

# Allowing Time

NANCY BLANNING

If we are lucky enough to have a fruit tree in our back yard, it is such a thrill when it bursts into blossom. We hope a spring snow storm or late freeze will not damage the tiny star flowers. We are grateful when the spent petals fall away because their task of drawing bees is done. Soon the little fruit buds reveal themselves upon the branches. We watch the small green nubs emerge that will mature into an apple or a peach. If a pesky, hungry squirrel comes near the tree, he is chased away. Or maybe we even put a protective net over the crown of the tree to keep away the birds or other critters that might prematurely peck and damage the bounty we anticipate. As the summer passes, the sour-looking green matures to a warm blush of rose. We would not dream of picking the fruit too soon before it has reached its full ripeness. At last, through all this patient waiting, we harvest what earth, plant, sun, wind, water, and time have provided to us. We revel in the sweetness of the fruit and are grateful.

It is so odd that our society can recognize the rightness of allowing nature time take its course in our garden but forget how this wise view applies to little children. All developing entities need care and tending and sufficient time to grow. Yet everyone is in such a rush.

When we look at the developmental steps and stages of the child, we see a dependable and lawful order through which the being of the child unfolds. First she gains control of head, then trunk, arms and hands. The chattering movement

of the legs finds control and intention to carry her along, with hands, to crawl along the floor. To upright stance she rises, and in time the first tottering steps gain security. Words begin to flow, preparing the foundation for thought. And the child needs to play, to explore, to wonder, to stand in awe at the world she has entered, to find it so inviting and engaging that she cannot suppress her joy at having entered into life.

This is the child moving from tiny star-flower blossom to ripened fruit before beginning her entry into the world of thinking and learning. She needs to be protected from the pesky squirrels with their nervous nitterings—facts and early academics—and birds which might peck away at her—stabs of sensory overwhelm that shock and bruise. The parents, teachers, and other caring adults stand as the child's sun, radiating warmth and encouragement to grow into her proper ripeness.

The physical sun in the sky shines day after day and never hurries. It does not worry that the apple is not growing fast enough. It allows time for rightful process to unfold.

Of all the gifts we bestow upon our children, may this be one—allow them time. 

**NANCY BLANNING** has been a Waldorf early childhood educator for nearly 30 years, emphasizing therapeutic and developmental support with young children. She also serves on the WECAN board and is co-author with Laurie Clark of *Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures*, a therapeutic movement resource book for teachers. For further information on WECAN and its activities, please visit [www.waldorfearlychildhood.org](http://www.waldorfearlychildhood.org).

