



International congress
Pregnancy, birth and early childhood

The dignity of the child

29 May to 1 June 2024 at the Goetheanum

Life forces

Finding forces that bring life
in a world of exhaustion

Organiser

Interdisciplinary CARE I working group
(Pregnancy, birth and early childhood)

*Your locus is
where eyes look at you.
Where eyes meet
you come into being.*

*Borne by a call,
always the same voice,
it seems there is only one
with which all call.*

*You fell,
but you don't fall.
Eyes catch you.*

*You exist
because eyes want you,
look at you and say
that you exist*

Hilde Domin
(*Sämtliche Gedichte*, S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, Frankfurt am Main, 2009. Translation Christian von Arnim)

Dornach, January 2024

Dear Colleagues, dear Friends,

Finding forces that bring life in a world of exhaustion. How does that work? Which remedies, applications and techniques in therapy and education unlock life forces? The perception of a growing plight of exhaustion spreading among pregnant women, entire families, professionals and increasingly even young children led our interdisciplinary CARE 1 working group on pregnancy, birth and early childhood to the idea for the 2024 international congress at the Goetheanum. This congress continues the series of early childhood congresses and aims to facilitate even greater international co-operation between the various professional groups involved in this stage of life.

In the ongoing virtualisation of our lifeworlds, it seems highly topical to us to work on the way in which children and adults can connect well with their bodies today, encounter the world in a healthy way with their senses, and continue to be able to tap into genuine sources of strength from the world. At this congress, we wish to make it possible not only to understand but also to bring to experience how a child gains and maintains life forces by immersing themselves in their body and senses. Concrete ways will be shown how we can promote this in childhood and strengthen it in ourselves.

We will approach the major topic of the living formative forces through content-related work, discussions, artistic work and our own experience in order to make them effective for our therapeutic and educational work and at the same time for the care and preservation of our own forces.

For the CARE I interdisciplinary working group and the Medical Section

Karin Michael, Philipp Reubke, Ina von Mackensen and Claudia Grah-Wittich

Target groups

The congress is intended for people working in education and therapy. Early childhood educators, midwives, gynaecologists, specialists in paediatrics and adolescent medicine (the topic is relevant from neonatology to school and kindergarten medicine or child and adolescent psychiatry!), nurses, motologists, occupational, speech and art therapists, physiotherapists and all other staff working in the field of early intervention.

Important questions

Which impressions nourish, revitalise, tire or offend children and adults? How does this happen? How do I arrive at the conscious experience of what I perceive? Can we make tangible the connection between the life forces and the sensory processes? Which senses live in the child (during pregnancy, at birth and in early childhood)? What is the child's perception?

Wednesday, 29 May

09.00–10.00

School of Spiritual Science work

8th class lesson *(DE)*

For members of the School of Spiritual Science

Christoph Meinecke

13.00–15.00

Lecturers' meeting

Conference start

15.00–16.30

Welcome – Making oneself at home

Philipp Reubke

Finding forces that bring life in a world of exhaustion

Karin Michael

Forces in nature

Benno Otter

16.30–17.15 Coffee break

17.15–18.30

Movement and arrival

Which movement experiences help us to arrive well in our own bodies?

Georg Soldner

18.30–19.30 Evening break

19.30–21.00

Signatures of life

Claudia Grah-Wittich, Jochen Breme and David Martin

Thursday, 30 May

08.30–09.00

Joint start to the day

with singing and stillness

09.00–10.30

Lectures: "Where do I come from?"

1. Critical threshold situations

Christoph Meinecke

2. Extreme premature birth and asphyxia, post-maturation through integrated treatment including general movements.

Sven Wellmann

10.30–11.15 Coffee break

11.15–12.45

Workshops

12.45–15.00 Lunch break

15.00–16.30

Perception exercise

Christian Forss and Hansjörg Palm

16.30–17.15 Coffee break

17.15–18.30

Panel on experiential afternoon and keynote contribution

"Change your heart and become as little children"

Georg Soldner, Karin Michael

from 18.30

Festive evening

With singing, choir and refreshments

Philipp Reubke

Friday, 31 May

08.30–09.00

Joint start to the day

with singing and stillness

09.00–10.30

Lectures: "Being in resonance"

1. Resonance

Claudia Grah-Wittich

2. Letting go and sleeping

Ina von Mackensen

3. Assisted conception: conceived in the hands

Natalie Hurst

10.30–11.15 Coffee break

11.15–12.45

Workshops

12.45–15.00 Lunch break

Optional with shortend lunch break

14–14.50 *

Puppet show „Die Goldkinder“

Felicia Puppet Theater at the Goetheanum

15.00–16.30

Experiential afternoon – Course for the senses

Red axis, 3D pool for adults, external applications, movement, etc.

Christian Forss, Hansjörg Palm

16.30–17.15 Coffee break

17.15–18.30

Panel on experiential afternoon

Digital and analogue sensory perception

Silke Schwarz, David Martin

18.30–19.30 Evening break

19.30–20.30

Eurythmy "To the earth"

Eurythmy Ensemble at the Goetheanum

Saturday, 1 June

08.30–09.00

Joint start to the day

with singing and stillness

09.00–10.30

Workshops

10.30–11.15 Coffee break

11.15–12.45

Lectures: "What will be?"

1. Establishing openness for what is coming into being *Angelika Maaser*

2. The future of birth

Johanna Hünig

3. Forming an envelope

Cristina Meinecke

12.45–13.00

Summary and conclusion

*** Puppet show "Die Goldkinder"**

Fairy tale from the Brothers Grimm.

Contribution to costs: CHF 15,
limited seating

–Subject to change–

Workshops (the workshops build on one another)

Thursday and Friday, 11.15–12.45 / Saturday 09.00–10.30

1. Dealing with infectious diseases, fever, antibiotics in infants and young children (DE)

We live in a cold, accelerated world in which there remains little space and time for children to be ill. The meaning of fever, the importance of warmth in relation to the development of the immune system. Our topics are life, struggle, suffering, salutogenesis and the development of strength, supporting the sick child, which we will work on interactively on the basis of a modern scientific perspective, research results and hands-on practical experience/exercises. Please bring comfortable clothing and a towel if necessary.

Dr habil Henrik Szőke, Andrea Wagner

2. The challenge for the I: Finding a healthy relationship with the body (DE/EN)

It is becoming increasingly difficult to incarnate into a body as a soul and spiritual being. We also see this in the increase in identity disorders, allergies, autoimmune diseases and psychosomatic problems. How can we support the incarnation of children in such a way that they succeed in forming the body as a suitable tool for their biography? And where do we as people raising children find the sources of strength to be able to support these particularly important and demanding phases of a child's life – pregnancy, birth and the first years of life – in the right way? *Claudia McKeen, Bettina Lohn*

3. Waldorf daycare: New ways of caring for young children (DE)

One of the many priorities of Waldorf education is to perceive and support the individual personality of the young child from the very beginning. Waldorf daycare can be a good choice for their care. This form of childcare creates an ideal and child-friendly environment due to the manageable group size. We intend to look together at the advantages of daycare as a form of childcare and consider the opportunities offered by Waldorf daycare as a new occupational profile. Both lecturers are experienced childminders and are members of the board and advisory board of "AG Waldorf-Kindertagespflege e.V.".

Katharina Eisenberg, Johanna Trost

4. Close to the cosmos – life forces during pregnancy (DE/EN)

How differently pregnant women can be affected: while one woman may experience the greatest fullness of her life forces and can move mountains during pregnancy, others experience an exhaustion that brings them to their existential limits. How can we gain an impression of the real life forces of a pregnant woman? What is the source from which women can draw? How can we strengthen the life forces of mother and child? Is the cosmos near or far at this time? We will explore these questions in contributions and discussions. In addition to diagnostic pointers, we will be looking at various therapeutic approaches to strengthening the life forces and trust that after the conference we will all be able to return to our work with a well-filled package of ideas. *Angelika Maaser, Johanna Hünig*

5. Training the perception for working with children of pre-school age, focussing on sensory and movement development. Deepened self-perception in preparation for a better understanding of developmental particularities (DE)

Work on, with and about the senses. Focus on the lower senses. Introductory presentations followed by perception exercises, self-experience and discussion on the topic.

Stefan Krauch, Hansjörg Palm

Workshops

6. Diagnostics and treatment from a sensory perspective of young children with behavioural and developmental issues. (EN)

The development of the lower four senses is a process that takes place in the first years of a child's life. If this process falters, children can develop reluctant and/or overconfident behaviour and get stuck in it. This makes children anxious, angry, decisive and restless. In short, it affects the development of self-regulation, attachment to the body and to the parents, and the discovery of the outside world. In this working group, we take the participants through our vision on the diagnosis and treatment of the lower four senses of young children (and their parents) with behavioural development questions. It is a practical working group in which case studies are discussed. *Lonneke Winters, Paulien Beijer*

7. Sensory experience through the artistic creative process with form drawing and work in light, darkness and colour (DE/EN)

All 12 senses are addressed when working with artistic resources. We start each time with form drawing in the corresponding movement and arrive in the here and now. We will immerse ourselves in the material as invisible, nourishing darkness. With the help of charcoal and our hands, we will work on the creation process in seven steps and experience the correspondence in the human being. The genesis in the process of creation and its laws of light, darkness and colour are recreated with our whole being. Please refer to the recommended reading for the working group under "Literature for preparation".

Bernadette Gollmer, Romana Janssen

8. "Nutrient or source of life?" – How do we develop a relationship with nutrition as the basis for healthy organ growth, an active immune system and joyful life energy? (DE)

With regard to the developmental stages of the child, we will reflect on educational aspects, e.g. enabling and fostering sensory experiences, perceiving transitions and creating rhythm, re-organising effects and connections; on questions of quality relating to the selection and preparation of food; as well as on experiences from parent counselling. We will deepen the topic by means of short thought stimuli, pictures from practical work, and our own experience through small samples and perception exercises. In this way, we together (midwives, physicians, parent counsellors, teachers) can succeed, accompanied by the parents and in being together with the children, to make eating a source of strength for life.

Susanne Wegner

9. Dolls – large and soft (DE)

Lectures for the spirit – doll making for the heart and hand. In three units we will create baby-sized, soft dolls to cuddle and play with. They can be held, carried, cared for... In our work we will discover the effect of the 12 caregiving gestures, which play a particularly important role in early childhood education. In the caregiving gestures, healing powers flow to the child and flow back richly. The materials in organic quality will be provided. (Please bring CHF/Euro 25 to the workshop in cash for materials). *Inge Heine*

10. Autism and the senses – Origin of autism and special characteristics of sensory development – Training the senses as a healing element for autistic traits in modern society (DE)

The two basic forms, early childhood autism and Asperger's syndrome, occur from early childhood onwards. They are associated with peculiarly puzzling disorders of sensory development. People with autistic symptoms display a withdrawal from sensory experience, sometimes under-functioning, sometimes over-functioning, and sometimes conspicuous savant syndrome. Autism was discovered during the Second World War, when autistic traits were increasingly appearing in modern society. How can we learn to better understand the phenomena of autism through knowledge of the twelve senses and sensory training, and how can we provide corresponding healing impulses in society? Please refer to the recommended reading for the working group under "Literature for preparation".

Dr med Hans Jürgen Scheurle

Workshops

11. Unlocking wellbeing – maturing, development and education of the sense of life – its universal importance in the support of the healthy, ill or traumatised child (DE)

We will address the particular importance of the sense of life for the healthy development of the child and for healing the traumatised child with content-related aspects, practical exercises and discussion with colleagues. In doing so, the experiences from the work in the Emmi Pikler House in Berlin will be included and will illuminate individual biographical destinies of the children cared for there.

Cristina and Christoph Meinecke

12. Collaborating with the parents – access to the child (DE)

How do we manage to work together with parents on an equal footing despite our different roles? How can we support these most important relationships for the children and enable the joy of being a parent, even if we are worried about the child's development (difficult conversations)? How does the child's prenatal decision in favour of these parents influence our attitude? Introductions, small groups, exercises, discussion. *Ina von Mackensen*

13. Support in challenging behaviour (DE)

We are increasingly encountering children in our day-to-day educational work who challenge their surroundings with their behaviour. These children often push us to our limits – and beyond. We invite you to follow the tracks. Which factors are beneficial and which are detrimental for the empathic support of challenging behaviour? How can children who cross boundaries be supported without our own life forces suffering in the long term? Is it possible, even, to strengthen them in the process? Mental hygiene, change of perspective and practising new approaches for action. The whole thing playfully, perceptively, intuitively. *Christian Forss, Marcel Roosen*

14. Fortifying medicines during pregnancy and birth, breastfeeding and early childhood, for parents, children and carers (DE/EN)

An experienced paediatrician and family doctor presents important anthroposophical medicines and external applications that can fortify expectant mothers, parents, children and carers. *Georg Soldner*

15. Thriving well (with practical exercises)

"Growth and life forces – how to support the infant to thrive" (DE)

Thriving adequately in the first weeks and months of life is an important building block for the healthy physical development of the infant. In an interdisciplinary team of midwives, obstetricians, physicians, nurses and therapists, the problem of inadequate weight gain can be addressed holistically in the interests of the child and their family. Food intake in the here and now is linked to the child's past and future. Experiences from pregnancy and birth can have an effect on the absorption, digestion and assimilation of food. The developing attachment, which is also revealed in the interaction during feeding, has an effect on the child's development. In the working group, the background and possibilities of support for thriving in infancy will be demonstrated, worked on and practised using a case. In addition to the focus on counselling, body therapy applications will also be used. *Natalie Hurst*

16. Time for play as part of the day at a childcare facility. (DE)

Particularly in the childcare situation, play provides the most significant possibility for children aged 1–3 to explore themselves and their surroundings. Through their activity they experience themselves as creators and shapers. That requires time and peace based on a feeling of security. The children can orientate themselves in a reliable daily routine. This creates trust, security, time and peace. They "don't have to worry".

Brigitte Huisinga, Sandra Rode

Workshops

17. Rhythmical Einreibung for infants and young children [\(DE\)](#)

Before birth, those not yet born are in archetypal communication in the spiritual world and after birth they still live IN the upper senses as an echo of this. What opportunities does this open up for us and the newborns in our encounters? Rhythmical Einreibung has a strengthening effect on the life forces through the rhythmical event but also through the qualities of touch (lower senses) and through the enveloping gestures. The content will consist of demonstrations and practical practising of Rhythmical Einreibung, observations of the upper and lower senses, care substances. If possible, bring a doll, ideally a Waldorf doll. *Anette Beisswenger*

18. The impact of anxiogenic society in the child development. Tools for prevention and care. [\(ES/EN\)](#)

Accompany the development of the child implies contemplating its multiple variables such as social context, immediate environment, family, the transgenerational inheritance and the individual qualities of the child. Understanding what anxiety is, anxiety disorders which impact in different biographical stages, their manifestation in the first years of life, allows us the necessary knowledge to provide tools for the adult and caregivers who form the child's environment. We will see what anthroposophic medicine, anthroposophical psychotherapy and arts-therapies can offer us. *Valentina Battistino, Daniela Lucero*

19. Twelve senses and seven life processes [\(DE/EN\)](#)

How can we better understand the growing number of children with hypersensitivity and autism spectrum symptoms? The aim is to work on a deeper understanding of them against the background of the 12 senses and 7 life processes. We will also discuss how children with these delicate open senses or sensory processing disorders can be supported in their development and wellbeing.

Dr med Karin Michael

20. Pikler and Waldorf education as sources of inspiration for work with babies, young children and caregiving adults [\(DE\)](#)

Pikler and Waldorf education can complement each other well. Basic knowledge of both working methods is important in order to be able to reflect well about oneself when working with young children and their parents. The tasks for the adults in the children's environment result from learning to read the general nature of human beings and individual characteristics. Small touch games by Wilma Ellersiek and songs in fifth tuning are practised by way of example. *Birgit Krohmer*

21. Caring for the life forces and senses of the young child [\(EN\)](#) – Workshop cancelled

22. Gathering life forces – through and with eurythmy [\(DE/EN\)](#)

Every movement we perform takes our etheric body with it, and this is explicitly the case in eurythmy. We aim to explore this and penetrate the movements in such a way that we can experience their inherent strength. Becoming active by means of exercises and sound forces and reflecting together on our experiences. *Silke Sponheuer*

Workshops

24. Seminar on plastic embryology – *representation and modelling of human embryonic development* (DE)

The deeper meaning of embryology can be revealed through Rudolf Steiner's study of the human being, which sees embryonic development not as the absolute beginning of human life but as a transition between the cosmic existence preceding the conception of the individual and actual earthly life. The phenomenon of envelope formation and of development as a way of moving out of the protective envelopes is a lifelong theme and a basic motif for medicine and education. In embryonic development, it is "physically" tangible. In accordance with the basic Waldorf educational principle that the limbs have the most direct access to the world and to the spirit (tenth lecture in *The Foundations of Human Experience*), art – modelling – can bring to life the scientific subject of embryology and lead to its internalisation. In this sense, plastic embryology can be a building block for therapists and educators for a study of the human being filled with life.

Jochen Breme

Literature for preparation

- Link: www.tessin-zentrum.de (German)
Article by Karin Michael and Silke Schwarz on the Tessin Centre website, April 2022
- *Zur Sinneslehre*, Rudolf Steiner, Themen aus dem Gesamtwerk, Volume 3
In particular the lecture of 8 August 1920, GA 199
- For the Bernadette Gollmer and Ramona Janssen workshop:
Drawing on *Genesis. Secrets of Creation*
Rudolf Steiner, fourth lecture, Munich, 19 August 1910, CW 122

Presence congress "The dignity of the child", 29 May to 1 June

Sponsorship price	CHF 500
Normal price	CHF 390
Reduced price	CHF 350 *
Students	CHF 270

* Reduced fee for care workers, midwives, pre-school teachers and daycare workers.

Lunches are already included in the conference prices, dinners can be purchased separately.

Online registration: <https://tickets.goetheanum.ch/4KK/>



Online Webinar "The dignity of the child", from 1 June at 5pm (CET)

For people who are unable to travel to Dornach for the in-person event, we offer the online event. Selected lectures from the conference in Dornach will be recorded and made available to participants within a short time. The joint discussion and work on the content of the contributions (Plenary language English, without translation) will take place on Saturday, 1 June following the conference at the Goetheanum. Interactive participation in the in-person conference in Dornach and the workshops is not possible.

Online-Registration: <https://medsektion.goetheanum.org/>



Congress information

Translation

All lectures will be simultaneously interpreted from the respective plenum language into *English, Spanish and German*.

Translation Services

We shall gladly provide translation for our foreign guests, if required. However, we count on your understanding that we can only financially arrange for such translation if the number of participants for a certain language group is seven or more; if less participants register for a particular language, you are requested to bring your own translator – he/she will of course receive a free ticket for the conference.

(Requests until April 28 to: conferences@medsektion-goetheanum.ch)

Donations to support the early years congress
(*not to be used for remittance of the congress fee*)

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