

\$1.00

PETONE KINDERGARTEN 50TH JUBILEE

# A GARDEN WHERE CHILDREN GROW



As I write these introductory words of greeting to all who read this 50th Jubilee magazine of the Petone Kindergarten, I feel very conscious of the passage of time. The children of 1977 are benefitting from fifty years of hard work and dedication — and so to those of the past who contributed to the growth of the Kindergarten as we know it today, whether as members of the staff, parents or pupils, we offer our humble thanks.



To the present staff, parents and children who have supported the Local Committee in its efforts to make the 50th Jubilee a happy and memorable occasion, we also give our sincere thanks. Among the many who could be mentioned individually we are particularly grateful to the Petone Borough Council for its generosity. We would also like to record our appreciation of the enthusiastic way in which students of the Journalism Course at the Wellington Polytechnic have tackled the project of writing this history of the first half century of the Kindergarten. We thank them all and wish them well in the future.

Finally, to those of you who have yet to play your part in the life of the Kindergarten, we say good luck and may the spirit of fun and co-operation which we felt in 1977 remain with you in the future.

*Josephine A. Baker*

President  
Petone / Wharehoa Kindergarten Local Committee 1977

*Written and published by Wellington Polytechnic Journalism Course in conjunction with Petone Free Kindergarten; cover design, Lindsay Missen; design and layout, Frank Veale and Peter Ehrlich; finance and management, Elsbeth Hardie, Nicola Salmond, Susan Arthur, Frank Veale, Cecilia Leong, Peter Ehrlich, Jane Gunn, Amanda Samuel, Alan Deans, Don Rood, Ashoka Pandey, Ian Scales; publicity, Ian Scales, Gay Cavil, Nicola Salmond, Elsbeth Hardie.*

*Content: Research, Frank Veale, Peter Ehrlich, Ashoka Pandey, Ian Scales, Chris Bourke, Elsbeth Hardie, Martyn Rowe, Carolyn Wylie, Alan Deans, Jenny Eglinton, Matthew Dearnaley, Don Rood, Leonard Garae, Amanda Samuel; words, "Why a Garden" Ian Scales, "The First Seeds . . ." Frank Veale, "Those Who Tend . . ." p8 Matthew Dearnaley, p9 Jane Gunn, "Changing Seasons . . ." Ian Scales, "Today's Garden . . ." Peter Ehrlich, "As It Grows . . ." Alan Deans; pictures, p4 kindy records, p5 kindy records, p6 kindy records, p7 (top) courtesy Mrs Dopson, (bottom) kindy records, p8 Wendy Rivers, p9 Wendy Rivers, p10 kindy records, p11 Wendy Rivers, p12 Wendy Rivers, p13 Don Rood, p14 Wendy Rivers, p15 (top) Frank Veale, (bottom) Wendy Rivers, p16 Wendy Rivers, p17 Wendy Rivers, p18 Frank Veale, p19 Frank Veale, p20 Wendy Rivers, p21 (inside back) Frank Veale.*

*Production: paste-up, Frank Veale, Peter Ehrlich; graphic and pictorial reproduction, Bromide Services; printing, Madison Printing Co Ltd; tutors, A. P. S. Smith, R. A. Bryant.*

To Commemorate

# PETONE FREE KINDERGARTEN

Golden Jubilee

1927-1977

# Why a Garden?

JUST why should you send your child to kindergarten? What would he or she gain and what would you gain? Well you would gain two hours or so of peace during the day; no small benefit in itself. Your child would have a chance to let off steam in a way you probably wouldn't allow at home, and of course, he has a chance to play with other children.

But when your child comes home from kindergarten he has hopefully done more with his time than wear himself out. He has spent his hours doing a lot of things that are helping him develop mentally. This is what kindergarten is really all about.

Not all the experts agree, but the general view is that massive doses of experience allow a child to develop a set of information processing skills. These skills are what we call intelligence. In other words you have the potential to stimulate the intelligence of your child.

Stages of intelligence don't just appear at a given age, but are constructed by the learning process. Learning then should be aimed at the child's maturing rather than mature functions so that his mental development is stimulated. Kindergartens are designed to arouse curiosity, providing an outlet for it at the same time; to provide a child with a set

of learning tools which will enable him to advance to more complicated exercises.

Kindergartens and nursery schools have been around for a long time. The founder of the kindergarten movement, Friedrich Froebel (See inset) lived and taught the basis of kindergarten techniques way back in the middle of the 19th century. While the ideas behind kindergarten education have changed and developed over the years, the way kindergartens are actually run seems to have stayed very much the same.

In the early days educators were aware children needed intellectual stimulation; that play was not merely a frivolous childish pastime. In fact they held much the same beliefs that child development experts hold now except that they had no theory of development to back them up; they seemed to know intuitively.

Up until about World War II, kindergartens were viewed mostly as a back up to parental care. It was often felt that in many areas of society "proper" living habits were not being fostered. Kindergarten, it was felt, was a way of making up these deficiencies. In this way a child could learn the rules of his "little community" and so be more adept at taking his place in the big one when the moment came.

The 20th century has been a time of increasing interest in pre-school education in the developed world. Demand often outstrips supply as long kindergarten waiting lists can testify.

In the first decades of the 20th century, birth control and, for the rich, the shrinkage of their servant class meant people were brought closer to their children, and children were usually wanted children.

Also people no longer saw themselves and their destinies as defined by the natural order. The 20th century is the time of self awareness. More than before, a person's place in the world is made for him by his own efforts. It naturally follows that a parent who takes the trouble can increase the potential of his child. In earlier times it was felt that unalterable inherited intelligence slotted a child naturally into his "place". This change in attitude towards child de-

velopment is mostly attributable to Prof. Jean Piaget, a Swiss child psychologist, who during the 1930s developed theories concerning intellectual development after observing the growth of his own children. Piaget held that children develop their own intellectual structures through experience.

Since the war people who send their children to kindergarten seem to be influenced by one of, or a combination of, two trains of thought.

The first holds that people should send their children to kindergarten for what the social scientists call socio-political reasons. In other words, if parents feel their child is, or could be, culturally disadvantaged. If the child has little contact with other children for instance, or if he speaks another language and parents are afraid this will disadvantage him at school, they may feel kindergarten would give him a head start in learning to cope.

The second pattern of thought advocates the psycho-educational motive; that the early period of childhood is far and away the most important in terms of learning and learning to learn. It is best to strike while the iron is hot and start a child learning as soon as possible.

This has led to some pre-school institutions introducing more intensive academic type education. Not all experts are enthusiastic about these developments, some feel that too much emphasis on the linguistic and intellectual development of a child can detract from his or her emotional and social development.

Widespread acceptance of kindergarten does seem to have laid the ground work for the introduction of day care centres, a development which many people view with alarm. They are uneasy about what could be seen as an abdication of natural parental responsibility, representing a threat to the role structure of society.

Activities such as child minding, once unquestionably the preserve of parents or relatives are increasingly being usurped by specialists. Human activities seem to be being taken over.

As opposed to day care, however, kindergarten is there simply to serve as an extension of experiences available in the home where parents may be lacking in time, knowledge and facilities.

To quote from the report of the 1971

Committee Into Pre-School Education:

"It is the quality of the parent-child relationship which is important, and quality should not be confused with quantity. Fewer shared hours with a warm relationship are better than more hours spent with a less satisfactory relationship."

Kindergarten is there to provide the padding of childhood experience — to fill in the gaps. It is not there to take over from parents.



## Dr Maria Montessori (1870-1952)

Dr Montessori, an Italian, employed methods of early child education that proved important in the development of the kindergarten system. She took part in a scheme to renovate some of Rome's slum tenements, and then became head of the first infant school incorporated in one of the blocks.

Montessori was the originator of what are now known as educational toys. These toys (square peg-round hole) posed a self-correcting task to a child, who, having mastered what was involved could move on to another example.

Maria Montessori went on to run short training courses for teachers, and soon Montessori Societies sprung up in many other countries. Her success was attributed to the change of emphasis she brought into the field. She saw children from a scientific point of view rather than a purely mystical or intuitive position and envisaged the role of early childhood education as that of developing the senses and allowing the child to absorb a knowledge of environment.

Toys were her tools and she developed many of those still in use today. Probably the most well known are her geometric shape boards shown in the accompanying photograph.

## Dr Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852)

Froebel a German pioneer child psychologist, was the father of the kindergarten movement. It was he who gave it the name and direction. He established his first kindergarten at Blankenburg (Germany) in 1837 on the belief that the early years of a child's development were crucial.

He won the admiration of Charles Dickens, among others, for his methods which contrasted sharply with rote learning; the prevalent teaching method of the time.

Using toys and apparatus, known as gifts and occupations, Froebel encouraged his pupils to learn and think for themselves.

Gifts consisted of paper, building blocks, paper and sand which led to the occupations of paper folding, construction and clay modelling once the children had hold of them.

The children were thus trained in "dexterity of movement and in the laws of nature", but also, unknown to Froebel were developing intellectually through their play, almost as a side effect.

By providing an environment which encouraged the creative use of materials Froebel was conforming his institution to modern developmental theory without really knowing it.

# The First Seeds...

PETONE Free Kindergarten had its real beginning in November, 1926, when the principal of graduating Wellington kindergarten trainees suggested establishing new kindergartens around the city.

The suggestion remained with one trainee, Miss Eva Scaife, who from late 1926 until early 1927 did the rounds of Petone lobbying for support from local businesses and citizens.

This culminated in a meeting held in the home of Mrs George Cook, a strong supporter of the idea. The Wellington Free Kindergarten Council was in attendance and a motion was passed recommending the establishment of Petone Free Kindergarten as an experiment for a year.

If the local community supported the kindergarten it would continue with Miss Scaife as director.

Its success is now history and from the first opening at the YWCA Hall in Fitzherbert Street on April 8, 1927, and a roll of 16, Petone Free Kindergarten has gone from strength to strength.

The need for a permanent residence was soon realised and the original committee began to work toward this goal. The Mothers' Club was formed in 1929 and was to become a driving force behind much of the kindergarten's fund raising.

Apple time in the yard of the YWCA, Fitzherbert Street, in 1927, the first home of the kindergarten.



## Directors of Kindergarten and Presidents of Mothers' Club

|         | Directors   | Presidents                          |
|---------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1927-29 | Miss Scaife   |                                     |
| 1930-34 | Miss Scaife   | Mrs Milburn                         |
| 1935-36 | Miss Holland  | Mrs Milburn                         |
| 1937    | Miss Thompson   | Mrs Milburn                         |
| 1938-39 | Miss Price,<br>Miss Johnson                             | Mrs Milburn                         |
| 1940    | Miss Johnson  | Mrs Milburn                         |
| 1941    | Miss Farquar  | Mrs Milburn                         |
| 1942    | Miss Farquar,<br>Miss Gibbons                           | Mrs Laird                           |
| 1943    | Miss Gibbons  | Mrs Laird                           |
| 1944    | Miss Gibbons  | Mrs Henderson                       |
| 1945    | Mrs George  | Mrs Henderson                       |
| 1946    | Miss Hopkirk  | Mrs Brook                           |
| 1947    | Miss Hopkirk,<br>Miss Liggins                           | Mrs Brook                           |
| 1948    | Miss Liggins  | Mrs Brook                           |
| 1949    | Miss Christison   | Mrs Henderson                       |
| 1950    | Miss Christison,<br>Miss Knox-Dix                       | Mrs Jebb                            |
| 1951    | Miss Knox-Dix,<br>Miss Wansborough                      | Mrs Dopson                          |
| 1952    | Miss Wansborough,<br>Mrs Connell                        | Mrs Dopson                          |
| 1953    | Mrs Connell   | Mrs Prien<br>Mrs Tilly<br>Mrs Tilly |
| 1954    | Mrs Connell   | Mrs Tilly                           |
| 1955    | Miss De Hooge   | Mrs Tilly                           |
| 1956    | Miss Moerhuis,<br>Mrs Connell                           | Mrs Pickering                       |
| 1957    | Mrs Connell   | Mrs Hammond                         |
| 1958    | Miss Pedley   | Mrs Hammond                         |
| 1959    | Miss Pedley   | Mrs Hosier                          |
| 1960    | Mrs Goodrick  | Mrs Hosier                          |
| 1961    | Mrs Goodrick  | Mrs Findlay                         |
| 1962    | Mrs Goodrick  | Mrs Brain                           |
| 1963    | Mrs Goodrick  | Mrs Buzowsky                        |
| 1964    | Mrs Goodrick,<br>Miss Wooleston<br>Mrs Cook             | Mrs Baker                           |
| 1965    | Mrs Cook  | Mrs Stone                           |
| 1966    | Mrs Sue Cook,<br>Mrs Pollit                             | Mrs Alexander                       |
| 1967    | Mrs Pollit  | Mrs Alexander                       |
| 1968-69 | Miss Bolton   | Mrs Wilson                          |
| 1970    | Miss Shaw   | Mrs Ebert                           |
| 1971    | Mrs Trethewey   | Mrs Ebert                           |
| 1972    | Mrs Trethewey,<br>Mrs Cook,<br>Mrs Hart,<br>Mrs Edwards | Mrs Olsen                           |
| 1973-74 | Mrs Sales   | Mrs Weavers                         |
| 1974-77 | Mrs Sales   |                                     |

Mothers' Club originally, however, was intended as a purely social organisation for mothers to get to know each other and become involved with the ideals of the kindergarten.

Mrs Dopson, a life member of the United Mother's Club, looking back over 30 years involvement in both Mothers' Club and Local Committee comments:

"Mothers' Club had to raise enough money to keep children there, which was mainly through voluntary donations and holding small social functions.

"But really they were only supposed to be the social side, the Local Committee was supposed to raise all the finances.

"We also had to pay the salaries of the teachers."

The oldest records surviving of the Petone Kindergarten Mothers' Club executive meetings are for 1945, minutes recorded previous to that and some intermittent years, destroyed by fire in 1950.

But what do remain give a good insight into the involvement and concern mothers showed for the kindergarten.

Everyone pitched in. For example, a Christmas cake made in 1945 had the ingredients donated by the club executive.

Mrs Lane, icing sugar; Mrs Alexander, butter; Mrs Laird, butter; Mrs George, fruit; Mrs Fitton, sultanas; Mrs Townsend jnr, fruit; Mrs Brooks, sultanas; Miss Hopkirk, eggs; Mrs Henderson to bake it.

But both the Local Committee and Mothers' Club worked together to advance the kindergarten, holding such functions as gift afternoons, card evenings, socials, dances, street days, sewing circles, bazaars, competitions and raffles.

The monthly meetings were a social outlet as well as a vehicle for dealing with the kindergarten's needs.

Not to be overlooked are the now-famous talent evenings various Wellington kindergartens arranged, creating all their own costumes and props.

In 1930 plans for a new building were drawn up and a site secured, with the

Lady Bledisloe (centre) officiating at the opening of the kindergarten in 1930.



Playtime on the site before building commenced in 1930.

foundations stone being laid on July 16, by the Hon. Harry Atmore, Minister of Education.

Speeches were also made by the Mayor of Petone, Mr McKenzie, and the then Mr Walter Nash, MP.

A newspaper describes the opening in 1931:

"Yesterday afternoon was a gala one for Petone, when her Excellency Lady Bledisloe, accompanied by Mrs Vaughan-Hughes, opened the Petone Free Kindergarten.

"This new building on the corner of Victoria Street and Campbell Terrace is a most excellent example of modern school architecture.

"A bright blue door, which was kept



Dignitaries, parents and potential pupils about to inspect the kindergarten on opening day.

tightly closed until her Excellency undid it, opened into a large beamed hall full of tiny chairs and benches. Two other rooms of this, all with long French windows, provided a delightful setting for the children.

"As the children range from two to five years and cannot yet read, pictures of cats, dogs and birds are put by each little coat peg. They learn everything by 'playing at it'. They 'play house' and incidentally learn how to wash-up, tidy and sweep.

"It is all a big game and thoroughly enjoyed by them all."

The kindergarten "did its bit" for the war effort as well.

There was an urgent need for a nursery school to assist those mothers working in the war industry, growing rapidly in the Valley.

Additions were made to the existing kindergarten building to cater for these children, additions which were to prove invaluable in later years as the kindergarten roll grew.

But it has not been "all roses" in this garden over the past 50 years.

Tough times came with the Depression and in 1932 the Government decided to discontinue its subsidy to free kindergartens.

Petone was lucky in that although it was in an area acutely affected by the depression it belonged to the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association, which had better resources than the Hutt counterpart.

Kindergarten associations generally took up the fight to keep the subsidy.

Miss E. Wilson, principal of the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association in February, 1932, said:

"It hardly seems possible that any country could ruthlessly sweep away a movement which has world-wide recognition and which is acclaimed by the teaching and medical profession as one of the most worthwhile works a country can undertake."

And the Mayor of Wellington followed with:

"The last thing that should be touched in the efforts for retrenchment were the kindergarten schools, as they laid the

foundations of good character in the coming citizen."

He felt if the subsidy was stopped "the streets would become their playground."

A petition of more than 34,000 signatures was presented to the Government which in April, 1932, acceded to paying one half of the grant.

The full grant was not restored until 1936.

Thumbing back through the years via the religiously kepy minute books of the local committee and mothers' club many humorous (though some not at the time) anecdotes come to light.

From a 1961 local committee meeting: "Mrs Pollitt gave a brief account to the meeting of this morning's events at the kindergarten . . . Mrs Brown discovered four of the girls (Susan and Tracy Browne, Linda Burke and Gabriel Reeves) playing at the far end of the kindergarten grounds and eating berries of a deadly nightshade plant."

A doctor was rung and he immediately sent an ambulance to take the children to Hutt Hospital where "the stomach pump was applied to them and there were no real complications."

But a note added to the end of the minutes: "Confirmed as NOT deadly nightshade."

In 1928 a child's birthday was "celebrated with a birthday cushion, a gift of a coloured handkerchief and special privileges. On a fifth birthday hundreds and thousands were sprinkled on their rusks."

Children and fathers at the rear of the kindergarten in 1949.



A talents evening, one of the many novel fundraising ideas undertaken by the Mothers' Club. This one, from 1960, was entitled "Salaam, Song of India".

From Mothers' Club executive minutes, 1946: "We also discussed ways of reviving the interest of past and present mothers who have not been attending club meetings. It was decided to hold a fathers' day one Saturday soon."

Modern-day child experts might be horrified at a subject chosen for an afternoon discussion in 1945, "Methods of Punishing the Child", while women's libbers will be aghast to learn that in the '30s more money was spent on rusks for boys than for girls.

The Petone community has always supported its kindergarten.

This was first felt by Miss Scaife in her early pioneer work, down through the years of street days, bazaars and raffles and shown again by those local organisations which have made this publication possible.

## Those Who Tend...

helped the mothers to become friendly."

Eva Scaiffe was one of a family of six children and spent her early life in the countryside around Nelson. The country life instilled values which she carried through to kindergarten days.

"We were always busy as children. We each had a tree to climb on and swings. I have always believed in children being occupied.

"We weren't just minding the children. The mornings were well timetabled. But if something interesting cropped up we would find or make stories to suit.

"I believe that a bit of discipline isn't bad for children; it gives them some structure to rely upon. But they must be treated with respect. After all they are little men and women. We didn't push them but let them thrive.

"We used anything to help the imagination and the body. I have always encouraged self-reliance in children."

The reader may be forgiven for thinking these ideas just a little ahead of their time, for education advisors to primary and secondary schools are only now beginning to think along similar lines.

Mrs Lane spent 29 years in the South Island but on her arrival back in this part of the country she was greeted by six kindergarten mothers.

Since then she has kept more immediate links with Petone Kindergarten. She was present at a small ceremony earlier this year when the Petone children made a 50th birthday cake and she blew out the candles.

Mrs Lane is now a sprightly septuagenarian. Okiwi House which is her home is very handy to the Eastbourne shops (or the "village", as she calls Eastbourne).

The day we met her, Mrs Lane was reading a book about the early days of the Alexander Turnbull Library. She believes it important to keep links with the past because the future is built on the past.

We found Mrs Lane to be remarkably lucid about details of early days at Petone but then, as she said, "One always remembers the things that matter."

WHEN Mrs Terry Sales left England in 1955 Petone and its kindergarten were far from her thoughts.

After seven years tutoring chefs at a training college in England Mrs Sales met her husband, a self employed manufacturers' agent, who was planning to emigrate to New Zealand. They were married shortly after and left immediately for Wellington where they have lived for the past 22 years.

The Sales settled in central Wellington and while her husband successfully carried on with his business, Mrs Sales found she had time on her hands. To occupy herself she took up various hobbies and part time study including a home nursing course.

On leaving school in England it had been Mrs Sales' intention to teach domestic subjects and it was with this in mind she applied for Teacher's Training College in Wellington. After two years training she had intended to set up a private kindergarten but on finding she was required to work out her bond Mrs Sales decided to teach at Paparangi Kindergarten.

It was after she had been teaching here for a year that the Wharehoa Kindergarten scheme was set up in Petone and Mrs Sales left Paparangi for the new kindergarten.

She virtually became head teacher there and when the then senior head teacher left the scheme Mrs Sales was appointed to the position.

Having now been involved with the Petone-Wharehoa scheme for five years Mrs Sales feels that she would hate to leave.

"You become part of a family here," she says.

As senior head teacher of the Petone Free Kindergarten Mrs Sales finds the position exciting and particularly challenging because there is such a mixture of races within the area. She finds the challenge of helping children to learn another language, and to mix with different cultures, very stimulating.

All the children have to learn to speak English before they go to school x Mrs Sales finds that the most important thing is to relate to the child no matter what language he speaks.



Mrs Sales, the current director of the Petone Kindergarten.

By using songs written in the many languages spoken by the children and greeting them in their native tongue the staff try not to "bury" the native languages. This retains a very important link with the children.

Mrs Sales feels pre-school education plays a vital part in the development of a child. To have the experience of socialising and sharing and the chance to adapt to the classroom situation before a child goes to school can be extremely valuable and Mrs Sales would like to see more children given this opportunity.

Whether a child attends a kindergarten, playcentre or whatever, is not important. What is vital is the need for pre-school facilities.

Mrs Sales is also concerned that the present kindergarten system requires a child to leave at the end of the term in which he turns five. However, as a child is not required to start school until the age of six this means there is a gap in the system which leads to many children starting school before they are ready.

It would be better if there was no "cut off" line and each child could attend school when he or she was ready, Mrs Sales says.

Mrs Lane, the first director of the Petone Kindergarten, still keeps in touch.

HALF a century ago in late 1926 a newly-trained kindergarten teacher reported to her headmistress eager for duty

Eva Scaiffe always wanted to be a teacher. Her aunt, Dorothy Greenwood, was herself Froebel trained and helped set up the Richmond Kindergarten on The Terrace. It was she who observed that the younger the children were, the more Eva was at home with them. So it was on her recommendation that Eva Scaiffe began training at Taranaki Street Kindergarten.

"They were very under-privileged children, very special children," said Mrs Lane. "All of them needed kindergarten training."

The Petone area was no less deserving. Although there wasn't the racial mixture there is in Petone today, there were nevertheless many new immigrants learning to mix and learning New Zealand ways.

The kindergarten was an important socializing institution among other things.

"The mothers knew us, they were our friends," Mrs Lane recalled.

"And the children becoming friendly



## Changing Seasons...

ON the face of it, the world has come a long way during the 50 years the Petone Kindergarten has been in operation.

A world-wide depression, a world war and umpteen other major events have occurred since 1927, accompanied by advances in science and technology. Most of the things we use have obviously changed a lot. But what is surprising when you look at old photographs of kindergarten activities, is how little the children's toys and play have changed over the years.

Sure they've got a little less woody looking. Plastic and aluminium seem to be the present norm. But take that into consideration and allow for yellowing pictures and the images are unerringly the same.

Children just seem to be children, no matter where they live or when. The children who have attended the Petone Kindergarten over the past 50 years are no exception.



*Children Learn What They Live*

*If a child lives with criticism,  
He learns to condemn.*

*If a child lives with hostility,  
He learns to fight.*

*If a child lives with ridicule,  
He learns to be shy.*

*If a child lives with shame,  
He learns to feel guilty.*

*If a child lives with tolerance,  
He learns to be patient.*

*If a child lives with encouragement,  
He learns confidence.*

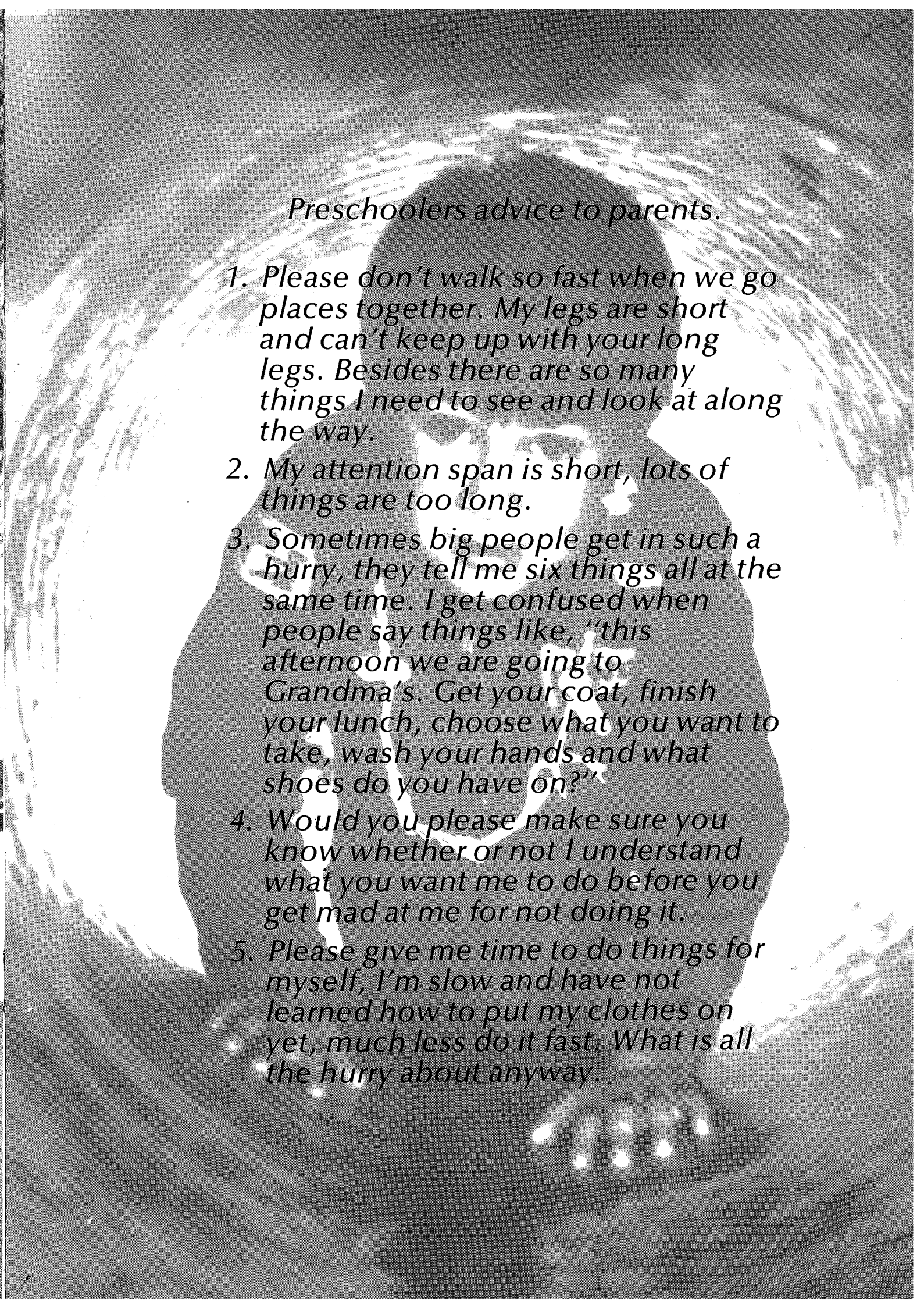
*If a child lives with praise,  
He learns to appreciate.*

*If a child lives with fairness,  
He learns justice.*

*If a child lives with security,  
He learns to have faith.*

*If a child lives with approval,  
He learns to like himself.*

*If a child lives with acceptance and  
friendship,  
He learns to find love in the world.*



*Preschoolers advice to parents.*

- 1. Please don't walk so fast when we go places together. My legs are short and can't keep up with your long legs. Besides there are so many things I need to see and look at along the way.*
- 2. My attention span is short, lots of things are too long.*
- 3. Sometimes big people get in such a hurry, they tell me six things all at the same time. I get confused when people say things like, "this afternoon we are going to Grandma's. Get your coat, finish your lunch, choose what you want to take, wash your hands and what shoes do you have on?"*
- 4. Would you please make sure you know whether or not I understand what you want me to do before you get mad at me for not doing it.*
- 5. Please give me time to do things for myself, I'm slow and have not learned how to put my clothes on yet, much less do it fast. What is all the hurry about anyway.*



# Today's Garden...

WE are all as much a part of the young child's environment as his favourite dump truck or her well-nursed Barbie doll, but as adults we cannot afford to be static, wooded or immovable.

Realising children's development needs in physical, intellectual, social and emotional aspects is no easy task, for the requirements vary from child to child.

Kindergarten teachers are given training in all areas of pre-school education, but how does the rest of the community act towards encouraging the growth of children?

When you visit the children at Petone Kindergarten a teacher will outline principles which have the good of the children as their only purpose. Teachers ask you to speak as little as possible when in the rooms with children.

"We are trying to protect the children from interruptions and to show that children's attention, if respected, will

**KINDERGARTEN:** derived from the German words *kinder* and *garten*, their meanings, children and garden broadly outline the purpose of pre-school education today.

gradually lengthen as they learn concentration in their play."

A simple consideration but one which is often unrecognised, is to crouch or sit when talking or playing with children.

"It is easier for them to relate to their own height level and your movements are less of a distraction than if you stand."

A child's attention moves quickly from object to object in his environment and a staring adult does constitute an "off-putting" factor.

"There is a danger the child may become conscious of the attention of visitors and thus show self-consciousness."

If a child laughs then laugh with them.

"They understand the subtle difference if you laugh at them and this does little to increase their confidence."

When speaking with a child talk the language of children, short sentences with easily understood words.

"There are already enough adults in their lives and it is unwise to add to this number."

But without adult help in forming relationships children can acquire set patterns of dominance, withdrawal and intolerance which may become set and hard to change later at school.

This situation is far from evident at Petone Kindergarten. An abundance of willing helpers, mothers and fathers play an important role in the kindergarten's success as does the dedication of the teachers.

this ensures the children have someone to listen to them and someone to protect them from natural hazards, other children and their own lack of skill in areas which require development.

A child will talk enthusiastically about the things and people who matter most and a lot can be learned about a child through listening and understanding what is being said.

Petone has become a community of diverse nationalities and the kindergarten reflects what could be described as an international playground with children representing the many countries of the world.

The experience to be gained from the varying cultures is invaluable and the children become acquainted with the



Simple Simon says...

different customs and ideas which helps them to accept more readily the opinions and ways of others.

The teachers also have to adapt to changing ways and often they greet the children in the morning, speaking to them in their native tongue.





These children need to be in contact with the English language, and our New Zealand customs, for as long as possible if they are to progress to schools where they will not be at a disadvantage.

From the kindergarten the children need to make excursions into the working world, visiting such places as schools, the beach, other kindergartens, homes, museums, parks or just going for a walk.

Visitors and unusual commodities must be introduced into their lives so the children may be a part of the changing experiences in the world around them.

Working situations have themes such as the standard forms of science, biology and maths through to the more flexible activities of art, drama and communication.

In this way the teachers must be opportunists, taking advantage of the many chances to expand the children's horizons.

It is most important to realise that the involvement of the parents, especially the mothers, is a very real aid in expanding a child's mind.

When a child begins kindergarten the mother is required to attend until the teacher-child relationship has developed to a bond of trust and friendship.

The time involved varies from a few sessions to sometimes a full term, depending on the nature of the child. This also fosters a more friendly relationship between parents and teachers.

Activities are often planned by the teachers to involve parents with their children in a wide area of stimulating experiences which enable the child to participate at his or her own level and which ensure the maximum is absorbed from these activities.

Surprisingly the comparison of early photographs of Petone Kindergarten's activities with the modern day situation reveals little change in games played and the construction and style of the children's toys and aids.

The rooms and play areas are well stocked with the regular supplies of wooden trucks and blocks, dolls and houses, paints and doughs.

The larger items include a water trough, swings and slides and the original sandpit. The children appear a little different in their more modern clothing but the smiling faces are still the same.

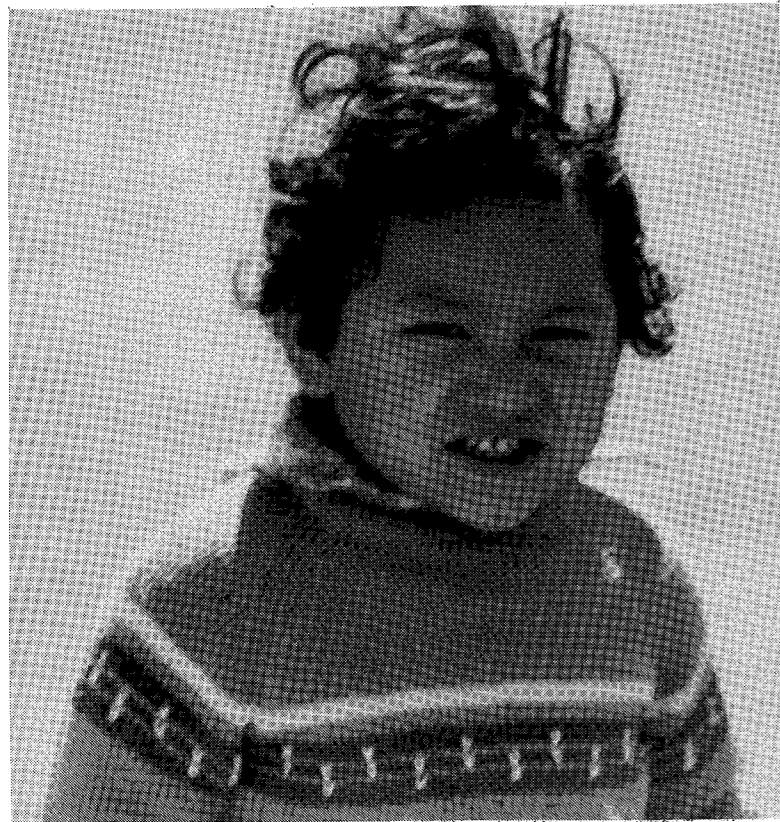
The glowing signs of contentment radiating from their simple innocence is the only reward that the caretakers of the children's garden in Petone would ever wish for.



The current teaching staff at Petone Free Kindergarten, from left to right. Maria Sorenson, (a relieving teacher), Alison Barker, Rebecca McClutchie and the director, Terry Sales.



# As it Grows...



PETONE is a community made up of many racial groups which lends the area much of its atmosphere and character.

When you walk down Jackson Street it's not unusual to see people from four or five different racial origins in a single glance: Maoris, Pacific Islanders, Chinese, Indians, and others all live within the community.

It was these people that the Petone Kindergarten had in mind when it opened a kindergarten at the Wharehoa Polynesian Centre.

The Wharehoa Council, who administer the centre, had been running a child care centre for some time before they offered the use of the premises to Petone Kindergarten in 1973.

They were anxious to let small children in the area have the use of their facilities and saw this move as helping the rapidly increasing Polynesian population become more integrated in the community.

The scheme was designed so that the Wharehoa group could accept a propor-



tion of European children from the Petone Kindergarten roll, and Petone could accept a proportion of the non-European children enrolled at Wharehoa.

This would eliminate any problem with parents who may come to regard Wharehoa as a pre-school group for underprivileged children.

With the opening of the kindergarten at the Wharehoa Centre the Petone Kindergarten became the only one in New Zealand to be in charge of two kindergartens; an arrangement that has worked out well.

A close link has been established with the Wharehoa Council as several members of the Petone Kindergarten's Local Committee also serve on the council.

This makes communication between the two administering bodies easy and eliminates any problems which might otherwise have arisen.

The kindergarten is under the charge of Mrs Helen Froude and she is assisted by one other full-time teacher. They care for 30 children in two sessions, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

Mrs Froude is convinced the scheme has been a success.

"The kindergarten has run very smoothly with no problems. We have received a lot of assistance from the Wharehoa Council and I'm sure that with their help it will continue to be a successful venture. It is a very happy place."

In the four years in which the Wharehoa Kindergarten has been open they have admitted children mainly from the western Petone area, with Petone Kindergarten serving the rest of Petone.

This has created an invaluable service to the children in this area, particularly with the rapid growth around the western hills.

At present the Department of Education is in the process of updating the kindergarten's washroom facilities. Over the years parts of the building had become run down, but when approached the department readily agreed to improve parts of the premises.

While the kindergarten occupies the centre during the day it is still available to the community at large during the night, and at weekends. A number of sport and church groups make use of the building at these times.

By offering Petone Kindergarten the use of their premises the Wharehoa Polynesian Centre's identity has been enhanced in many ways. It is not only serving the Polynesian community but also making itself open to people of all ages and so truly does belong to the community as a whole.

