

# School Kindergartens 1900s

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century a few schools established kindergarten classes for preschool aged children. A number of schools ran kindergarten activity sessions in the infant classrooms. By the end of the century preschool kindergartens had been disestablished as Education Boards enforced the minimum five year old entry level to school. At schools such as High Street in Dunedin an independent fee paying kindergarten operated alongside the school. Several photographs of this kindergarten provide a rare glimpse kindergarten in action. The director was Miss Zeby Dale, who had trained with Miss Weineke, the first teacher employed by the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association. Miss Dale had previously been the director at both Yarella and Walker Street kindergartens.

Sources:

- May, Helen (2005) *School Beginnings: a 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial story*, NZCER Press, Wellington
- May, Helen (2011) *'I am five and I go to School': the work and play of early education in New Zealand*, University of Otago Press, Dunedin



PHYSICAL EXERCISE.

High Street School Kindergarten, *Otago Witness* 24<sup>th</sup> December 1902





FREE-BUILDING IN THE YOUNGEST CLASS.

High Street School Kindergarten, *Otago Witness* 24<sup>th</sup> December 1902



Froebelian 'occupation' of paper folding at High Street School Kindergarten, 1906, S10,164g, Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākena

Muriel May attended High Street Kindergarten and is likely to be one of the children doing paper folding around the table. The school had no outdoor gardens but Muriel recalled the window sills with 'frail beans sprouted on flannel in saucers, poor relations of Jack [and the beanstalk's] sturdy plants,' as well as sitting in the 'sunny hall weaving paper mats – gold strips into a purple frame.' She remembered a circle on the floor for kindergarten games, but her striking memory was the sternness of the large infant classroom she joined at age six years with boys and girls curtained off from each other.

Muriel May, (1973) *Freshly Remembered: Half a Century of School*, Whitcomb & Tombs, Christchurch, p. 12.





7. Basket-weaving—Waikouaiti, Otago.

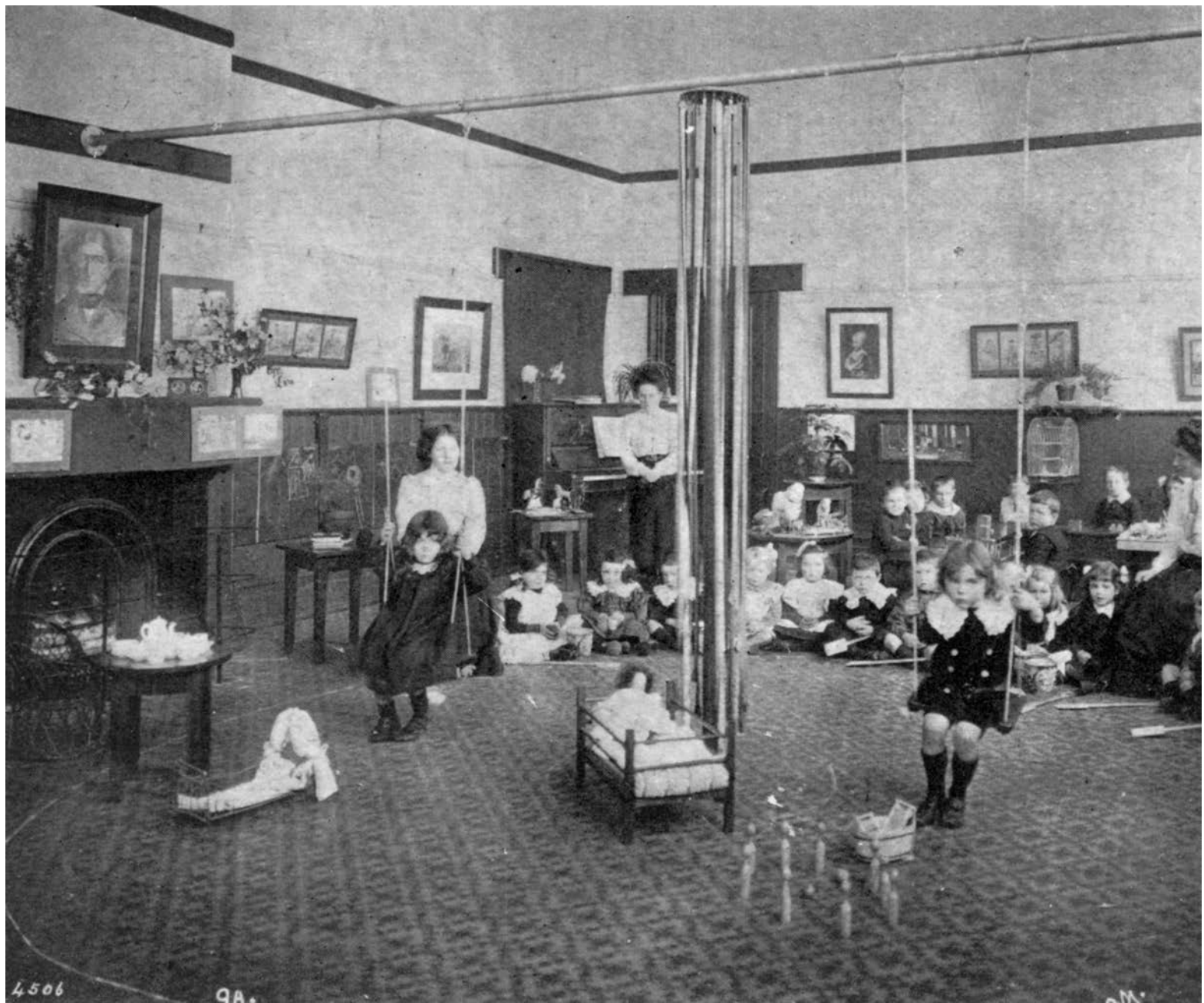
Māori Children being taught to weave baskets at Waikouaiti School, Otago  
*Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives, E1, 1902*

In 1908 the training colleges (in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin) were given authority to establish a kindergarten-school for children aged from 4 years, with a kindergarten-infant school specialist to be appointed to each college. These kindergarten schools operated until 1927, when they were closed for financial reasons. The new kindergartens were expected to model the latest kindergarten methods for teaching the young. here are no early photos of the kindergarten-schools except the one overleaf, with Froebel still in place, seemingly observing the children staged for play. But the presence of swings, dolls, a tea set and skittles and an absence of any distinctly Froebelian apparatus suggest that times had changed.

Source:

May, Helen (2013 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) *The Discovery of Early Childhood*, NZCER Press, Wellington





‘Instructing the children in play,’ Kindergarten room at George Street Normal School, Dunedin Training College, *Otago Witness* 24 October 1910