

## Books of Interest

*Ready to Learn:  
From Birth to School Readiness*  
by Martyn Rawson and Michael Rose  
Reviewed by Stephen Spitalny

*Ready to Learn* is the sixth book in the Hawthorn Press Early Years Series, two of which were reviewed last issue. At last! A flurry of books on Rudolf Steiner's early childhood perspectives published in English. This series is insightful and professionally produced. This particular book is of special merit as it addresses the perennial question of grade school readiness from a Waldorf perspective. It is a book that I have been awaiting for years!

*Ready to Learn* offers a look at child development that is filled with wisdom and experience. "We want to show that the premature intellectual awakening of children runs counter to their real long-term interests... 'When is a child ready to go to school?' In order to answer this question we must first establish what a child needs to learn in its pre-school years. This early developmental learning phase is the essential foundation upon which all future education must stand, totter or fall." (page 1). The authors bring practical guidelines for assessing school readiness, the culmination of a significant stage of childhood. This highly readable book is filled with anecdotes, research and practical considerations that fills a resource void for our work with young children. Themes addressed include: children's drawings, play, sense and cognitive development, development of memory, language development, the significance of story, boy/girl differences, and computers.

A significant feature of this book is that the whole presentation is done in very accessible language. The authors stayed away from 'Waldorf lingo' and hence their perspective is more acceptable to parents and non-Waldorf educators. Each chapter has a summary of its main points and most have suggestions for good

educational practices. Appendix 1 on School Readiness is the clearest and most concise description of what to look for in a school-ready kindergarten child that I have yet seen. The authors emphasize, though, "Developmental principles are a reality. So is individuality" (page 161)." *Ready to Learn* will be widely found on the bookshelves of early childhood educators, not only Waldorf/Steiner teachers, as well as in parent libraries and teacher trainings. It is not only about school readiness but about the whole child's development in the first six or seven years of its life.

Martyn Rawson and Michael Rose were co-founders of the York Steiner School where Michael still teaches. Martyn currently works for the Steiner Schools Fellowship. Both contribute to teacher training programs and write articles and books on Steiner/Waldorf education. Many of you may have read some of Martyn's deeply insightful articles in *Paidia*. Thank you to the authors and to Hawthorn Press for their tremendous work in the field of early childhood. Also just published: *Addiction's Many Faces* by Felicitas Vogt. For more information on the Early Years Series, go to [www.hawthornpress.com](http://www.hawthornpress.com).

