



“Waldorf education goes deep. In contrast to current ‘mile wide, inch deep’ curricula in some other school systems, Waldorf education takes time to develop understanding, independent thinking, the imagination, and self sufficiency. These attributes enable people to use their knowledge with wisdom and care.”

*Katharine Smithrim, Professor,
Faculty of Education, Queen’s University*

Early Childhood Education an introduction to wonder and wisdom



Mulberry School
GRADES 1-7 • KINDERGARTEN • MORNING GARDEN
PARENT & CHILD • PARENT & INFANT

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*Preparation for active intellectual, physical and artistic development
in a harmonious environment
that honours and celebrates childhood.*



ABOUT MULBERRY SCHOOL

Mulberry School started as a playgroup in 1993, inspired by the principles of Waldorf education. Our school now offers our well-loved Parent and Child programs, Morning Garden and Kindergarten, and Grades One through Seven.

Mulberry School is an independent, non-denominational school, governed by the Faculty and Board of Directors, and supported by the Administrator and standing committees of the Board. We are a non-profit Ontario corporation and a registered charity.

Mulberry School is a Waldorf Developing school within the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America and is affiliated with the Waldorf School Association of Ontario. Waldorf education was founded in 1919 by Rudolf Steiner in Stuttgart, Germany. Today there are more than 800 Waldorf Schools worldwide. The Waldorf curriculum and teaching methods address the whole child – head, hands and heart, through each stage of the child's development.

Our outstanding faculty play primary roles in the life of our school. In addition to their Waldorf experience, our teachers have diverse educational credentials and excellence in many other fields.

At Mulberry School we encourage each child's natural love of learning by providing a beautiful, caring environment that engages the whole child. Our rich and integrated curriculum offers a balance of humanities, mathematics, literature, science, fine arts, physical education, music and handwork. Our children develop emotional stability, intellectual flexibility and moral values along with strong academic skills: a sound education for their future.

Mulberry School is enriched by its vibrant community. We celebrate seasonal festivals, offer parent information and education events, and host guest speakers on parenting issues and Waldorf education. Mulberry School welcomes children and their families from all religious, ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds.

PARENT & INFANT

Parents arrive with their babies up to age one. We begin with a cup of tea and an exchange of stories, reached milestones, and special concerns. Babies sleep in their parent's arms or play on their blankets, learning to interact a little with each other. We learn songs and rhymes in a circle with the babies, and a parenting topic is introduced for discussion. We make a small toy or decoration for the baby; a way to relax and re-charge. We finish back in our circle with rhymes, songs, and finger games for the babies and lullabies.

PARENT & CHILD

The Parent and Child groups introduce children ages one to three and their parents to the rhythms and activities of Mulberry School. Upon arriving, children enjoy a period of free play. They dig in the sandbox, construct roadways with wooden boards or towers with blocks, and play house, animals or dolls. Toys are made of natural materials, wool, wood and cotton. Parents come to the table to make a small toy or seasonal craft. Sometimes children join in on a drawing with beeswax crayons or a watercolour painting. When a certain song is sung children know it's time to tidy up and set the table. We light a candle, sing our thanks and enjoy a wholesome snack together. Parents discuss topics of interest, Waldorf philosophy and specific parenting issues. The program ends with a circle of rhymes, songs, games and the telling of a simple story. Each week the children move more fully into the circle, learning to participate in a group of peers, and becoming increasingly attentive.



MORNING GARDEN (ages 3 and 4)

The Morning Garden is a gentle step into the world of peers and the expectations of becoming a social being. Two teachers lead the group of children. The daily rhythm balances free play with structured activities. Some children arrive hiding behind mom's skirt. Others dance into the room with a story to tell. Teachers and parents greet one another. It's playtime, when simple natural materials and the work of the teachers inspire imagination. Blocks become barnyards, sand flows and falls, children in work aprons knead dough, pushing and pulling it in a bed of flour. After free play, children tidy up the room.

When they are finished the children come tumbling over to the carpet to say good-bye to our little mouse, who declares whether or not our room is beautiful again. Throughout the process teachers say very little. The invisible teacher, rhythm, is at work here. We take into account a balance of activity and rest, interaction and solitude, work and play. We call it 'breathing in' and 'breathing out'— a rhythm known by our body and all the cycles of nature.

Mid-morning a nourishing homemade snack is provided: rice, soup, bread with apple butter and porridge. Children learn to stay at the table until all their friends are finished. Circle time is full of songs, movement, verses, finger games, and puppet stories enjoyed together on the carpet. The day ends with outdoor time. The yard is a simple beautiful space where creative play is inspired by nature.

KINDERGARTEN (ages 4-6)

Parents often feel a deep sense of calm when they walk into a Waldorf kindergarten. The rhythmic, repetitive and reverent nature of the kindergarten allows children to spend time together unselfconsciously and with their senses fully engaged.

Each morning, children and parents are welcomed to the classroom and the children engage in a period of creative play, a time of 'out-breathing'. Toys include stumps, wood blocks, baskets with knitted animals, handmade baby dolls, felt puppets, small gnomes, pine cones, polished stones, rocks, etc. Wooden play stands can be made into a stage for a puppet show, a ship, or a house corner. A crown turns a child into a king or a queen and a caped child becomes a farmer, shepherd or a knight.

During playtime, daily artistic activities are offered. These include, painting, making soup or bread, drawing, a seasonal craft, or beeswax modeling. Structure is brought into the free play time of children likely to move in to grade one the next year through work on small projects that develop coordination and cooperative social skills. Children have made sewing pouches, stilts, crowns, gnome homes and standing puppets.

After free play, all children and teachers share in class clean up, followed by a circle. Our morning circle, ten minutes at the start of the year expanding to 15-20 minutes by the end, is an 'in-breathing' phase, includes songs and verses with both fine and gross motor gestures, nursery rhymes, dances, finger plays and games. Through circle games and songs, puppetry and story telling, the children learn to listen attentively, cultivate a sense of language, and sharpen their memory to strengthen the foundation for academic readiness.

A healthy homemade snack comes next. The children have set the table and washed their hands in preparation. We sit in our seats, take our neighbours' hands and sing a song of thanks for our food. Our snacks include delicious and nutritious foods such as, oats with apples and cinnamon, brown basmati rice with tamari sauce, vegetable soup (which the children help to prepare), and homemade bread that the children have kneaded. There is also fruit contributed by parents, to accompany the snack. After tidying up, we sit in a circle for our final story. Then it is time to get dressed for outdoor play.

Free play in the yard is an 'out breathing' for the children. They make choices about where and with whom they play. Cedar stumps and wooden boards become houses, trains, boats, and obstacle courses. Other children play chase or rake leaves and make nests in the piles. We walk to the park each week where the children love to climb, swing and slide.