the book itself. However, the children will be given the opportunity to discuss these aspects of the books in their classroom.

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the text in which they appear.
8. With prompting and support, identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.
9. With prompting and support, identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic.

**TRCCS:** During the time that the teacher and children are engaged with books rather than oral presentation or the activities and objects that informational texts may refer to, they will be given the opportunity to discuss these aspects of the books.

### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

**TRCCS:** *The focus on the children reading informational texts will come in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.* In prekindergarten and kindergarten, the focus is on being immersed in experience and practical activities in all the ways described above.

### Reading Standards: Foundational Skills

#### Print Concepts

1. Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
  - a. Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.
  - b. Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.
  - c. Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.
  - d. Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters of the alphabet.

**TRCCS:** *The focus on the children reading texts will come in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.* In prekindergarten and kindergarten, because the children are learning primarily through imitation, they will be encouraged to imitate the adult’s reading of books. As they approach first grade and demonstrate readiness for a more conscious relationship to the written word, they will be given the opportunity to recognize the form of written language.

### Phonological Awareness

2. Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds.
  - a. Recognize and produce rhyming words.
  - b. Count, pronounce, blend, and segment syllables in spoken words.
  - c. Blend and segment onsets and rimes of single-syllable spoken words.
  - d. Isolate and pronounce the initial, medial vowel, and final sounds in three-phoneme words.
  - e. Add or substitute individual sounds in simple, one syllable words to make new words.

**TRCCS:** *The focus on the children reading texts will come in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.* In prekindergarten and kindergarten, Children are immersed in a rich oral tradition of songs and oral speech, thus developing phonemic and tonal awareness. Some of the literary activities in the kindergarten include the recitation of rhythmic poetry and nursery rhymes and the singing of traditional songs, immersing the children in vivid oral speech, while also developing phonemic awareness. Many times, movements that emphasize the rhythm and beat, and makes clear the syllabic formation of the words, while also reinforcing the meaning and the gesture of the language.

### Phonetics and Word Recognition

3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
  - a. Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondences by producing the primary sound or many of the most frequent sounds for each consonant.
  - b. Associate the long and short sounds with the common spellings for the five major vowels.
  - c. Read common high-frequency words by sight.
  - d. Distinguish between similarly spelled words by identifying the sounds of the letters that differ.

**TRCCS:** *The focus on the children reading will come in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.* In prekindergarten and kindergarten, phonetics will primarily be worked with orally. The experience of the consonants and vowels can be built up through movement and expressive speech so that the children have a feeling for the sounds, for example the round protectiveness of “b” and the open reverence in “ah.” This deeper relationship to the language is worked with in 1<sup>st</sup> grade as well, as the children write and read the letters.

### Fluency

4. Read emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding.

**TRCCS:** *The focus on the children reading will come in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, along with readers.*

### Writing Standards

#### Text Types and Purposes

1. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book.
2. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

3. Use a combination of drawing, dictating and writing to narrate as single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred and provide a reaction to what happened,

**TRCCS:** *The focus on the children writing will come in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.* In prekindergarten and kindergarten, the children will be given the opportunity to record their experiences and learning in painting and drawing, to act it out through imitative play and dramatic play, and to share their experiences in tableside conversation and special circle time sharing.

#### **Production and Distribution of Writing**

4. (Begins in Grade 3)
5. With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.
6. With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

**TRCCS:** *The focus on the children writing will come in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.* In prekindergarten and kindergarten, the children are guided and supported to express themselves clearly, in whatever medium. However, *there is no use of electronic devices until 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade.*

#### **Research to Build and Present Knowledge**

7. Participate in shared research and writing projects.
8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
9. (Begins in grade 4)

#### **Range of Writing**

10. (Begins in grade 3)

**TRCCS:** *The focus on the children writing will come in 1<sup>st</sup> grade.* In prekindergarten and kindergarten, the children are given opportunities to work in groups to make discoveries and explore and with adult guidance and support, they share what they have learned with the others in their class orally or through projects, visual arts, and imitative play.

#### **Speaking and Listening Standards**

##### **Comprehension and Collaboration**

1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
  - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions.
  - b. Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.
2. Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.
3. Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.

##### **Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas**

4. Describe familiar people, places, things and events and with prompting and support provide additional detail.
5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional details.
6. Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings and ideas clearly.

**TRCCS:** In prekindergarten and kindergarten, the speaking and listening skills are cultivated throughout all of the activities. The teacher is careful to not overuse his or her voice, but to demonstrate as much as possible through actions and modeling of the desired activity or behavior so that the children can clearly imitate that ideal. Children are weekly asked to report on a given topic (sharing). They will do this while simultaneously following the agreed upon rules for discussion. For example, raising a hand, waiting their turn, and focused listening while others are sharing. They will also be guided to speak audibly and express thoughts and ideas clearly when sharing with the class. Children will participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults, small and large groups to practice the aforementioned listening and sharing goals. In the weekly “sharing” and in tableside conversations about their experiences, they will be encouraged to provide detail. They will have opportunities to share their experiences through drawing, painting, other creative projects as well as through their own storytelling and play acting.

### Language Standards

#### Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
  - a. Print many upper- and lowercase letters.
  - b. Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.
  - c. Form regular plural nouns orally.
  - d. Understand and use question words.
  - e. Use the most frequently occurring prepositions.
  - f. Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
  - a. Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I.
  - b. Recognize and name end punctuation.
  - c. Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds.
  - d. Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships.

#### Knowledge of Language

3. (begins in grade 2)

#### Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on kindergarten reading and content.
  - a. Identify new meanings for familiar words and apply them accurately.
  - b. Use the most frequently occurring inflections and affixes as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word.
5. With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
  - a. Sort common objects into categories to gain a sense of the concepts and categories represented.
  - b. Demonstrate understanding of frequently occurring verbs and adjectives by relating them to their opposites.
  - c. Identify real-life connections between words and their use.
  - d. Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs describing the same general action by acting out the meanings.
6. Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

**TRCCS:** Fairy tales present a rich verbal vocabulary and, as the children are exposed to this vocabulary, they too, are encouraged to learn new words, sounds and literary contexts. The children engage in much recitation with related movements that helps ingrain proper English usage as well as to discern shades of meaning. Through sharing, tableside conversation, and numerous By the end of kindergarten, children will demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English, including its appropriate grammar, oral form and usage. This is accomplished through an emphasis on manners and character development throughout all aspects of our daily activities.

### **Prekindergarten and Kindergarten – Seasonal Themes**

What follows are suggestions. What is asked for in a Waldorf-inspired prekindergarten and kindergarten is that the themes that inform the teacher's choice of stories, activities, etc., are connected to the seasons and the children's life experience. It is hoped that the teachers will be conscious of the deeper meaning behind many traditions, and while these deeper meanings are not taught directly, the fact that the teachers carry out the activities with these meanings in mind nourishes the children's own soul lives. TRCCS prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers are free to be creative and to find their own connection to the seasons, their own themes, their own stories, etc. A teacher can draw upon the fairy tales, poetry, songs of myriad cultures and traditions, as long as they have a reason for their choice, a meaning that makes sense for the children, the teacher and their environment. The detail here is to give a sense of what is possible, to inspire creative thinking, and to give examples that may be used if helpful.

#### **September – Autumn—courage, knights & dragons, apples**

For some of the children, this may be their first time attending school or being away from home, which takes courage. They can overcome their fears, embodied in the character of the dragon, by identifying with their strong courageous self through the stories told, the circle time poems, songs and games, and through play acting with their peers. The knight, for instance, also exemplifies nobility, uprightness, and clear boundaries, which are other positive characteristics for the young children to emulate. It is also the time of year when apples are harvested. The apple, itself, contains many lessons: the 5-pointed star shape at its core when cut in half, the many ways it feeds us, its many colors and varieties, and the many poems, songs and fairy tales that feature it.

As the first month of the school year, it is also an important time for establishing the daily and weekly rhythm of the classroom, as well as the habits, rules and attitudes that will define our kindergarten classroom community. By giving special attention to these social forms, having children repeat them as necessary to make clear the expectations and boundaries, the teacher (with a smile on his or her face) establishes the culture for the rest of the year and immediately brings a sense of security to the children who know what is expected in all regards.

In a traditional Waldorf school, the festival of Michaelmas is celebrated near September 25<sup>th</sup>. In a Waldorf-inspired school, a festival of courage is often celebrated at this time. Children throughout the school may take part in a pageant/play in which a knight slays a dragon.

#### **Stories**

St. George and the Dragon  
Johnny Appleseed  
Sleeping Beauty

#### **Poems**

Here's a little apple tree – *Autumn*, Wynstones Press  
The Knight, by Molly De Havas – *A Journey Through Time*, Floris Books  
Brave and true will I be – *A Journey Through Time*, Floris Books

### **Songs**

Bumblebee and butterfly, M. Meyerkort – *Autumn*, Wynstones Press  
The Leaves are Green – *Autumn*, Wynstones Press  
Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

### **Activities**

Comparing apple peel lengths  
Finding 5-pointed stars in nature and other 5s

### **Projects**

Making swords & shields  
Making and dyeing silk capes  
Baking and cooking with apples

### **October – Autumn—colors, fading & blossoming, squash**

The children have settled into the rhythms of the kindergarten day and week and are eager to learn. The leaves are turning color, falling and becoming brittle. Squash of all sorts, including pumpkins, are plentiful. There are autumn flowers, such as the Michaelmas Daisy, that still bloom. The contrast is striking between all that blossoms and all that decays. This is a lesson that touches on the deeper meaning behind Halloween and All Souls Day. Soul cakes can be made and left on people's doorsteps. The story of The Root Children can give the child a more complete picture of the wholeness of the cycle that reassures them of the spring that will come again, and that the death in autumn is only part of the complete cycle of life. The compost pile is another place that this lesson can be taught, as with a rotting log, when one learns that what decays becomes the source for new life and growth. Because of the many colors of the autumn leaves, and how striking it is that the green world changes into a many-colored one, paying extra attention to colors can be fruitful this time of year.

### **Stories**

The Autumn Blanket – *Autumn*, Wynstones Press  
Little Red Hen  
*Mousekin's Golden House* by Edna Miller, Simon & Schuster  
Story of the Root Children

### **Poems**

These are the brown leaves – *Autumn*, Wynstones Press  
Scarlet and yellow, golden and brown – *Autumn*, Wynstones Press  
I am a pumpkin – *Autumn*, Wynstones Press

### **Songs**

Come little leaves – *Autumn*, Wynstones Press  
Oats and Beans – *Old Songs & Singing Games*, Collected and Edited by Richard Chase, Dover  
It's golden in the treetops  
Soul cake

### **Activities**

Observing decaying and blossoming in nature  
Making a rainbow of leaves from green to purple  
Finding colors in nature

### **Projects**

Making sun-catchers with leaves and waxed paper or leaf crowns

Cooking and baking with squash and pumpkin  
Working on a compost pile

**November – Autumn—harvest, gratitude, Native Americans, corn, power of community**

Now the cold begins to settle in along with the darkness of the shorter days. How wonderful that tradition has it that we celebrate the harvest and gratitude at this time of year. Gathering the abundance of the harvest gives the community confidence that it can survive the cold, harsh winter. Through celebration, we can feel the power of the community, as we share with one another our separate gifts and the fruits of our own harvest to create a feast that is bigger than anything one could create alone.

It's also the time of year when Waldorf schools hold a lantern walk. It's cold and dark, but we can create the space within our hearts and within some physical container for a light to shine. Then, when we come together as a community to create our collective parade of lights, accompanied by song, we demonstrate in another way the power of community and how as we each bring our inner light, we create something wonderful together. The children learn that as the light wanes outside, they can create an inner light through warmth of heart that brightens the world.

**Stories**

The Little Grey Pony – *Autumn*, Wynstones Press  
The Giant Turnip – *Autumn*, Wynstones Press  
A “First Thanksgiving” story  
The Spirit of the Corn  
Other Native American tales  
Stone Soup

**Poems**

A farmer rose at the break of day – *Autumn*, Wynstones Press  
November, Anonymous – *A Journey Through Time*, Floris Books  
The Harvest by Alice C. Henderson – *A Journey Through Time*, Floris Books

**Songs**

Rise Up, O Flame  
The Earth is Our Mother  
Glimmer, Lantern, Glimmer

**Activities**

Making stone soup  
Recreating a Thanksgiving feast  
Grinding and learning about corn

**Projects**

Making lanterns (can take several weeks)  
Preserving food  
Making Indian corn necklaces or chains  
Making corn husk dolls

**December – Winter—light in darkness, giving & receiving, wood/trees**

At this time of year, the inner light gets even brighter and the outer darkness even greater, and this is the time when many cultures celebrate a festival of lights, and the Waldorf-inspired school can as well. One way to celebrate is through an event in which a spiral form is created on the ground with pine boughs or other means. In the center a person can be seated with an apple with a burning candle in it (or

some other candle holder and candle). Gentle quiet lyre or flute music is played while the children take turns walking into the center with their own unlit candle holder, lighting it in the center and then setting their lit candle somewhere along the path on the way back out. As the children add their lights to the spiral, it gets brighter and brighter in the room. The parents and teachers watch this beautiful procession.

This festival, in which a light is shared – given and received – is one way in which children can learn about the power of giving and receiving this time of year. Through gift making and gift-giving, children can also learn about how good both gestures feel and how both are an important part of life. Homemade gifts, especially, can be appreciated for the effort and love put into them.

As the solstice comes and goes, the birth of the new light can be honored, the fact that now the daylight will increase again. Trees, which give up their lives to keep us warm, can be studied. Their rings a sign of their how many years of winter, spring, summer and fall they have been through. Their wood useful for making candle holders for gifts, for making bird and squirrel feeders to give gifts to the wild animals, and for collecting for wood fires. Because they are bare, the shapes of the tree branches are easy to see and can be observed. The strength and color tones of the various types of wood can be experienced and explored.

Stars can also be a theme because of how bright they seem in the night.

### Stories

A story about the gifts of a tree

A Visit to Mother Winter, *Circle Round* by Starhawk, Diane Baker, Anne Hill

The Candleberry Elf, [www.sparklestories.com](http://www.sparklestories.com)

The Star Money, Brothers Grimm

Shoemaker and the Elves, Brothers Grimm

### Poems

The gift of the light, M. Tittman, *Winter*, Wynstones Press

In darkest midnight, *Winter*, Wynstones Press

Trees by Sara Coleridge

### Songs

Down with Darkness, E. Amiran, *Sing through the Seasons*

One Star Shone, M. T. Schunemann, *Sing a Song of Seasons*

I'm a Tall, Tall tree, M.T. Schunemann, *Sing a Song of Seasons*

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star by Jane Taylor, *Poems for Children*, JelleyBean Press

### Activities

Cutting different tree trunk circles to see rings and experience different woods

Circle games with giving and receiving bean bags, catching & throwing

Feeding the wild animals

Building fires and learning about fire safety

### Projects

Woodworking – feeders, candle holders, blocks for classroom

Cookie Baking / Gingerbread House

Making bean bags or felted balls for gift giving/playing catch with

**January – Winter—warmth in coldness, hard work & play, wonder of snow, wool**

The holidays are past and the children are back from a break. It is wintery now, with more snow and cold than in December. How do we keep warm and dry? We learned about wood and fires in December. In January, we can learn about how physical activity can help us stay warm, both hard work and intense play: with snow, there's shoveling, building with, hiking through, climbing mounds of, target throwing with, and sledding. There's also stacking wood, sanding wood, scrubbing something clean, and moving furniture around the classroom. Friction and body heat keeps us warm: rubbing our hands together, huddling close together. Layers of clothing keep us warm, especially wool.

### Stories

The Three Little Kittens

Busy Monday Morning by Janina Domanska

The Mouse, the Bird, and the Sausage, Brothers Grimm, told by Shea Darian, *Seven Times the Sun*

### Poems

Look out, Look out! *Rhythms, Rhymes, Games and Songs for the Lower School*

We are working, working hard, *Winter*, Wynstones Press

Little light snowflakes, *Winter*, Wynstones Press

I can make a snowman - *Spindrift*, Wynstones Press

### Songs

Oh, Where Do You Come From? Traditional German, *Sing a Song of Seasons*

I Like Winter, Lois Lenski, *Sing through the Seasons*

The Mitten Song

### Activities

Nutmeg grating and other grating projects

Rearranging the furniture, rolling huge snow boulders

Lavender foot and hand baths

### Projects

Finger knitting

Wool felting

Beeswax modeling/making the wax warm

### February – Winter—fire and ice, transformation & change, family & teamwork

The cold begins to wear us down as adults and we begin to long for spring. We know winter's end is coming, but in the meantime have to make the best of the cold and damp. The days are getting longer, however, and that helps. How do we help each other get through to the spring? We can celebrate one more aspect of the winter – ice, and we can honor that noble counter part – fire. February, in fact, is a good time for beeswax candle dipping. As children follow each other around a circle of pots of melted wax, they each slowly grow their candles. The candle's flame feels especially warm and bright when it is cold, damp and gray outside. And as it burns, the candle slowly decreases in size again. The water outside freezes in cold darkness or melts as the sun's fiery rays set to work. These and other transformations can be interesting to observe.

Groundhog Day is another example of this anticipation and impatience for the spring. It may be fun to lead the children to check in on all the animal friends to see what signs of life can be found: tracks in snow and mud, food scraps, birds returning.

February is also the time of year when we celebrate Valentine's Day, and it can be a time to honor the whole idea of partnering, family and teamwork. What do we mean when we say we "heart" someone or

something? How do we show love toward each other? What can we do together that we can't do alone? What can we do as a family or as a larger team? Is it true that many hands make light the work? In addition to making and giving Valentine cards and gifts to give to loved ones, this month can include activities that make tangible the power of uniting with our fellow human beings.

### Stories

Snow White and Rose Red, Brothers Grimm  
*Snowsong Whistling* by Karen E. Lotz  
*The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats  
 Sweet Porridge

### Poems

The Fire, *Rhythms, Rhymes, Games and Songs for the Lower School*  
 Jack Be Nimble  
 Up the tall white candle stick, *Rhythms, Rhymes, Games and Songs for the Lower School*  
 Little Nancy Etticoat, *A Journey Through Time*, Floris Books

### Songs

Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush  
 Many Hands by Shea Darian, *Seven Times the Sun*  
 Tracks in the Snow by Jessie Gaynor, *Sing through the Seasons*

### Activities

Looking for and comparing icicles  
 Tug of war  
 Tracking animals

### Projects

Candle dipping  
 Valentine making (paper, felt, cookie cutouts)  
 Ice sun-catchers for outdoor tree decorating

## March – Spring—Mother Goose, silliness & seriousness, maple syrup

Thank goodness it is March. It's still winter, but we all feel lighter. The equinox comes later in the month and then nature really begins to turn toward spring. How can we celebrate the lightness we feel? One way could be Mother Goose and other silly rhymes, riddles and circle games. Children could help by being invited to share during the weekly sharing time a riddle, rhyme, game or story. Learning about what makes a riddle a riddle, a rhyme a rhyme and a story a story will come easily through this. Working with numbers through various poems and songs can also be done. Conversations may come easily about when it is good to be silly and when it's good to be serious. Creative game playing can also lighten the mood and offer many opportunities for learning through play.

Also in March, nature presents us with the huge gift of sugaring time. This is a wonderful activity for the young children to be able to participate in and learn about. Maple syrup on fresh snow snow-cones makes a wonderful treat. Beginning to sense the uprising of life all around adds to the excitement.

### Stories

Three Billy Goats Gruff  
 The Emperor's New Clothes  
 Little Louse and Little Flea, a French Fairy Tale, *Spindrift*, Wystone Press  
 Little Madam, a German tale, *Spindrift*, Wystone Press

### Poems

The Lion and the Unicorn, *The Real Mother Goose*  
 One, Two, Three, *The Real Mother Goose*  
 Riddles and Runes from *A Journey Through Time*, Floris Books  
 Winter tells us little bulbs, *Winter*, Wynstones Press  
 I saw a little birdie coming hop, hop, hop, *Spindrift*, Wynstones Press

### Songs

Baa, Baa Black Sheep  
 A Ram Sam Sam, Moroccan Folksong, *Seven Times the Sun*  
 A Tisket, A Tasket, Mother Goose, *Lavender's Blue Dilly Dilly*  
 Winter Goodbye, *Winter*, Wynstones Press

### Activities

Children can share riddles one week, funny stories another, silly poems another  
 Tapping maple trees and making maple syrup  
 Learning and playing games

### Projects

Maple syrup, maple sugar, maple cookies  
 Making and playing with simple puppets (finger puppets, sock puppets)  
 Very simple doll – *Natural Childhood* by John Thomson, A Fireside Book

### April – Spring—rebirth, waking-up, life processes of plants, planting seeds, eggs, wind

There's no mistaking the thrill when spring begins to show in snowdrops and crocuses, in leaf buds, in chickens laying more eggs than they have all winter, in the need to start planting the garden. The "Root Children" have finished their new dresses and are coming back up above the earth; the bugs and beetles have their freshly painted shells and begin to roam and fly again. So many signs of spring can be found that the children can go on a treasure hunt to find more signs every day.

Easter in the Christian tradition is usually celebrated some time in April (or the end of March), and many other cultures have their ways of celebrating the renewal and rebirth that comes at this time of year. The egg is symbol of this, with its sun-like yoke in the center. A lovely project could be incubating eggs or just observing the henhouse activity nearby and discovering any new chicks that may hatch.

### Stories

Velvet Ears by S. Baines, *Spring*, Wynstones Press  
*Story of the Root Children* by Sibylle Von Olfers, Floris Books  
 Seeds by E. Tuck, *Spring*, Wynstones Press

### Poems

Come with me, *Spring*, Wynstones Press  
 In the heart of a seed, *Spring*, Wynstones Press  
 I have heard a mother bird, *Rhythms, Rhymes, Games and Songs for the Lower School*

### Songs

Spring is Coming  
 Ring around the roses  
 All in a Wood there Grew, *Rhythms, Rhymes, Games and Songs for the Lower School*  
 In the Springtime by Clifford Monks, *Sing a Song of Seasons*

**Activities**

A parade to celebrate spring  
 Hatching chicks  
 Planting the garden

**Projects**

Ribbon sticks  
 Pinwheels  
 Spring basket of wheat grass grown from seed  
 Natural egg dying

**May – Spring—celebration of growth, flowers, dancing**

May in our climate finally promises lovely weather, flowers, and the greening of the world. The children’s energy is likely to be high as they feel the burgeoning of life all around them. They, too, may feel as if they can do anything, that the sky is the limit. Life is looking up, and they are looking up and growing up, too. How can the teacher make the most of this upward momentum? Climbing, measuring growth, building towers or other structures, and flying kites are all activities that would honor the child’s longing for the heights. More challenging artistic activities or projects that take a certain skill or build clearly on previous lessons during the course of the school year would help satisfy that desire to feel oneself bigger, taller, more skilled than earlier in the year. Longer, complicated stories with more memorization required would also be appropriate.

May is also the month when May Day and a May Pole Festival may be celebrated as well as Mother’s Day. Songs and simple dances may be learned so that the children can dance around and weave the streamers of the May Pole.

**Stories**

Mashenka and the Bear  
 The Boy with the Shining Garment, M. Dodwell, *Spindrift*, Wynstones Press  
 Rumpelstiltskin

**Poems**

Build a House, *Spindrift*, Wynstones Press  
 Wake Up, *Rhythms, Rhymes, Games and Songs for the Lower School*  
 Spring Is Here, Spring Is Here, *Rhythms, Rhymes, Games and Songs for the Lower School*

**Songs**

Mother Earth by P. Patterson, *Spring*, Wynstones Press  
 Growing Song, M. T. Schunemann, *Sing a Song of Seasons*  
 I’m a Tall, Tall Tree, Traditional

**Activities**

Outdoor building projects, climbing trees, climbing and rolling down hills  
 Painting the colors of the world – the watercolor paintings can be used for the May baskets and/or kites  
 Finger knitting the handles for the May baskets  
 May Festival and delivering secret May baskets to neighbors

**Projects**

May baskets with flowers  
 Pressed flowers for Mother’s day gifts

Kites

**June – Summer—caterpillars & butterflies, nature spirits, circus arts**

The end of the school year is in sight and summer feels right around the corner. The children are preparing for a big transition, from school to summer time schedules and, for some of them, from kindergarten to first grade. How can the teacher help the children prepare for the transition? What stories, songs, poems and activities can give encouragement and can support the children’s sense of their strength and self-confidence? The caterpillar-butterfly metamorphosis is a profound lesson in self-transformation through which even the prekindergarten and kindergarten children can be nourished. The more complete picture given by nature and the garden now of how the seeds planted in April have grown is another supportive lesson.

The fact that everyone is about to fly away from the nest of the school can create a type of energy that may be channeled through simple circus arts, somersaults and cartwheels, or tests of physical coordination, such as hopping on one foot, beginning to learn to skip rope, and rhythmic clapping games.

**Stories**

The Butterfly and the Rose, *Summer*, Wynstones Press  
 Bremen Town Musicians, Brothers Grimm  
 Going to First Grade

**Poems**

The Caterpillar, *Hand Rhymes*, collected by Marc Brown  
 Flutterby, *Seven Times the Sun* by Shea Darian  
 Elfin creeps into a shell, *Summer*, Wynstones Press  
 Pretty Flower Elves are We, *Rhythms, Rhymes, Games and Songs for the Lower School*

**Songs**

Over in the Meadow, Traditional  
 Town Musicians of Bremen by C. Thatcher, *Gateways*, Wynstones Press  
 Oats and Beans and Barley Grows, Traditional

**Activities**

Put on a simple circus with everyone showing what they can do  
 Watching a classroom caterpillar transform into a butterfly  
 Cleaning and preparing the classroom for the summer

**Projects**

Garden stone – possible Father’s Day gift  
 Picture frame – possible Father’s Day gift  
 Tissue-paper butterflies, *Earthways*, by Carol Petrash

**Birthdays**

We all know how important birthdays are to young children. In the Waldorf-inspired prekindergarten and kindergarten, birthday celebrations can carry an even deeper meaning: birthday crowns can be a symbol of the child’s higher nature, her or his inner queen or king. In *Let’s Dance and Sing: Story Games for Children* arranged by Kundry Willwerth, a birthday celebration is described in which each year of the child’s life is recounted, including the time when not yet born. Other books describing festivals also include other examples of ways to honor this special day. In the prekindergarten and kindergarten classroom, parents may be invited to hear and help tell the story of the child’s coming to earth. The

children may act out the coming down the rainbow bridge with a large rainbow silk. A special honey cake may be baked. A birthday song sung. And the teacher may give the child a simple but beautiful gift, such as a shell, a polished stone, a pinecone, a feather, a bell on a ribbon, etc.

### **Resources**

The list that follows is not exhaustive, but includes many helpful resources for the Waldorf-inspired prekindergarten and kindergarten classroom.

### **Songs, Poems, Stories, Games**

*Autumn: A collection of poems, songs and stories for young children*, Wynstones Press  
*Winter: A collection of poems, songs and stories for young children*, Wynstones Press  
*Spring: A collection of poems, songs and stories for young children*, Wynstones Press  
*Summer: A collection of poems, songs and stories for young children*, Wynstones Press  
*Spindrift: A collection of poems, songs and stories for young children*, Wynstones Press  
*Gateways: A collection of poems, songs and stories for young children*, Wynstones Press

*Autumn Tales* by Suzanne Down, Juniper Tree Puppets  
 Other books from Suzanne Down, Juniper Tree Puppets:  
*Around the World with Finger Puppet Animals*  
*Spring Tales*

*The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales* by Jacob Grimm, Pantheon

*The Eentsy, Weentsy Spider Fingerplays and Action Rhymes* by Joanna Cole and Stephanie Calmenson, Mulberry Books

*Favourite Tales from Hans Christian Andersen* by Hans Christian Andersen; Illustrated by Anastasiya Archipova, Floris Books

*Games Children Sing and Play: Singing Movement Games to Play with Children Ages 3-5* by Joan Carr Shimer and Valerie Baadh Garrett

*Hand Rhymes*, collected and illustrated by Marc Brown, Puffin Unicorn Books

*A Journey Through Time in Verse and Rhyme: Poems collected by Heather Thomas*, Floris Books

*Let's Dance and Sing: Story Games for Children* arranged by Kundry Willwerth, Mercury Press

*Let Us Form a Ring* By Nancy Foster, An Acorn Hill Anthology

*Poems for Children*, compiled by Kate James, JellyBean Press

*The Real Mother Goose*, Floris Books

*Rhythms, Rhymes, Games and Songs for the Lower School*, Selected, arranged and edited by Christoph Jaffke, Pedagogical Section

*Seven Times the Sun: Guide Your Child through the Rhythms of the Day* by Shea Darian, Gilead Press

*Sing a Song of Seasons: Singing with Children Series*, arranged by Mary Thienes-Schunemann, Naturally You Can Sing Productions

Other books in the series, all with a free CD:

The wonder of Lullabies, a collection of traditional and original songs  
Lavenders Blue Dilly Dilly, traditional songs.  
Sing A Song with Baby, songs and games for the baby child.  
The Christmas Star, to accompany the holiday season.  
This is the way we wash a day, songs for work and play  
Cante Cante Elefante , songs in Spanish

*Sing through the Seasons*, compiled and edited by Marlys Swinger, The Plough Publishing House

*The Tales of Tiptoes Lightly* by Reg Down, Trafford

### **Art, Craft, & Practical Projects and Festivals**

*Celebrating Festivals with Children* by Freya Jaffke, Floris Books

*The Christmas Craft Book* by Thomas Berger, Floris Books

*Earth, Water, Fire and Air: Playful Explorations in the Four Elements* by Walter Kraul; Translated by Donald Maclean, Floris Books

*Earthways: Simple Environmental Activities for Young Children* by Carol Petrash, Gryphon House

*Feltcraft: Making Dolls, Gifts and Toys* by Petra Berger, Floris Books

*Festivals, Family and Food* by Diana Carey, Judy Large, Hawthorn Press

*Festivals Together: A Guide to Multi-Cultural Celebration* by Sue Fitzjohn, Minda Weston, Judy Large, Hawthorn Press

*For the Children of the World*, Edited by Louise DeForest, WECAN Books

*Gardening with Young Children* by Beatrys Lockie, Hawthorn Press

*The Nature Corner* by M. V. Leeuwen, J. Moeskops, Floris Books

*Painting with Children* by Brunhild Muller, Floris Books

*Toymaking with Children* by Freya Jaffke, Floris Books

*Under the Sky: Playing, Working, and Enjoying Adventures in the Open Air* by Sally Schweizer, Rudolf Steiner Press

*The Waldorf Kindergarten Snack Book* by Lisa Hildreth, Bell Pond Books

### **Miscellaneous**

*Beyond the Rainbow Bridge: Nurturing our children from birth to seven* by Barbara J. Patterson and Pamela Bradley, Michaelmas Press

*The Developing Child: Sense and Nonsense in Education* by Willi Aeppli, SteinerBooks

*First Grade Readiness* by Nancy Blanning, *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv, Algonquin Books

*Heaven On Earth: A Handbook for Parents of Young Children* by Sharifa Oppenheimer, SteinerBooks

*Nokken: A Garden for Children* by Helle Heckmann, WECAN Books

*What is a Waldorf Kindergarten* compiled and introduced by Sharifa Oppenheimer, WECAN Books

*Work and Play in Early Childhood* by Freya Jaffke, Floris Books

*You're Not the Boss of Me* Edited by Ruth Ker, WECAN Books