

The Six Constitutional Types Found in Children

by

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The Large-Headed Child

The main characteristic of this child is his/her large head in relation to his/her body. These children have large foreheads, a big occiput, and rosy cheeks. They are quite introverted with good concentration. They are rather dreamy and imaginative and quite artistic. They lack the hardening element as the "I" and the astral body are diverted from the nerve-sense system.

Therapeutically, Rudolf Steiner indicates washing the head and neck with cold water in the morning and a diet rich in root vegetables for their high content of salty substances. However, great care must be taken in the use of salt. In eurythmy, consonants and the big U exercise are helpful. Medicinally, infants are given Plumbum 0.1% ointment on the occiput for four weeks. Preschool children receive Plumbum prep. D10, 1 pea sized portion (psp) qam for four weeks followed by Cuprum prep. D6, 1 pcq qam for two weeks to seal the process. School children take Plumbum prep. D20 for five weeks, followed by Cuprum sulfurikum D6 for two weeks. This can be repeated. Vitamin D and potentized hypophysis extract can also be helpful.

The Small-Headed Child

This child is thin and pale. His/her head is small in relation to the body. Especially striking is the small cranium with its often-flat region. The face is quite defined. The small-headed child has poor concentration and is easily distracted. Such children show an analytic "bloodless" imagination. The "I" and the astral body do not engage properly in the metabolic-limb system.

As therapy this child should receive warm applications on the abdomen in the evening. Diet-wise these children need more sweet nutrients like dates, figs, and honey. Also leafy vegetables and teas are recommended. The choice and amount of sugar depends on the given situation. Wool is the fabric of choice in clothing. In eurythmy, vowels, especially the big I exercises, and LM are helpful. Medicinally, silver applications in a low potency on the abdomen or as Bryophyllum argento cult 0.1% internally as well as Primus baths are indicated. After five weeks, Ferrum prep. D8 should be given for two weeks to seal the process. This can be repeated. A good description of these two constitutional types can be found in Volume One of *The Anthroposophical Approach to Medicine* by Husemann/Wolff, p. 106.

The Cosmic Child

The head is the most cosmic part of our body. "It bears the stamp of what we were before our birth, before our conception even. All that is soul and spirit in us has left its mark there, we have therefore in our head a picture of our pre-earthly life. . . . The head is somehow apart from direct connection with the external world. . . . Thought and ideation are connected with the head, but not judgment. Judgment is connected with the middle organism, and particularly with arms and hands" (Steiner, June 13, 1921). Cosmic children have a "talent to live in the prenatal world" (Glöckler). The head is well formed physically and functionally (angelic children) whereas the rest of the body lacks penetration of the formative forces. These children have good perception but are poor in executing and concluding a thought process. They have difficulties naming geometric forms. They do not like to engage in physical activities.

Therapeutically the cosmic child needs to feel the geometry of a eurythmic form rather than the beauty. The eurythmist must ask the child to concentrate on walking a form exactly along imaginary lines. Walking on the balancing beam is also helpful. In main lesson, the teacher must evoke the child's feelings for a hero or compassion for an historic event.

The Earthly Child

In the case of what Steiner calls the earthly child, the forces of heredity work strongly, particularly in the metabolic-limb system. These children love earth and, therefore, always have dirty hands. They love material things such as cars, television, electronic equipment, and so forth. They are fascinated by motion. They themselves are constantly in motion. They are practically oriented, although their fine motor skills are below average and this handicap often causes outbreaks of bad temper. Sometimes they dive into an activity without checking out the “details.” They can easily define geometric forms.

In eurythmy, the beauty of a form needs to be stressed. An exercise should be walked first leaving out the earthly child, next the child who can do it most beautifully is asked to do it alone, and then the earthly child is encouraged to do it him/herself. Drawing of beautiful geometric forms and rhythmic play with bells seem to be helpful too. These children often need special individual attention.

The Rich in Fantasy Child

These children have a good memory—even too good of a memory. They cannot forget. Their memory-pictures do not only remain but acquire right away a power of their own and keep coming up again involuntarily. The “I” cannot bring the thoughts under control. These pictures come up again, changed in form to fantastic imaginations: the child tells about the visit to the zoo and all the animals she saw, how they talked to her, how she rode on them, and so forth.

These children, these “prisoners of the ideas they have received,” (Steiner, June 15, 1921), need to give more attention to writing or painting or any activity or exercise that brings them into movement such as eurythmy or gymnastics. In eurythmy, vowels done while stepping or walking are helpful, so that the “idea remains quietly in the organism instead of coming up again constantly and involuntarily” (Steiner, June 15, 1921). In music, singing rather than playing an instrument assists these children.

The Poor in Fantasy Child

These children have little imagination. They easily forget. They must be encouraged to be more observant while they are reading and also to listen to what the teacher tells them in class. In eurythmy, they should do the exercises mainly standing still so that their movements are mostly done with their arms. Consonants are particularly helpful in calling up ideas. Instrumental music has the same effect.

The goal in this type of child is to activate the “I” to master conscious thoughts. This can be achieved by reviewing the day, starting with the most recent event and then going back in time.

It is often difficult to determine the type of a particular child. Often this is not possible because the child does not fit one of the six categories. She might be a hysteric, neurasthenic, “poor in sulfur,” or typical sanguine child, and so forth. The variations are numerous. The safest way to work with children is outlined in the lecture Steiner gave in Stuttgart on September 22, 1920, when he talked about “balance in teaching.” He describes the relationship of the “I” to the other three bodies, noting the “I” can be too little or too much bound to the other bodies. Rudolf Steiner gives ideas similar to the ones mentioned in this article. In a practical setting like a classroom, he recommends that instructions change rhythmically between activities that expand and contract a child’s organism, so that the child is constantly challenged by sympathy and antipathy. This helps the child to be in the preschool with his/her whole being and, therefore, engage the “I” properly.

Endnotes:

Steiner, Rudolf. *Balance in Teaching*, Mercury Press, 1982.

_____. *Waldorf Education for Adolescence*, Kolisko Archive Publication, 1980.

Husemann/Wolff. *The Anthroposophical Approach to Medicine*, Anthroposophical Press, 1982.