

January 18, 2022

Dearest Nursery families,

Happy long weekend! Today is a national holiday in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

As we try to navigate and stay healthy as a class during this season, please remember to take extra precautions for each other, our families with immunocompromised family members and moms who are expecting. If you suspect that your family has been exposed to Covid, please reach out to our administrator, Kevin McDuff at kmcduff@waldorfschool.com so he can help you with school protocols and know how your child can safely return back to school. Being vigilant, erring on the side of caution and giving your child the extra day of rest if they show any symptoms of sickness before returning to school keeps our school stay open and open in-person. Thank you all for your support!

Today, on this sleepy, gray morning, I am sending you an article called "Sweet Dreams" by Susan Gray Weber, a long time Waldorf Early Childhood teacher on the east coast. She starts off the article with the Russian proverb, "The morning is wiser than the evening," meaning that any challenges or problems are best solved in the morning after rest rather than at night without rest. With my own children I remember how precious my own sleep was when they were little and how much sleep and rest they were able to get was crucial to the quality of the next day. I also remember the times they fought sleep and there were unexplainable moments either going through teething, bad dreams, processing the activities during the day that affected their sleep through the night. Still, this article is a great reminder that children at this age need 11-12 hours of sleep every night to allow them to get up on their own after enough rest, have enough time to have breakfast at home before school and help get ready for their day. As it is written in the article, what supports young children to ease into sleep is having a slow, unwinding of activities into the evening. Susan reminds us, "It is often observed that an overtired child will have difficulty sleeping, but that the more a child sleeps, the more he will sleep!"

Below is a list of some ideas for dependable rituals with a sense of warmth and protection:

- Ideas for supportive routine: special soothing canopy or veil over cradle, crib, or bed; a wool or quilted sleeping sack, or a cozy hot water bottle, or swaddling.
- Light meals not to bombard the liver before sleep.
- Ideas for supportive routine: tidying away the playthings of the day: now it is time for the dollies to be tucked in, the cows to go into the barn, the toy train to park at the station.
- Bath, then the lighting of a candle and a story, finally concluding the day with a poem or prayer and a kiss.
- Send our children to sleep with the loving human voice of those who love the child most dearly as the last sound instead of recorded stories/lullaby/music before sleep.
- Limiting the sense impressions during the day that is tolerable for a young child and not overwhelming.
- Unwinding to sleep with whispering voices, unwinding the evening with a dimmed house (blackout shades during spring/summer), and aromatherapy with essential oils, back rub, and/or feet rub. (my own additions)

Looking forward to seeing you this Wednesday.

Warmest regards,
Maria Morioka
WSOC Nursery Teacher