

How to Recognize if your Child has a Learning Difference

Lecture: Friday, October 16, 7:00 p.m. — 8:30 p.m. Dr. Susan Johnson's journey to Waldorf Education and her path to integrating anthroposophical and allopathic disciplines.

Workshop: Saturday, October 17, 9 a.m. —12:30 p.m. A hands-on experience empowering parents to more readily recognize the signs of learning differences, as well as the potentially negative impacts of premature academic instruction on a still-developing child.

Both events are in Meadows Hall. Please RSVP to ahamilton@waldorfschool.com. Adults only.

How do we determine when a child needs extra academic help? How is this provided in a Waldorf setting?

"The development of young children unfolds according to a clear pattern," says Dr. Susan Johnson. Bilateral integration (the working together of the right and left brain) and a developed proprioceptive sense (an understanding of the orientation of the body in time and space) are essential for successful reading, writing, and spelling. **Without the appropriate development in these areas, literacy can present a challenge.**

Learning differences become apparent when a child exhibits symptoms of ADHD, has difficulty with visual and auditory processing, or reads only with sight memory. Children with insufficiently developed proprioceptive and bilateral integration often are stuck at a younger age when it comes to reading and writing. How do we strengthen these areas? For many children, movement therapy is beneficial.

In Extra Lesson remedial work, the integration of the left and right hemispheres is promoted through painting and other exercises involving the body. Bilateral integrative pathways can be strengthened by activities that involve cross-lateral movement. In Waldorf schools this is promoted in circle time and activities such as jumping rope in kindergarten, and in the early grades with exercises including Eurhythmy, form drawing, and cursive writing.

Once bilateral integration matures and the proprioceptive system develops fully, a child can more easily focus on academic work. Please join us to learn more about Waldorf methods designed to help your child thrive.

Presented by Susan Johnson, MD, FAAP



Dr. Johnson is a behavioral and developmental pediatrician. After completing a three-year residency and a three-year fellowship in behavioral and developmental pediatrics, she worked for seven years as the physician director for the School Health Center in San Francisco. After the birth of her son, she was introduced to Waldorf Education and became a certified Waldorf teacher. She spent an additional year of training in the Extra Lesson/sensory integration program at Rudolf Steiner College with Ingun Schneider. She also attended a special training course in anthroposophically-extended medicine at the Lukas Clinic in Arlesheim, Switzerland. Dr. Johnson makes visits to Waldorf schools and has a private practice in Colfax, CA. **For more information, visit www.youandyourchildshealth.org.**