Our Healthy School Culture

The Three Care Streams Process

RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL
OF ANN ARBOR
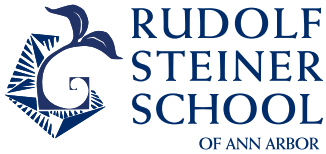
The healthy social life is found only
When in the mirror of each human soul
The whole community finds its reflection,
And when in the community
The virtue of each one is living.
-- Rudolf Steiner

What Is "Three Care Streams" of Student Support?

Most of the time our children are doing well at school. They are "in the flow." Sometimes, though, they experience challenges. For one reason or another they feel out of kilter with their teacher and classmates. Their challenges may have to do with social interactions ("They're being mean to me.") Some students experience learning challenges ("Everyone can do fractions except me.") Occasionally students act out, misbehave, or exhibit non-compliant behavior ("I don't have to if I don't want to; you can't make me.")

Social and emotional well-being is a prerequisite for academic success. Our school is committed to providing support for those students who are experiencing challenges. This commitment is the foundation of the curriculum and the heart of our work at our school. We have adopted our Three Care Streams of Student Support process in order to provide as much support as possible for students who are experiencing social, behavioral, or learning challenges. It is based on the work of Kim John Payne, who is respected worldwide for helping children, parents, and teachers navigate challenge as well as conflict. For more information about Kim John Payne, please go to simplicityparenting.com.

Underlying Premises of the Three Care Streams Work

Accountability rather than blame. When things are going wrong we must set them right. Each person involved can take some responsibility.

Empathy is key to success in life. Our interventions seek to build empathy

in the children so that they can learn to stand in one another's shoes.

A child who misbehaves is a disoriented child. If we realize that a child who is pushing the behavioral boundaries is disoriented, we approach the child differently – less punitively – than we do when we see their behaviors as intentionally naughty or disruptive.

Conflict is a necessary part of being human. If we expect that we can remove all conflict from our children's lives we set ourselves up for frustration. Conflict is a given, and most of us have learned our greatest lessons from the conflicts we've experienced. Our task is to let children know that we are there, guiding them through their conflicts so that they may learn constructive lessons from them.

Our task is to remove hindrances to learning. Children who experience learning challenges present us with a riddle: What is the key that unlocks their capacities? While honoring the child's gifts, as educators and parents our work is to seek these keys and support the child to find areas of success.

We begin with implicit approaches before moving to explicit approaches. You will often see the words "implicit" and "explicit" as you read through this handbook. Implicit means "not directly expressed." In other words, it's a process that is there, but the children are not necessarily aware of it. The Waldorf curriculum is rich in implicit approaches to social and emotional challenges. In fact, much of the Three Care Streams work is not apparent to the parent body or the students because it is implicit – embedded in the stories, pictures, artwork, speech, music, theatre, and rhythms of the lessons. When the teacher tells the class a story about a character who could never forgive, and describes the hardships this caused him in his working life, this is an example of using a story to address the difficulties that one or more of their students is experiencing.

On the other hand, an explicit approach directly addresses a situation in the class or with an individual child. Explicit approaches range from "light touch" ("Children, is this a raising-our-hands-and-taking-turns-time, or is it a speaking-out time?") to "close holding," which might be a behavior change plan for an individual child.

When we support a child we begin with the lightest touch possible. If that doesn't work, we move on to more explicit, closer holding approaches.

Our School's Core Values

The values that are embedded in our curriculum and our work with each other can be distilled into four statements – our Code of Core Values.

We Are Kind • We Are Safe • We Are Respectful • We Are Responsible

Our Core Values are simple enough to be understood by a young child, yet contain all the issues with which an eighth grader might wrestle. They inform our guidelines for working with the children and their interactions with each other ("Suzie, it is not kind when we use those words," or "Esteban, when we are responsible, we turn our homework in on time.") Teachers use the core values throughout the grades to build the students' awareness of appropriate conduct. In the middle school the Student Social Action Committee has discussions about examples of responsibility, respect, kindness and safety. They present their ideas to the younger grades.

The Code of Core Values forms the foundation of our guidelines for adult communication as well. We have guidelines for faculty work, parent-teacher communication, and Board of Trustees work. We developed the guidelines by starting with the Core Values. Each set of guidelines includes specifics such as:

Give each other the benefit of the doubt • Use respectful language • Don't interrupt

Three Care Streams Organization

The student support work is organized into three "streams" which address the three categories of challenges students experience. In addition, there is a Care Coordinating Group that provides oversight and a Student Social Action Committee that assists with all three streams.

Care Coordinating Group (CCG)

This group consists of the Learning Support Coordinator, the Lower School and Early Childhood Coordinators and the chairs of the three groups described below. The CCG oversees the Student Support work, coordinates student plans and support circles, and keeps communication flowing among the three streams, the faculty, and the administration. The CCG receives requests from members of the school community (Administrative staff, faculty, parents, etc.) and invites the individual to attend a Care Coordinating Group meeting to determine next steps.

Learning Care Group (LCG)

The Learning Care Group observes, gains understanding of, and provides support for students experiencing challenges to learning and academic success. This group offers suggestions for therapeutic support for students. This can include special education considerations and outside tutoring.

Behavioral Care Group (BCG)

A student is directed to the BCG when faculty members and administrators observe that they are pushing the school's behavioral boundaries. A student who misbehaves is a disoriented student. The BCG helps teachers and administrators provide clear and firm guidance so that students can reorient themselves and find their footing at school.

Social Care Group (SCG)

Students are brought to SCG when they are having difficulties in social interactions. These difficulties may be noticed by family members or by teachers at recess or in the classroom and may include (but are not limited to) non-inclusion, excluding/being excluded, and bullying/being bullied, teasing/being teased.
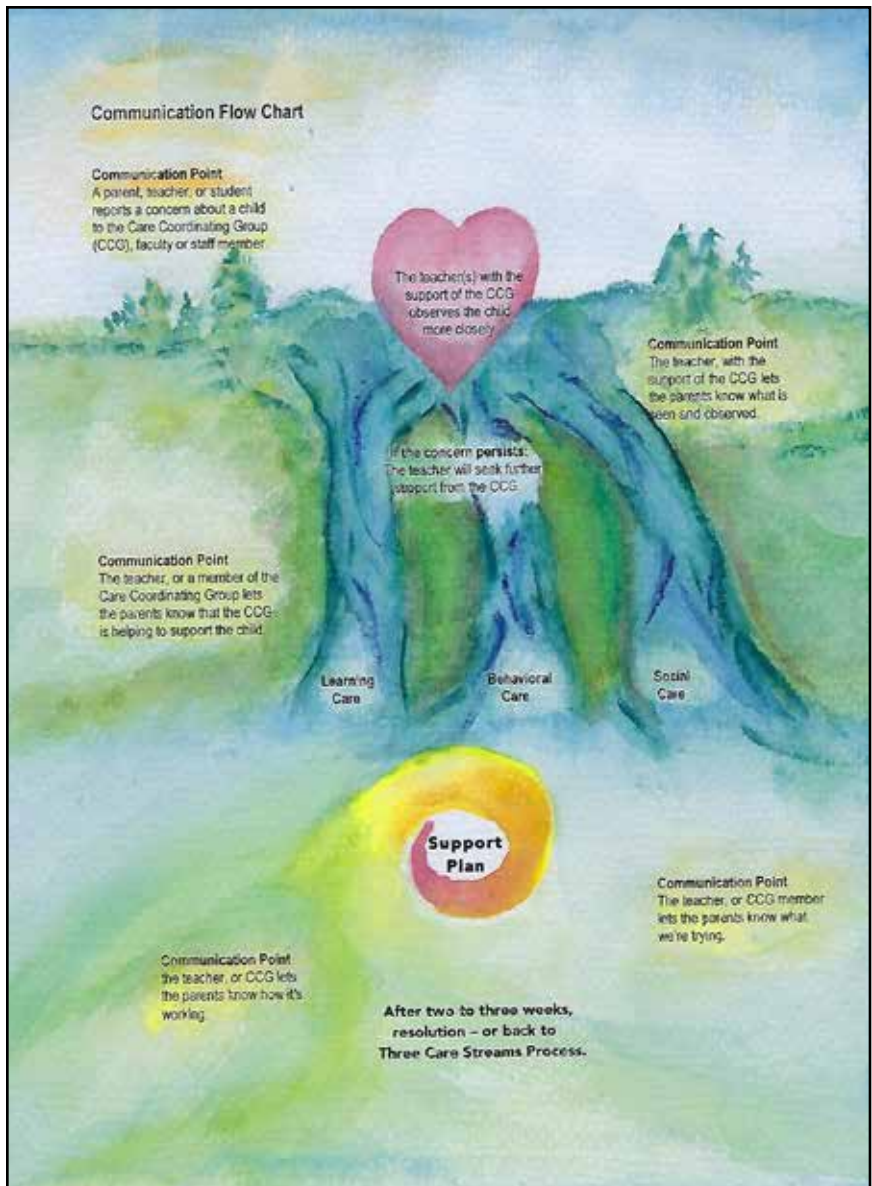
The Student Social Action Committee (SSAC)

Student participation is an important element of the Three Care Streams Approach. The Middle School students meet regularly to train as student mentors and helpers. They learn conflict resolution skills and reflect upon their own experiences to bring understanding and empathy to their work with the younger students. The Middle School students take an active role in supporting and guiding the younger students at recess under the guidance and supervision of the SSAC Lead. They are asked to lead by example and to take an active role in contributing to the healthy social life of the school and community. In addition to regular meetings they lead student trainings in the classroom and lead role-playing in younger classes, mentor younger classes, and participate in Circles of Friendship or No-Blame Meetings. (Please see the glossary for explanations of these terms.) Each year they work with the school's Code of Core Values.

The Three Care Streams Process

The student support process aims to move the student's experience from challenge to resolution. It is a transparent process. Though we cannot resolve all difficulties to the satisfaction of all parties, we strive to address them promptly as they arise and to keep parents informed of our progress through the process.

Communication Flow Chart

Communication Point
A parent, teacher, or student reports a concern about a child to the Care Coordinating Group (CCG), faculty or staff member.

The teacher(s) with the support of the CCG observes the child more closely.

Communication Point
The teacher, with the support of the CCG lets the parents know what is seen and observed.

If the concern persists: The teacher will seek further support from the CCG.

Communication Point
The teacher, or a member of the Care Coordinating Group lets the parents know that the CCG is helping to support the child.

Learning Care   Behavioral Care   Social Care

Support Plan

Communication Point
The teacher, or CCG member lets the parents know what we're trying.

Communication Point
The teacher, or CCG lets the parents know how it's working.

After two to three weeks, resolution – or back to Three Care Streams Process.

1. **A student comes to our attention.** The Three Care Streams process begins when someone (teacher, parent, or student) notices that a child is "out of the flow" socially, behaviorally, or academically. Parents, teachers and students each hold a valuable window into the child's experience. Parents or guardians know better than anyone how the child is at home. Teachers have the most direct experience of the child at school. Often, a student sees things that adults do not. Here are examples of how the process moves from a parent, teacher, or child's observation:

    - A teacher brings the child to the attention of the faculty or the Student Support Specialist after noticing that the child is experiencing persistent challenges that are not addressed by the various implicit strategies.
    - A parent notices his or her child is experiencing social, learning or behavioral challenges. The parent describes what he or she is seeing to the class teacher or the Student Support Specialist. The teacher observes the child more closely with the parent's perspective in mind and, after working with a range of implicit strategies, brings the child to the Care Coordinating Group if the challenges persist.
    - A child reports something that is happening for a fellow student to a teacher, or a parent. The teacher observes more closely and brings the student to the Student Support Specialist if the problem persists.

In the case of a severe problem, the student moves immediately to the more explicit steps in the process.

2. **Communication Point.** The teacher reports to the parent (or back to the parent if the parent brought the matter to the teacher initially) to let him or her know what was seen at school and how the student's needs are being addressed. When the teacher calls upon the support of the Three Care Streams process, the parent is notified.

3. **The child's teacher(s) meets with the CCG or members of either the Learning, Behavioral, or Social Care Group.** When a student's challenges are not alleviated by implicit approaches the teacher meets with the appropriate stream to develop a support plan. (Support Plans are described in detail below.) The plan is implemented and reviewed as needed.

4. **Communication Point.** The teacher or member of the Care Coordinating Group notifies the parents of the plan: "Here's what we're trying."

5. **The teacher reports back during the Student Review time at the weekly faculty meeting, or to the Care Coordinating Group.** If the situation has been resolved the process is complete. If it has not, the

teacher meets again with the CCG, LCG, BCG or SCG either to extend the plan or to create a new one. Parents are informed of the new plan by either the teacher or a member of the Care Coordinating Group.

6. **Closing Communication.** The teacher, or a member of the Care Co-ordinating Group, notifies the parent as to when the child's issue is resolved.

These steps are repeated until resolution has been reached. If resolution is slow in coming, the original supporting group may call upon help from the other two "streams" or refer families to other professional support services.

The Response & Support Plan – An Implicit to Explicit Approach

The Response and Support Plan is key to moving a student toward resolution. Each stream of the support work has a compendium of tools to draw upon throughout the Three Care Streams process.

Implicit Approaches (Not Directly Expressed, Pro-Active)

There are many pro-active supports built into the curriculum. They are implic These are our "lightest touch" approaches. They are embedded in our stories, music, art, speech, drama, therapeutic movement, developmental aspects of the curriculum, and daily rhythms.

Our curriculum begins by meeting children at their developmental stage. Classrooms are designed to keep social and sensory complexity low, with a high level of form and predictability. Each of the arts encourages a quality of listening to the other. Pedagogical stories tell of characters that experience struggles, and provide images of what works for them and what does not. Each day is rich in beneficial movement and a rhythm that moves in and out of focused work. The implicit strategies serve to diminish the need for explicit interventions.

Lightest Touch Approaches

These approaches work with the whole class. Students are aware of them, but barely. They blend into the fabric of the day. Examples are (see the glossary for explanations of these terms):

- Buddy systems
- Politeness and courtesy
- Work with the Core Values
- Connected Classroom
- A calling-out scale
- A timing orientation
- Preview and Review with class
- Selective seating

Explicit Approaches, from Light to Moderate to Close Holding

If classroom strategies are not orienting a student to productive learning and relationships, the teacher begins to work directly with the individual student. When we work with the individual, we are truly in the explicit realm. These approaches still include a range from light touch to close holding.

- Selective seating
- Support Circle
- DADD (Disapprove, Affirm, Discover, Do-over)
- A visit to another classroom for a "re-set"
- Behavior Change Plan
- No-Blame Meeting
- Circle of Friendship
- Support from the Student Social Action Committee
- Escorted Transitions
- Goals and Achievements plan

The Support Circle – A Moderate Holding Intervention

A Support Circle is often included in a student's Support Plan. It is a meeting of the adults in the child's life. It is facilitated and is forty-five minutes long. It is attended by the child's parents or guardian, the child's teacher or teachers, and a member of the supporting "stream". The aim of the meeting is to find ways to build upon the child's successes. A Support Circle may be requested by a teacher or a parent, and it is coordinated by the Student Support Specialist. Often a written plan is included which will be reviewed or updated periodically. There is follow-up after the meeting to record what progress has been made.

Close Holding strategies are implemented if Light to Moderate holding is unsuccessful in bringing change. Close Holding is usually a short-term plan for students that require closer attention on a daily basis. The support team may suggest additional resources from outside of the school. While a student is in close holding, the class teacher or support team are in frequent communication with parents or caregivers and any professionals who support the student outside of school. The school administration and staff are informed of students who are being closely held.

Glossary of Approaches

Buddy System. The use of Middle School students to be friends to a class or a student.

Calling Out Scale. Assigning a number (1, 2, or 3) to a call-out and using a hand signal to alert a child to his or her call-out. One is "the right thing at the right time," two is "the right thing at the wrong time," and three is "the wrong thing at the wrong time."

Change Plan. A meeting with a child, a member of the CCG, and a Middle School student to explore what isn't working and how we might make it better.

Check-in and go. A student who is having difficulty during a transition to another class, the bathroom, or recess is asked to check in with the teacher before proceeding to the destination. During this brief check-in the student reviews the agreed-upon goals for the transition.

Circle of Friendship. A small group of people who are on the lookout for a child in need. It may include an empathetic classmate, teachers, and middle school students.

Connected Classroom. An approach to the lesson by the teacher that begins with warm connection, moves to preview and direction, and ends with review and closing.

DADD. An approach to behavior that is out of line. It begins with disapproval (D) of the behavior and affirmation (A) of the person, followed by discovery (D – "What's going on today?") and do-over (D – "Let's try that again.")

Middle School intervention. Middle School students support children at recess by developing warm relationships with the younger students by being present with small groups that are experiencing social difficulty. They are also assigned as buddies and as members of Circles of Friendship.

Escorted Transitions. A teacher escorts a student during transitions that are problematic for them.

Explicit strategies. Strategies that are directly expressed and apparent to students.

Goals and Achievements Plan. An agreement between a student and teacher to work on a particular behavior. It assigns a numeric value to how well a student has done. Both teacher and student set a goal and both track progress.

Implicit strategies. Strategies that are not directly expressed or apparent to the student.

No-Blame Meeting. An adult facilitated meeting among all parties involved in a social conflict or discipline issue. Each student has an assigned Middle School helper.

Politeness and courtesy. A school-wide approach to creating form and predictability in the school community.

Preview and Review. A description of what is coming (preview) or a look at what just happened (review). A preview reduces anxiety, and a review helps a child understand the effects of his or her actions. Previews and reviews can consider long or short periods of time (the coming school day, what just happened) depending upon the age of the child.

Selective seating. This can refer to the child's position in the room in relation to the teacher, to the teacher's choice of desk partners for the child, or to a seating location with fewer possibilities for distraction.

Support Circle. A facilitated meeting of adults to focus on the needs of a child.

Support Plan. The Three Care Streams Group plan for meeting a child's needs.

Timing Orientation. A visual scale in the classroom that demonstrates for students what type of classroom activity is occurring, how long it will be, and what the appropriate noise level is.

Working with Core Values. Explicit instruction in the meaning of the Core Values. May be done by the teacher or the Middle School students.

About Kim John Payne

A consultant and trainer to 250 U.S. independent and public schools, Kim John Payne, M.ED., has been a school and family counselor for more than 30 years. He has also consulted for clinics, training centers, and educational associations in South Africa, Hungary, Israel, Russia, Ireland, Switzerland, Germany, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Canada. He has served as the project director of the Collaborative Counseling Program at Antioch University and the co-director of an extensive research program on a drug-free approach to attention-priority issues. He is the director of the Simplicity Parenting Project and the Center for Social Sustainability and has worked extensively with the American and U.K. Waldorf movements. The author of **Games Children Play**, **Simplicity Parenting, The Soul of Discipline** and **Beyond Winning**, he lives with his wife and two children in Northampton, Massachusetts.

www.simplicityparenting.com

*Receive children in reverence, educate them in love,
and let them go forth in freedom.*
– Rudolf Steiner