

Silent movie:

## Auckland's Free Kindergartens c. 1933

Details and images from this movie:

Helen May (2013) *Discovery of Early Childhood*, NZCER, Wellington, pp. 309-311

The film is held in the collection of the:

New Zealand Archive of Film, Television and Sound Ngā Taonga Whitiāhua Me Ngā Taonga Kōrero

<http://www.ngataonga.org.nz>

Reference:

<http://www.ngataonga.org.nz/catalogues/moving-image-catalogue/media/personal-record-ambler-fred-auckland-s-free-kindergartens-f27219>

This includes the full text.

In the 1990s the New Zealand Film Archive conducted a film hunt, encouraging New Zealanders to scour their cupboards for forgotten films. In the late 1990s while teaching my course 'Discovery of Early Childhood' at Victoria University, I was trawling the Film Archive for clips concerning children and by chance discovered a recently found film called *Auckland Free Kindergartens*. This was a professionally made silent movie illustrating the work of the eight free kindergartens in Auckland. There is a mention in the AFKA's annual report for 1933 of a "noteworthy event" being "the first exhibition of moving pictures, depicting scenes and daily activities in our eight schools presented to an enthusiastic audience on the evening of the presentation of Diplomas. For this event, supplemented by the gift of the film for propaganda purposes, we are indebted to the thoughtfulness and generosity of a member of the Council, Mr. F. N. Ambler and his friend, Mr Tomlinson."<sup>23</sup> Both the text and the imagery in the film provide many clues to the kindergarten movement of this time; illustrative of kindergarten concerns for health and orderly habits, but also presenting the kindergarten as a place for enjoyment for children, with caring teachers who provide a wide range of activities for children. The mention of "individuality", "natural inclinations", "imagination", etc. reflects the new mood of progressive ideas. Nevertheless, the noticeboard outside Myers Park Kindergarten invites the public to "Come and see the children AT WORK", not play!

There are eight free  
Kindergartens in Auckland  
District for children up  
to five years of age





000:00 AUCKLAND'S FREE KINDERGARTENS

000:03 "There are eight free Kindergartens in Auckland District for children up to five years of age."

000:08 "One of the best equipped - Myers Kindergarten."

000:25 "Kindergarten activities include songs, games and handiwork etc."

000:34 "The morning's activities commence with greetings followed by a simple hymn and prayer."

001:09 "The imagination is aroused by story telling, Miss Plummer the Director entertains a group."

001:23 "Children are encouraged to develop their individuality and independence by "free activity" periods."

002:06 "Cleanliness is taught to all"

002:46 "Special care is taken to teach good table manners."

003:36 "The children's strength is not overtaxed, opportunity is given for rest periods."

004:05 "These are some of the daily activities at Myers Kindergarten and after the morning's session the children are safely conducted home."

Figure 7.15. Selected captions from Auckland Free Kindergartens silent movie, with selected sequence of movie clips, 1933. NZ Film Archive. Wellington