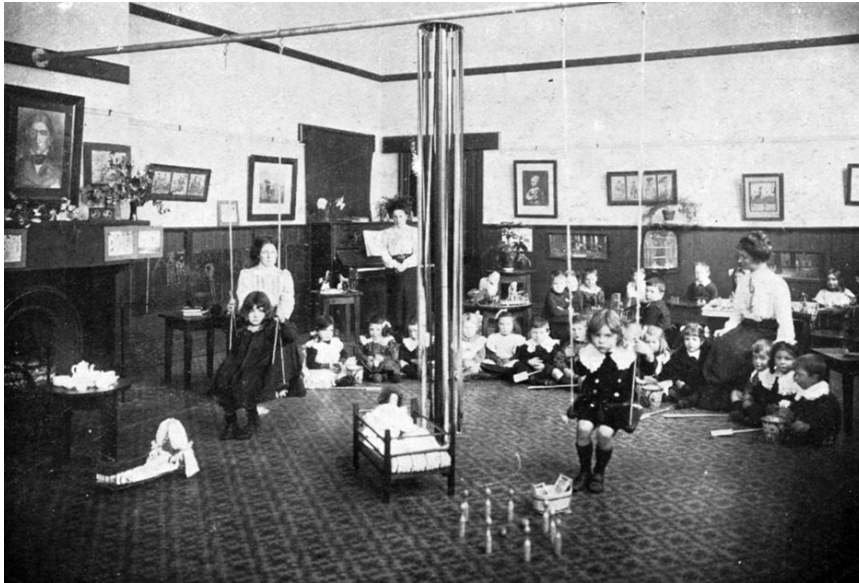


*Internationaler Fröbelkongress: Fröbelpädagogik im Kontext der Moderne Bildung, Erziehung and soziales Handeln*, (Eds. K. Neumann, U. Sauerbrey, & M. Winkler) IKS Garamond Verlag, Jena, Germany (2010, pp.95-112).

### **Helen May: Refashioning the colonial kindergarten: A political story from Aotearoa New Zealand**



[‘Under the gaze of Froebel’ Kindergarten teachers and children at George Street model school, Dunedin Teacher’s College’, *Otago Witness* August 24, 1910, Hocken Collections, University of Otago, Dunedin New Zealand, S10-134a]



[‘Kindergarten play beneath Britain’s flag’ Rachel Reynold’s Kindergarten, c.1930s, Hocken Collections, University of Otago, Dunedin New Zealand, ex MS 1149]

Froebel's kindergarten originated in Thuringia, Germany, in the first half of the nineteenth century. By the latter half of the century, British settlers in Aotearoa New Zealand had also established kindergartens. This was as far as one could geographically travel from west to east and north to south. The islands of Aotearoa, named by the indigenous Maori peoples as the "land of the long white cloud" were the last and furthest frontier for exploration and settlement by Europe's Old World migrants. The colony of New Zealand was on "the edges of the empire" and regarded as "Mother England[']s] ... most desirable of progeny."<sup>1</sup> The New World of the Antipodes, like that of America in earlier centuries, was not only about the geography of new lands that European settlers wrongly presumed were empty, the New World was imbued with dreams of new opportunities, starting afresh and leaving the ills of the Old World (in Britain) behind. The timing of settlement in the New World of Aotearoa New Zealand coincided with the emergence of the kindergarten in the Old World of Prussian Germany. This makes an interesting case study of the rapid transformation of ideas and institutions across lands and cultural contexts. Upon arrival in the new British colony, the kindergarten as an institution and a pedagogy, continued to be refashioned. This chapter provides, firstly an insight into the journey of the kindergarten relocation to the fledgling colony of Aotearoa as a "rider of the whirlwind" of an expanding "Anglo-World"; and secondly an overview of its refashioning across the centuries as a "survivor of the whirlwind" of education and social politics.

In the twenty-first century, Judith Duncan claimed that, "Kindergarten arguable is as 'New Zealand' as 'kiwi fruit' 'pavlova' and 'buzy bee'."<sup>2</sup> Kindergarten is deeply embedded into the cultural landscape of New Zealand. It had long been regarded by successive governments and other providers of early childhood services as the 'flagship' because it operated in purpose-built buildings, had qualified teachers and was free (or almost) to parents. Kindergartens are still the largest provider of early childhood education for three and four-year-olds in a country where children start school on their fifth birthday, and the government subsidises early childhood education from birth to five years. But in the current environment of choice for

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<sup>1</sup> Moon, 2009, p.11.

<sup>2</sup> Duncan, 2006, p. 1; kiwi fruit and pavlova cake are New Zealand food icons, and buzy bee is an iconic children's toy.

parents and competition by private business, kindergartens are no longer always a first choice by parents. Duncan writes, “Neo-liberal discourses [...] have challenged the very traditions of the ‘free kindergarten’, presenting a possible outcome for the service as one that might become ‘freely forgotten’.”<sup>3</sup>

### **1. “Rider of the whirlwind”<sup>4</sup>**

The idea of kindergarten arrived in New Zealand during the 1870s via England, and in the 1880s via the West Coast of the US. While Froebel’s pedagogy remained connected to the idea of kindergarten, the institution of the kindergarten was one of many “riders” of a “whirlwind” termed by James Belich as “the settler revolution and the rise of the Anglo-World.”<sup>5</sup> In his book “Replenishing the Earth” (2009) Belich uses the phrase “riders of the whirlwind” to capture the experience of indigenous peoples who suffered huge losses in this settler revolution, but were also “survivors” who, in various ways, engaged with the onslaught. Belich’s somewhat controversial recasting of the consequences of the whirlwind of the settler revolution is recast further in this analysis to apply to one of the Old World institutions that was exported. It is also a reminder that the New Zealand kindergarten story, which is a significantly a settler story until the 1960s when Maori children became more of a presence in early childhood institutions, is also embedded in the contexts of colonisation.

Belich likens the Anglo-World expansion to faraway frontiers as “utopias in the making” by Old World peoples. He presents the facts of this expansion:

“Right across that Anglo-World something funny happened after 1815. A new pattern of settlement appeared, one with crazy, manic optimistic growth that saw towns sprout like mushroom. By 1920 the US contained 62 million people and the Greater Britain (including the Dominions) 24 million. It was a rate of demographic growth that exceeded even that of the so-called Third World in the twentieth century.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Duncan, 2007, p. 319.

<sup>4</sup> Belich, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Belich, 2005, p. 49f.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with James Belich by Ruth Laugeson, *NZ Listener*, July 20, 2009, p. 21.

Rousseau's eighteenth-century notion of a South Seas Arcadia still had currency in the imagination of intending settlers escaping hardship in Britain, and was fuelled too by the naval explorer James Cook's 'discovery' of the Islands of Aotearoa. However, John Andrews suggests in his book, "No other home like this: A history of European New Zealanders" (2009), that migrant settlers in the nineteenth century also brought a particular "cloak of imperialism draped around their shoulders." The consequence was that the "healthy New Zealand environment itself became enrolled in a programme to improve the British race."<sup>7</sup> Paul Moon likens New Zealand to the South Seas Island in Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *Utopia Unlimited* (1893), where the inhabitants saw the "path to its improvement lying in imitating the institutions that earned Britain the title of 'Great'."<sup>8</sup> New ideals of kindergarten childhood combined with its institutional strategies to improve the lives of the poor, sat well in this broad mix of colonial-utopian endeavour.

There are parallel elements of utopian endeavour in the Froebel kindergarten that emerged during 'new times' in Prussia in the 1840s. Froebel and others were challenging the suffering inherent in Lutheran Church orthodoxy, arguing instead for the pursuit of happiness. Froebel was concerned that childhood had become a 'straight jacket'. Froebel proclaimed that in his kindergarten, "children will not be schooled, they will be developed."<sup>9</sup> He wrote that, "The infant school [...] though their intention is good they only train the memory, neglecting or insufficiently attending to the creative and expressive needs ..."<sup>10</sup> The kindergarten first became a "rider" after the 1851 *kindergarten verbot*. This was in the aftermath "whirlwind" of the failure of 1848-49 Prussian Revolution. The liberal ideology that sparked the Anglo-World settler revolution was similarly embodied in the educational ideology of the kindergarten. The links between education and social reform attracted liberal sympathizers to the kindergarten. The *verbot*, however, labelled kindergartens as centres of atheism and subversion. As sympathizers of the failed revolution fled the country the idea of the kindergarten was carried to other European countries and more distant lands. A more deliberate export of the idea occurred in 1854 when Froebel's supporter, the Baroness von Marenholtz-Bulow, visited England where

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<sup>7</sup> Andrews, 2009, p. 64.

<sup>8</sup> Moon, 2009, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Corbett 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Froebel, 1844.

she demonstrated kindergarten games, sticks and blocks. Also in 1854, the Society of Arts in London sponsored an exhibition at which Froebel's gifts were displayed and demonstrated. Henry Barnard was a visitor to the exhibition; his letters to Elizabeth Palmer Peabody spearheaded the kindergarten's US arm. Such was the interest in kindergarten after the London exhibition, that a booklet explaining Froebel's ideas and methods entitled "Women's Educational Mission" (1855) was written by the Baroness and translated into English. Henceforth, the kindergarten was irrevocably an institution embedded in the Anglo-World and its pedagogy poised to spread. Froebel societies became a key conduit. In England links were established with the Home and Colonial Infant Society that trained infant teachers, and in 1888 this organisation became the National Froebel Union and acted as an examining body for kindergarten training. Trained kindergarteners were also "riders" in the settler revolution. Records at the London Froebel Institute, founded in 1892, name New Zealanders who gained their Froebel training at the Institute before emigrating, and others who returned to be trained.<sup>11</sup>

The mix of all these happenings coincided with the appearance of the New Zealand settlement cities of Dunedin, Wellington, Auckland and Christchurch, whose first buildings were erected in the 1840s and 1850s. By the 1870s and 1880s it was evident that the South Seas Arcadian dream was harder to realise. A fragile institutional and economic infrastructure recreated many ills found in European urban environments. This situation made a ripe project that combined settler 'do-it-yourself' endeavour in the New World and the kindergarten's 'new child', whose metaphoric appearance was as the builder of a "new society".

That free, secular and compulsory public schooling was fully established in the colony in 1877 was a significant realisation of the settler dream. The influence of kindergarten ideas in New Zealand was first seen during the 1870s in selected infant classrooms and schools whose children ranged in age from four-years to eight.<sup>12</sup> Teachers leading these initiatives introduced periods in the school day when kindergarten occupations, in particular, were 'taught'. For example, the methods of Mrs Catherine Francis at Mt Cook Infant School in Wellington were described as

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<sup>11</sup> *The Link*, Froebel Institute, London.

<sup>12</sup> May, 2005.

“a combined system of the Home and Colonial Training Schools with the kindergarten lessons as an auxiliary.”<sup>13</sup> This kindergarten infiltration of the 3R’s school curriculum for young attendees paralleled that in Britain.<sup>14</sup> In Dunedin, Learmonth Dalrymple circulated a pamphlet entitled, ‘The Kindergarten, being a brief sketch of Froebel’s system of Infant Education’ (1879). Froebel’s ideas were subsequently discussed in Dunedin education circles,<sup>15</sup> although there is no evidence of Froebel Societies until 1898 (in Wellington) and 1909 (in Dunedin).<sup>16</sup> There is elusive evidence of private kindergartens operating during the 1870s, as well as several short-lived free kindergarten ventures probably modelled on the free kindergartens and crèche established at Salford in 1871 by William Mather, an industrialist and founding member of the Kindergarten Association in Manchester. The direct conduit to these first kindergarten ventures was via England as a product of colonial expansion. Back in 1828, the Secretary for the Colonies, reported to the Parliament that, “Wherever our Empire is acknowledged we have carried thither our language, our laws and our institutions...”<sup>17</sup> By an accident of politics and timing the kindergarten became one of the Anglo institutions to be “carried thither”.

The spark that brought success to the incomplete and/or short-lived kindergarten ventures in New Zealand came via Britain’s lost empire, the US. The Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association (DFKA) was established in 1899. Its blueprint was imported from the Golden Gate Kindergarten Association (GGKA) in San Francisco, US.<sup>18</sup> The idea of the free kindergarten had been demonstrated in England but its real roots were in the German *Volkskindergarten* already seeded before the *verbot*. The idea of the *Volkskindergarten* for working class children had been established through the advocacy of the Baroness, who claimed that “until the mothers of the lower classes are a better educated race, the education of their children must be the care of the educated class.”<sup>19</sup> Ongoing communication between members of the DFKa and Sarah Cooper from the GGKA reveal the detail

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<sup>13</sup> Fleming, T. R. ‘Mt Cook Log Book Infant School 1878-1927’ (September 5, 1979), Beaglehole Library, Victoria University Wellington.

<sup>14</sup> Brehony, 1987.

<sup>15</sup> Dempster, 1986.

<sup>16</sup> Bethell, nd, notes.

<sup>17</sup> McCann, 1988, p. 101.

<sup>18</sup> May, 1997; Bethell, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> Allen Taylor, 1982, p. 327.

of the blueprint model that was eventually replicated in each of New Zealand's four settlement cities. The children came from the streets of the colonial settlements. The kindergarten associations were philanthropic and in New Zealand remained outside the public education system. This became a protection of Froebelian pedagogy from the dictates of school requirements.

Unlike the US and England, no direct New Zealand links with the German kindergarten movement have been traced. There were a few refugee German settlers to New Zealand in the late nineteenth century. This may have been the background of Miss Weineke who was recruited as the first teacher for the DFKA. There are unconfirmed reports that she was 'German trained' but her background is a mystery.<sup>20</sup> A more curious link across the oceans was a mention by the Baroness Marenholtz-Bulow of 'Neuseeländers' in her document, "The Kindergarten and the Importance of Children's Play" (1872). Marenholtz-Bulow was referring to Maori, and she had clearly seen examples of the fine flax weaving displayed in German museum collections of the time. Like Froebel's block 'gifts', weaving was an iconic kindergarten activity. Marenholtz-Bulow wrote that:

"By plaiting, a tissue is produced not unlike those plaited mantles the New Zealanders make of sedge and bast, and by a progressive development the patterns rise to the level of the artistic products of the modern loom."<sup>21</sup>

This distant admiration of Neuseeländ by the Baroness does not appear to have been noticed in New Zealand at the time. Surviving weaving samples by kindergarten trainees in the late nineteenth century in both Germany and New Zealand (and also in the US, Australia and England) are, however, identical in style. New Zealand kindergarteners did not note or include any pattern styles from Maori "Neuseeländers". Despite distance, kindergarteners in New Zealand followed the prescriptions of Froebel and the followers who interpreted his work. While the whirlwinds of the separate Prussian and Anglo settler revolutions transported the kindergarten across seas and continents and refashioned it into a British colonial

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<sup>20</sup> Personal communication, Kerry Bethell.

<sup>21</sup> Marenholtz-Bulow, 1872, p. xviii. In its original German, she said: "Durch "Flechten" werden Webereien gemacht, nicht unähnlich den aus Schliff und Bast geflochtenen Mänteln der Neuseeländers, und in allmäliger Entwicklung steigen die, "Muster" auf zu den Kunstwebereien der Jetztzeit."

cultural context, the pedagogy was a survivor, with the appearance of kindergarten across the sites being remarkably similar.

Public opinion and political patronage was wooed to the practice of Froebelian pedagogy by presenting the work inside the kindergarten to outsiders, as a good investment in its infrastructure. Dunedin kindergarteners not only adopted the GGKA's blueprint, but also used extracts from the Association's annual reports that Sarah Cooper freely circulated. So the citizens of San Francisco and Dunedin (and Sydney and Tokyo) were similarly reassured that:

the result of [kindergarten] teaching would be a lasting good, in moulding the minds of children who otherwise might drift into lower channels of life [...] To guard the children of Dunedin from thriftlessness, disease, pauperism, and crime was the desire of those who first spoke of planning a kindergarten in this city. They wanted to lay hold of little ones, who came into the world burdened with evil tendencies...<sup>22</sup>

This was a decidedly 'un-Froebelian' sentiment, but its persuasive message was successful in securing the necessary patronage. Sir Robert Stout, the country's premier between 1884-87 attended the annual Association meetings in Dunedin. He was himself an early kindergarten child from Scotland who later recognised the voice of his teacher, Miss Jane Liston, when he was visiting a school in the new colony. While kindergarten became a politically acceptable institution of the colony it was only minimally funded from the public purse. In 1910, Sir John Logan Campbell, a past Auckland Mayor and Member of Parliament, donated the first kindergarten in Auckland. He declared at the opening of the building:

Long may it remain so, and may the children be destined to go forth as well ordered and worthy citizens of the land - the ripened fruit of the Free Kindergarten.<sup>23</sup>

A long way from its Thuringian origins, Kindergarten had thus been refashioned to "ripen" the citizen child of the most distant colonial outpost in the Anglo-World.

## **2. "Survivor of the whirlwind"**

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<sup>22</sup> DFKA 2nd Annual Report, 1891 p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Cited in Marshall, 1983, p. 14



During the twentieth century the free kindergarten movement grew, supported but not owned by the state. Its independent survival was due to:

- the adept politics of its leaders;
- the passion and competence of its teachers;
- support from the education community;
- the delight of its child attendees;
- the satisfaction of parents; and
- ongoing political patronage.

Each country where kindergartens became established has a unique twist to its story. This section of the chapter provides a broad overview of the refashioning of kindergarten as an institution over the past 130 years in New Zealand. For most of these years kindergarten was regarded as a flagship of progressive preschool provision. From the mid twentieth century, alternative versions of preschool provision emerged, often inferior in quality to the kindergarten, or with alternative philosophies that operated without the level of government support kindergartens eventually attained. From the 1980s, government policy shifted towards supporting more equitably a range of early childhood services including childcare provision. This led to most early childhood services using the kindergarten professional model of qualified teachers. While this diminished the flagship status of the New Zealand kindergarten, on the broader front New Zealand early childhood education became a flagship in international arenas. Peter Moss recently applauded New Zealand for ‘leading the wave’:

“... having developed a reform of [early childhood education and care] ECEC services that confronts the split system and the dominance of technical practice. While there are many elements of the market apparent, including a large for-profit sector, New Zealand has also opened up diversity, most obviously in its innovative early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*. New Zealand has developed a national framework, which brings some coherence to the system around issues of equity and access. One Ministry (education) is responsible for all ECEC services; there is a single funding system for services, (based on direct funding of services rather than parents); a single curriculum; and a single workforce, which by 2012 will consist of early childhood teachers,

educated to graduate level. Underpinning these structures, and perhaps the most radical change of all, New Zealand has an integrative concept that encompasses all services - 'early childhood education', a broad and holistic concept that covers, children, families and communities, a concept of 'education-in-its-broadest-sense' in which learning and care really are inseparable and connected to many other purposes besides. *New Zealand has, in short, understood the need to rethink as well as restructure early childhood education and care.*<sup>24</sup> [my emphasis]

Kindergartens were key players in this refashioning and transformation of policy, but now wonder whether they have anything that is uniquely 'kindergarten' within their pedagogy and institutions.

The schemata in the following table broadly summarize the shifting position of kindergartens in New Zealand. The chapter concludes with some commentary on the modern colonial kindergarten as it ponders its future and again positions a purposeful place. In 2008, 23% of all early childhood enrolments were in a kindergarten. This was a drop from 67% in 1988. The actual numbers of children attending kindergarten did not change greatly, but the level of early childhood participation, which also included infants and toddlers, rose as government funding for childcare, home-based, Pasifika and Maori services increased. Kindergartens, however, were reluctant to replace their separate morning and afternoon sessions and school-term-year to offer the full-day and full-year services of a childcare centre, although in some areas they reduced the age of entry to two years. Kindergartens could still boast that they only employed qualified teachers, but over the past decade many more childcare centres had 100% qualified teachers, and with full-day programmes had better staffing ratios than kindergartens. The kindergarten associations also felt disadvantaged when the government shared a somewhat low capital subsidy scheme for new and improved buildings around other community-based services. It was the private market that had the capital to enter the early childhood property and buildings business, attracted by large government subsidies on children, salaries and operations.

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<sup>24</sup> Moss, 2008. pp. 7-8.

Part of the historical attraction by parents to kindergarten was because they were almost free although the nomenclature of the ‘free kindergarten’ was dropped in the 1990s after government policy allowed and encouraged kindergartens to charge fees. The cost to parents, nevertheless, remained minimal although fundraising activities remained an aspect of a kindergarten parent’s contribution. The introduction in 2007 of ‘20-hours-free’ early childhood provision for three- and four-year-olds in all teacher-led services in effect extended the benefits of the free kindergarten to childcare that, while subsidised, was not free. The overall 34% reduction in the cost of early childhood services to parents across the country was so marked that the Consumer Price Index for education in the country registered a 5.2% drop in the first month of the scheme’s operation.<sup>25</sup> By 2009, the average participation per child had increased by two hours per week; 55% of children enrolled in early childhood attended between 6 and 24 hours a week, with 41% of children attending over 24 hours a week.<sup>26</sup> Since the introduction of ‘20-hours-free’, that boosted the funding for kindergartens too, its associations have become more pro-active, offering a wider range of options for parents. While still retaining the traditional school-term-year and the traditional morning or afternoon session, many kindergartens now offer mixed age programmes and a school-day session from 9am to 3pm. Some associations have even purchased childcare centres to offer full day programmes.

More strategically, kindergartens have aligned themselves with other community providers to try and redress government policies that favoured the growth of a private sector which, at times, has compromised quality for profit. Local kindergarten associations are increasingly being approached to provide professional support and services for stand-alone community-based childcare centres that do not have the organisational infrastructure an association or business chain can provide. Kindergarten associations were key players in the Quality Public Early Childhood Education Project that developed a shared vision for ‘2020’ for community-based services as a basis for political advocacy in the changing landscape of early

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<sup>25</sup> Statistics NZ, October 2007.

<sup>26</sup> [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/student\\_participation/early\\_childhood\\_education/1927](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/student_participation/early_childhood_education/1927)

childhood provision.<sup>27</sup> This coalition of community-based interest groups determined on the following:

### **Vision**

- Every child has a right as a citizen to participate in free early childhood education.
- Every family that wishes to can access high quality, community-based early childhood education.
- The project group advocate for government policies to realise our vision by 2020.

### **Goals**

- Promotion of community-based ECE services including parent-led services through the development of a national plan for all ECE provision throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.
- Provision of appropriate services to ensure every child can participate in free high quality ECE.
- Robust accountability to government, parents, whānau and communities linked to indicators that demonstrate high quality ECE.

Unlike parts of the private childcare sector, kindergarten associations have established positive links with the primary and early childhood teachers' union, the New Zealand Education Institute -Te Rui Roa, as well as the university providers of teacher education, and the New Zealand Childcare Association – Te Tari Puna Ora. These groups have been crucial in the fashioning of New Zealand policy initiatives; a “whirlwind” process that has refashioned the kindergarten as a “survivor” of societal change, political change and pedagogical shifts. While New Zealanders might ‘take for granted’ that the kindergarten has always been part of the ‘traditional’ education landscape, Judith Duncan reminds us that parents still

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<sup>27</sup> May and Mitchell, 2009.

choose kindergarten for their children because it ‘isn’t childcare.’<sup>28</sup> Older perceptions of the dichotomy between care and education are still apparent in the minds and choices of parents. Ironically though, it has been the ability of kindergarten associations to bridge these historic divides; to forge new alliances and provide new services, that has become a key strategy for their future survival as a “rider of the whirlwind”.

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<sup>28</sup> Duncan, 2009.

## Refashioning the NZ kindergarten

1870s →	Kindergarten activities in some infant schools.	
1880s →	<i>Charitable funding</i> Free kindergarten associations operate with small government subsidies in inner cities. The associations establish their own training programmes. Expansion is constrained by cost.	<i>Public funding</i> Free schooling for all children from age five years. Infant classrooms in schools increasingly incorporate selected kindergarten activities into their programmes.
1940s →	<i>Kindergarten teachers</i> Free kindergartens become the preferred flagship for government supported part-day preschool education for 3-4 year olds. Government starts to fund the infrastructure of building costs, salaries and training of kindergarten teachers. Provision expands to suburbs and towns. Demand outstrips provision.	<i>Playcentre parents</i> Parent-run playcentres are established as an alternative to kindergarten by mothers, as the 'expert' teachers of their own children. Parent education and training is a key part of the playcentre movement. Playcentres attain limited government funding.
1960s →	<i>Preschool education</i> Kindergarten and playcentre are characterised as 'preschool education' within the Department of Education. Kindergarten training shifts into teacher's colleges along with primary and secondary teacher education.	<i>Care</i> Childcare comes under government regulation and is placed in a department concerned with the welfare of children. There is no government funding support for childcare services.
1980s →	<i>Early childhood education</i> Government policies integrate services for care and education	<i>School</i> Most children attend an early childhood programme prior to

	<p>under the same government department, and also in respect to curriculum, funding and qualifications. Early childhood policies now include children from birth to school age. There are a range of services including childcare services, Nga Kohanga Reo Maori immersion language nests for Maori children, Pacific Island bilingual centres, as well as home based services.</p>	<p>arrival at school on their fifth birthday. Early years of schooling becomes less connected to preschool</p>
<p>2000s →</p>	<p><i>Teacher-led</i></p> <p>Government introduces new policies that require all adults working in early childhood centres, to hold a teaching qualification and funding is provided to centres to pay the costs. Government introduces '20-hours-free' early childhood education to all three and four-year-olds in whichever kind of service they attend.</p>	<p><i>Parent-led</i></p> <p>Services are characterised as either teacher-led or parent-led. Services such as playcentre, while supported, are funded differently and do not get the full benefits of the '20-hours-free' policy.</p>
<p>2010s →</p>	<p><i>Community-based provision</i></p> <p>Kindergartens are still fully run by associations as community services. In 2008, 64% of early childhood enrolments are in community-based services. Kindergarten provision has remained fairly static and in 2009 showed a 12% drop as parents were able to access free early</p>	<p><i>Private and corporate provision</i></p> <p>By 2008, 60% of childcare centres are privately owned, with quite a few being part of a corporate business chain. Subject to their meeting all regulatory requirements government has funded children in privately run services since the 1980s. With the large levels of government support, private</p>

	childhood in other services.	enterprise has met the demand.
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