Suggestions for Grade 3 Teachers

What is the essential underlying task of the teacher?

“To harmonize the soul-spirit with the life-body of the child.”

-Astrid Schmitt-Stegmann, former director of Teacher Training, Rudolf Steiner College

Understanding child development is a key to understanding how to help the child harmonize her “I”ndividuality (Soul-Spirit) with Heredity (Life-body).

Let’s first review what is happening in the 0-7 Years Phase. From birth to seven years, the etheric forces are dedicated to growing and forming the physical body. The hereditary forces are strong at this time. It is important during this stage to nurture the child’s life forces through a strong daily rhythm that includes wake up time, daily activities, meal times and rituals around bed time that support a healthy amount of sleep.

As a baby, the child first establishes eye contact, then moves to grasping objects, lifting her head, rolling over, sitting, eating, crawling, standing, and walking. All of these milestones are the first steps of the individual taking hold and beginning to master the Life-Body.

At three years, the child has the experience of “I” and uses the word “I” to identify herself. However, the objects and situations of life continue to be flexible and fluid, very etheric. A chair can become a boat, a castle, etc. and the child can be a fireman, a cat, a mother... The young child lives in the moment and is one with her surroundings, learning through imitation and repetition.

How Teachers Support the Harmonizing of Their Students’ Soul-Spirit with Life-Body from 7-10 Years Old

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<th>Child’s Development</th>
<th>Teacher’s Support</th>
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<td>Overall</td>
<td>A teacher’s creative efforts, thoughtful organization, and well-planned lessons help each child form healthy etheric bodies.</td>
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<td>From 7–14 years, the child’s etheric body takes center stage—this is the body of memory, health, rhythm, habit, and to some extent, morality.</td>
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<td>Memory Forces</td>
<td>At this age, children need to develop their picture-forming memory abilities through our stories and imaginations. Recalling or retelling stories helps the</td>
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her body are freed to be used to **form mental pictures**, to form **long-term picture memories**. These mental pictures gradually increase through age 14. Children to establish a strong thinking life and memory skills.

It is important to infuse our own **speech** with clarity and warmth. We must work on imbuing the child’s experience with the English language with enthusiasm and precision. How a person speaks has an effect on her thinking. If children are allowed to speak in incomplete sentences, they will have trouble bringing thoughts to completion.

Guide parents to support a slow-tech approach to screens. Television, video games, educational apps, etc. fix their pictures to the child’s memory. They take away the freedom of the child to create her own inner pictures. A first grade girl told was heard saying, “I like radio better than television- the pictures are more beautiful.”

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<th>Habits and Rhythm</th>
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<td>A child’s Individuality “remodels” <strong>the body</strong> she inherited and developed during the first seven years. The more the child’s individuality can remold the body to express its own individuality, the better... it will then be easier for her to <strong>achieve her destiny</strong>.</td>
<td>Habits live in the etheric and <strong>good habits</strong> are a gift for life. By age eleven we have, by and large, established our life habits. We can change our habit life, but it takes a lot more will and effort after this age. And we must be aware that the tendency to cater to the needs and desires of the body, rather than having control over our desire nature, is one of the dangers of our time.</td>
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| As teachers, we can help the children create a “finely tuned instrument” (healthy body) through movements such as the following:  
  - Chores in the classroom – sweeping, etc.  
  - Recess – climbing, swinging, jumping, stilts, hopscotch, skipping  
  - Handwork – finger knitting, making their needles, knitting, crochet  
  - Flute playing, beeswax, painting, form drawing, drawing, writing | Through rhythmic chores, establishing a respect for classroom materials, valuing good hygienic practices, modeling and expecting good manners, speech, etc., the teacher can play a key role in the development of her students’ healthy habit life. |

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Morality
After the 9-year change, the child can experience the duality that exists in life. The feeling realm of the Soul (morality) begins to develop. **Morality is learned** – we are not born with it.

The Old Testament stories of the third grade and Norse myths of the fourth grade help the nine year old use her newly awakened self-consciousness to grapple with questions regarding what is right and what is wrong. At this time, carefully selected story material can help to nurture the students’ moral foundation so that when they reach age twelve and begin to make more of their own life decisions, they have a strong moral basis to anchor them.

The arts also help to develop a student’s moral foundation. Form drawing, modeling, and drawing school an inner sense of judgment. Art nurtures **flexibility in a student’s thought-life** by enriching their creativity and imagination. The Soul–life is nourished by music and color while speech works on the individuality of the child–it nurtures the “I”.

Lastly, and most importantly, what lives in a teacher’s soul–her gestures, movements, attitudes toward life, gratitude and love– helps her students to form their own **inner conceptual/thought life and inner morality**. If you have a student who seems to be greedy, try denying yourself the next time you want an ice cream, etc. (Check out the story about Gandhi and sugar.) Be forewarned: with children, “Don’t do as I do, but do as I say.” doesn’t work! Keep in mind that **it is not our perfection that inspires the child– it is our striving**. It is our effort, our desire, our fortitude that empowers them to try new things, to stretch themselves, to overcome challenges. The child experiences our higher being through our striving and our attitude.

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