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Early Childhood Care and  
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There can be no doubt that early childhood education has always been the poor relation of state education in New Zealand. Its history is therefore largely uncharted. It is the purpose of this essay to trace the humble beginnings of early childhood care and education in Christchurch, from 1877 to the outbreak of World War I. As well as a portrayal of chronological events it is also the story of the issues faced by the founding mothers of the early childhood movement, (a great many of whom, incidentally, were spinsters). Many of these issues remain in early childhood education today: the debate over whether early childhood services are chiefly custodial, albeit caring, or educational; the provision of opportunities for mothers to have time to work or rest unhindered by their small children; the opportunity for educators, of varying motives, to influence children during their most formative years; the economic value of the work done by those who teach very young children; the preparation of young women for the work of childrearing; and the role of the community and the state in the welfare and education of infants and young children. In Christchurch, as elsewhere in New Zealand, the story is of small efforts first made by private and charitable institutions. Then, as demand increased and teachers became increasingly professionalized through training and the growth of umbrella organizations, the state became increasingly involved. The story is also of a small group of dedicated enthusiasts, prepared to organize everything from the annual festival to deputations to government commissions, and their tireless efforts

to maintain what they believed to be an essential social service.

It is important, before beginning, to clearly define what was meant by the terms "creche" and "kindergarten" at this time. A "creche" referred to a primarily custodial facility, open to the public, where young children, particularly infants, could be left in the short-term care of another person, often a trained nurse. The emphasis was on physical care and attention, rather than on learning or play, though no doubt both occurred. A "kindergarten" referred to a public facility for children prior to school age (under seven years old) but no longer infants. The programme of the kindergarten would undoubtedly be based on the teachings of Friedrich Froebel, 'the father of the kindergarten', summarised in his Pedagogics of the Kindergarten, first published in 1861. (1) The emphasis of such a programme would be on manual manipulation of matter and objects, such as plasticine, balls and blocks, physical drill, such as arm swinging and marching, and fostering the behaviours considered desirable in children, such as obedience, good manners and industry.

These activities were also a feature of 'kindergarten' as a subject which was finding its way into the primer classes of New Zealand primary schools after 1877. This essay is not concerned with kindergarten classes in state primary schools, except where they impacted upon the development of independent kindergarten facilities or the training of teachers in kindergarten methods.

Nor does this essay attempt to investigate the prevalence of informal arrangements which were undoubtedly the major source of childcare for women then, as now - relatives, neighbours and older children; newspapers of the period contain enough accounts of destitute children to show that such support was nonexistent for many families. That creches and kindergartens were perceived as 'social rescue' agencies was an important argument in their early establishment. As kindergarten teaching became increasingly professionalized however, this argument declined and their educative role came to the fore. This was only starting to become evident before 1914; the distinction between facilities which 'cared' for children, as opposed to those which 'educated' them, still strong today, was only beginning to appear.

#### 1877 - 1890

Although the existence of kindergartens in Christchurch prior to 1890 is hazy, there was certainly some understanding abroad of kindergarten methods. As early as 1878 a kindergarten was opened at the Normal school in Christchurch, under the direction of Mrs Crowley, who had been brought out from England where she had trained. (2) The North Canterbury Education Board reported its intention to proceed at once with the building of a kindergarten schoolroom. (3) Their 1879 report describes extensions to the normal school intended to house this kindergarten. (4) However, Mrs Crowley resigned in 1880, "in accordance with the terms of

her agreement, in consequence of the reduction of salaries". (5)  
 By now the Normal School was no longer under the charge of C.C. Howard, an enthusiast for Mrs Crowley's work, but under that of W. Malcolm. Mr Malcolm recommended a modified infant programme, using kindergarten methods, due to the expense of kindergartens, his beliefs that six or seven years of age was young enough to begin school life (children as young as three had attended the kindergarten at the Normal School), his conviction that small children should only attend three or four hours of school a day, and his suspicion that many parents simply sent them to school to get them "out of the way". (6) Both Senior and Junior students at the Normal School continued to be instructed in "Kindergarten" for two hours per week. (7)

The Rev. J.W. Habens, Inspector-General, when interviewed by the Education Committee in 1887 regarding the school starting age and the expense of kindergarten methods replied

I know of the existence of some so-called kindergarten schools in New Zealand, but I believe they are by no means fully developed under the kindergarten system. They are practically infant schools with teachers who have some knowledge of kindergarten practice. (8)

#### 1890 - 1898

Prior to 1898 there were undoubtedly 'kindergartens' in operation in Christchurch. As early as 1892 the Lyttelton Times advertised that "The East Christchurch Kindergarten [would] open on Tuesday, February 2, in the Wesleyan Church Schoolroom, East Belt." (9)

In May of the same year a correspondent to the Lyttelton Times complained that the appointment of a Truant Officer would further encourage families to withdraw their children from state schools and enrol them in private schools such as that of

the Advance Thought sect who have opened really good kindergartens, for which only a very small fee is charged, and the steps that I hear are being taken for the establishment of from three to four free kindergarten schools in and around Christchurch. (10)

The establishment, operation and demise of these early kindergartens remains unclear; kindergartens which advertised their opening in January of one year usually failed to readvertise the following year, they were not required to be registered with any authority, and there was no system of registration or accreditation for kindergarten teachers.

By December 1895 however there were clearly several such institutions in operation. In 1895 the Lyttelton Times reported on an evening performance by the students of the "Excelsior Kindergarten and Day School", at which the children presented a cantata, grand march, various exercises and tableaux, and gave creditable performances with Indian Clubs; presumably the students of the "Day School" completed most of the programme!

(11) The same month the Lyttelton Times advertised that

The annual entertainment in connection with the Students of Truth Kindergarten and Day School will be held in the Social Hall on Friday evening next

and gave an account of the annual performance of the Addington Kindergarten the night before. These children presented a

similar programme to their peers at the Excelsior Kindergarten, but extended their repertoire to include nursery rhymes, and were rewarded with prizes and refreshments all round. The chairman, Rev. W. Bean, in his break-up speech, congratulated Miss Hockley on the rapid growth of the kindergarten. (12)

Nor was there a complete shortage of advocates for the kindergarten movement in the 1890s. "Duties", writing in 1891, pleaded for church-aided kindergartens to serve a three-fold need: to guide children, relieve mothers, and occupy well-off young women with time on their hands; high remuneration was not considered necessary for such work, it being a labour of love. (13) "Niva", writing the following year, presents a damning indictment of the failure of state education in New Zealand, including its responsibility for "the tendency which phrenologists know as the organ of destructiveness [to become] abnormally developed" but, fortunately, goes on to offer a glimmer of hope:

It is no good finding fault unless one can suggest a remedy, and the remedy, as far as the school education is concerned, lies in the full adoption of the system which the advanced thinkers of the present day are perceiving to be the system of the future - the kindergarten. This is the highest and fullest form of education now known, and it must be used until superseded, if necessary, by one still higher. It must, however, be carried out in the spirit of its founder, or else it degenerates in to what so many parents mistakenly believe it to be, viz, mere play. (14)

#### 1898 - 1905: THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

Perhaps "Niva" was resurrected to appear, once again, in the guise of "Froebelian", writing to the Lyttelton Times in 1898:

"Harmonious development" as Froebel calls his system....is simply used as a pleasant means of relieving the weary brains of the little beings who ought not to know mental fatigue. (15)

"Froebelian" is at pains to point out, however, that kindergartens are not merely play places, but meet children's basic rights as human beings to wholesome surroundings and a good education. (16) "Earo", writing in April of the same year, also extolled the kindergarten for children aged from two to seven years, and made reference to what has become an urban myth in education - that of the seven thousand children who had progressed through San Francisco's kindergartens to date, not one of whom had appeared in a police court. (17)

The minor flurry of letters and articles to do with kindergartens appearing in the Lyttelton Times during 1898 was prompted by the establishment of the Children's Aid Society, on June 2 1898. (18) Although Christchurch had its fair share of charitable organizations, none was specifically concerned with infants and young children. The Charitable Aid Board Orphanage was the nearest approximation at this time, with seventy-three "destitute children" in its care, (including twelve infants), but forty-three of these were boarded out, and it also supervised the placement of older children in industrial schools. (19) At the

end of 1898 there were only seven children in the North Canterbury Orphan Asylum at Lyttelton. (20)

On 14 July 1898 a large public meeting was held to "urge the claims of the Canterbury Children's Aid Society"; the sum of £100 was estimated as necessary to make a start. Mr O'Bryen Hoare outlined a central theme of the evening: the need for some society to "remove many children from our streets", to avoid their inevitable progression into a life of crime; he also made reference to children who "lived practically in the gutter", and

From information he had received.....at least forty children in Christchurch were living in degradation; and the fact that women were now taking a leading part in the reform augured well for the future success of the Society (Applause). (21)

Sister Frances was credited with the original idea of forming the society, it then being taken up by the Women's Institute.

Speakers suggested various roles for the society, including oversight of the strict enforcement of the Industrial Schools Act, acting as a presiding agency to co-ordinate the work of all similar societies, and the establishment of both a kindergarten and a creche; the Rev. A.C. Hoggins suggested one further aim: the education of women to provide the one thing the state could not supply - a mother's love. He then went on to suggest 2s 6d to 5s as a suitable range of prices to demonstrate sympathy with the society's aims. (22) Soon after this meeting the Lyttelton Times praised the work of the society in planning to establish "free kindergartens in the various suburbs, where young children

under the school age can be taught the beauty of cleanliness and orderly ways."

At the central office of the society periodical sewing meetings are already held, and material is being made up for children only; here, too, clothing is received to be made up for the proteges of the Society, whose benevolent work, it may be remarked, is carried out with the most careful discrimination. (23)

A primary aim of the Children's Aid Society was to agitate for the enforcement of the Industrial Schools Act, which allowed police the power to remove children from 'undesirable' homes. In its first year of operation the circumstances of thirty-four families (representing 117 children) were "investigated" by the society; neglect was found to be due to parental sexual immorality (thirty-three children), parental drunkenness (thirty-six children), prostitution (ten children) and extreme poverty (thirty-eight children). Only eleven cases were eventually reported to the police; three went to court, all discharged, one without conviction. In one case not investigated by the police, a thirteen year old girl subsequently became pregnant; in cases of cruelty to children the police were hindered by the lack of witnesses prepared to give evidence in public. The society therefore concluded that it "[had] been able to do little to counteract the evil influences upon the children in many of the homes". (24)

The free kindergarten project was, however, an initial success. Sydenham was chosen as "the scene of its operations", a suitable cottage was rented, and furniture was solicited. The perceived advantages of the kindergarten were clearly missionary:

In the first place, children under school age will be kept off the streets, and will be taught orderly and self-respecting habits; secondly, they will carry order and self-respect into their homes; and, thirdly, they will gain admission for the members of the Society into their homes, without causing the visitors to be regarded as intruders.

↑  
(25)

This third objective clearly suggests the lack of compunction the "members of the Society" aimed to have in their self-identified role as agents of social rescue. The idea too that by influencing children's habits they could also indirectly improve the habits of their negligent parents is also an interesting one, which was to appear again in later appeals for the establishment of kindergartens.

The kindergarten opened in the Acme Hall, 244 South Belt, on 21 November 1898, under the supervision of Mrs Bendely (26), who had operated a successful private kindergarten in Christchurch for many years. (27) Initially an average of fifteen children attended, aged from three years and under, and up to six years of age. Miss Westaway, the head teacher, and her assistants took the teaching role, which included visiting mothers in their homes, who reportedly expressed their gratitude at the relief the kindergarten afforded them. By July 1899 there were twenty-eight

children on the roll, with twenty-two <sup>in</sup> an average attendance, as well as two school-aged girls "unable to bear the strain of public school life". Clothing was sold to mothers for small sums and the cash used to buy material for more clothing. Miss Westaway's "thorough understanding and wise application of Froebel's principles" shaped the programme of the kindergarten and Miss Isherwood, her voluntary assistant, worked at the kindergarten "with a view to qualifying for the post of kindergarten teacher". Whether even Miss Westaway received some form of remuneration for her work is not recorded, but clearly the work of the society was primarily voluntary. (28)

Mrs Bendely's influence also extended to training. In January 1899 Miss Cooper advertised in the Educational column of the Lyttelton Times:

Sumner - Miss Cooper, pupil of Mrs Bendely, will open a kindergarten at Berry Street, Sumner, after the Christmas holidays. Pupils received as boarders. Miss Cooper, certificated Teacher of Music, will be at home at the Kindergarten, Berry Street, Sumner on and after Friday, the 3rd of February, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. (29)

In the same edition, Miss Sweet advertised the opening of her "Christchurch Kindergarten and Preparatory School" at "Haldon" in Montreal Street, the term to begin on February 1st. (30)

By mid 1900 the Children's Aid Society was flourishing. It had a committee of twenty, including Sister Frances, Mr Blank (the Education Board Truant Officer), Mrs Bendely and the Rev. A.C.

Hoggins, which met fortnightly in the City Council chambers. As well as its continued interest in the Industrial Schools Act, the Society's 1900 Annual Report was concerned with truancy, housing of the poor, the provision of playgrounds, neglected children, children selling newspapers and flowers on the streets late at night, clothing for the poor, and a state home for imbeciles. In addition to an average attendance of thirty-six children at the South Belt kindergarten, a second kindergarten had been opened in the Public Library in St Albans (then known as Knightstown) on August 28, 1899. A year later the average attendance at this school was thirty, although the school suffered from an absence of outdoor space; fortunately gifts of coal and wood were received for the newly installed fireplace. Mrs Bendely was particularly concerned with the case of two imbecile girls, aged six and twelve, attending the South Belt kindergarten, and the lack of a suitable home for their care. (31)

The benefits of the new kindergarten were extolled by "Sphinx" in a letter to the Lyttelton Times:

Like all young things.....it is both interesting and promising.....Mothers cannot fail to be pleased to have their children taught and trained, taken off their hands for four busy hours of the day, during which time they are in the hands of loving, gentle and clever women.....The delight of the children in marching, in singing, and in the various exercises is pleasant, indeed, to witness, and they are very apt.....I am more than ever convinced that not in letting young people run wild, in allowing them early to earn their living, shall we ever find the solution of any of the difficult problems of life; but in caring for them, guarding them, training them, watching over them as over the jewels that are very precious, and must be cut and polished and set to the very best advantage. (32)

At their first break-up, forty children from the St Albans kindergarten, aged from two to five years, performed marches, songs, calisthenics and action songs, and had prepared displays of paper work and woollen balls. Although the school starting age was still legally seven, many children started school at the age of five, and not long after the opening of the St Albans kindergarten the head master of St Albans school had written to the Children's Aid Society claiming that the kindergarten was accepting children already on the school roll, and that this was likely to interfere with their school attendance. In reply, the Society asserted its intention to accept no child of school age, or attending another school; children aged five or six were encouraged to attend public schools, sometimes being supplied with clothing, unless they were judged unfit to do so. (33) The pupils of Mrs Joyce's kindergarten in Lyttelton were aged up to seven, although their activities were much the same as their peers at St Albans - drill, mat-plaiting and clay modelling. (34)

Despite the early success of the kindergartens, the South Belt kindergarten closed at the end of 1900, due to lack of funds (35); the Indian famine and the war in South Africa had been suggested as reasons for a decline in donations to the Society from the public during 1900. (36) "Interested" wrote to the Lyttelton Times in 1901 mourning the closure of the South Belt kindergarten and urging the need for free municipal kindergartens

to make children's lives more joyful and allow parents to become "rested and refreshed". (37) In reality, many saw kindergartens as places to care for the children of mothers who in turn worked outside their homes, often caring for the children of others, thus solving the 'servant problem'. "S.S.P." not only argued for free kindergartens and creches for the children of working mothers, but for improved wages for these women besides:

Were the hard-working wives of working men so relieved [by the provision of creches] we should have no compunction in demanding that the fine lady who desires to shift her household duties on to other shoulders should pay her substitute adequate remuneration, and so open the way for women to logically demand equal pay for equal work. (38)

Despite the setback in Sydenham, the St Albans kindergarten continued. A correspondent to the Lyttelton Times in 1902, aptly entitled "Nil desperandum", expressed thanks for gifts of coal, wood and coloured paper, and described the fifty to sixty children enrolled there as being

trained in love, cleanliness, order, obedience, and, through Froebel's methods, are being well prepared to take a place in our public schools. (39)

"A.Z.", writing the same month, gave the schools opening hours as 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and noted "it is very refreshing to know that a quiet, unpretentious work is being done by a few energetic young ladies". (40)

However the annual report of the Children's Aid Society in September 1903 described a slightly less successful operation. The roll stood at forty-four children, aged from three to five

years, with about thirty-five children attending; a lack of assistants was also noted: "It is earnestly wished that young ladies of leisure could see their way to help in so good a work". (41) Items such as coal and clothing had once again been gratefully received. As well as the kindergarten, the annual report was once again concerned with drunkenness, the mentally defective, and the Police and their enforcement of the Industrial Schools Act, along with adoption, a cottage home, and a deputation to the Premier, led by the Rev. Hoggins. (42) The Cyclopaedia of New Zealand recorded the following description of the Knightstown school in 1903:

The St Albans Free Kindergarten continues to flourish. It is in charge of Miss Scholfield, who has four assistants, and the attendance is between fifty and sixty, the pupils ranging from two or three to five years of age. The usefulness of the institution is proved by the progress of the children, who, besides being instructed in the use of the school appliances, are taught to walk, march, sing, and take exercise in other approved forms. The Children's Aid Society carries on its work in connection with this school, and supplies children's clothes where needed, but these are paid for by the mothers. (43)

By March 1904 the St Albans kindergarten too was facing difficulties and in an editorial in October the same year the Lyttelton Times suggested that the State should support the work of the Society by direct financial aid, such as that being sought by the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association. (44) Eventually the government was forthcoming with a grant of 30s per child, based on an enrolment of forty-five children. (45) Although Mrs Bendely had estimated the cost of operating the kindergarten at



about £70 per annum, including rent of the building and payment of the head teacher, there was also a growing concern during 1904 that a kindergarten was not the most appropriate way for the Society to meet its objects. In an interview given to the Lyttelton Times in October 1904 Mrs Bendely

went on to say that the society had given every inducement to the poor to send their children to the kindergarten at St Albans, but the response had been mainly from poor parents who had some consideration for their children. The poor and degraded parents would not allow their children to attend. (46)

During 1904 debate was rising within the Children's Aid Society over a proposal to close the kindergarten in favour of an Emergency Home, along the lines of the cottage homes then being established in Great Britain. (47) On 10 January 1905 a cottage in Grafton Street was opened by the Society to provide emergency care for children from birth to 10 years of age. Lady Plunket agreed to become Patroness of the Society and formally opened the cottage home later that year, but it continued to require considerable support from public donations. (48) Eventually, despite the government's contribution, the Society was unable to sustain both projects and Christchurch's second free kindergarten closed on 25 August 1905, with the roll at fifty-six. (49)

(The Children's Aid Society eventually met its demise too. At a meeting on July 1 1907, trustees were appointed to dispose of the funds of the Society, and in June 1910 the trustees of the Society resolved

having due regard to the spirit and aims of the Society,

[to] offer to the Council of the Convalescent Cottage for Children at New Brighton the whole of the aforesaid fund, some £669. (50)

1906 - 1911: THE CHRISTCHURCH KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION AND THE CHRISTCHURCH FREE KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION

From mid-1906 there were once again plans afoot in Christchurch to provide free kindergartens. A meeting of women teachers and others interested in kindergarten work was held to form an association to spread the principles of the kindergarten method, and ultimately to establish a training institution for kindergarten teachers. The Rev. A.C. Hoggins, in the chair, stated that

such an organisation was desirable in the interests of the whole country, on account of the importance of proper education in elevating the standard of national efficiency by diminishing crime and ignorance. (51)

At its first annual meeting a year later, little practical progress had been made, but the Rev. J. MacKenzie, presiding, neatly summarized the position of the Association:

[He] said that the formation of the Association had come about by the desire of a large number of private kindergartens in Christchurch to come into closer contact....The ideal of the Association was to establish free kindergartens in Christchurch with a training college attached....The weight of the undertaking must fall on the ladies, and the question was whether they had sufficient conviction, power of self-sacrifice and enthusiasm to pull it through. (52)

Correspondence was received from the Dunedin and Wellington Free Kindergarten Associations, the Dunedin Association describing its income of £484 as derived from subscriptions (£176), a special Government grant for furniture (£60), Government capitation (£

126), entertainment (£43), and students' fees (£10). The Christchurch Association was clear that it wished to deal with children under school age and the meeting resolved to call a public meeting of those interested in taking practical steps towards establishing a free kindergarten school in Christchurch. (53) Secretary of the Association was Miss R. Old, head teacher of Te Whare Kindergarten in Hereford Street. At their break-up in 1909, pupils of Te Whare not only performed the customary carols, action songs and drill, but also presented recitations and country dances. Prizes were distributed for general progress, gardening, sewing, elocution and attendance, as well as for composition and writing; Miss Old's pupils were evidently receiving a thorough introduction to school life and work. (54)

At about the same time, the Lyttelton Times first records the existence of 'Sunbeam' Kindergarten in St Albans, by way of a letter from its "Principal", Miss Emily Schofield, expressing thanks for the donations of a tree and treats for the children's Christmas party. (55)

Whether either of these kindergartens operated under the auspices of the Christchurch Kindergarten Association is not entirely clear. In 1910 the Lyttelton Times received a letter from one Kate Anderson, which referred to the "Sunbeam School" in the "Old Library Rooms, Crescent Road, St Albans" as having been operating for 10 years under the "same capable guidance", and she names Mrs

Bendely and Miss Scholfield ~~is~~ as those in charge. (56) She is obviously referring to a resurrection of the Children's Aid Society's St Albans Kindergarten, opened in the Knightstown Library under Mrs Bendely's guidance, but it seems that this later incarnation did not operate as a free kindergarten; her letter refers to a shortness of funds facing the Sunbeam school, so that the children were required to pay 6d a week. (57)

The same month as this letter appeared, another public meeting was held to discuss free kindergartens, at Te Whare in Hereford Street. The meeting discussed the projected formation of a Free Kindergarten Association, differing in scope from the Kindergarten Association now existing but in nowise conflicting with it. (58)

The objects of the two association, however, appear to have been almost identical:

.....to meet a need long felt by all who were interested in the education of the less fortunate classes.....to establish a large free kindergarten and training school for teachers. (59)

Miss Hurse, who had spoken at this meeting, was back at Te Whare one month later to be elected treasurer of the Kindergarten Association at its fourth annual meeting. Mr J.C. Anderson, whose wife (or himself, if misprinted) had spoken so stirringly one month earlier at the meeting to form a Free Kindergarten Association, was also on hand at the existing Kindergarten Association's annual meeting to improvise "a diverting sketch". The Association raised its subscriptions to 2s a year for members and 3s a year for associates in 1911, but despite its commitment

to the opening of a free kindergarten, no such scheme had been achieved by the Association in its four year history, and it remained a Kindergarten Association in name and philosophy only. (60)

1911 - 1914: THE CHRISTCHURCH CRECHE AND KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION AND THE NORMAL SCHOOL KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT

At a public meeting in May 1911 free kindergartens for Christchurch were once again the topic. At this meeting, however, the chair was taken by Mr T.E. Taylor, then Mayor of Christchurch, and the drive behind the proposal came from his wife, Elizabeth. Mrs Taylor not only suggested a kindergarten for three to five years-olds, but advocated the need for a creche to relieve mothers and train young women for future motherhood. The old Sydenham Workingmen's Club building was suggested as a possible site, and a committee was established to look into the proposal (61); so began the Christchurch Creche and Kindergarten Association.

The contribution of Mrs T.E. Taylor to the success of the Association cannot be under estimated. She was its first President, and remained so until 1921. Her husband, a fervent socialist and temperance advocate, was the popular and energetic Mayor of Christchurch at this time, as well as its Member of Parliament; Christchurch was shocked at his death following abdominal surgery in July 1911, aged only forty-eight. (62)

Taylor was viewed as something of a radical for his day, and he undoubtedly supported his wife's work; in June 1911 he had himself advocated training for domestic servants. (63) Mrs Taylor was guaranteed a high profile in Christchurch affairs and she seems to have capitalized on it effectively.

At their committee meeting in June 1911 the question of re-opening the recently closed Sunbeam kindergarten arose. The Association was also thoroughly committed to the establishment of a creche and it was suggested that alterations to the Sunbeam building might make this possible as well. With regard to the Sydenham project, there was some concern that by taking on such a major project at first, their scheme might be crippled at the outset. Eventually the meeting resolved to investigate the Sunbeam project and hold a further public meeting, as well as approaching "prominent citizens".

A hearty vote of thanks was passed to Mrs Taylor for her energetic efforts, and gratification was expressed that the wife of the Mayor should lead in movements of reform. (64)

The fact that 1911 was Coronation Year, and Coronation Day was soon approaching, did not escape the committee. Although they reaffirmed their support for a Home for Incurables as the Coronation Memorial, the committee were keen to link their efforts to the Coronation timeframe to attract public sympathy, and, no doubt, donations. (65) Mrs Taylor's public profile

ensured regular newspaper coverage of her project and in an interview in June 1911 she spoke at length of the work of the Association's committee to date. Mrs Taylor said that it was hoped to employ a Karitane nurse to run the creche, as well as a trained kindergarten teacher, but that overlapping with the primary system would be prevented. Although the Association hoped to have a creche or kindergarten in every thickly populated district, a central creche was the first priority. She also assured the Lyttelton Times that "the committee was working hard with members of the old Kindergarten Association" and that it was not intended for the institutions to be charitable. The size of the new Association was a force to be reckoned with. Mrs Taylor numbered the founding committee at "eighty ladies", subsequently divided in General, Finance and Entertainments committees; the Finance Committee planned to canvass most of Christchurch for donations after the planned public meeting and Coronation festivities. (66) (On the day of this interview, Mr Taylor was in attendance at the opening of the new children's ward at Christchurch hospital, for which "certain ladies" had canvassed donations totalling £4536.) (67) The Entertainments committee were contemplating "a huge fancy dress pageant, which would probably extend over three evenings or afternoons" as well as a production of Little Lord Fauntleroy. (68)

At the same time as the new Association was getting off the ground, Kindergarten was seeing a resurgence at Christchurch

Training College. Proposals were afoot to add a kindergarten and roof garden to the Normal School, including a main hall which could be divided internally, with smaller classrooms to one side, allowing teachers to work with individual children. The lack of outdoor space at the Normal School was a problem, but the roof garden proposal would remedy this in a small way.

The flat roof would not improve the architectural beauties of the building, but in view of the utility of such a garden the other matter was a small consideration. (69)

Mr C.H. Opie, Chairman of the North Canterbury Education Board, noted that

The question of kindergarten work was prominently before the public at the present time, and it was hoped that the building proposed would serve as a model for the future conduct of such work....[however] "It must be clear," said Mr Opie, "that the proposal is not for a kindergarten creche. The institution will be purely pedagogical." (70)

On the 19th of the same month, the board received approval from the Minister of Education to establish a kindergarten class at the Training College, including the appointment of an additional staff member, at Grade 2. (71)

As indicated by Mrs Taylor in her interview, the existing Kindergarten Association continued to convene as well. However it was the Creche and Kindergarten Association that held a meeting on July 12 with "lady teachers" from Christchurch to plan a carnival, and to propose to the Education Board, Teachers Institute and Minister of Education

(1) That this meeting of lady teachers affirms that it is desirable that kindergartens for children under five years of age should be attached to every city and suburban public

school.

(2) That until such kindergärten schools are established it is desirable that kindergarten occupations should be afforded in the creches for children under five years of age.

(3) That no children except those physically or mentally defective should be kept in the creche kindergartens over the age of five years. (72)

At the annual meeting of "subscribers to Te Whare Kindergarten", presumably many of whom were members of the Kindergarten Association, Mrs Taylor spoke concerning the proposed creche kindergartens, and, later that month, the Creche and Kindergarten Association met with the Headmasters Association, urging kindergartens attached to every city school. (73)

By now the Sunbeam kindergarten had been taken over by the Association and they were also contemplating an adjacent cottage as suitable for a creche. The Association also hoped to rent cottages adjacent to the primary schools at Woolston, St Albans and Sydenham for their projects. (73) <sup>(Ibid.)</sup>

The death of T.E. Taylor in July 1911 cast a shadow over the Creche and Kindergarten Association. Some fifty thousand people had attended his funeral and ninety parents and supporters of the Association attended a meeting in August to offer their commiserations to Mrs Taylor. But efforts to reopen the closed Sunbeam kindergarten continued nevertheless. (74) A meeting was held in the Sunbeam schoolroom in mid-August to forge a preliminary plan for its opening. Five days later, the

Association met again and its constitution was adopted. Two honorary solicitors and two honorary physicians were appointed, and subscriptions were set at one guinea for honorary members, 5s for active members, and 2s 6d for associates. It was resolved to register the Association, and that

The object of the Association shall be the establishment of creches and free kindergartens in Christchurch and surrounding districts.....The age limit of children attending the kindergartens shall be five years. (75)

By now the proposed cottage at Woolston had been found "unsuitable for children", but the Sunbeam school would re-open in September to cater for "forty little ones", and a festival was planned for September 28 to 30. (76)

A major pursuit of the members of the Association was the convening of public meetings in Christchurch's various suburbs to spread the word concerning creches and kindergartens and to gauge support for their establishment locally. At one such meeting, at Addington, the 'servant problem' arose again.

Mesdames Wells and Chilton, members of the Christchurch executive.....gave an earnest appeal for help to mothers who were over-burdened through the dearth of home-helps. (77)

In September 1911 the Lyttelton Times intimated the imminent opening of the Sunbeam kindergarten and described its history: six years from 1898 under the auspices of the Children's Aid Society, then four years run by private subscriptions and small payments from parents. At the end of 1910 the kindergarten had

been offered to the Christchurch Kindergarten Association with £100 paid off, the Association having been working for five years to raise the standard of private kindergartens and establish free kindergarten schools. The kindergarten would now be re-opened by the Christchurch Creche and Kindergarten Association, who were hoping to secure capitation of £2 per head, then being offered by the Government to free kindergartens, provided that an equal sum was raised locally. The Association was seeking a qualified teacher for Sunbeam and eventually hoped to establish a creche and/or kindergarten in every district as a relief to mothers and to keep children off the streets. (78) Two days later the newspaper reported the appointment of Miss Hull, "a highly trained English kindergarten teacher" whose testimonials were of "a very high order"; Christchurch's third free kindergarten opened for business on 25 September, 1911. (79)

The new Kindergarten department at the Normal School was opened on 2 October 1911, with about thirty children enrolled. Mr Watkins, principal of the Training College was emphatic on the point that "the kindergarten was in no sense a creche".

The proper work would be undertaken with such modifications as would require to be made to suit New Zealand conditions. The work would be along the recognised Flavellian line that play was the most serious occupation of children. (80)

The assistance of the Education Board was also sought by the Creche and Kindergarten Association in October 1911. They sought

permission to erect a kindergarten building on the Woolston school site, as well as the use of two rooms in the master's residence. (81) The question of dual control of the facility arose and this was finally given as the official reason for declining the proposal, but there appear to have been other sentiments behind the rejection as well.

Mr Opie said that children of three years of age should not be shut up in school and kept at kindergarten work, and on his motion it was agreed that the Board could not see its way to grant a request to establish a creche and kindergarten under separate management. (82)

Undaunted, the Association continued to hold its monthly meetings in the suburbs to canvass support for local kindergartens: Richmond, Sydenham, Woolston and Addington formed local committees and a building was secured in Phillipstown. (83) The Phillipstown committee resolved to open its school at the beginning of November in the Primitive Methodist Church in St Asaph Street, where the trustees of the church had been most generous. (84) The Association was also planning to borrow a tent to run a creche at the A&P show; this 'tent' eventually became two large marquees, with a Mother's Rest and Creche, charging 6d per hour, and 6d to mind coats; toys, biscuits and picture books had been donated. (85)

↓ In December the Sydenham branch began enrolling children for a proposed kindergarten in the Hastings Street Hall. Mrs Taylor appealed to parents for donations, citing the projected costs of running the kindergarten as £120 per annum for teachers' salaries, £30 for rent of a room and a further £30 per annum

for cleaning, fires, and so on. Parents were urged to send their children regularly, so that the Department of Education subsidy might be claimed; the children were further encouraged with a present from the Christmas tree. (86)

1912 saw the Association continue to strengthen. Each kindergarten was by now run by a local committee, responsible for rent and upkeep; the executive committee of the Association took legal responsibility, met the cost of teachers' (and lecturers') salaries and claimed the kindergarten capitation from the Department of Education. (87) St Albans was granted capitation in January 1912, but Phillipstown kindergarten required some upgrading. (88) The central committee, at its June meeting, received a favourable report from "Mr Gill, Inspector of Schools" and capitation was granted, backdated to 1st January at Phillipstown and Sydenham. (89) In March 1912 the roll at St Albans stood at fifty-one, and at Phillipstown it was fifty-six; Sydenham, only four months after first receiving enrolments, had over eighty children on the roll. The Lyttelton Times gives an excellent description of the kind of work carried out in the Association's kindergartens:

During an hour spent by the reporter in the school the children sang a morning hymn, a little song in which they wished their teacher "Good morning," and a third in which each child solemnly shook hands with a neighbour. A few simple calisthenic exercises followed, after which the weather and the properties of various kinds of fruit formed subjects for a sort of informal discussion. Then came the arrangement in vases, by the pupils, of flowers they had brought for the teacher, after which the school resolved itself into four classes, one engaged in plasticene

modelling, another in constructing model gardens, with trays of sand, sticks to make fences, and flowers to "plant," a third, for very tiny children, in building with blocks, and a fourth in the engrossing task of drawing a "pig-house with three pigs." The school then reassembled for a series of action songs, in which various mites took upon themselves the characters of "birdies," and built nests, fed the little birds, and "flew" about with great pantomimic success. The play-time interval, succeeded by morning lunch, completed the first hour of the school day.

Especial attention is paid to inculcating habits of courtesy, politeness and consideration for others, and in this respect, even were nothing else taught, the kindergarten is justifying its existence. (90)

The difficulties under which the school's programme operated are described in the same article. These were chiefly financial, the school requiring a carpet square, some heating arrangements for winter, and improvements to the sanitary arrangements; the piano is described as "probably the oldest and worst in use anywhere in the civilised world." (91) The real point of the article however lies in its closing paragraph - the convening of a public meeting to organise a fundraising bazaar, aiming to raise £100; Mrs Taylor could not have had a better advertisement for the meeting had she written it herself!

From 1912 onwards the activities of the Association are also notable for their interest in the federation of New Zealand's four Kindergarten Associations, their commitment to kindergarten teacher training, and their encouragement of the increasing public feeling that the government should increase its role in supporting the kindergarten movement. The Christchurch Creche and Kindergarten Association certainly contemplated the formation of

a Free Kindergarten Association, (91) and the first Kindergarten Association conference, held in Dunedin in October 1912, passed a motion regarding the desirability of federating the four municipal associations (in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin). However the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union was not formed until delegates met again in Wellington the following year, (nor did it meet again until 1920, World War I having intervened). (92)

The Association also delegated four members of their central committee to wait upon the Education Commission, led by Mark Cohen, in 1912. Mesdames Taylor and Langford, and Misses Inkpen and Old were to present the Association's views. (93) Mrs Langford was successful in gaining an audience with the Commission, and particularly urged the training of kindergarten teachers.

The head teacher at the St Albans Kindergarten had a special training in an English school. The one at the Sydenham school was trained by a certificated kindergartener in Wellington, and the one at Phillipstown was trained by a kindergarten teacher here. These head teachers each have several students under their control. The students are moved from school to school so as to get an all-round training. Then, we have four lecturers who teach these students. (94)

(It is interesting that Cohen himself was a long-time supporter of kindergartens, having written to the Education Committee in 1887 stating "I am an ardent advocate of the kindergarten system, which I hope yet to see made the initial grade of our education scheme." (95)) Miss Hull, the Association's original head

teacher at Sunbeam, was appointed "trainer" to the Association in 1913, at a remuneration of £150 per annum (96); two further students had been appointed at Sunbeam at the beginning of 1913. (97) By the end of 1913 the possibility of state training and certification of kindergarten teachers had been suggested by none other than the Minister of Education, who had given the idea his support. (98) Lectures had been given at Mothers' Guild meetings on health subjects and the care of children for some time, and in 1914 the Association arranged for Misses Hull and Inkpen to give two hour lectures three times a week at the Y.M.C.A. for those wishing to train as kindergarten teachers. (99) At about this time the Lyttelton Times also records Mrs Taylor's receipt of a letter from George Hogben, Inspector-General, stating that the syllabus arranged by the Department for the training of kindergarten teachers was framed on the one drawn up by Miss Inkpen in 1912. (100) By the end of 1914 agreement was reached between the Association, representatives of other Kindergarten Associations and the government, and a Government Kindergarten Certificate was created. (101) In early 1914, when Sunbeam and Phillipstown kindergartens each had a staff of four, the staff included probationers, who received their lectures at the Y.M.C.A. and the School of Art free, through the generosity of the Association; in order to become a probationer, the Association demanded that the applicant be the winner of a Senior free place, and have at least two years work experience in a kindergarten. (102)



Finance remained a preoccupation as well, and efforts to gain government support were continual. By August 1912 the Association had received £167 from the government, including £44 as an equipment grant (103); although enrolled attendance now totalled over 180 children, actual attendance, on which capitation payments were based, must have been considerably lower. At the annual meeting of the Phillipstown branch, also in August, the need for the government to take up the kindergarten movement was noted; fundraising still represented the chief source of income for the Association. (104) At the Association's annual meeting the following month, the continuing success of the Association was noted by the Mayor of Christchurch, Mr Holland. He said "the Association was a monument to the capability of women, and showed what they could do without the assistance of men." (105) As well as the operation of the three kindergartens, the success of the monthly Mothers' Guild meetings was noted, and plans were outlined for an approach to the City Council regarding a daily or weekly creche to suit the needs of "widowers or of women who were in employment." (106)

For an association constantly appealing to others for financial support, it was in comparatively good health, with a credit balance of over £308. It also had the ongoing assistance of Mrs Taylor as President and Miss Schmidt, kindergarten mistress at the Normal School, who sat on its education committee (107);

Miss Inkpen, also on the education committee, had been appointed Inspector to the Association, (by the Association), and her annual report regarding the operation of Sunbeam kindergarten was thoroughly affirmative. (108) Yet the appeal for government assistance went on. The Mayor, speaking at the Christmas party at the Phillipstown kindergarten, again urged state aid and Mrs Taylor repeated her plea for regular attendance to attract a larger government grant. Phillipstown by now had an average attendance of fifty children, and it was hoped to move the kindergarten to the Leyden Street Congregational Hall, "which had the great advantage of a playground." (109)

The fundraising continued through 1913, initially with a street appeal which only raised a disappointing £186. (110) At a meeting in February 1913 the committee resolved to hold yet another public meeting, this time to form a Fathers' Guild, to attend to sanitation, lighting, gardening, picture-framing and other such male pursuits. This group would join the existing Sewing committee, Entertainments Guild, and the Mothers' Guild, which was responsible for providing "instructive and amusing afternoons," while students of the Association cared for the children. (111) At one such meeting, at Sydenham (now known as the Sydenham Free Kindergarten Association), Nurse Maude spoke to the forty to fifty mothers present concerning their "duty to the nation" by carefully supervising the health and morals of their children. (112)

Meanwhile the demand for creche and kindergarten facilities grew steadily. In March there were one hundred children on the roll at Hastings Street in Sydenham, with twenty waiting (113), but by October the Association was still only investigating the possibility of a new kindergarten in Colombo Street. (114)

Links with other charitable associations were also a feature of the Creche and Kindergarten Association. Mrs Taylor and Miss Olds represented the Association at the conference for the Society for the Health of Women and children (115), and in July 1913 Mrs Taylor led the long-planned deputation to the Mayor, which included representatives of the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, the Methodist Deaconesses Home, the Women's Institute, the Plunket Society, the Creche and Kindergarten Association and the Society for the Protection of Women and Children. The deputation appealed for the establishment of a municipal creche in a suitable house, on the understanding that it would not be a charitable institution; in this they were supported by the Director of Christchurch Technical Institute, who felt that it would be a useful facility for students at the Institute's Girls' Hostel, presumably for mothercraft lessons. The Mayor was most sympathetic, but pleaded the difficulty of existing financial strain on the Council's resources and pointed out the large number of other appeals he had received; he suggested that the ladies approach the Hospital and Charitable Aid Board and, through them, make claim on Council monies. (116)

The second annual meeting of the Creche and Kindergarten Association in September 1913 received a glowing report of the Association's second year of operations. Finances were satisfactory and considerable support was being received from the Community. At the same meeting Miss Richmond read a paper concerning the necessity for women to think for themselves:

Women must not be too lazy or too cowardly to manage their own kindergartens over which they should always exercise full control. Girls should be trained to be queens, not copyists. (117)

Mrs Taylor was also thanked once again for her contribution to the Association:

During the discussion, Miss M. Hall heartily congratulated Mrs Taylor on the large gathering and the general interest taken in the Association's affairs. She said that great credit was due to Mrs Taylor for her persistency.....and for the graceful way in which she conducted the meetings of members. (118)

By mid-1914 the Association's three kindergartens were all thriving; Sunbeam had an average attendance of thirty-seven, Phillipstown averaged fifty, and at Sydenham attendance averaged fifty-seven children per day. Mr Gill, Wellington's Inspector of Kindergartens, had visited in April 1914 and remarked favourably on the work of Christchurch's three free kindergartens. (119)

Although it falls outside the timeframe of this essay, a brief summary of the later work of the Christchurch Creche and

Kindergarten Association is interesting, especially as its forerunners had not fared so well. By 1923 there were five free kindergartens in Christchurch being run by the Association; by 1950 there were twenty-two. In 1957, the Christchurch Creche and Kindergarten Association became the Christchurch Free Kindergarten Association, eventually affiliating with other regional Associations until it finally became part of the Canterbury-Westland Free Kindergarten Union. In 1961 the Christchurch Association celebrated its fiftieth anniversary by opening a new kindergarten in Cornwall street, also known as 'Sunbeam', on the site of the original Sunbeam kindergarten. (120)

Although this essay covers only one city, and a limited timespan, the main themes of the beginnings of early childhood care and education in New Zealand are evident. The way in which the Training College in Christchurch insisted that its kindergarten department was "purely pedagogical" demonstrates the roots of the division between 'caring for' and 'educating' children which led to later distinctions between kindergartens and childcare. The belief too that the care of children, particularly infants, should be funded, at least partly, by charity continued for several decades; dollar for dollar subsidies for the establishment of kindergartens continued until well into the 1970s, and parent's fees still represent the chief source of income for childcare centres. This issue is related to the

belief that the work of caring for children is of low economic value, reflected, even in 1912, in the salaries of kindergarten and creche workers; not only is caring for young children a labour of love, it was, and is, believed to be an excellent preparation for motherhood. Agitation for increased community and state responsibility for the provision of services in early childhood has also continued since the first efforts of organisations such as the Children's Aid Society, and it will not be until the 1990s that a realistic level of funding is attempted. Fundamental to all these early efforts however was the belief, also still prevalent today, that by influencing the child during their most formative years, society of the present, as well as the future, can be shaped and changed. The founders of the early childhood movement in New Zealand genuinely cared for young children and their families and believed that creches and kindergartens were the answer to any number of social perils.

Clearly however, even as the numbers of children attending free kindergartens in Christchurch prior to 1914 grew, it cannot have been possible that all the pre-schoolers requiring extra-familial care were catered for by three free kindergartens. Although there were undoubtedly private kindergartens continuing in operation, some perhaps opened by students of the Creche and Kindergarten Association, a wide variety of informal arrangements would have continued to be the mainstay of pre-school care. Yet

as the numbers of users of primary education increased sharply when free education became available, so too did the demand for free kindergartens.

The enthusiasm of the early advocates of creches and kindergartens cannot be underestimated. The first efforts to provide creches and kindergartens were either schools established by true enthusiasts for kindergarten methods, or, as mainly described in this essay, the work of genuinely motivated agents of social rescue. Children, and their families, were educated, socialised, clothed and cared for by committees of well-meaning ladies who were concerned for the social and economic conditions of young children, the health of their mothers, and the future shape of society.

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