# Flags and Building Blocks, Formality and Fun

*One Hundred Years of Free Kindergarten in New Zealand*

Beryl Hughes

Nola McMillan

# Auckland Kindergarten Association

## TRAINING COURSE FOR STUDENTS

### NATURE OF TRAINING.

The Association aims at training girls to become competent in the care, management and teaching of little children.

The training is both theoretical and practical. The former aims at giving an understanding of modern educational principles and methods, while the application of this knowledge is provided for by practical work with children in the Free Kindergartens under the direction of qualified teachers.

The training in this special educational work fosters and develops womanly qualities, and widens interest in all matters connected with child and home life.

**Principal and Lecturer.**—Miss C. M. Colegrove.

**Demonstrators of Kindergarten Teaching.**—The Directors of the Free Kindergartens—Campbell, Myers, Newmarket, Onehunga, Otahuhu, Ponsonby, St. James', and Sunbeams.

**Eurhythmics.**—Miss B. Whistler, of the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics.

**Class Singing and Musical Appreciation.**—Miss A. Necker.

**Handwork and Drawing.**—Miss M. S. Newman.

**Theoretical Training and Lectures.**—At Myers Free Kindergarten, Upper Queen Street, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**Practical Work.**—At all the Free Kindergartens five mornings a week, from 9 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Students have one afternoon in the week free.

### CONDITIONS OF ENTRY.

A Student wishing to enter for training must be seventeen years of age or over.

She should have had a good secondary education.

She will be requested to furnish two testimonials, one from the Headmistress of the last school she has attended, and one other.

There are no fees to pay, and students do not receive a salary during their training.

### PROSPECTS.

Though the Association cannot guarantee positions to students when they have finished their training, the following are open to them:—

1. They may become assistants, and subsequently Directors, in Free Kindergartens, when vacancies occur.
2. They may take positions in the preparatory departments of schools.
3. They may be governesses in private families.
4. They may open private Kindergartens of their own.

*Description of a Training Course for Students, Auckland Kindergarten Association, 1930.*

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## *One Hundred Years of Free Kindergarten in New Zealand*

Beryl Hughes

New Zealand Free Kindergarten
Union Inc.
1989

New Zealand
Free Kindergarten Union Inc.,
P.O. Box 27-234,
Wellington,
New Zealand.



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# Contents


| | |
|---|---|
| Acknowledgements | 4 |
| Foreword | 5 |
| A Present-day Kindergarten | 6 |
| How it all Began | 9 |
| Kindergarten Buildings | 14 |
| Kindergarten Names | 19 |
| Kindergarten Equipment | 21 |
| Health in Kindergarten | 23 |
| Kindergarten From a Distance | 25 |
| Disasters | 28 |
| Attitudes to Kindergarten | 31 |
| The New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union | 33 |
| Clothes for Kindergarten | 36 |
| Women and Kindergarten | 39 |
| Kindergarten Training | 42 |
| Kindergarten Teachers | 47 |
| The New Zealand Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association (KTA) | 48 |
| Kindergarten Programmes | 49 |
| Kindergarten Funding | 53 |
| After 100 Years | 56 |

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Isobel Christison: *A Survey of Preschool Educational Services in New Zealand*. M.A. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1965.

Phyllis Levitt: *Public Concern for Young Children: A Socio-Historical Study of Reform, Dunedin 1879-1889*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Otago, 1979.

Elizabeth Anne Meade: *An Organisational Study of the Free Kindergarten and Playcentre Movements in New Zealand*. Ph.D. thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1978.

Brian Marshall: *A History of the Auckland Kindergarten Association*. Auckland Kindergarten Association, 1983.

Ted Scott: *An Early Wellington Kindergarten*. New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1975.

I have also found the two publications of the N.Z.F.K.U. *Seventy-Five Years of Free Kindergartens in New Zealand* and *Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1975* valuable.

Finally, I am grateful to Peter Ridder and Don King for their work on the production of this book.

Beryl Hughes
Wellington, 1989

# *Foreword*

100 years of achievement in any field of endeavour is noteworthy for many reasons, not the least of which is the opportunity it provides to reflect on the past and look to the future.

The celebration of provision of a kindergarten facility over the past one hundred years comes at a time when New Zealand society is facing rapid and significant change. The developments that are taking place in the field of education in 1989 will impose on kindergarten communities the potential for significant changes, particularly within administration. We might pause and reflect on what the good folk of Dunedin would have thought of such changes in 1889.

Indeed, one may wonder whether, when establishing the first kindergarten in Walker Street, those involved could have fully appreciated the potential growth and influence of the Kindergarten movement over the years ahead. I venture to suggest that despite the growth, and the sometimes difficult times associated with that growth, the founders of New Zealander's first kindergarten would be more than satisfied with today's kindergarten provision.

This publication has been produced, not as a full history, nor to specifically acknowledge any person or persons. Rather, it is an anecdotal account of the Kindergarten movement with perhaps more emphasis on the last half-century than the very early years.

In recommending this publication I acknowledge the work of Mrs Beryl Hughes and those others who have contributed. *Flags and Building Blocks, Formality and Fun* is seen as a recognition of the immense voluntary input to kindergartens over the years and an incentive to continue to provide a quality environment for children in kindergartens in the future.

Hewitt Harrison
President

*New Zealand 1889, New Zealand 1989. The same country, but people, social conditions and attitudes are different. One free kindergarten then, almost 600 now. And what a difference between the first New Zealand free kindergarten and one of today.*

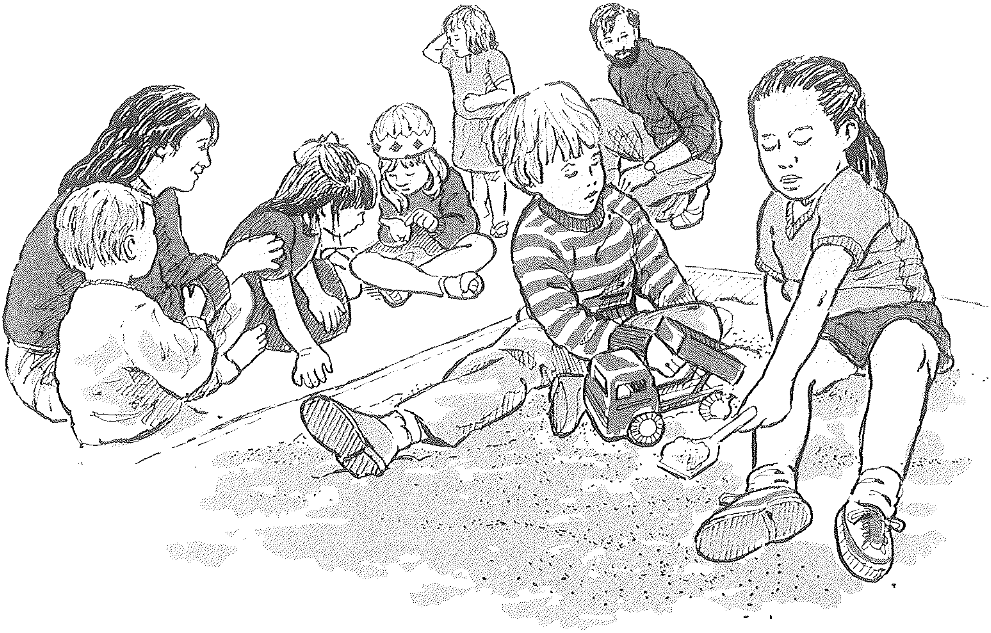
# A Present-day Kindergarten

The Ngaire Larcombe Kindergarten in Wainoni is one of the newer kindergartens in the Christchurch area. I arrived there on a fine spring day, just after nine o'clock: a few children were still arriving but most of them had already settled into a cheerful, orderly state of busyness. I left my jacket in the small staffroom which was packed tidily with books and toys; even if the teachers ever had time to sit and relax, they did not have the space. At Ngaire Larcombe Kindergarten, as in all places – including their own homes – where children are to'be found, there is not quite enough room for them and the equipment that goes with them. The kindergarten was bursting with life, bursting with children, and bursting with boxes of material neatly stacked around the walls.

Near the entrance, a photograph of Ngaire Larcombe herself, formerly president of the Christchurch Free Kindergarten Association, smiled down at the activity below, seeming somehow a part of the scene. A notice nearby said, "To play is to work, to work is to learn, to learn is to live." There appeared to be no shortage of any of these activities.

I moved around, trying to take in the many activities of the children and the choices waiting for them. One table held the kindergarten pets: two birds in a cage, with a notice saying "Tena koe Juicy-fruit Tena koe Smokey-boy", were flanked by two fish tanks and a mysterious-looking bundle of brown paper shrouding a wormery.

The music corner held a piano, drums, radio, record player, xylophone and a considerable number of castanets and other small instruments. Juicy-fruit and Smokey-boy sang vigorously in the background, ready to take on all mechanical music-makers.



Nearby, tables held sellotape, scissors, wool, cartons, bodkins, yellow scrim squares. At other tables children were removing lumps of clay from wet scrim wrappings and pounding them into shape.

Children's pictures hung from the beams, and everywhere there were signs, some in Maori and Samoan. Three mobiles of paper discs gave the addresses of groups offering help for the problems facing people today: a budget advisory service, a postnatal depression support group, a solo parents' support group, a women's refuge, a diabetes society, marriage guidance, an asthma society – 27 in all, representing nearly as many problems. A poster "Take care with strangers" was aimed at the dangers children face.

Like many of the children, I moved to and fro inside and outside. The outside area, bordered by shrubs, contained a stretch of grass, a stretch of concrete and some climbable trees. A big sandpit with toys and a water-supply close at hand was one of the main attractions.

Children chose freely from these activities, sometimes with adult support and guidance. With all the things to interest them a few found time to be interested in me and my activities. "What are you doing? What are you writing?" Some of them effected introductions: "His name's Ryan, my name's Emily." I tried to slide into the woodwork and thought I was succeeding but "Still watching?" one little girl asked me briskly.

Morning tea, with a teacher helping and talking to the children, was taken in small groups. The group that I watched drank milk and ate slices of tangelo while discussing that universal childhood experience of today: a visit to McDonald's.

Another group formed around a teacher in the music corner. After jumping up and down to music on the piano, they formed a circle for singing-games, one in Maori.

As the session drew to a close, the children helped to tidy away the materials and to wipe down tables. Parents began to appear and to remove their children quietly.

Ngaire Larcombe Kindergarten is a special needs kindergarten, one which is given a favourable ratio of staff to children to allow it to serve the special needs of the district. Many of the children live in a state housing area and the average income per family is relatively low. Christchurch has a high unemployment rate and this has hit some families. About two-thirds of the mothers go out to work, often to clean offices in the city centre, some distance away.

Yet in spite of these difficulties, the children looked happy and well cared for and I was told that the fund-raising was good. The problems have not crushed the kindergarten or its users. But Wainoni needs more kindergartens to cope with the long waiting list. The roll for morning and afternoon sessions is 40 and there are four teachers, including one special group teacher. The head teacher told me that they had been together for several years, and that it was this which made the kindergarten work so well.

The kindergarten can take a special group of children – up to 5 in number – with some kind of educational handicap, who attend four times a week. One of them is a lively and attractive boy who is profoundly deaf. The special group teacher gave him much of her time; at one point she took him into the staff-room, where I saw them sitting on the floor, working at total communication.

I left Ngaire Larcombe Kindergarten at the end of a morning pleasantly spent in an active, happy and co-operative community. This is a state which is achieved by hard work, the work of staff, children and parents today and of those who have gone before them, the founders of the kindergarten movement in New Zealand.

# How it all Began

The first free kindergarten in New Zealand, whose centenary we are celebrating in 1989, differed in many respects from the Ngaire Larcombe Kindergarten. It was established in the poorest section of Dunedin as an act of charity on the part of some well-to-do and benevolent people. Louisa Darymple, who had helped to establish Otago Girls' High School, was interested in the education of young children and published a pamphlet in 1879, suggesting that at three years old children should be taught in schools based on the ideas of the German educationalist, Friedrich Froebel. Mark Cohen, editor of the Dunedin *Star*, had corresponded with the director of a flourishing kindergarten in San Francisco and hoped to see a kindergarten established in Dunedin. Lavinia Kelsey, who was elected secretary of the Dunedin Association, had a sister-in-law in London trained in kindergarten work by the National Froebel Society. This contact proved valuable to the new Association. The Reverend Dr Rutherford Waddell, distressed at the sight of small children "spilt about the streets", as he put it, playing in all weathers in the dirt and dangers of traffic, called a meeting with the intention of providing some sort of care for them. As a result, the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association was formed. Mrs Rachel Reynolds, a woman of good social position and the mother of 9 children, was elected president. Dr Waddell and Mrs Reynolds had taken the lead in calling the meeting but it seems to have been Mark Cohen who was responsible for this solution to the problem of young children with nowhere to play and no-one to care for them while they played: a free kindergarten.

The first kindergarten was opened a few weeks later in June 1889, in the Walker Street Mission Hall, attached to St. Andrew's Church, where Dr Waddell was minister. No rent was charged. There were 14 children to begin with, and 60 by the end of the first year. Miss Wienicke, Froebel-trained and teaching at a private kindergarten in Christchurch, was appointed director and brought one of her students with her.

It was said that to begin with the children were dull and apathetic but that they improved in time. Probably they were shy at first and over-whelmed by the attentions of ladies much better dressed and better spoken than their own mothers. In the first few years, teachers sometimes went into the streets and collected stray children, so some early

Dunedin kindergarten children were conscripts. They seem to have settled in happily to the new world of excursions, books, toys, Froebel's mysterious gifts, plants, songs, the attention of adults who were trying to understand their needs.

The Ngaire Larcombe children wore bright, comfortable clothes in a variety of styles. The Walker Street children wore pinafores, made by ladies who supported the kindergarten. A photograph taken in 1895 of the second Dunedin kindergarten shows the staff, too, wearing pinafores in severe styles like those worn at the time by nurses or superior domestic servants.

Without exception, the children in the very early Dunedin kindergartens came from very poor families, where life was a struggle to survive and where mothers often worked in factories or did piece-work at home, in conditions which made it impossible for them to care for their children properly. An Otago newspaper described the typical home of a kindergarten child as a "rotten old tumbledown shanty". Compassion for the children of the poor was a powerful motive behind the move to found a kindergarten but powerful, too, was the desire to civilise them and turn them into respectable citizens, who would give no trouble to their betters. There was never any question of the children of committee members attending kindergarten. The ladies who were involved in kindergarten work in the early days, on the committee or raising money, were a class apart from the children's mothers, who were not expected to help. Compare this with mothers – and often fathers – today, who are

*Walker Street Kindergarten, Dunedin, 1895*
*(reference: Hocken Library).*

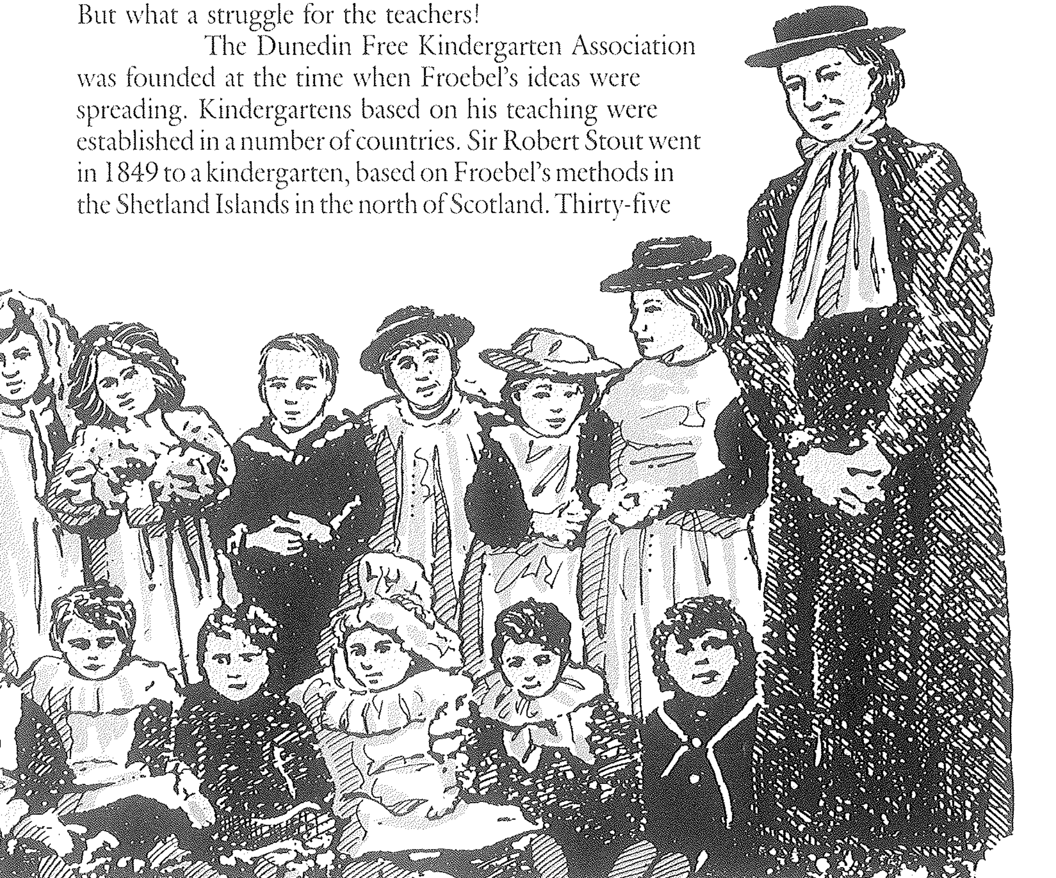
expected to help at kindergarten sessions and in many other ways.

Some Walker Street children came from Chinese and Lebanese families but no attempt was made to interest the children in their own cultures, which were seen as a handicap. Increasingly today kindergartens cater for children of different ethnic backgrounds by incorporating elements of their cultures into the programmes.

There is another striking difference between Walker Street Kindergarten and a kindergarten today. At Walker Street there was a rapid turnover of children and the attendance was low. Now long waiting lists show the value that parents place on kindergartens. When children finally are admitted, they usually attend regularly.

Buildings and sites in the last century – and into the first half of this – were highly unsatisfactory by today's standards. The halls where the early kindergartens were housed were usually unattractive, hard to heat, with no outside areas. On fine days the children were taken to parks or by special invitation to private gardens. Marching through the streets carrying little red flags with the word "Kindergarten" worked on them, the Walker Street children must have provided good publicity for the cause. But what a struggle for the teachers!

The Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association was founded at the time when Froebel's ideas were spreading. Kindergartens based on his teaching were established in a number of countries. Sir Robert Stout went in 1849 to a kindergarten, based on Froebel's methods in the Shetland Islands in the north of Scotland. Thirty-five



years later, Stout recognised the voice of his teacher, Jane Liston, in the corridor of an Auckland school.

Believing that play was the best means of developing children's potential, Froebel created educational materials, which he called "gifts", to bring out their full capacities. These gifts were used in the early Dunedin kindergartens and in others for many years. The first was a set of balls, each with a string attached, while the other gifts were mainly sets of differently shaped blocks. They probably would not interest children now. But some of the activities in Walker Street Kindergarten and in the second Dunedin kindergarten, Yaralla, which opened in 1891, can be found today. Some of the same games are played, such as Farmer in the Dell and Ring a Roses. (The Ngaire Larcombe Kindergarten had "Ring a Roti" written on a strip of paper hanging from a beam.)

From the beginning to the present day, kindergartens have emphasised the importance to children of understanding the world around them. A local newspaper reported in 1895 that the children were studying wheat grown in a damp cloth and that later they were given buns and told how flour was milled from wheat. Handwork was another activity which has spanned the years. The 6th Annual Report of the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association spoke of the children sewing in wools and silks, weaving with coloured papers and playing with bricks, "their hands growing deft and their minds unconsciously developing as they think what they are doing". Today materials are more varied and include some not invented in the time of Walker Street, but the educational principle is unchanged.

Froebel believed that children should play in natural surroundings – grass, trees, flowers, plants of all sorts. This presented difficulties for kindergartens in slums but the teachers did the best they could. It was accepted that when kindergartens were purpose-built, they should be in pleasant surroundings and take advantage of the natural features of their sites.

The founding of Walker Street Kindergarten was only the first step. There were other poverty-stricken areas in Dunedin where provision for small children to play was needed, other cities in New Zealand where the same conditions prevailed. Steadily, more kindergartens were established in Dunedin, and then elsewhere.

In Christchurch kindergartens without fees were started for poor children by the Children's Aid Society in 1904. Then in 1911 the Mayoress of Christchurch, Mrs T.T. Taylor, called a public meeting which established the Christchurch Free Kindergarten Association.

*St. Peter's Mission Hall, Wellington, 1909.*

In Wellington Miss Mary Richmond began to raise funds in 1905, dividing the city into twenty centres, each with members and associates pledged to collect money. (Katherine Mansfield's mother was a not very active supporter). By 1915 there were four kindergartens in Wellington. Originally, the movement was known as the Wellington Free Kindergarten Union, then in 1911 its name was changed to the Richmond Free Kindergarten Union in honour of its founder. The name was changed again in 1917 to the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association since it was feared that the previous name might suggest that the kindergartens were run for Miss Richmond's financial benefit.

The Auckland Free Kindergarten Association came into being in 1908, largely as the result of the work of Mrs Leo Myers, who had seen the value of kindergarten education to children in America, where she was born. The Association opened its first kindergarten, Logan Campbell, in 1910.

The wish to help the children of the poor, the motive for establishing the first free kindergarten in Dunedin, operated in the other three centres too. All of them opened kindergartens in inner-city areas where children had nowhere to play but the streets. It is true that the Auckland Association originally intended to establish fee-paying kindergartens in addition. However, nothing came of this.

# Kindergarten Buildings

*There was an awful lot of shifting, especially at Woolston, because the forms were so heavy and they were up on a platform and you had to prepare the hall before you started. I remember I wanted to introduce water for the children's play and I had a sink sunk into a big table and at 11 o'clock there was still ice on it.*

*We shared this enormous hall with Scouts. Scouts were my bugbear; they always broke things. We had to make symbols for the children so that they could recognise their towels, red, blue, a different colour for each group and we sewed them on the sleeping bags and the towels. Then they had to be in plywood painted the same colours and nailed above the towels and sleeping bags and coathangers. Then the Scouts would pull the wooden symbols off.*

EVA MILLEN

For many years most kindergartens, through lack of funds, operated in rented halls shared with other organisations. Running a kindergarten in these conditions presented problems. Equipment usually had to be put away after each session. Eileen Bethell, leaving a rented hall in Hawera after a busy session, realised she had locked her assistant under the stage with the equipment. Halls were sometimes damp and rat-ridden. The floor of the hall used by one Wellington kindergarten was so slippery that it was suggested that an old railway tarpaulin should be laid down for games.

The Realm Hall, Hataitai, where an Italian restaurant now stands, is remembered as being particularly bad. Mary Collier (née Abraham) recalls that it was "the most dreary, dark, cold, miserable place in Wellington." Then the kindergarten moved to the rooms of a sports club. This was a "palace compared with the Realm – instead of smoke and beer the whole place reeked of sweaty bodies and liniment. The highlight of the day was shaking the horrible coconut matting. We used to take the mats out into the middle of the road for shaking but we had to be agile to avoid being run down by the trams coming through the Hataitai tunnel."

Staff and children throughout the country appear to have coped bravely with difficulties: the kindergarten in the North End of Dunedin was held entirely in the open air one winter while the building was being altered.

The first purpose-built kindergarten, Rachel Reynolds in

Dunedin, was opened in 1914. Later on a number of others were also purpose-built. From 1958, the Department of Education required that kindergartens be established only in specially designed permanent buildings. In 1961, 95% of kindergartens were housed in their own buildings.

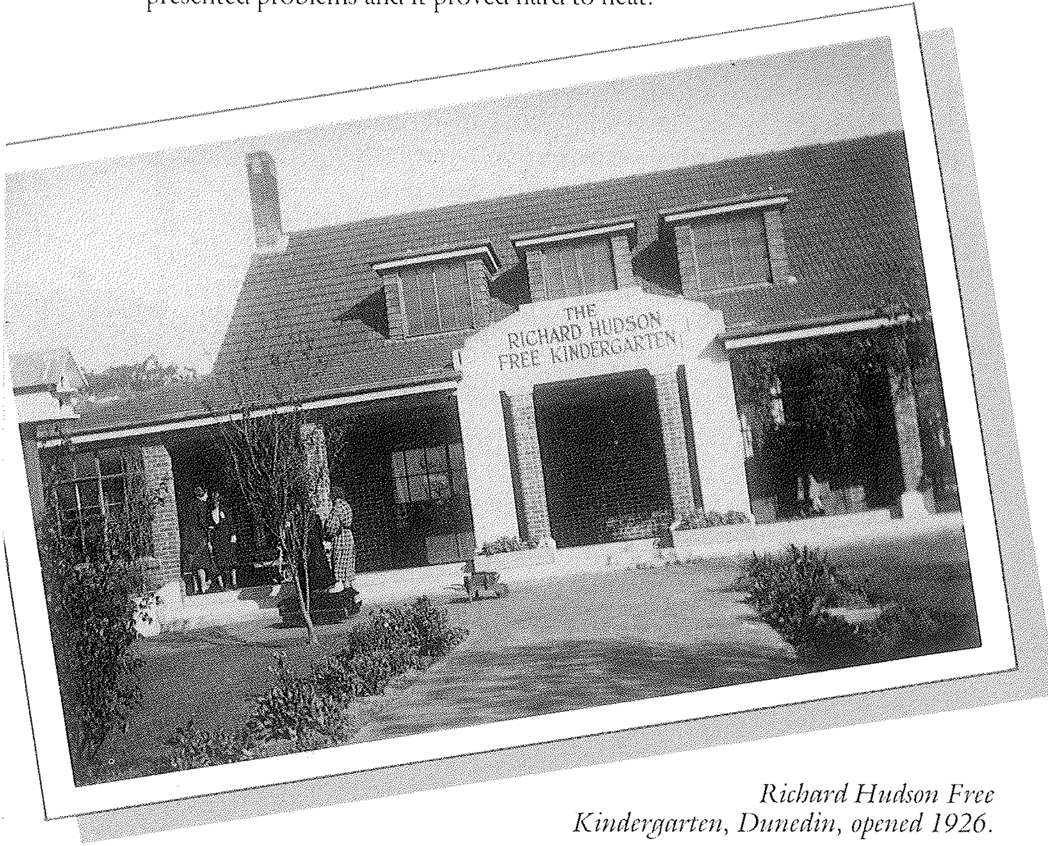
Before a permanent building went up, a site had to be found. Shirley Muir in Hamilton "tramped over site after site after site and every day it was raining." Blockhouse Bay Kindergarten, Auckland, had to find a suitable site in 1955 in an area where the local Residents and Ratepayers Association complained of "no drainage and poor nightsoil collection, no footpaths and atrocious roads; no playing fields for children . . ."

Often a kindergarten committee was not formed until the area was almost built out and sections had risen considerably in price. The Department issued guidelines for sections in 1952. A site of a quarter of an acre with a sufficient proportion of flat or nearly flat land was the ideal, with maximum sun and shelter from wind. All the trees, irregularities of the ground and any special features were to be kept. Part of the area was to be paved, the rest laid out in a garden with a place for digging. Eventually, as the Department became increasingly involved with the movement, sites were set aside for kindergartens when primary schools were built.

*Myers Kindergarten, Myers Park, Auckland, 1916 (Alexander Turnbull Library).*

Some early kindergarten buildings were very attractive. Myers Kindergarten, Auckland, which was the generous gift to the Association of Arthur Myers, M.P., was opened in 1916. A newspaper reported that it was "one of the prettiest and most effective that have yet been erected in Auckland, the tiled, gabled roofs, cream rough-cast walls and red brick finishing of Renaissance design, giving it a most striking and picturesque appearance."

In Dunedin the Richard Hudson Kindergarten building, opened in 1926, was red brick with a tiled roof, and a verandah, 60 feet by 10 feet, along the entire front, glazed at the ends. It was built on almost half an acre of land adjoining playing fields and was surrounded by lawns, trees, paths and trolley-tracks. The youngest children had their own cloakrooms, and separate approaches to the verandah and grounds. But its very spaciousness presented problems and it proved hard to heat.




*Richard Hudson Free Kindergarten, Dunedin, opened 1926.*

Nearer the present day, Corstorphine Kindergarten's new building was as impressive as any of the older ones, although in a different way. Made of steel, triangular in shape (and with a triangular sandpit), its front walls were made entirely of glass. Inside it was painted pale green, with red beams and red and black lino. It was opened in 1963 by Mr T.K.S. Sidey, whose mother was the first President of the Kindergarten Union and for thirteen years President of the Dunedin Association. Ngaio Kindergarten in Wellington opened in 1950 in a building specially designed for joint use with the Plunket Society. The Helen Deem Centre in Dunedin was also shared with Plunket, and was opened in 1954 in a building which had once been the Mothercraft Cottage for the first Karitane Hospital.

Although kindergartens today are miracles of convenience compared with the early rented halls, steeply rising costs have led in the last fifteen years or so to buildings which are rather smaller than they were in the 50s and 60s.

Few buildings have such an interesting history as Newtown Kindergarten in Wellington, built for the Centennial Exhibition in Rongotai in 1940. The builder, James Fletcher, donated his firm's labour and persuaded other firms to donate materials. During the Exhibition it was the setting for demonstrations of kindergarten work by a teacher and it aroused interest in the kindergarten movement. At the end of the Exhibition, it was to be re-erected on another site as a permanent kindergarten.

However, once the Exhibition was over, the Air Force took possession of the building for use as a mess hall. A year or two later, they gave it up and it was moved to a small flat site in Hospital Road, Newtown, part of the grounds of Government House, which looms above. Previously this had been used as a horse paddock and as an allotment for the unemployed. Both the Governor-General and the Government were content that a kindergarten should occupy the land. The roof had just been completed when an earthquake brought another setback. Men repairing earthquake damage were housed in camps on the site and the building was used as a mess hall for the second time. Not surprisingly, the Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, in opening the kindergarten at last in November 1943, referred to the ceremony as the lifting of a tapu.

Newtown Kindergarten today is an oasis of trees and grass in a heavily built up area and caters for children of many different backgrounds. The "model luncheon room" and the "housekeeping corner", visible in photographs of the Exhibition, are still there with only small changes. The tapu appears to have been truly removed. Yet it is not only Government House which looms near. Much nearer is Wellington Hospital, which has made plain its interest in acquiring the land. Already a road to the Hospital has been built around it. But if the Kindergarten Association loses this land, where else could it find a pleasant site? Many of the children live in high-rise flats and need a place to play outdoors. There are no parks in this part of Newtown.

Buildings for Training Centres followed the same pattern in the four main cities. In the early days, students were trained in rooms in a particular kindergarten. Some Training Centres were luckier than others. Myers Kindergarten, Auckland, had spacious and attractive premises which housed students from 1916 to 1958. (In the very early days, Auckland students had trained in the cricket pavilion in Victoria Park.) Eva Millen, describing Christchurch in the 1940s, says:

> *We had lectures some afternoons in rooms with a butcher's shop below us, so we had the smell of saveloys coming from underneath and of hairdressing on the next floor up.*

As Training Associations grew in size and the number of students increased, bigger premises became necessary. The next step was to a large house, once occupied by a household with servants but too big for a family home in the changed social conditions after World War Two. A house in Ponsonby was considered for Auckland students, but Sir John Allum, President of the Association, said, "My young ladies are not going to Ponsonby," and that was that. The young ladies went to Arney Road, Remuera. Eventually, when Training Centres were outgrowing the old houses, students moved in 1975 into the teachers' colleges, now Colleges of Education.

# Kindergarten Names

*When they opened it, they gave my name to it, which I thought was a very great honour. I went to it several years ago, I walked in and introduced myself. I think the kindergartener thought I had come from the dead; she hadn't known whether I was alive or dead.*

UNA WILLIAMS, SPEAKING OF A VISIT TO THE UNA WILLIAMS KINDERGARTEN, MASTERTON.

Most kindergartens are called after the street, suburb or town in which they are situated. Yaralla (later Kelsey-Yaralla) received its Australian aboriginal name after the home of Miss Walker of Sydney, who gave £100 to the kindergarten.

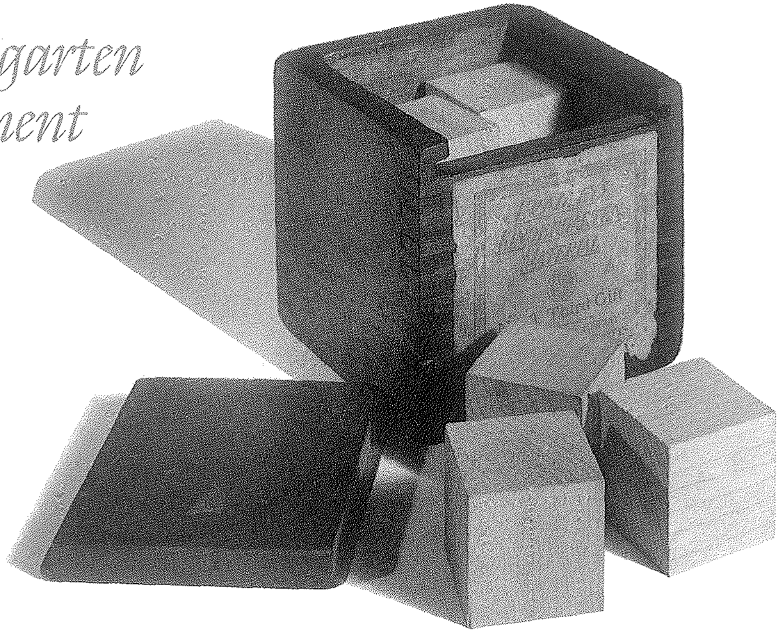
Some kindergartens are named after people who have made a large contribution to the movement, often to the kindergarten in question. Moira Gallagher Kindergarten in Porirua is called after the first Supervisor of Pre-School Services in the Department of Education, whose contribution to the movement has been immense. Kindergartens have been named after Presidents of the Union, for example the Helen Downer Kindergarten, Rotorua and the Laura Ingram Kindergarten, Motueka. Hanan Kindergarten, Timaru is unusual in being named after a husband and wife, Mr and Mrs A.E.S. Hanan. Logan Campbell Kindergarten, Auckland, is named after a generous donor, Woolston Kindergarten, Christchurch, was renamed Edmonds Park because of the handsome donations of Messrs T.J. Edmonds Ltd, whose baking power has contributed to the success of many a kindergarten cake stall. Richard Hudson Kindergarten is another one named after a local businessman.

Jamieson Kindergarten, Hamilton, is named for Miss I.M. Jamieson, first President of the Hamilton Association. Miss Jamieson had other distinctions: a travelling scholarship was named in her honour and she taught a future Director of Education. (She said on meeting him, "Beeby! What do bees do?" "They make honey, miss." "Yes, Beeby, but they work. I want you to work.")

These are only a few of the "name" kindergartens, which pleasantly commemorate people who have worked hard for kindergartens. A close link can exist between a kindergarten and the person for whom it was named. Joyce Barns remembers Miss Kelsey visiting Kelsey-Yaralla a num[...] of times in the late 1930s. The children were fascinated by her bonnet and shawl and long skirt. After she died, Miss Kelsey's ashes were scattered on the geraniums at the kindergarten, as she had requested.

*Ted Scott at the sundial, Taranaki Street Kindergarten, early 1920's.*

# Kindergarten Equipment



*We had Froebel blocks – beautiful little boxes with sliding lids. Each child sat on a chair with his blocks in front of him on the table, and when it was time to start each one turned his box upside down and slid off its lid, then lifted the box, and there was a little group of blocks, some cubes and some rectangular ones. The children built what they liked once the blocks were out of the boxes.*

MARJORIE CONNELL

Marjorie Connell was speaking of 1925; Froebel equipment had a long life. However, his gifts and occupations gradually disappeared. His "Mother Songs" were replaced by songs relating to the child's own experience. Another influential inventor of material for young children was Maria Montessori, the first woman doctor in Italy. She designed equipment intended to improve control and coordination, which became very popular in kindergartens in the 1920s and 1930s. As educators began to insist on the importance of imaginative play, enthusiasm for the equipment declined. More recently it has reappeared in kindergartens; however, with competition from a wider range of materials, it now has a less important place.

Since Walker Street days, there has been an increase in the quantity and quality of equipment. Owning their own buildings meant an end to the worst storage problems of kindergartens and made larger equipment possible. The outside play areas which purpose-built kindergartens had, increased the range still further. All Dunedin kindergartens acquired slides by the end of the 1930s, while Richard Hudson Kindergarten and Rachel Reynolds Kindergarten had jungle gyms. Without play areas outside, it was difficult to provide sandpits. (Even Taranaki Street with a garden had only a sandbin; photographs show children standing outside and reaching into it to play.) Now sandpits became one of the most used pieces of equipment, although their covers sometimes created problems for teachers. In recent years, many kindergartens have built large sand areas, sometimes with varying depths, which give greater scope for imaginative play.

There was one poignant remit at the 1934 conference, which was received but not passed: that some of the toys at kindergarten should further the cause of international peace.

During the war, parents found it difficult to buy toys, which in any case were much less abundant and varied than today.

> *This was in a time of rationing, before the new generation of toys. For example, as a young child I never saw a balloon. So one of my vivid memories is the large variety of home-made and commandeered things to play with at kindergarten. I remember doing an awful lot of things with flour.*
>
> DAVID LANGE

Waterplay became common, although not all mothers instantly accepted it. The East Harbour Committee wrote to the Wellington Association in 1950, suggesting that it should be discontinued "unless there is adequate supervision to prevent damage to clothing and to health." ("Provide waterproof clothing," was the reply.)

Many kindergartens have living equipment: plants, birds and goldfish. When the school milk scheme ended, Motueka turned its milk stand into an aviary. Taranaki Street had ten baby rabbits and a lamb, which had the honour of being fed by the Director of Education, Dr C.E. Beeby.

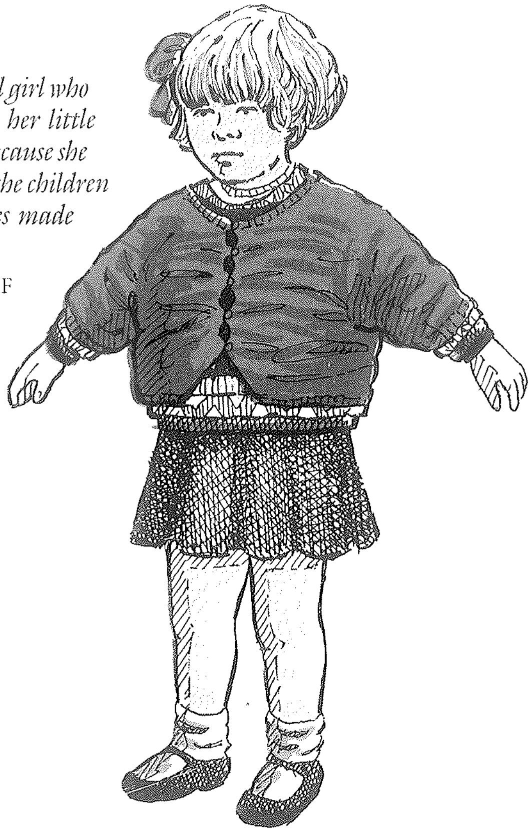
On the whole there have been few great changes in equipment. The 1977 Jubilee booklet of Petone Kindergarten pointed out the continuity and confirmed it with photographs. The chief changes have been the use of junk material, the increasingly sophisticated musical equipment, and the tremendous improvement in the number and quality of books for children.

What lies ahead? Many 3 and 4 year olds can use computers with flair. Although they are expensive and vulnerable, they may become standard equipment some day.

# Health in Kindergarten

*I shall always remember one small girl who arrived wearing five jerseys and her little arms were stuck out at her sides because she couldn't get them down. Some of the children were inadequately clad in clothes made from flour bags and pillow slips.*

TED (EDNA) SCOTT, DIRECTOR OF TARANAKI STREET KINDERGARTEN, 1924-1948, INTERVIEWED BY GERALDINE McDONALD.



In the early days, some of the children were not only scantily clad, they were dirty and lice-ridden. Since Miss Riley, Principal of the Training Centre, spoke of visiting fifteen homes of kindergarten children and finding that only one of them had a bathroom, this is not surprising. Yet the children appeared to flourish. One of their teachers commented:

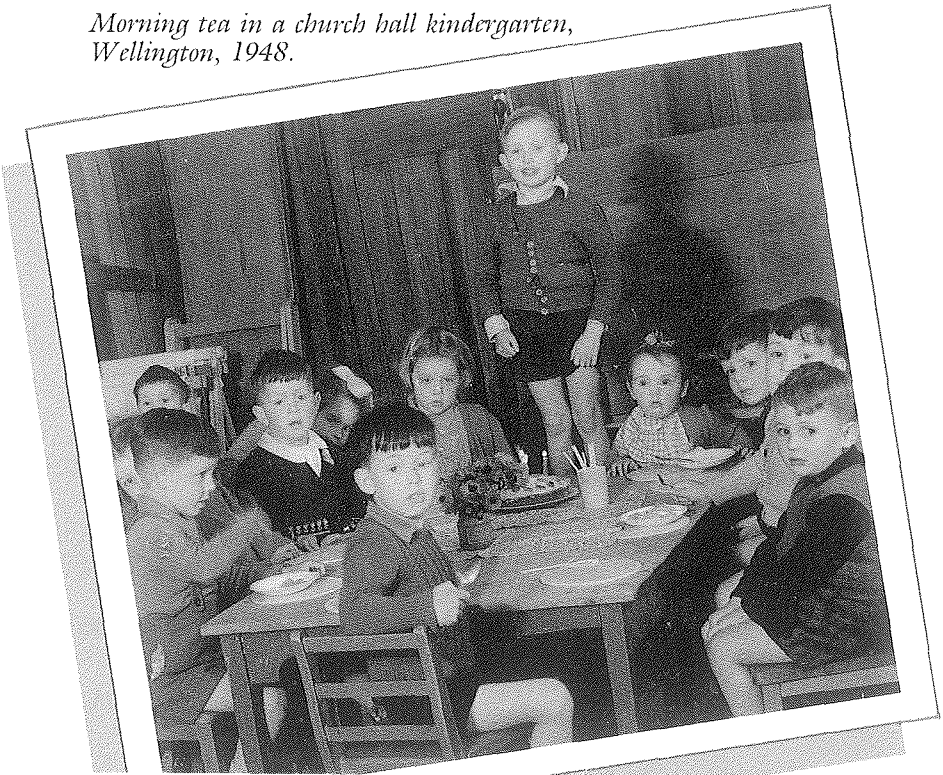
> *It is a constant wonder to us, who know how many of them are almost neglected, under what conditions they sleep and the unwise food they have that they are as healthy as they are.*

(Possibly some of these criticisms were ill-founded. Teachers were judging families from the perspective of a different social class and sometimes a different ethnic group. The "unwise food", for example, may have been strange to middle-class New Zealanders rather than harmful. Moreover, the desire to minister to the poor may have led to an exaggeration of the squalor, and hence to an exaggeration of the need for help.)

All kindergartens trained children in orderly habits and tried to improve their health. The morning tea of milk and apples was a useful addition to their diet. Directions were given to the Taranaki Street children, "Come regularly; be in time; and come clean." In Dunedin in the early days, children were given each day in winter a spoonful of malt extract, donated by the local supplier. Members of the staff of the Otago Medical School in the twenties inspected the children and gave talks on child health to teachers and parents. Then in 1929, Dr Ada Paterson, Director of the Division of School Hygiene, authorised regular medical examinations of kindergarten children. Regular dental examinations came later.

Rising standards of living and better educated parents have led to healthier children. But there are many with special problems and there are some who are poorly housed. There are children even today whose experience of grass and trees is mainly at kindergarten.

*Morning tea in a church hall kindergarten, Wellington, 1948.*



# Kindergarten From a Distance

Many children today travel to kindergarten by car, often as part of a car pool. On wet days in Taranaki Street Kindergarten, "many of the mothers carried the children as well as having a baby in their arms." Children were often dropped off by fathers on their way to work or by brothers and sisters on their way to school. Sometimes they were dropped off too early and teachers found them sitting in the gutter. Children attending Freemans Bay Kindergarten at one time travelled on buses with placards around their necks, bearing their names and addresses and with pockets for their tickets or money.

> *. . . my brother and sister, who are twins, went to [a kindergarten] at Papatoetoe. At the end of the day they were put on the bus wearing a label which said they were to be let off at the monument near home. Unfortunately, several times the bus driver or the twins forgot, so my father would be summoned from his surgery to drive into Auckland to pick up the two.*
>
> DAVID LANGE

If there were no kindergarten near enough for children to attend, their parents could try to arouse interest in establishing one. This was not an option for families living in remote areas and for many decades their children had to go without kindergarten teaching. Then in the early fifties "Kindergarten of the Air" arrived, a radio programme for the under fives, conducted by a kindergarten teacher. It was intended to give children with no kindergarten near them the opportunity to share in some kindergarten activities and to give them a feeling of belonging to a larger group. Parts of the programmes were intended for mothers and gave them advice on children's play. There were stories, songs, fingerplays, and suggestions for games and things that children could make. It was a tremendous success. It was broadcast twice a week at first and then five times. Mary Brooker, who followed Loma Jones in conducting the programme, was asked by someone in broadcasting, "Do you realise you're on the air more hours each week than Selwyn Toogood?" That was fame indeed.

Mary wrote all the scripts for her sessions and did everything but the music, which was provided by Ailsa Martin. A time-consuming but fascinating part of the work was answering the heavy fan mail. Letters came from parents, telling of their children's enjoyment. Adults sometimes enjoyed it. "Can we have the jump game once more before we leave port?" wrote four sailors on the *Ruahine*, while the captain of the *River City*, which went up and down the Wanganui River, became a regular correspondent.

Accompanying her husband to a conference, Mary was asked to conduct a mock session of "Kindergarten of the Air." She obliged. "Golly, she's good at imitating Mary Brooker", her husband was told by someone who knew her only by her married name of Mary Purdy.

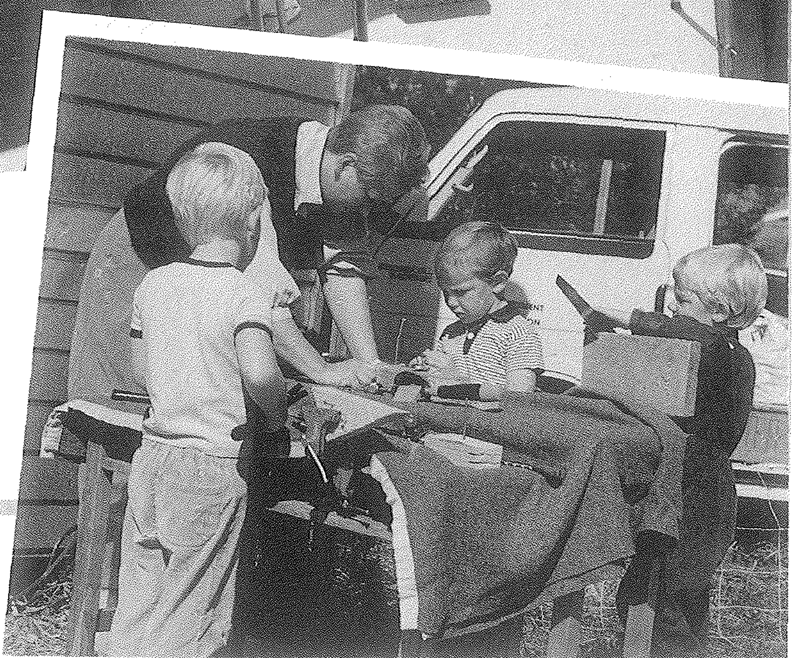
The programme has long gone, although some of the records made by Loma Jones and by Kate Harcourt, who followed Mary, may still survive as souvenirs of what was for years a success story. It was listened to by children who lived far from a kindergarten, by children in hospital, by children too young for kindergarten and by children on waiting lists. For twenty minutes a day, it was their kindergarten.

Since 1976, kindergartens have catered for some families who live far from orthodox kindergartens. In Southland a mobile kindergarten, based at Longbush, travels to 8 different rural areas each week. In all there are 8 Free Kindergarten Mobile Units throughout the country, carrying a variety of equipment, including slides, ladders, water tanks, materials for painting and carpentry, blocks, dough and books (which are sometimes lent to the children). Mobile units usually roster parents to help, and provide welcome social contacts for them, particularly for mothers, who in some cases seldom see other women. These new-style kindergartens develop their own specialties: the Marlborough Unit makes a point of providing excursions for children. The venues include vacant schools, community halls, private houses and a marae.

There are two itinerant kindergarten teachers in the Wairarapa, who visit play groups in the area. They do not drive mobile vans but bring equipment in their own or rented cars.

Some families benefit from a kindergarten experience which is not provided by the free kindergarten movement. This is the early childhood programme of the New Zealand Correspondence School, established in 1977. This programme was set up by the senior teacher, Mary Wood, and Cushla Scrivens and serves 510 families throughout the country. All 17 teachers in the unit are kindergarten-trained. Like the trained teachers who have worked in private kindergartens, they have used their training outside the free kindergarten movement. They send out to parents resource sheets on child development and guides to activities like puppetry and weaving. Books, cassettes, jigsaws, word-games, number-games and videos are sent out on loan in special Correspondence School bags.

The programme serves families engaged in farming, fishing, tourism and forestry as well as families who lead an itinerant life. It also caters for children who are ill or suffering from certain disabilities; most of these are cancer patients. The teachers are a support service for all the families in the programme, but particularly for those with medical problems. Some of these children later attend kindergarten.



*Mobile Kindergartens, Lakeland and Hunterville.*

# Disasters

*We were sitting down to tea when the phone rang. It was a man I knew saying, "Shirley, the kindergarten's on fire. There's smoke blowing out everywhere." Of course, I panicked – I immediately wanted to rush out. My husband said, "Sit down and have your tea. The fire brigade will put it out." As I came away from the phone, I picked up a pencil and paper and while I choked down my tea, I wrote down all the things I had to do. Then I went to the fire.*

SHIRLEY MUIR, HAMILTON

This was one of the few fires suffered by a kindergarten. It was dealt with capably by Mrs Muir, who went to the next committee meeting and announced that she hadn't come to talk about the fire but about rebuilding the kindergarten. The fire, which had been caused by children breaking in and playing with matches, reduced the building to a shell. Six weeks later, it reopened.

Epidemics used to hit kindergartens badly. In the early days, when hygiene in homes was often poor and inoculation unknown, there seem to have been regular waves of measles, whooping cough and chicken-pox, which laid low not only children but kindergarten students.

Some kindergartens closed during the terrible flu epidemic of 1918-19. In Wellington, kindergarten students looked after the children of sick parents in the Teachers' Training College in Kelburn. This epidemic led in Invercargill to the establishment of its first kindergarten. Two women members of the Southland Hospital Board, visiting the homes of flu victims, saw mothers who needed help with their young children. This led after two years hard work to the opening of a kindergarten.

Kindergartens had to close temporarily in the polio epidemic of 1948. Teachers were allowed to visit children in their homes and to help them with their activities there.

Kindergartens have carried on through two world wars. Nettie Riley, Principal of the Wellington Training Centre, reported to the Council of the Richmond Free Kindergarten Union in November 1914, three months after the start of World War One, that the Wellington kindergartens, with the exception of Brooklyn, had taken the soldier's life as their subject for the previous month. But on the whole, war seems to have affected kindergartens only in limited ways. Trenches were dug in Christchurch kindergartens in case of air raids in World War Two. The secretary of the Wellington Association suggested in 1942 that badges should be issued to teachers "to enable them to move about in their respective areas in the event of an emergency." Mercifully, none of these precautions proved necessary.

Some kindergartens were requisitioned for military purposes, while Otahuhu Borough Council considered that kindergartens should be closed during the war. A few kindergartens were open for extended hours in order to help mothers working in essential industries. The Taranaki Street and Petone Kindergartens became all-day nursery schools. Ponsonby Kindergarten extended its hours to 3 p.m. to help mothers on work of national importance. The staff believed the children's health improved with regular rest periods and meals. (Local meat suppliers donated six pounds of bones each day for soup.)

*'Mothers Engaged in Work of National Importance', Taranaki Street Free Kindergarten, early 1940's.*

*xander Turnbull Library)*

However, the Auckland Association refused to convert any of its kindergartens into day nurseries. The redoubtable Sir John Allum, President of the Association and Mayor of Auckland, was strongly against the idea. He believed that mothers should not be employed in industry except as a last resort, which he believed had not yet arrived. It was claimed that in any case there was little demand from mothers for nurseries.

Some kindergartens faced financial problems when war work took away people who had previously helped them. Although the end of the war eased some difficulties, it brought staff shortages to kindergartens, when teachers left in numbers to marry.

The depression of the 1930s was more harmful to kindergartens than was either World War. In late December 1931, Government announced that all capitations and subsidies to free kindergartens would cease. This caused an outcry and 34,000 people signed a petition in protest. The *Evening Post* in Wellington opened a subscription list to help keep kindergartens open. A number of kindergarten teachers gave up all or part of their salaries.

A deputation, which included the leader of the (Labour) opposition, a number of M.P.'s, the Mayor of Wellington and representatives of various kindergarten associations, called on the Government in an unsuccessful attempt to make it change its mind. It was difficult for committees to raise money to compensate for the cuts, since the depression hit a large section of the population. In some kindergartens, 40-50% of fathers were on relief work.

At the end of 1932, in the hope of saving money, the Government raised the minimum age for starting school from 5 to 6. Kindergartens then came under pressure from parents to accept 5 year olds. This they were not keen to do, since it was likely to mean excluding younger children. One positive response came from Dr C.E. Beeby, then a lecturer at Canterbury University College. He started a play group for 30 five year olds in a paddock in Rossall Street, Christchurch.

Kindergartens battled through the depression, although a few closed temporarily. The Government allocated some Art Union funds to help the movement and subsidies were restored in 1935.

A different kind of disaster hit the Hastings Kindergarten in 1931, when it had to close temporarily because of the terrible earthquake in Hawke's Bay. The President and secretary of the Association visited the children and their mothers at home constantly. A much less serious earthquake in 1966 damaged a wall of Wairoa's new kindergarten during the official lunch at its opening.

# Attitudes to Kindergarten

*In our canvassing we met all sorts of objections, as well as support. Some said, "Oh, it's just a lazy mother's way of getting rid of the children." They didn't realise that it isn't the lazy mothers who take their children to kindergarten. One dear old soul said, "Oh, yes, kindergarten. But that's German, isn't it?" That was the war. We had all sorts of objections.*

UNA WILLIAMS

Attitudes to kindergarten have undoubtedly varied over the years. In the beginning, collecting young children together for play and instruction must have seemed an odd idea to some people. An early critic in Dunedin dismissed kindergarten as a "new-fangled Yankee notion". But on the whole opinion was encouraging; it seemed beneficial for the children of the poor to be kept off the streets and taught civilised behaviour. With the spread of kindergartens to the suburbs and the appearance in them of children whose mothers had more time to care for them, ambivalent attitudes developed. This ambivalence was linked with the early twentieth century emphasis on the importance of motherhood and the belief that mothers should give full-time care to their young children. Mixed feelings towards kindergarten can be detected in a speech made by the Director of Education in 1926. He said that "the normal child was best brought up in the home," but that kindergartens were held in the morning when mothers were busiest. He added that unemployed kindergarten teachers could be used for "teaching the feeble-minded in institutions." However, Truby King, more influential at the time than a Director of Education, said in a speech in 1928 that kindergarten work was one of the finest in the community, and that his daughter had trained as a kindergarten teacher.

Kindergarten could at one time be dismissed (by men) as a women's concern. When a kindergarten was first proposed in Invercargill, a city councillor pronounced, "This is only a woman's fad and it will last perhaps a year." Almost 60 years later, the fad is still there, with 15 kindergartens in the city, 5 in other parts of Southland and a Mobile Kindergarten.

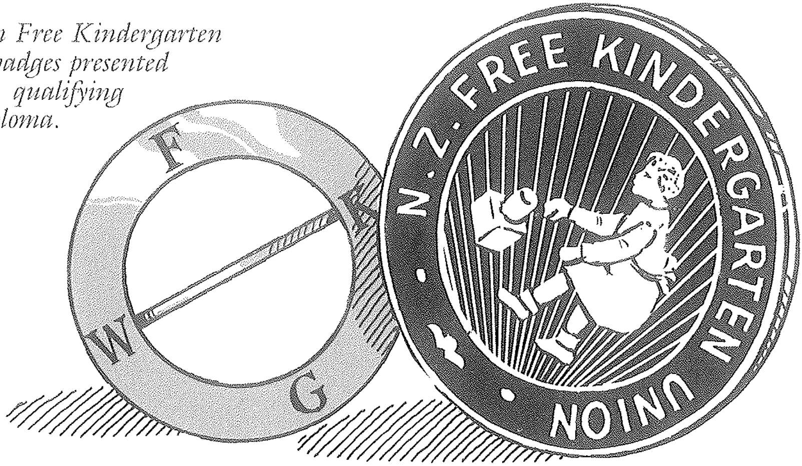
Mrs Dowsett, secretary of the Wellington Association, said in 1941 that "possibly because of strongly entrenched opposition to modernity and progress and a somewhat provincial outlook, free kindergartens were not easy to start in New Zealand." But by the 1950s, if not before, kindergartens were accepted as a normal part of life for those children lucky enough to have access to one. From the beginning, kindergartens gained the support of influential people; apart from the women who gave their time to sit on committees, there were doctors, accountants, lawyers and architects who gave their service free. As kindergartens became more widely accepted, support became wider. There were businessmen in the early days who gave generously but more recently they have served on committees and councils as a community service.

Once it was accepted that mothers were not shirking their duty by leaving their children for a few hours under professional supervision, people became comfortable with the idea of kindergarten. It came to be seen as an institution like the Plunket Society, upholding the New Zealand ideal of a nation with healthy, happy children. People, particularly perhaps in small towns and developing communities, became very proud of their kindergartens and of the movement as a whole. Beverley Brayshaw remembers a delegate at a conference who held up the K beater from a Kenwood cake-mixer: "She said we should be proud to wear that K. If we had earrings made like that, it would show we were interested in K for Kindergarten."

# The New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union

When the only kindergartens in New Zealand were all in Dunedin, there was obviously no need for a national body. As the movement grew, the need for a body to establish a common policy and common standards became clear. Delegates from the four main centres met in 1913 to discuss the establishment of a national association but the outbreak of the first world war delayed action for years. Then in 1926, delegates from the original four associations and the Invercargill Association established the Kindergarten Union. A number of important decisions were taken: membership was to be open to all associations which received a government capitation grant; conferences were to be held biennially; refresher courses for Principals of Training Colleges would be held in the alternate years; a standing committee of representatives of each of the associations affiliated to the Union was to meet each year. Mrs T.K. Sidey (later Lady Sidey) of Dunedin was elected President of the Union and served until 1934.

*The New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union Conference, Wellington, 1926.*




*Wellington Free Kindergarten graduate badges presented to students qualifying for the diploma.*

The Kindergarten Union is not an executive body but is the body which negotiates with government on matters of policy. It represents associations and speaks for them. Before the Kindergarten Teachers' Association was recognised as a service organisation, the Union was the only body which worked for higher salaries for teachers. In order to raise standards among kindergarten teachers, it established the Jamieson Scholarship, and also post-graduate bursaries to be held within the country.

The Auckland Association withdrew from the Union from 1944 to 1954. The chief reason for this was a constitutional point: Auckland believed it was unfair that small associations had the same voting strength at conferences as large ones. In addition, there seems to have been both a fear of being "ruled from Wellington" and some personal conflict between certain members of the Auckland council and Maud England, the honorary secretary-treasurer of the Union. Auckland rejoined after voting rights had been put on a fairer basis and it was assured that it could have direct access to the Auckland office of the Department of Education.

The Union Conference, held annually since 1951, is for many the highlight of the year. Now held at Massey University, it used to be hosted by associations, which were responsible for accommodation, meals and entertainment. Sometimes an association hosted a conference at the time of a celebration of its own. The venue of the 1958 conference was Auckland at the time of its Golden Jubilee. The association presented the Union President, Helen Downer, with 50 golden orchids. Three years later, Mrs Downer received 50 golden daffodils at the conference, when Christchurch celebrated its Jubilee.

Associations provided entertainments for delegates. Janet Elliott remembers being taken to dig for shellfish in Invercargill and being whisked through a hotel in Westport to fish for whitebait in the Buller River at the back. Delegates were given souvenirs of the conference: cookery books compiled by the host association, teaspoons, caddy spoons. Ashtrays were given once, acceptable mementos at the time, unthinkable as a general gift today.

Members of the executive, above all the presidents and secretaries, have made immense contributions to the movement, working tremendously hard and often paying their expenses out of their own pockets. Mrs Johnson, President of the Union from 1951 to 1955, is remembered for her outstanding leadership. Presidents have often had to travel widely. Mrs Downer said she could write a book, "Have you slept in your spare bed?", which suggests one possible hazard. Miss Ingram (who once startled a conference by inadvertently referring to Sir John Allum as "Saint John") crossed Cook Strait over 400 times while she was President.

Not all presidents had such a nation-wide perspective. One of them became, it was said, too closely identified with her own Association. A member of the executive commented that it was a pity that the President couldn't leave her home town either physically or mentally.

The Consultative Committee on Pre-School Educational Services recommended in 1947 that pre-school services be quickly extended.That recommendation, and the fact that a new generation of parents were particularly interested in pre-school education, created a problem of rapid growth. During the 1950s and 1960s, the kindergarten movement developed to the point where the number of associations became unwieldy, and other problems arose. In 1974, the establishment of a permanent office in Wellington, with a paid secretary-treasurer, led to a more efficient and professional organisation. In 1977 a committee convened by Shirley Muir was set up at the annual conference to examine the administration of the movement and to provide assistance to associations which took disciplinary action. One of its recommendations was that associations "within reasonable geographical location enter into meaningful discussions to amalgamate." In addition, the Union executive, at the 1982 conference, recommended a considerable reduction in the number of associations.

Although this recommendation, and other recommendations contained in the report of the Muir Committee, were rejected, the need for stronger and more efficient associations has led to a reduction in their numbers. This process appears likely to continue.

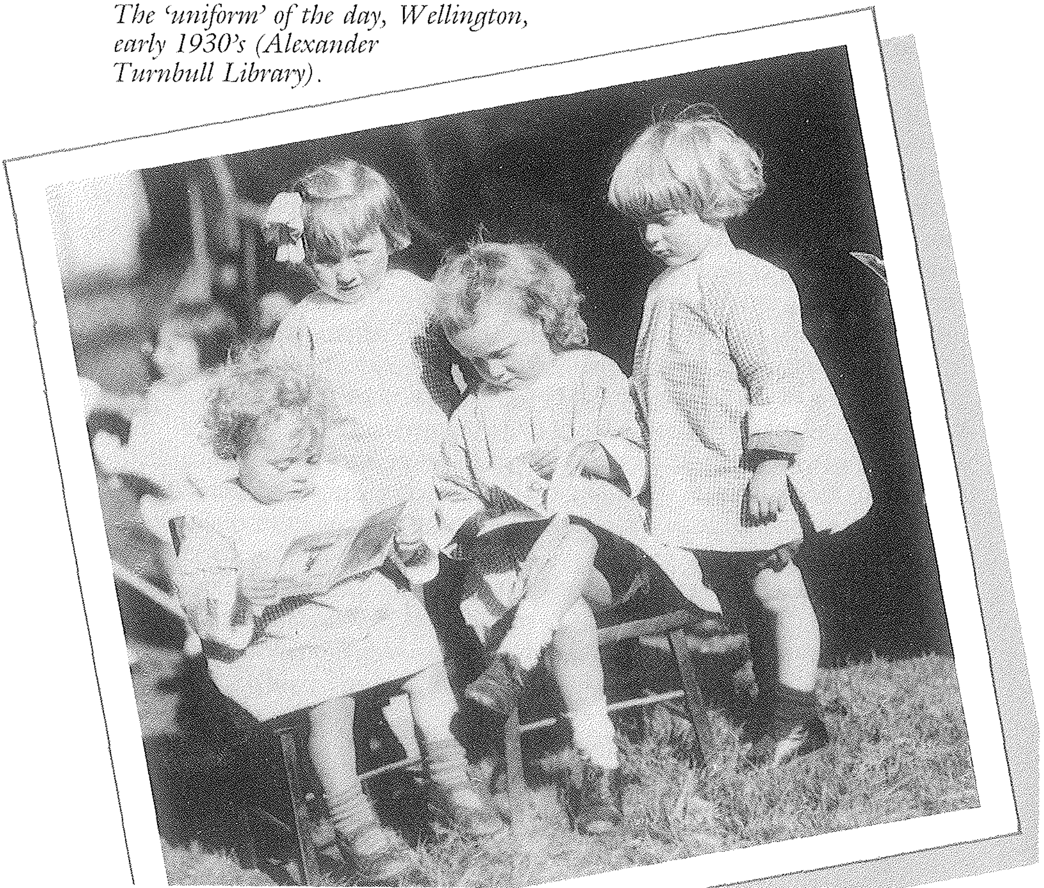
# *Clothes for Kindergarten*

*If things were too bad, she [the Public Health nurse] would go to visit the home and perhaps somebody would find a singlet for Tommy because he didn't have one. Somebody would provide new trousers, or somebody's cast-off trousers, because what he was wearing was so dreadful.*

MARJORIE CONNELL, INTERVIEWED BY GERALDINE McDONALD

Marjorie Connell was describing Taranaki Street children's clothes in the late 1920s. Conditions must have been much the same as this in all early kindergartens in poor districts. Even when their clothes were in fair condition, children look weighed down by them in early photographs. These photographs show, too, the pinafores then worn in kindergarten.

*The 'uniform' of the day, Wellington, early 1930's (Alexander Turnbull Library).*



Adults' clothes in kindergarten have also changed. In the early years of the century, strict propriety had to be observed by teachers and students; one of the roles of the ladies in the Kindergarten Association was to enforce these conventions. Gloves had to be worn in the street, but of course of the right type and the right colour.

Even after World War One – even after World War Two – the dress code was strict. Chris Christison was rebuked by the Principal of the Training Centre for going stockingless on a hot day in 1949 in Petone Kindergarten. For graduation ceremonies, students were dressed like debutantes in long white dresses and long white gloves. They walked in procession, looking, it was said, like vestal virgins. Their hair was carefully coiffed and they carried posies. The staff sometimes had difficulty in recognising them. Their seniors dressed up too. Miss Gallagher remembers with affection a dress of duck-egg blue which she wore more than once.

*Miss Riley and graduating students, Wellington, 1925 (photograph by Marie Dean).*

Students wore uniforms until 20 to 30 years ago. Bernice Lindegren recalls:

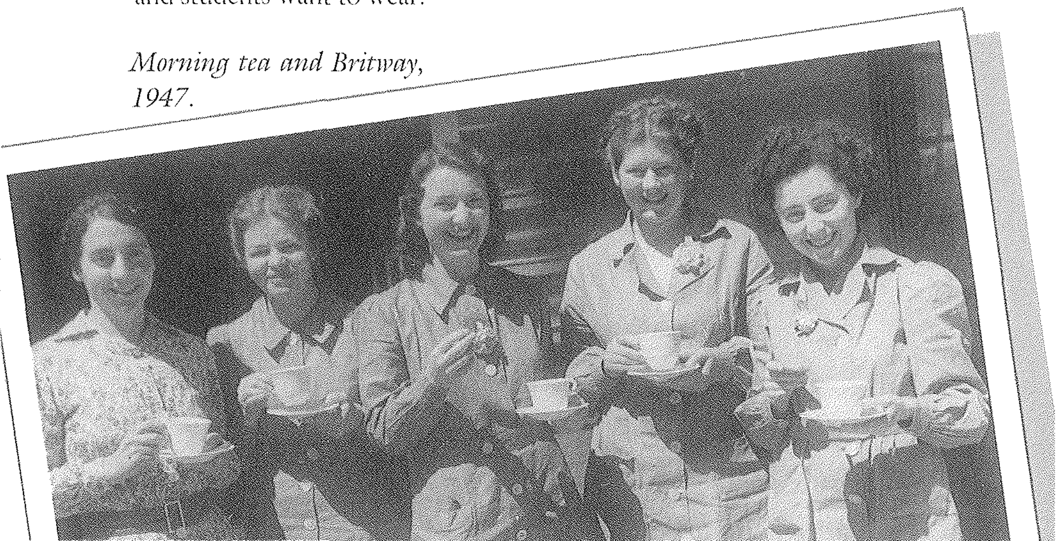
*When we were students, we had to wear uniforms, all the same colour. We were given a length of britway in a bright blue and I had to take them home and have two uniforms made. They had to be all the same pattern. When I was teaching, I made two out of furnishing linen, they were full length and very sensible. In summer, you stripped off your clothes and got into the overalls. In winter, you put them on over your clothes. When I came back about fifteen years later, I was amazed to see that had gone and teachers worked in very smart clothes.*

Joyce Barns also wore a uniform made of britway – a plain and hardwearing cotton cloth – when a student in Dunedin. Hers was beige with blue collars, cuffs, buttons and belt.

Teachers too wore overalls, which were starched at a laundry each week. Starching was sensible, since paint then washed easily off the surface of the material.

Slacks became a keen issue in the fifties. Although highly practical for kindergarten work, particularly in winter in badly heated halls, they were considered unfeminine and unladylike for some time. Mary Brooker, working in a Hamilton kindergarten in a freezing rented hall, was given permission to wear corduroy slacks in winter as long as she and the other teacher wore the same colour, so that it looked like a uniform. Once slacks were permitted, there came other novelties. Miniskirts, which could sweep materials off the children's tables, were not resisted as strongly as long skirts. Even shorts were accepted eventually. What next? It is risky to prophesy in the area of fashion, but the need for practical clothes when working with children is likely always to limit the sort of things that teachers and students want to wear.

*Morning tea and Britway, 1947.*



# Women and Kindergarten

From the meeting that launched Walker Street Kindergarten to the present day, men have been very active in the movement. They have sat on committees, held positions which have involved them in long hours of hard work, they have been honorary physicians, lawyers, architects, accountants. They have raised money, given money, budgeted and spent money, they have cut scrub, mended equipment, painted fences. (Sir Robert Muldoon, while a member of the Devonport Kindergarten Committee, spent a number of Saturdays cutting the rock on which the kindergarten was to be built.) More recently, they have been parent-helpers. One father, a naval officer, said after a morning's helping that he would rather supervise a ship-load of drunks than a kindergarten session, but in general men have coped cheerfully.

Yet, granted that men have worked magnificently for kindergarten, it is the work of women which has been the basis of the movement; the work of committee ladies, of teachers and students, all of whom until fairly recently were women, the work of mothers.

In the early days, the movement provided scope for the talents and energies of well-to-do women, who were typically the wives of professional men and businessmen. Some of these women had children themselves, although the children did not attend a free kindergarten; some were childless; some like Lavinia Kelsey never married. They were often women of great abilities. A Wellington newspaper reported that "peculiarly gifted ladies take the wee mites from the gutters in back streets". These women sat on committees, raised money, commanded their associations, supervised the dress of students and ran a tight ship. Joyce Barns was visited in her Dunedin kindergarten by a committee lady who, looking for dirt, ran a knife around the skirting-board. They enforced standards of behaviour. Up from Dunedin, Joyce Barns was aware that she was being carefully appraised in a variety of situations by ladies of the Wellington committee before being appointed to the Taranaki Street Kindergarten. Their role can be seen as that of lady bountiful, not a role admired today. Yet it is to their credit that they put into this work time and effort which could have gone on the social round. Their reward was not only that they saw kindergartens established and children benefiting from them. They also had a personal feeling of accomplishment and a knowledge that they were using their abilities. At a time when women were restricted in what they could do, this was not a small thing.

The hospitality of their large and well-appointed houses was extended to others. Mrs Corkill invited children from Taranaki Street Kindergarten to watch the navy in port and gave them their tramfare home. Mrs Didsbury held a garden party every year for students in her house on The Terrace. Where the Wellington motorway now roars, students wearing the obligatory white gloves sauntered through bush walks and then were served afternoon tea. Does it sound like one of Katherine Mansfield's Wellington stories? It was still going on about forty years ago.

Early kindergarten mothers were uneducated and too burdened by poverty and work to take much interest in kindergartens even if they had been encouraged to do so by the ladies at the helm. They do not seem to have objected to attempts to impose middle-class standards on their children. One Walker Street mother described the kindergarten as "a beautiful school, my girls come home so eager to help me scrub, sew, wash and iron. They tell me they do all this at kindergarten when they play busy mothers."

Compulsory education and the spread of kindergartens to the suburbs led to the appearance of a new type of mother, who wanted more contact with her children's schooling. Although social attitudes at the time held that a mother's place was in the home, involvement in kindergarten could be seen as an extension of her domestic and maternal role. Yet this involvement liberated her to a degree from a life confined to her own household. She could join the kindergarten Mothers' Club where she could hear lectures on child-rearing by doctors and teachers, which supplemented her own skills and did not challenge her identity as a mother.

Mothers raised money cheerfully but expected to have some say in how it was spent. Sometimes in the early days there were conflicts between kindergarten committees or Associations and Mothers' Clubs. When the Mothers' Club at Kaikorai Kindergarten, Dunedin, raised money for a gramophone in 1927, the Dunedin Association refused to sanction an expense which they considered unnecessary. In an attempt to minimise conflict, the Association once recommended that no parent with a child at kindergarten could serve on a local committee.

Mothers became increasingly confident over the years. Mothers' Clubs flourished, ran competitions with each other and held Talents Evenings. The president of a Mother's club who in 1935 "wore a handsome frock of gold lace with diamanté accessories" does not sound like a downtrodden drudge.

Some kindergarten directors did their best to involve mothers. Eva Millen, when at Sydenham, had a friend who was

> *. . . very interested in pre-natal exercise and folk-dancing and she came to the Mothers' Club and took those with the mothers. We met every week and they loved the stories she told them, as well as the exercises to music. I found that later on when I wanted to have mother-helping, they were very eager.*

Encouraged by Miss Gallagher, Eva Millen involved mothers in kindergarten activities. If they wanted to, mothers could make extensive studies of their own children. Later, as a Supervising Head Teacher, she impressed on kindergarten staff the importance of involving parents in kindergarten work.

Mother-helping has become more common, partly as a result of the influence of the playcentre movement, which was based on the direct involvement of mothers. A kindergarten mother was expected to take part in the children's activities; she was not there just to do the dirty work. The President of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Teachers Association wrote in protest in 1977 to a firm whose TV advertisement appeared to equate mother-helping with cleaning. (It was presumably on the lines of "Mother-helping at kindy's just a breeze now I'm using brand X.") The firm apologised and promised to change the advertisement.

Looking back, many women wonder how they managed to put so much time and energy into kindergarten work. Often they had several children and other organisations needing their help. It meant good planning and strong commitment but there were great gains. As Shirley Muir says

> *It became your social life. We had Mothers' Clubs that were always well-attended because that was one of the social outlets you could have for that age-group. You met such a lot of people and you made friends. Television was the end of it – terrible!*

# Kindergarten Training

It was understood from the beginning in Dunedin that teachers must be trained so that the work could continue. Miss Wienicke's student followed her from Christchurch, and so, a year or so later did two other young women. These students worked in a kindergarten in the morning and were taught in the afternoon by Miss Wienicke and by lecturers from the University and the School of Art. They had lectures on the educational philosophy of Froebel, child psychology and nature study and were given instruction in crafts and in practical skills like the making of jig-saws. It was insisted from the beginning that training must be full-time. As Miss Lavinia Kelsey, secretary to the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association, wrote in 1896:

> *The Committee continues to refuse all applications for a partial training, believing that nothing less than two years' close contact with children can grant the experience necessary for a well-trained kindergartener.*

*Training activities, late 1920's.*

In the early years there was no difficulty in attracting students. With few occupations available for middle-class girls, kindergarten teaching was approved as work which would not involve loss of caste: it was benevolent, "womanly" and might prepare them for bringing up their own children. There were sometimes more students than there were jobs for them; in these cases students were usually encouraged to start private kindergartens.

As free kindergartens opened in Wellington, Auckland and Christchurch, training of students began in these cities. In Wellington, students trained in the three rooms where the Taranaki Street Kindergarten was held, situated over a shop. Staff and committee were aware that conditions were bad. The Principal, Miss Riley, called it "this hovel of a place", and said of her students, "Give them, at least, a place where they could leave their hats without the ribbons being taken off them". So in 1918 the Wellington Association bought an old factory nearby and converted it into a training centre with the kindergarten beneath. The children were said to be "stupefied" at first by the unaccustomed space. This second Taranaki Street building was no paradise, but it had a garden and pear trees. It also had a rough neighbourhood. Marjorie Connell recalls that when she trained in the twenties, students visiting kindergarten families were instructed to go in pairs in certain streets. Haining Street was particularly to be avoided, since the elderly Chinese living there were said to smoke opium. The Royal Tiger Hotel was next door to the kindergarten and occasionally staff would have to go in to pluck out a parent who was needed. Margaret Bennett, as a student, went in on a dare.

In the early days, each centre conducted its own examinations, based on its own curriculum, and awarded its own diploma. The programme developed in Auckland by Margaret Gibson, the first head of training, included psychology and child study, methods and history of education, school hygiene, nature study and blackboard drawing. Similar programmes were followed in the other three centres. Students spent much of their time in practical work in kindergartens in the morning and were, in effect, auxiliary staff.

Soon after the establishment of training centres in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch early this century, approaches were made to government in the hope that it would help to develop a uniform programme. It was not, however, until 1947 that a national syllabus was first drawn up. From 1950 onwards, diplomas were granted by the Kindergarten Union and not by the Training Associations. These, however, retained administrative and financial responsibility for the training of students.

*More student activity.*

Even in the early days, there was often very good teaching. Margaret Gibson gave excellent service as Principal in Auckland, supplemented by outside lecturers. Nettie Riley in Wellington is remembered for her vigour, her gift for telling stories to children and her cry to students, "Energy harnessed produces power. Think of the Niagara Falls."

Kindergarten students received no allowances while training until 1941, well after allowances were first paid to people training to be primary or secondary teachers or dental nurses. This was a handicap to Associations, which, as career opportunities for women expanded, found it increasingly hard to find a supply of students. Even with allowances, students were not particularly well off. Eva Millen in the 1940s found it necessary to earn money and cooked for a family while the mother was away for a year. They lived at the top of a hill, so the biggest boy used to carry sides of mutton up for her.

> *Quite a number of girls came from small, private schools and from well-off families. Kindergarten teaching was considered a nice thing for girls like that to do. These girls had grown up in well-run homes and had some experience in the running of a home, which they carried over into kindergarten work. These girls had a style of their own, very gentle and polite but firm underneath.*

PEGGY DALMER

Mrs Dalmer's comments refer to the 1960s but were applicable before this. In the early days, students received no bursaries or allowances – in fact they sometimes had to pay fees. At a time when opportunities for young women were limited, parents were often ready, even at the cost of personal sacrifice, to support their daughters while they trained.

On the whole, students appear to have enjoyed their training, which became more varied and interesting over the years. Joyce Barns, who began training in Dunedin in 1938, recalls that there was then more emphasis on the manual than on the intellectual element. Among the many things she was required to make was a model kindergarten out of cardboard. But there was an improvement during her training, with an increasing number of lectures on specialised topics given by outside experts.

The study of child development from babyhood was an important part of the course. Peggy Dalmer, when Principal of the Christchurch Training Centre, ensured that students would be brought into contact with small babies:

> *I used to send them to visit friends of mine with small babies. Some of these became "College babies", who came into College every month or so. The students used to see them being bathed or fed. They would follow the progress of one child for one year, then another child. I tried to arrange for girls to board with families where there were small children. It was important for the students to get to know children.*

*Child development – observation of a baby, late 1940's.*

Students' work in the kindergartens to which they were attached was assessed as part of their training. One student recalls feeling nervous while under observation and as a result gripping a child's painting too tightly. The child pulled it from her hand, the painting ripped, and he swore vigorously. The voice of authority boomed from behind, "And I don't blame him, Miss McSweeney."

There were no married women in training until 1963; even an engaged girl was highly unusual. Girls usually came straight from school and tended to be considered children by council members. Kindergarten teaching was often thought of as something a girl did between leaving school and marrying. ("A nice job for a nice girl" is Joyce Barns's comment on that attitude.) But a student's work was not always ladylike. When completing her training in 1951, Eileen Bethell was told to paint the inside of Myers Kindergarten, which had a 20 foot stud. The opening of training to married women, and the arrival of older women, helped to turn kindergarten teaching into a serious career. Students were called teacher trainees from 1978 on, an indication of changing attitudes. The minimum entrance qualifications were raised and the quantity and quality of recruits improved. "Not so many of the twin-set and pearls brigade," one former staff member commented.

University degrees were once unheard of for kindergarten teachers, but are now common enough to occasion no surprise.

Kindergarten training is now accepted as part of the education system, a point underlined by the move into Colleges of Education in 1975. There were certainly drawbacks in going from a training constructed solely for kindergarten work. A few lecturers already on the staff of one College used to refer to the kindergarten lecturers as "the little people" and kindergarten staff had to struggle to keep an identity and to avoid exclusion from important committees. But the difficulties have been overcome and overall the move into Colleges of Education, where kindergarten trainees take their place with other budding teachers, has been beneficial.

# Kindergarten Teachers

Teachers were called directors in the early days and assistant teachers were assistant directors. These grand titles, sometimes for girls just two or three years out of school, lasted until 1969. Possibly they were some compensation for poor pay and unsatisfactory working conditions. Teachers tended to work in isolation from staff outside their own kindergarten and were under the scrutiny of the local committee. Committee members might be enlightened and well-informed or they might not. In any case, teachers felt themselves to be vulnerable to lay criticism.

But times changed and so did teachers. Improvement in salaries, and the fact that from 1948 on the work became full-time, helped kindergarten teaching to develop as a career. Moreover, as the standard of entrance qualifications was raised, as older people came into the profession, teachers became more confident in their dealings with committees. The increasing involvement of government was a help to them. Moira Gallagher, Supervisor of Pre-School Services in the Department, and later Chris Christison, Margaret Bennett and others, were there to give professional advice. The creation of the position of Supervising Head Teacher increased their support-system.

There was hesitation at first about admitting men into kindergarten teaching but in 1976 the first male teachers began work. Some people were afraid that men would take off to other employment fairly soon but on the whole this has not happened. The return of married women to teaching once their children are at school has been another notable change in the kindergarten work-force.

Adults often retain vivid memories of their teachers and of their days in kindergarten:

> *It was an enjoyable time. I distinctly remember the teacher, Miss Hamlyn, with what from the close range of childhood seemed like very sturdy shoes. We sat on the floor in front of her while she told us what to do. I can also recall drinking pink milk, eating apples, and having afternoon sleeps on a camp stretcher.*

DAVID LANGE

# The New Zealand Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association (KTA)

*We never had a voice of our own. It was our employers who always spoke for the teachers and we did what we were told and got on with it.*

MARGARET BENNETT, SPEAKING OF HER EARLY YEARS AS A TEACHER

Considering the relative isolation of kindergarten teachers from each other and the tendency at one time for teaching to be regarded as an interlude between school and marriage, it is not surprising that teachers did not quickly form an association. However, the Kindergarten Teachers' Association was formed in 1952 and was recognised as a service organisation in 1958, with the right to approach the Minister directly and to conduct salary negotiations on behalf of its members. The K.T.A. in its early, gentle phase has been called a club for young ladies. Even then, it brought benefits to all kindergarten teachers, as with departmental support it ran summer schools and in-service courses and produced its own publications.

More recently, the K.T.A. has become a dynamic organisation, actively promoting its members' interests. It clashed with one Minister, who spoke of "the sulphurous smell of pseudo-unionism" and said that he would not tolerate "the use of tactics which have a place on the shop floor but not in the kindergartens of New Zealand." The K.T.A. has survived both attacks like this and the Minister in question. It has won substantial gains, including better salaries, maternity leave and transfer expenses, and has instituted a counselling service for members. Now with paid officials and a Wellington office, it has become an effective and professional part of the kindergarten movement.

# Kindergarten Programmes

*There was a little coloured cloth on the table and a chair for every child and a saucer for every child and one child was chosen every day to be hostess and she had a special apron made to match the cloth on the table and all beautifully ironed and starched. It was a very formal morning tea. In Taranaki Street, it was particularly significant because the children were so poor and grubby and it must have been something out of this world to have a vase of flowers on the table etc., nicely ironed table cloth and this nice apron.*

MARJORIE CONNELL IN AN INTERVIEW WITH GERALDINE McDONALD

Mrs Connell was speaking of her time as a student about sixty years ago but this formality was not peculiar to Wellington or to that time. From Walker Street to roughly World War Two, kindergartens were run on formal lines. The morning tea arrangements were intended to civilise the children of the poor – and, in any case, this was the way that things were done in a formal age. The programme was run in a manner which would seem rigid later on. Children in the early days were divided into separate groups according to age, called tops, middles and tinies. These groups were little classes, each with its own teacher, who stayed with the group throughout the morning. In many kindergartens, children were allowed to

*Children having a meal at a nursery school, 1940's (Alexander Turnbull Library).*

work only at tasks which were felt to be right for their ages. They were not allowed to experiment or to try their skills.

Two medical students who studied Kelsey-Yaralla Kindergarten in 1928 as part of their training in Preventive Medicine, reported a very strict timetable: 9.00-9.15, cloakroom changing; 9.15-9.30, Greetings; 9.30-9.45, drill; 9.45-10.00, rest, story dramatisation; 10.00-10.15, rhythm; 10.15-10.40, handwork; 10.40-11.00, rest; 11.00-11.15, play; 11.15-11.30, rest, nature study; 11.30-12.00, games. A programme like this gave a child little time to settle to any activity.

Wellington kindergarten children occasionally gave public demonstrations. The Association held an exhibition in the Masonic Hall in 1918. Berhampore Kindergarten presented Mothers' and Fathers' Work in the Home. (Chief thought: Industry.) The children scrubbed tables, prepared bread and milk and chopped wood for kindling. A journalist reported that spectators watched with alarm as four year olds wielded axes but there were no casualties. On another day, Taranaki Street presented Work on the Wharf. (Chief Thought: Co-operation of Interest.) The Association presented more demonstrations, this time in the Town Hall. The subject of Mail Delivery showed children making a railway station and a signal-box. Home activities and the cutting of paper clothes for dolls were shown on other days.

This was the sort of thing the public liked to see: children visibly working, visibly learning. The themes chosen were ones which gave the children some understanding of the world around them. The trips on which they were taken were often to workplaces, and were intended to increase their knowledge of their own city.

"If we had been talking about trains, we would take the 'tops' to the railway station. The train drivers were very good and would take them up into the engine and let them pull the whistle", said Ted Scott. On another day, she took the children to the fire station, where they were taken down the pole, "and I went too". Children from Freemans Bay Kindergarten visited a blacksmith and a boatbuilder at work, a sawmill, the fire brigade and the railway station.

Children were often taken on trips simply for enjoyment, sometimes to get them out of the confinement of rented halls with no space for play outside. The Dunedin Tramways used to give free passes to kindergarten groups on outings. Taranaki Street children on their way to the Basin Reserve for outdoor play received other favours. Ted Scott again: "We'd come past the barracks. It was wartime and the soldiers would call out and give us apples and bits of bread and jam."

Tight organisation of the sessions was standard for many decades, and children even had to visit the toilet by the clock. This rigid programming brought difficulties, as Eva Millen found in the Christchurch kindergartens in which she worked in the 40s and 50s:

> *Each group had to have about a quarter of an hour's music, which was followed by morning tea of milk and apple. Before this, the children had to wash their hands, again in groups. If they finished early, you more or less had to sit them on the lockers and fill in time somehow, and this was really very nerve-racking, very ulcer-making. Somehow during the morning, each group had to have music, story or talk, wash-time, a rest, handwork, outdoor play etc.*

Painting, now an activity through which children can develop their imagination, hardly existed. Ted Scott said of the 1920s:

> *We did not have any painting in those days. We used to prepare outlines for the children to colour in. The children weren't permitted to go over the line, and if they went over the line, they'd try to rub it out so that we wouldn't see it. In those days people thought it important for children to develop good control over their hands.*

Parents approved of lessons and equipment at kindergarten from which a structured programme could be developed. Teachers used to present educational themes, which would be continued through the week or even for longer periods. Eva Millen once presented a frog theme, with frog music, frog stories, and even live frogs, including a large one which broke through its muslin cover and escaped one night. At the end of her frog week, an exasperated small boy told her "I'm sick of that bloody frog."

Themes have not disappeared and can be seen today in many kindergarten programmes.

One important part of the old kindergarten day was the rest period, although as Eva Millen pointed out, with all the children wanting to go to the toilet or have a toy with them, it was anything but restful. Setting up the stretchers and taking them down again was a nuisance and there was another problem:

> *The children had to take their shoes off while resting: that was insisted upon. We were in trouble if anyone from higher up called and we didn't have shoes off and of course in Sydenham and Phillipstown a lot of the children wore boots and they were often on the small side. It was a nightmare getting them on again.*

Eventually, Eva Millen with the help of her assistant charted each child's activities to see if there were any who didn't voluntarily choose a restful activity for part of the time. As a result, with the support of Miss Gallagher, who considered a rest period unnecessary in a three hour programme, she gained permission to drop it altogether.

This is an example of the way in which rigid programming was breaking down. The strict methods of child-rearing of previous generations had come under attack in the 1920s and 1930s and this change in attitude assisted a swing to free play. Miss Gallagher was in favour of free activity. Chris Christison, appointed to Petone Kindergarten in 1949, devised a programme in which children could move from one activity to another as they pleased. The change was gradual and uneven and is not possible to date precisely. But in the early 1950s the executive of the Wellington Association decided that students should be sent to train only in kindergartens where "freer methods" were used. Nelson teachers put periods of free play into the session after attending a refresher course in Wellington in 1951. Several mothers said they would withdraw their children if this continued, so it stopped. A letter to a newspaper in 1958 mourned the kindergarten of six years earlier, "a delightful place where the children played far more happily than they do these days . . ." Free play, the writer said, had led to chaos. In time, with backing from the Department, free play became accepted. As Miss Gallagher pointed out in a speech, a free programme did not mean that discipline was lacking: "The direction of the discipline of the free programme is that it comes from the environment itself."

At one time it was believed that encouragement to intellectual development would harm social development, but later on it was recognised that there was no conflict and that growth in one area could bring growth in the other. This led many teachers to change to a more ordered programme, with a balance between free activity on the one hand and guided learning which would stimulate the child on the other.

Whatever the type of programme, children can have their own agenda. Eva Millen, short of helpers one day and concentrating on supervising the outside area, found that three boys had stuffed sixty towels – the entire supply – down the toilets. Moreover, children bring into kindergarten ideas learned outside it. Peggy Dalmer noticed a difference in play after television arrived. "It seemed to be T.V. jingles. Boys building forts used to talk like gangsters or cowboys. I didn't have a T.V. set for a long time so I often didn't know what they were talking about."

# Kindergarten Funding

*Sing a song of sixpence, a kindergarten stall,*
*Please give us old clothing, produce, fruit and all.*
*Also send your veges, Friday week's the day,*
*And soon we'll have a kindergarten building on the way.*

KAIKOHE KINDERGARTEN, 1954

Kindergartens run on hard work – and money, the two being closely connected. In the days when there was no government funding, the Walker Street Committee appealed to local businessmen for money or goods and gave their friends collection cards which they were expected to fill. Parents were not involved in fund-raising, although they sometimes showed that they wanted to be more than passive recipients of charity; one father drove the children from his son's kindergarten to the beach and back in his cab for an outing. Some parents gave a donation of a penny a week.

The *Otago Witness*, which circulated beyond the province, started a fund through its Little Folks page, to which more fortunate children could contribute to help those at Walker Street. The Annual Report of the Dunedin Association referred to these donations: "Boys have sent their prize-money won at a school picnic, girls have sent sixpences and shillings given them for things dear to a girl's heart."

But Dunedin fundraisers had to learn the basics. They launched a huge effort in 1897, capitalising on the celebrations for the 60 years of Queen Victoria's reign. The result – £800 – was so impressive that the committee decided not to ask for subscriptions that year. Then when funds ran low, they had to build up a subscription list more or less from scratch.

Money from government came in slowly and subsidies to Associations depended to some extent on attendances at kindergarten. Epidemics were therefore watched with alarm. In 1920 there was a marked drop in numbers in Wellington kindergartens, and Dr Ada Paterson was asked to certify that this was caused by whooping cough and measles.

Although government aid increased decisively during the 40s and 50s, the need for purpose-built kindergartens involved many committees in heavy fund-raising. Parents were heavily committed. The mother of the

Right Hon. David Lange, for example, worked hard for Otahuhu Kindergarten. Shop days, jumble sales, dances were routine. So were bottle drives, for which Kaikohe had useful advice: "Small boys are essential to the success of a bottle drive. While our adult collecters are at the back door receiving the occasional refusal, Master 8 year old is already down the garden path into any unlikely place. What better reward for the public-spirited householder who gives all his empties cheerfully than to hear a youthful voice piping at the front door for all to hear, 'Gee we got HUNDREDS from this place'."

Associations passed on news of good fundraisers. Hamilton Association strongly recommended the dressed dolls of Mrs Ward of Marton, which showed eight scenes in the life of Belinda from kindergarten to golden wedding. Blenheim Association raised money through real brides in their Bride of the Year contest. Beverley Brayshaw remembers that "they wore their dresses and the florists made bouquets. We would generally have two or three very elegant men of forty who had been in our Association and they would escort them." People paid to vote for the bride they supported.

There could be snags. The executive of the Wellington Association, hearing that a local committee had been warned about playing housie at a card evening, asked them "in the interest of all kindergarten work to fall in with the Police request." From Wellington, too, comes the shocking story of a kindergarten committee selling raffle tickets on another kindergarten's turf. Wairoa Kindergarten made money by cooking and selling sweet corn, but were robbed one year. Mary Collier saw the thief "and there began two days of intense search around the Wairoa streets to recognise the culprit. Having the local detective on the committee was a great help and eventually the culprit was brought to justice."

The floral carpet was a popular fundraiser. The Auckland Association presented the first kindergarten floral carpet in 1945. Five were made from then till 1964, all designed by the same architect. The first measured 12 metres by 9 and was a work of art. "The flowers were arranged in a design representing a garden, with trees lifting into the sky. The trees were crowned with foliage of bronze and green hydrangeas, standing against a sky of soft blue hydrangeas." Nursery rhymes and kindergarten themes were used for later carpets.

Auckland raised £12,000 in all through floral carpets and the cake stalls, mystery envelopes and teas which accompanied them. The gain in publicity was incalculable.

Talents Evenings presented by Mothers' Clubs were for years a standard way of raising money. Wellington mothers claimed that in World

War Two and immediately afterwards when there were few overseas shows (and local theatre was meagre compared with today) they "filled a real need to the public in providing bright entertainment at low cost." Mothers' Clubs have declined and Talents Evenings with them, victims of television and the entry of married women into the workforce on a scale unknown forty years ago.

New ways of raising money have appeared. The Kindergarten Building Committee in Queenstown had a spectacular success in 1987. With the help of Rotary, a house, complete with carpets and landscaping, was built with voluntary labour in 19 hours. From the profit on the sale of this house the Building Committee received the $30,000 necessary to establish a kindergarten. Wellington committees in 1988 hired McDonalds restaurants for Sunday breakfasts, with some of the profits going to their own kindergartens. A Lower Hutt kindergarten eased the worry of Christmas 1988 for many by wrapping gifts in city malls.

Bequests in wills, though less colourful than many fund-raising efforts, have also been very valuable. So have gifts from outstanding donors such as the Dunedin Savings Bank and Cadbury Fry Hudson Ltd.

The need for raising money decreased considerably with increasing government funding. Government now pays the salaries of kindergarten staff and gives bursaries to teacher trainees. It funds the Colleges of Education where kindergarten teachers now train, and subsidises kindergarten buildings. Over the years the Union and the Associations have had to learn how to deal with a government department and have had to accept some loss of autonomy as the price of increased funding.

*Talents evening, Newtown, 1953.*

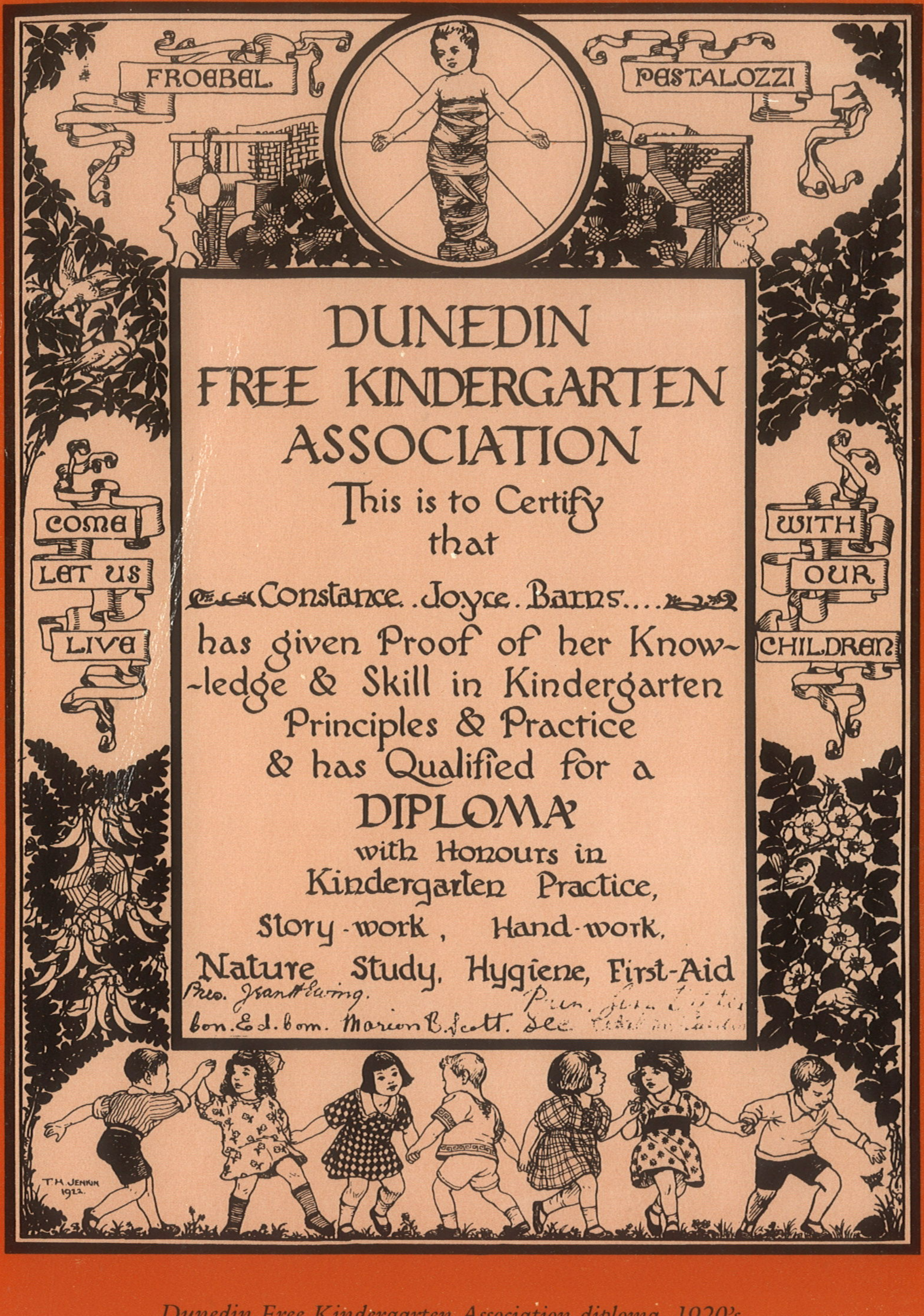
# After 100 Years

The centenary of the first kindergarten in New Zealand is being celebrated at a crucial time for education. No one can tell precisely what will be the effect on kindergartens of the Meade and Picot Reports.

The importance of pre-school education is now recognised. The pre-school world, which once meant only kindergarten, has from 1940 grown to include playcentre and play groups, including Te Kohanga Reo, and the rapidly growing child care movement. However, the kindergarten movement is so well-established and plays such a large part in the life of the community that there is no danger it will lose its identity.

Without abandoning its principles or its structures, kindergarten, by being alert to the challenges ahead, can adapt successfully to the next 100 years. It can contribute to New Zealand in that period as much as it has undoubtedly contributed in the years 1889 to 1989.

*(Alexander Turnbull Library)*



FROEBEL. PESTALOZZI

DUNEDIN
FREE KINDERGARTEN
ASSOCIATION

This is to Certify
that

Constance. Joyce. Barns....

has given Proof of her Know-
-ledge & Skill in Kindergarten
Principles & Practice
& has Qualified for a

**DIPLOMA**

with Honours in
Kindergarten Practice,
Story-work, Hand-work,
Nature Study, Hygiene, First-Aid

Pres. Jean H. Ewing. Prin. [illegible]
Con. Ed. Com. Marion B. Scott. Sec. [illegible]

COME LET US LIVE WITH OUR CHILDREN

T.H. JENKIN 1922.

*Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association diploma, 1920's.*

New Zealand Free Kindergarten
Union Inc.

Assisted by
The New Zealand Council for
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