

# Kildare Steiner School

Where children have time to be children

Rathargid,

Dunlavin,

County Kildare

045 401919

[www.kildaresteinerschool.org](http://www.kildaresteinerschool.org)

## The importance of play



### The Steiner Waldorf approach to early childhood education

Early childhood is an intensely rich time of learning for our young children. The world is a fascinating and dazzling place to them, full of things to be touched, pulled, played with and fully experienced through their rapidly developing bodies. It is also the time when the vitally important foundations are laid in both brain and body for later social and intellectual development and formal learning.

Steiner Waldorf education is designed around the simple idea that, in order to learn and develop in a balanced way - physically, emotionally and mentally -, children need to be engaged through their head, heart and hands. Since no two children are the same, this engagement should take place in a natural, unhurried way that supports each child in progressing at their own individual pace.

The Steiner Waldorf approach emphasises what modern scientific research is now showing us: that we learn with the whole body, rather than with just a “disembodied brain” and that too-early exposure to formal academic learning can physiologically damage developing brains, inhibiting children’s natural curiosity and their ability to learn. In addition, when children are pressured to grow up fast, important achievements may be skipped or bypassed, which can give rise to serious problems later.

## Importance of play-based learning

The high value which Steiner Waldorf schools place on imaginative play as an essential part of healthy growth and learning is supported by increasing numbers of studies which show that “play at every stage of development improves IQ, social-emotional functioning, learning, and academic performance”, according to Dr. David Elkind in his book *The Power Of Play*. “Just playing” is in fact what nearly all developmental psychologists, neuroscientists and education experts recommend for children up to age seven as the best way to nurture their development and ready them for academic success later in life.

Outdoor playtime is a regular part of the Steiner Waldorf preschool programme, regardless of the season. When the children are out of doors, nature can provide the toys – bark from trees, pieces of moss, coloured leaves. In the Kildare Steiner Waldorf Kindergarten our children are free to be children. They can do all the things we did when we were young - make things, grow things, burn off energy, climb trees and get dirty.



**Steiner Waldorf teachers take a long view of education. We believe that when the seeds of learning are sown in fertile soil and tender shoots emerge, there will be a rich harvest when all bears fruit at the end of a long growing season.**



## A rich and diverse learning environment

With its emphasis on creative play and age-appropriate learning, the Steiner Waldorf early years' curriculum provides a stimulating start for the young child. Key areas of focus include:

- **Body and Movement** – how active, versatile movement prepares the way to more skilful thinking.
- **The Senses and Perception** – children can discover and explore the real world with their senses and thereby get to know and learn to understand simple, perceptible connections.
- **Speech** - children playfully learn language and become at home in it through songs, stories, verses, finger games, and rhymes.
- **Imagination and Creativity** are promoted by the use of non-standardised and barely “finished” toys that stimulate children’s imaginative and creative powers, as well as daily playtime indoors and outdoors.
- **Social Ability** - The children learn that there are rules as well as a regular rhythm to the day, week and seasons.
- **Ethics and Moral Values** – The teachers’ actions and stories provide children with models of good behaviour without burdening them with admonishments or lectures.

The Steiner Waldorf approach takes a long view of education. Give your child the gift of an unhurried childhood.

## Kildare Steiner School—a unique learning environment

The Kildare Steiner Waldorf School & Kindergarten provides a unique education for children from the ages of three to 12 years in a beautiful 4.2 acre rural setting near Kilcullen in Co. Kildare . Funding for one year of Kindergarten is available under the Irish Government’s ECCE Scheme.

With their excellent and imaginative approach, Steiner Waldorf Schools and Kindergartens are increasingly recognised as a creative and compassionate alternative to traditional avenues of education. They are highly successful and sought-after in Europe and North America and are part of the fastest-growing independent educational movement worldwide.