



KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

An official
publication of the
New Zealand Free
Kindergarten Union

July 1976



AS I SEE IT

My attendance at the A.P.A. Conference has given me the opportunity to make some of those comparisons (always described as odious) between the Australian and New Zealand services as I saw them.

The first major difference is that in the main pre-school services are part of the Health portfolio. The second and by far the greatest difference is the fact that each of the seven states of Australia controls its own education system. This confuses the scene somewhat and in speaking to delegates at the conference one had to always glance at the name tag to identify the home state of the speaker before making a comment. To say that confusion reigns supreme in my mind would be an understatement.

After the conference I spent some time in Tasmania with my sister. I was able to visit her daughter's school with her because Tasmania's school holidays commence when the rest of Australia complete their holidays. No one was able to tell me why the holidays were so late, but someone commented, "We always do the opposite to the mainland, mate." For whatever reason they do it, it did give me the opportunity to visit a kindergarten attached to my niece's school.

Although physically attached to the school, it had nothing to do with the school. This was in contrast to the pre-primaries which a South Australian delegate told me about. Children in all states commence school some time during their sixth year. Depending on the date of their birthday they could be five years 11 months old when their formal education commences. As in South Australia children from four years eight months on could attend a pre-primary centre. As readers must now realise, comparisons are not only odious, but an impossibility.

Australia is obviously searching for a more uniform system of education and it would appear after much discussion that they would prefer to come under the wing of the Education portfolio. New Zealand may already have what they are looking for. As always, time alone will tell.

PATRICIA M. LOCKHART,
Editor.

The New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union

is a body which consists of and co-ordinates kindergarten associations throughout New Zealand working in the interests of kindergarten.

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Around and About

FRANKLIN

Mrs Lockhart spent a weekend in April as the guest of the Franklin Free Kindergarten Association. During her stay she officially opened two new kindergartens: Park Estate in Papakura and Homai in Manurewa. Both these kindergartens were designed by a private architect and incorporated the concept of two separate playrooms joined together by the staffroom. Homai Kindergarten has its full roll of 80 children attending and we are waiting for permission from the Department to begin a special group of blind/deaf children.

On the Sunday we toured the whole of the Franklin area which covers both rural and urban areas. Along with the housing explosions in Manurewa and Wiri we have inherited the associated problems of insufficient pre-school facilities. At the official opening of Homai Kindergarten the Deputy Mayor of Manakau spoke of the population growth from 40,000 to 80,000 in 10 years, and stated that the average age in Manurewa is 17. In Manurewa West alone this year 1,500 sections are to be opened up for building.

Members of the Management Committee thoroughly enjoyed Mrs Lockhart's company at a dinner on the Saturday night. We feel that the visit was an unqualified success and extend our thanks to her for a most enjoyable weekend.

—Glenise Rolfe.

BALCLUTHA

After five years hard work by the Establishment Committee it was a great thrill to see the Rosebank Kindergarten finally completed. The building was officially opened by Mrs K. D. Lockhart on the afternoon of 14 February. Mrs Lockhart then stayed on to help us celebrate the event at a cabaret held in the evening.

The kindergarten is situated on school grounds and the close liaison between school and kindergarten is most encouraging.

—Barbara Watt.

HAMILTON

Both Insoll and Grandview Kindergartens were officially opened by Mrs K. D. Lockhart on Saturday, 24 April. Following the ceremony, Hamilton Association invited Associations to an informal dinner at the home of Mrs Shirley Muir, where Mrs Lockhart was staying.

It was a great opportunity for surrounding Associations to meet Mrs Lockhart and a very pleasant and informal evening was held.

—S. L. Clark.

ASHBURTON

The Thomas Street Kindergarten which is at present under construction will be Ashburton's fifth kindergarten. The establishment committee was formed in July 1973. Since that time \$7000 has been raised by various fund raising activities and donations. Catering for a variety of functions has provided us with most of our money. In addition we have held an Annual Garden Party, a hair fashion evening, shop days, cake stalls, run raffles, sold kindy kid T-shirts and tied thousands of meat tickets. At present a recipe book, Family Favourites, is being printed.

We are now looking forward to the completion and opening of our building which we hope will be ready for occupation at the beginning of the third term.

—Thomas Street Establishment Committee.

UNION OFFICE

4th Floor Education House West Block,
Willis Street, Wellington.

ANNUAL RENTAL: \$1337.00.

AREA: 382 square feet.

OCCUPIED: 11 October 1975.

CARPET: Teal.

FURNITURE: Four chairs covered in ginger

wool, coffee table, heater, two work tables 8ft × 3ft and 5ft × 3ft, desk, filing cabinets, two 3ft × 6ft storage cabinets with shelves, and coat cupboard.

EQUIPMENT: Gestetner, typewriter, photocopier, calculator, and clock presented by Napier Association.

The office is positioned to receive the maximum sun and has a pleasant outlook to the west. The executive met there for the first time on 5 March 1976. The walls which are a pale teal colour make it a very restful office. At the present time workmen are still completing the rest of the fourth floor and there is a great deal of noise which the secretary has to contend with. It will be some time before this ceases because other floors in the building are also to be completed.

We are hopeful of acquiring at least one picture of quality to hang and when this has been done our office will, at long last, be complete. It is wonderful to have a permanent home of our own and the Union is grateful to the many people who made it a reality.



Back Row:

Mesdames Mary Collier (ward 5), Gaenor Logan (ward 8), June Davey (ward 7), Joyce Miller (ward 6), Betty Van Der Werff (ward 2), Edie Martin (ward 3), Bernice Lindegren (secretary).

Front Row:

Mr Peter Bussell (ward 4), Mrs Shirley Muir (vice-president), Mrs Pat Lockhart (president), Miss Laura Ingram (immediate past president), Mr Ken Hayr (ward 1).

A.P.A. Conference: Refreshing! Thought Provoking!

February—Decision to register; April—Air tickets in my possession; mid-May—Why did I decide to go?; May 21—What did I think of the Conference?

The sessions selected, and the visit to the Institute of Early Childhood Development (formerly the Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers' College, which I had visited), meeting old friends and making new ones, were all very rewarding. I was pleased to be one of the 780 people representing a vast range of professional and personal interest in early childhood education.

The sessions I selected were "Child with a Handicap", "Communication Between Parents and Teachers", "Research Reports and Papers", "Learning in the Early Years", "For Teacher Educators", "Community Based Childrens Service Groups", in addition to the opening, closing and evening sessions. To comment fully on the above papers would involve writing a book!

I was full of admiration for Professor W. Lett's skill in combining role playing and discussion with a large group of people in the session "Communication Between Parents and Teachers". Honestly, I have always felt role playing was not my thing, but after that experience my feelings were reversed. Dr Tessa Blackstone, speaking about parent participation, raised the following points—the assumption that the teacher knows best; parents as active participants, not passive; nursery education is suited for parent involvement because children are taken and collected; the curriculum is flexible and attendance is not compulsory. While I enjoyed all the sessions, the two most exciting speakers were Dr Lilian Katz and Dr Patricia Minuchin.

On teacher education, Dr Minuchin spoke of the problem of establishing some excellence in standards and assessing the work of young teachers. The concept of competency-based education has resulted in lots of paper and thus turned into a complicated process. We must understand the learner, the learning process, and course work should include field experiences related to social problems, mores and customs. The teacher must be knowledgeable about the educational environment, how to set up such an environment for learning, working with adults, parents and assistants in the school setting. The young teachers want to be actively involved in their own learning and this has changed some of the ways we teach our students, i.e. involving them in experiential activities.

Dr Katz, in her paper "Teachers in Pre-schools Today", highlighted our concerns—the

correlation that the younger the child you work with, the less training you need; lesser salary and status but work longer hours. Most students enter the field by focusing on (a) children, (b) curriculum, (c) philosophy and/or goals. Teachers are all people whose day to day assignments involve them with children, and the younger the child the greater the range of functions the adults must be responsible for. The relationships of children and adults seem to fall into two types of programmes—(a) programmes which are very nice, with well-equipped adults who are friendly, warm, pleasant, and children are having fun. Children in this programme might look at the adults and say "Is there anyone at home?"; and (b) children engaged in routine tasks, going through routine tasks, may say "There's nobody home". Goals for early childhood education help children find themselves, but neither programmes (a) or (b) pay attention to the development of the intellect. Enjoyment is not a proper goal of education. The goal of education is to catch the learner's mind and if you succeed then the learner finds enjoyment. Type (a) and (b) overlook the children's capacity to be interested in their environment. Child/adult relationships must be characterised by greater intensity than is inferred in the programmes that emphasise, nurture and warmth with young children. We must respond to children as though they are people—take them seriously. Early childhood education requires an adult to be a thinking person, to be real, authentic, vigilant, and to concentrate. She posed the question "What does every child have to have", and then put forward seven propositions: a deep sense of psychological security and feeling of being attached; an adequate sense of self esteem, life for the child must be worthwhile, interesting, satisfying and real; have adults or other children who help them make sense of their world; to improve, refine and deepen their experiences; to accept that adults exercise quiet, firm, consistent authority; optimum experience with adults and other children who exemplify those qualities which we consider and choose to be good in our society, culture or community. We must never undermine a child's respect for his own family or their respect for him. Children should have relationships with adults who are prepared to make a stand for what is worth knowing, doing and caring for.

We must take a stand. Our children may not accept our version, but we must cultivate our capacity to adhere to our values quietly and with conviction, and respect our own values and those

of other people. In optimum esteem, in learning by observations, in quiet assessment and firm judgement, we shall bring quality into the daily life of our children.

Conference closing was on a high note. "The Need for a Comprehensive Care and Education Service for Pre-school Children" was the title of a paper presented by Dr Tessa Blackstone. She traced current developments in England in relation to the family, technology and the mobile work force.

Dr Minuchin, commenting on this paper, asked, "How do you move into a situation, diagnose this and try to provide a life environment for these children?" This means an alert, alive, sensitive kind of teacher, who can come to this situation with open-mindedness.

In her comment, Dr Katz gave us sound advice. The policy issues we have to resolve; but the only way is for us to work on all fronts at the same time. Policy input for each of us is to identify what our assignment is and do it as well as we

can—become a student of it, become informed. "Do not waste your energy converting the uncommitted, but use this to do your own assignment and encourage others. Let us be known by our actions, not our rhetoric," said Dr Katz. (How much energy had I used trying to convert the uncommitted!!)

Dr Blackstone concluded by asking, "Should there be separate training places for kindergarten teachers and teachers of older children, or different pay scales?" "Should day care workers use colleges for courses?" Academics, she said, are too unconcerned with problems of practitioners. We need to encourage diversity within a unified framework and accept the variety and diversity of the nuclear family.

Our thoughts and concerns were echoed by several speakers, thus united us in the theme of the Conference—"The Young Child in Focus."

—Phyllis M. Varcoe,
3 June 1978.

PEN PORTRAIT

Mary Collier, Ward member for Ward 5, which comprises seven Associations, 28 kindergartens and four establishment committees.

Married to John who is a mercantile company account and mother of Susan, 16, and David 14. Both attend independent boarding schools.

Mary's involvement in kindergarten commenced 26 years ago. Originally from Masterton she trained in Wellington as a kindergarten teacher. During her employment by the then Palmerston North Association she spent one year travelling overseas mainly to visit pre-school centres and ski.

Mary played a leading role in the mothers' club in Waipukurau and in 1962 helped establish the Wairoa Association. She became secretary and the first head teacher for a period of six weeks (during a staffing crisis). When John transferred to Napier, Mary joined the Napier Association and during the last 10 years has been an executive member, vice-president and now secretary, a position she has held for six years. She has served on the P.T.A. and school committees of her children's primary and intermediate schools, the Hawkes Bay E.D.C. Committee, Pre-school Com-

mittee of Palmerston North Training College and present Ward representative on District Pre-school Committee.

Other outside interests include the Hawkes Bay Rose Society of which she was secretary for four years. Mary is now show secretary and bronze medal judge of this society. She is convener of Napier Hospital flower group and a member of the Church Sanctuary Guild. Home interests are maintaining a half acre garden, floral art, and keeping up with the children. Her entire family share a love of sport. Mary has been a representative tennis player, single handicap golfer and claims she is now just an ageing squash enthusiast. Mary also claims that she is probably the only Ward member and Association secretary who is aiding the energy crisis by riding a motor-bike! Her aim is to see sufficient kindergartens established in Napier to cater for all the pre-schoolers whose parents wish them to attend. These kindergartens to be staffed by teachers who have completed a comprehensive training of at least three years, thus making them more competent both academically and practically. practically.

LIAISON IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

"Liaison" is a fashionable word these days, and in no area of education is it more fashionable than that of early childhood. In fact so fashionable has it become that at times it appears to be almost meaningless.

In January, however, more than 60 people gathered at Mount Albert Grammar School, Auckland, prepared to clarify their views on liaison, look at existing liaison and plan for its future development. Initially this course, arranged by the Teachers' Refresher Course Committee, met a disappointing response. This, in part, may have been due to the fact that many people in early childhood work did not realise they could apply for these courses.

Fortunately the worst fears of the organisers were not realised, enough people registered for the course, and on a hot Sunday in January participants from all over New Zealand arrived at the school hostel to discuss matters of concern to them. They were there from all over the country, from Lake Kaniere and Dunedin, from Nelson and Dargaville, from big city schools and from tiny play-centres in country areas. There were Education Department officials, discreetly in the background on this occasion, headmasters (not enough), kindergarten teachers, play-centre supervisors, nuns and nursing sisters, S.T.J.S.'s and representatives from child care and independent kindergartens. A greater variety of participants one could not imagine.

Mr Pat Foley from the Education Department opened the course with a plea for unity and understanding among early childhood groups. He spoke of the long history of liaison in early childhood and asked the course to look carefully at reasons for its failure in the past. Then followed a description of the various agencies involved in early childhood education, a very essential exercise, as it turned out that many of us were very ignorant of each other's organisations. It was, in fact, a day for clearing away misconceptions and stereotypes.

Mrs Eileen Bethell of Auckland spoke on kindergarten from an administrative point of view. Those of us who have, over the years, tried to sort out the intricacies of kindergarten administration had considerable admiration for the way in which Mrs Bethell traced her way through the maze of relationships between Union and associations, Union and Education Department and associations and teachers. Miss Elizabeth Tunks of

St Heliers Kindergarten then spoke on the kindergarten teachers place in liaison, an area in which she, herself, has had considerable experience.

The course covered a wide range of topics. An entire day was spent looking at community involvement in early childhood education. A group of community pre-school advisers described the work they were doing in their own community. Few of us will forget their enthusiasm and their firm belief in the need for early childhood education.

Miss Phyllis Varcoe from Dunedin spoke on the very successful liaison group which has worked there for a number of years. It was clear that its success had been largely due to careful organisation and a definite sense of purpose.

We looked too, at alternatives in early childhood education for children with special language needs. Mrs Nancy Gerrand spoke on the Te Kohanga programme while Miss Miria Pewhairangi made a plea for interaction rather than intervention—a plea that was discussed at great length later by groups of course members.

One evening session was given over to "discoveries"—people whom course members had discovered amongst their number who had something special to offer—a headmaster who had started a pre-school unit to provide specifically for the needs of his community, a sister from a psychiatric ward whose main work is with pre-schoolers, a nun who described her work with deaf pre-schoolers with quiet modesty and whose love for the children in her care positively shone through.

And what did this course achieve? Certainly not the guidelines on liaison we expected to write. In any case there seemed little need for such an exercise when already the Headmaster's Handbook gave clear direction and an excellent paper, which was made available to the course, had been presented to the National Advisory Council by Mr Athol Blair. So we turned our attention to other important concerns in early childhood education. We looked at the need to know each other's organisations better—and this is essential if we are to present the "national constituency" in early childhood education which the Director-General spoke of last year. Especially we looked at the need for community participation in education, and the involvement of parents in early childhood education from zero the eight years, was seen to

be essential. Much discussion was held on the way in which parents could be involved in schools. An attempt was made to find an area of common concern amongst all the groups involved and it was soon clear that their common concern was the child, but not just the child in isolation—the common concern was for the child, the child in his family and the family in the community.

Not a great achievement perhaps, but, at least, 60 people have gone back to their own areas knowing a little more about early childhood education and convinced of the need for closer liaison—a liaison which will benefit not only the child, but his family and his community too.

JOAN BROCKETT.

When the mail arrived with a letter to say that I had been accepted to attend the course on Liaison at Mount Albert Grammar School, Auckland, I could scarcely believe my luck. My late application had been successful. As I had never been to Auckland and knew very few people there I was filled with a sense of apprehension. I need not have worried—everyone was well catered for in the tradition of Auckland's warm hospitality.

I travelled by air and train to Auckland and spent a day sightseeing around the city, visiting the zoo, and finally celebrating my birthday before moving to the school where I was to spend the new days.

Amid lovely surroundings I settled into a dormitory where I found I had a single cubicle. Our hostesses Joan and Jennifer had everything well organised for us and made us feel really welcome. I was told that I was on the dormitory steering committee—each evening a group of us would meet to discuss the day's happenings and plan a different activity for the next evening. Meals were on the dot and they were excellent with plenty of variety.

I sat at a different table each meal and met a large number of people with whom I was able to discuss the previous session or some other topic of interest to us. During mealtimes I was able to meet primary school teachers, sisters from the Catholic School, and others from many other walks of life.

As the days progressed we attended lectures of the highest standard given by lecturers representing a variety of pre-school services. I found the discussion times during the lectures invaluable. It was interesting to find that New Zealand was represented from the far north to the deep south.

During lunch hours and early morning walks I was able to explore nearby Mount Albert—its beautiful park, community building, and interesting shops where I found the shopkeepers very friendly and helpful.

As the course ended we all hoped that this would not be the last one we would attend. On behalf of all who attended, I would like to thank our Auckland hosts and friends for the welcome we received, and also to thank Mr White, the housemaster of Mount Albert Grammar School for his helpful assistance at all times. Thanks also to the Board of Governors for allowing us to stay there.

In the company of 12 others, Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders, I spent two days on a bus tour of the Bay of Islands before catching the train to Wellington and then the plane to Christchurch and bus home.

I wrote this article to tell everyone of the advantages of the Liaison Course, but ended up telling you how much I enjoyed myself.

I am now settled back in my kindergarten stimulated by the best course I have ever attended, and with a greater confidence in myself. I am aware of my capabilities and able to liaise to a far greater degree than I thought possible, with the community in general, with the parents and their children in our care.

MORE COURSES LIKE THIS PLEASE.

—Elvira Jose,
Hanan Kindergarten,
Timaru.

A similar article recently appeared in Education News to publicise the work of the committee on which the union is represented.

How Do Parents Find Out About Pre-school Education?

The majority of New Zealand parents appear to place a high value on organised education in early childhood. About half the three and four year olds (nearly two-thirds of four year olds) now attend some recognised form of pre-school education centre and although the number of pre-school centres is expanding rapidly many have substantial waiting lists.

The kindergarten, play-centre and child care movements are increasingly well known in the community and the successful involvement of parents in pre-school education has undoubtedly had a marked effect in the spread of knowledge about it and in helping parents to appreciate its nature and value.

Apart from the information on pre-school education provided by the pre-school education services and other interested organisations, parents have been informed of the value of pre-school education through workers in community services such as Plunket and Public Health nurses, social welfare workers and the new community pre-school worker service.

Person to person contacts are probably the most successful means of publicising pre-school education. To back up these contacts and help in reaching parents who have little awareness of what pre-school education is, what its possible benefits to parents and children are, and what services are available, the Department of Education has published an explanatory pamphlet, and a poster.

The committee which drew up the pamphlet represents the Free Kindergarten Union, Playcentre Federation, Federation of Parents Centres, Family Life Education Council and the Departments of Health and Education. These are the organisations which were able to accept the

Department of Education's invitation to all bodies known to be interested in providing information on early childhood education, to form a working party to promote this work.

The prime function of the committee is to assist in promoting and co-ordinating the preparation and presentation of information for parents of pre-school children. While this information is mainly on early childhood education it also concerns the general welfare of young children as, at this stage in particular, it is difficult to separate care, including health, from education.

There is much published material on early childhood available to parents, including a considerable amount of high quality written in New Zealand. This was revealed in a comprehensive survey which, together with recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry into pre-school education and of the Education Development Conference, has guided the committee's initial work.

Apart from its general explanatory pamphlet on pre-school education the committee has been working to meet another need through the production of a series of pamphlets on play activities. These pamphlets will be suitable for use in the home environment. The committee is also collating reference lists of books and films which have been found particularly valuable by parents. In addition it plans to publicise titles of books recommended for reading to young children.

The Committee would be interested to receive suggestions on the matter of supplying information to parents of pre-school children. Please write to the Chairman, Information for Parents of Pre-school Children Committee, C/o The Superintendent of Special Services, Department of Education, Private Bag, Wellington.

Planning the physical environment for the care and education of the young children.

This three-hour session at the A.P.A. Conference was conducted by Mrs Elizabeth Wood, a past lecturer in early childhood education, Mr Alex Podolinsky, a director of the Steiner School in Melbourne, and Professor Lucile Lindberg, professor of education, Queen's College, New York.

Mrs Wood's paper is reprinted here with her permission. It makes an interesting basis for comparison with our own history of buildings and the present scene. Many Associations are highly critical of the new building brief and many are critical of a statement made recently that in an emergency existing facilities may have to be used. In the next issue of the journal there will be summaries of the papers presented by the two other speakers.

I think the most pertinent point made in the three hour session on suitable buildings etc., for the young child was made by Professor Lucile Lindberg who states, "the best building in the world is useless without the good teacher."

Planning the Physical Environment For the Care and Education of Young Children

by Elizabeth Wood

Records show that as long ago as 1888 there was recognition of the fact that within a school setting very young children needed a particular type of environment, one that varied in certain ways from that which was more suited to their older brothers and sisters. One account of the modifications that were seen as important was given in the Argus Supplement of 9 August 1888.

"The kindergarten room . . . is filled with rows of small desks, each intended to accommodate only two children, and the seats, unlike the ordinary forms of the primary school are fitted with rests at the back. Sufficient space is reserved to enable the teacher to pass to and fro, and on the floor there is room enough for the children to march and move about when they grow tired of the inactivity of sitting."

In the early part of this century there was only a handful of kindergartens and creches, the former seemed almost exclusively for children from privileged families, the latter for less privileged children. In describing the creches it was that they

" . . . were purely philathropic in purpose and offered full day care from 7.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. (1 p.m. on Saturdays) for children under school age who, for the charge of 3d per day, were washed, fed and amused."

From the point of view of events which influenced buildings, one rather significant development took place as kindergartens began to be established for less privileged children whose families lived in inner overcrowded suburban

areas; for many of these kindergartens were set up in church halls. And even when the first authentic kindergarten building in Melbourne was erected hall-like proportions were accepted as quite suited to its institutional requirements. This link between kindergartens and church halls remains evident as there are still kindergartens functioning quite successfully under vaulted roofs and mock gothic windows, where draughts roar under doors, and opportunities for supervision are often less than ideal. This institutional influence in buildings for small children meant high ceilings, large impersonal spaces, small and often high windows, isolation between indoors and outdoors, where there was little benefit derived from either sun or light in an atmosphere that was cold and imposing. Gradually, as the number of kindergartens grew, changes began to appear, and innovations that catered for young children's needs became more apparent, even though up until the beginning of the Second World War the number of kindergartens was still very small.

One of the things that influenced the types of buildings that were produced prior to the Second World War was the very strong welfare programme that was offered through kindergartens. Not only were the children taught, but they were often fed and washed too, and their play was geared to developing good habits and sound health. Many of the children who attended kindergarten during the 1930's came from families who were affected by the depression, which meant that kindergartens were often the source of food, comfort, and support. So, the types of buildings that were suited to programmes

that catered for such a range of possibilities seemed to fall somewhere between hall, school rooms, and hospital.

Feeding children, washing them, washing their clothes, collecting clothes for distribution, as well as allowing children time to sleep, and opportunities to play and take part in an organised programme, needed a large and fairly versatile building; certainly one that had many more ramifications than the simple more domestic type of building that we regard as suited to today's needs.

The extraordinary growth in the number of kindergartens in Australia, particularly within this state, began in 1948. Quite by good fortune, or good timing, by that stage certain milestones had been reached in the concept of what constituted suitable buildings to "house" educational programmes for very young children. So, by the time kindergartens began to be built in significant numbers certain basic principles had been accepted, and these were:

1. Inside and outside areas need to be integrated.
2. Buildings need to be light and attractive.
3. Spaces and equipment need to be child-sized.
4. The environment as a whole needs to be safe, hygienic, and interesting.

These principles appear to us today to be almost commonplace, and they have certainly provided the basic guide-lines for new buildings for the past 30 years. Certainly it was not just by chance nor by waving the wand that these basic principles were first formulated. It was during the establishment of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres that these standards were conceived. This landmark was reached in the year 1940, for at that time plans to establish the Lady Gowrie Child Centres came into fruition. The six centres (one in each capital city) were designed from the same basic plan, but in each state variations and adaptations were made so that the buildings would be suitable to local conditions and climates, and so that the various sites would be used to the best advantage. Marcus Martin was the architect who designed the Lady Gowrie Centres, and in a forward to the book "Pre-school Centres in Australia", he said:

"With the introduction of group education for the pre-school child, new problems in planning and equipment have to be considered . . .

Usual standards accepted for schools will not apply in the case of the pre-school; and these are the outcome of many years of study and practical experience of highly trained personnel.

The plan should be essentially functional in character, the conception of which should

result in a building with a definite appeal, for the psychological effect on the child mind by immediate surroundings is far reaching."

In a paper in an Australian Pre-school Quarterly of 1965, Gladys Pendred claimed that the principle of unity between playroom and playground was demonstrated by the Lady Gowrie Child Centres, with the playroom opening directly on to the playground through large sliding doors. She continued:

"This principle in planning has been universally accepted and whatever the overall design of a new kindergarten may be, one can expect to find anywhere in Australia that the playroom will open on to the playground and that the building will be sited to facilitate supervision of both areas for play."

At the annual meeting of the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria of 1942-43 the annual report created another milestone in the development of kindergartens. One of the statements that was made had particular bearing on the development of kindergarten buildings, as it was concerned with expressing a specific statement of standards acceptable or necessary in the establishment of kindergartens. This statement listed particular requirements in relation to site, aspect, playroom, bathroom, playground, and other rooms such as kitchens and storerooms. It also discussed the adaption of old buildings, the provision of play equipment and suitable furniture. The emphasis was on providing equipment which would promote large muscle and general physical development. Chairs and tables should be designed, the report added, bearing in mind the posture of the child, as well as enabling him to become independent in the use of these things.

As well as emphasising children's physical development as a major determining factor in the choice of equipment, the report said:

"Much other equipment designed to give scope for sensory experience, powers of discrimination, dramatic and creative ability must be included if the child is to have real opportunity to learn through play."

I would claim that much of what has been achieved in the buildings that house our pre-school services stems from this work that was done in establishing the Lady Gowrie Child Centres, and, particularly in Victoria, from the statements made in the Free Kindergarten Union Annual Report 1942-43 which ultimately grew into "Standards for the Establishment and Maintenance of Nursery Kindergartens", and, "Pre-school Centres Building Regulations" which were

that catered for such a range of possibilities seemed to fall somewhere between hall, school rooms, and hospital.

Feeding children, washing them, washing their clothes, collecting clothes for distribution, as well as allowing children time to sleep, and opportunities to play and take part in an organised programme, needed a large and fairly versatile building; certainly one that had many more ramifications than the simple more domestic type of building that we regard as suited to today's needs.

The extraordinary growth in the number of kindergartens in Australia, particularly within this state, began in 1948. Quite by good fortune, or good timing, by that stage certain milestones had been reached in the concept of what constituted suitable buildings to "house" educational programmes for very young children. So, by the time kindergartens began to be built in significant numbers certain basic principles had been accepted, and these were:

1. Inside and outside areas need to be integrated.
2. Buildings need to be light and attractive.
3. Spaces and equipment need to be child-sized.
4. The environment as a whole needs to be safe, hygienic, and interesting.

These principles appear to us today to be almost commonplace, and they have certainly provided the basic guide-lines for new buildings for the past 30 years. Certainly it was not just by chance nor by waving the wand that these basic principles were first formulated. It was during the establishment of the Lady Gowrie Child Centres that these standards were conceived. This landmark was reached in the year 1940, for at that time plans to establish the Lady Gowrie Child Centres came into fruition. The six centres (one in each capital city) were designed from the same basic plan, but in each state variations and adaptations were made so that the buildings would be suitable to local conditions and climates, and so that the various sites would be used to the best advantage. Marcus Martin was the architect who designed the Lady Gowrie Centres, and in a forward to the book "Pre-school Centres in Australia", he said:

"With the introduction of group education for the pre-school child, new problems in planning and equipment have to be considered . . .

Usual standards accepted for schools will not apply in the case of the pre-school; and these are the outcome of many years of study and practical experience of highly trained personnel.

The plan should be essentially functional in character, the conception of which should

result in a building with a definite appeal, for the psychological effect on the child mind by immediate surroundings is far reaching."

In a paper in an Australian Pre-school Quarterly of 1965, Gladys Pendred claimed that the principle of unity between playroom and playground was demonstrated by the Lady Gowrie Child Centres, with the playroom opening directly on to the playground through large sliding doors. She continued:

"This principle in planning has been universally accepted and whatever the overall design of a new kindergarten may be, one can expect to find anywhere in Australia that the playroom will open on to the playground and that the building will be sited to facilitate supervision of both areas for play."

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brought out by the Department of Health in Victoria in 1951. The requirements of pre-school centres being built today are still regulated by these two documents, although many modifications have been made to the 1951 editions.

There are two reasons why I have gone into this brief historical survey. Firstly, to show that development of kindergarten buildings and equipment, and the standards that were formulated in relation to them, resulted from careful assessment and planning with particular emphasis being given to children's health, welfare, and learning.

Secondly, to ask should kindergarten buildings have shown more significant development during the last 30 years since these standards were first formulated?

And, to this question I must answer "yes", for a number of reasons.

1. Our knowledge of child development, of behaviour, and of how children learn has grown considerably since the 1940's, and therefore, we should have greater knowledge to draw on when planning kindergarten programmes and the buildings that complement them. I believe that kindergarten programmes have kept pace with increases in knowledge, but that the ways we have planned the environment in which these programmes are to take place have remained strangely dormant.
2. Ramifications of society are far more complex than they were 30 years ago, with greater variations in style of living, and with people from many different cultures making their homes in Australia. Also, many more children from a wide range of backgrounds are attending kindergartens than was the case 30 years ago.
3. Economic conditions have altered considerably in the last 30 years, and this means that buildings that are expensive to construct and to maintain need to be planned with awareness for the diversity of uses to which the buildings could be put; for example, by children after school, by adult groups at night, and by family groups or youth groups during the weekends. In the past the main objection to kindergartens being used out of hours was because it gave teachers far more work in preparing the building for use by other groups, and then setting it up again in the morning for kindergarten use. This was the fault of the building, and surely with advances in design and construction buildings could be made to be functional for a wider variety of groups without adding extra problems to those working in them?

There have been developments within certain

aspects of the kindergarten environment, of course. With the development of new materials and building techniques new designs, and more adventurous landscaping have been possible, and new materials have added to the variety of equipment. This has meant that maintenance has been made easier for teachers through more resilient materials, or through synthetic materials being used. Two of the materials that have been adopted rather too enthusiastically though are laminex, and treated pine logs. Laminex is a hard and unattractive material as well as having a surface that is both slippery and reflecting. This makes it unsuitable for use in buildings that are light, and that are open to currents of air, and basically because it is so much less sympathetic in texture to its users than more natural materials like wood. Pine logs are now so much part of our environment that I wonder what values they have that have made them so widely adopted. The equipment made from pine logs is usually fairly structured, fairly immovable, and fairly characterless. Also, from the point of view of the physical capabilities of pre-school children the diameter of the logs is too large for easy use by these children who need smaller rungs to hold on to and to climb up.

Another development in physical environments for pre-school children is the realisation that small, quiet areas are needed that can be shut off from the noisier, larger playrooms. These smaller, quiet rooms are seen as necessary areas where work with individuals, with small groups, or where special projects can be carried out. Teachers have voiced the need for such rooms, and have made it clear that such areas need easy access from the main playrooms and playgrounds, as well as having provision for adequate supervision from one area to another. In this case architects and teachers have combined to produce a very significant development in pre-school buildings.

One material that has almost vanished during the last few years, which in the past was one of the basic surfaces to be found in kindergartens, is tan bark. There has not been a suitable substitute found for it yet, and from the point of view of both safety and aesthetics, playgrounds have suffered since it became almost totally unavailable. Thus, another dimension becomes apparent in our desire to create the best possible physical environments, certain natural resources are beginning to run out (or are becoming extremely scarce), and suitable substitutes will need to be developed if environments are to remain satisfactory.

In relation to developing physical environments for young children, architects and designers claim that they have difficulty in planning stimulating,

imaginative, and innovative buildings because of the inarticulateness of teachers when they are asked to describe their educational aims. As well, designers claim that kindergartens are cluttered and noisy, and that most surfaces are hard and unsympathetic. They consider that teachers seem to be somewhat impervious to their surroundings and that they tend to accentuate the more unattractive elements in their buildings by the way they equip and arrange them.

Thus, in relation to these two points, both architects and designers consider that it would be useless to design really imaginative buildings, where space and texture and line were used more creatively, and which were furnished with basic modular furniture that could be used in many different ways. Such possibilities would be useless, they claim, unless teachers had a real understanding of how to use such buildings and equipment to really good advantage. One of the things that could help, designers believe, would be for teachers to study ergonomics, which by definition is "studying man in relation to his working environment."

Some of the aspects of the environment that need particular consideration are:

1. The use of colour and how it affects children's and adult's responses.
2. Different surfaces that could be used that would be softer and more attractive to children, yet would still be practical and easy to manage.
3. The effect of space on children's reactions, and how to use various spaces efficiently by creating spaces within spaces, or by pushing boundaries out to create larger areas.

Spaces within kindergartens must be flexible, as children of different ages and experiences need different sized areas to work in, for example, three year olds need small secure spaces with the close proximity of the other children and the teacher; two year olds need an even more scaled down area in which to feel at ease and secure; whereas most four and a half year olds are usually requiring more space in which to exercise their more advanced skills and to carry out their more elaborate ideas. Therefore, a building that caters for a wide age range of children needs to have certain techniques available that can be used to give the illusion of small, secure areas, within the larger overall area, or to allow for more unrestricted use of the total area.

4. The type of order that we establish in kindergartens needs to be considered in relation to whether it is created because of the ease of maintenance and because of adults' reactions to it. One architect claims that adult's constant

pre-occupation with order and symmetry seems quite at odds with what children need in an environment. Children want the sort of order that suits them, that they can adapt and recreate, and this usually conflicts with the ways adults organise the environment. This type of order applies particularly to playgrounds where maintenance is a constant concern, and because of this children can often be restricted in the way they use them.

In the book "Designing Australian Bush Gardens" Maloney and Walker show that they are aware of this sense of order when they say:

"... the human mind demands order, and because we are all human, we search for beauty through conscious design."

But, Lady Allen of Hurtwood says, in relation to playgrounds, that what we should be aiming for

"... is to enable children to handle malleable materials in their own way."

5. Because buildings, furniture, and equipment are all so expensive no doubt we are all thinking of ways to cut costs. Providing modular furniture could be one way of doing this, but firstly this would need to be designed and manufactured. Why shouldn't tables be designed so that they could double as cubby houses, or easles, or large blocks with which children could build? Any why must expensive supplementary material stay inside for fear of being spoilt when similar objects could be designed that could be used quite safely in sand, water or earth play? And, why can't buildings be climbed on, crawled under, added to, painted on? Most buildings seem just to provide a shelter in which various activities are carried out. I can imagine buildings that were brilliantly designed being used for all sorts of purposes as well as providing shelter.

As you can see from this last statement I am an avant-garde idealist, and a rather inexperienced one at that, certainly from the design point of view. I do, however, have a very keen desire to make physical environments for young children as suitable, stimulating, and natural as possible.

When interviewing an Adelaide architect some time ago he said

"Every building should be taken from first principles—obviously what you have done before will influence you; but you start from spatial relationships and take each building on its own merits."

May I suggest that this is the way for teachers to approach the task of organising the particular

physical environments that they are called upon to establish. Each kindergarten environment needs to be examined from first principles at the beginning of each year, and again during the year not once but many times. Children's growth, rate of development, socialising patterns, responses to learning, and emotional requirements, as well as what it is hoped to teach children should form the basis for deciding how to establish an environment that offers the most to particular children, at particular times, and in particular situations.

Thus, with continual change, development, and growth the axiom for physical environments for the young must surely be that they remain as

basic and as flexible as possible, encouraging a really creative approach to their arrangement and use.

Perhaps Lewis Mumford, one of the chief protagonists in the realm of modern environments, should have the last word.

He says:

"... An environment or a structure that has been reduced to the level of the machine, correct, undeviating, repetitious, monotonous, is hostile to organic reality and to human purpose; even when it performs, with a certain efficiency, a positive function such as providing shelter, it remains a negative symbol, or at best a neutral one."

The following are details of three centres I was able to visit while attending the A.P.A. Conference in Melbourne. All are about one hour's drive from the Central City area. It is interesting to note that two of the centres were set up as memorials to the fallen of the wars of this century. Bronze plaques in both buildings told this story. I was personally impressed with this idea—it seems to me that groups of children playing happily and safely are reward indeed for the sacrifices made by so many men and women in the cause of peace.

P. M. LOCKHART

FOREST HILL

Residential Kindergarten for Emergency Care

"Forest Hill" came into being in 1926, at a time of industrial expansion that followed World War I. During these years, the graduates of the Kindergarten Training College saw, in the inner suburbs, the pathetic physical condition of some of the children. They were moved to set up a "kindergarten holiday home" similar to a home in England. A small group of these graduates raised the sum of £1400 to purchase 14 acres of bushland at Nunawading.

During the years of economic depression, Forest Hill was a haven to which medical officers and kindergarten staffs sent thousands of children whose health was undermined by their living conditions. In 1934, as a result of public appeal conducted by the graduates, a new home, designed by Marcus Martin, was built to replace the original cottage. (At the time, Mr Martin's plans and descriptions of the new home were featured in several overseas architectural magazines, as being an outstanding example of an ideal "children's home".)

Forest Hill continued to provide country holidays for groups of children from suburban kindergartens until 1959, when it was realised that fewer children needed holidays for purely physical reasons, and queries were raised as to the wisdom of separating young children from their families. But as this need decreased, it became ob-

vious that another need arose—for emergency care. The strain of modern living results in greater pressures on families, and a survey conducted amongst social workers, hospital almoners, personnel officers, psychologists, teachers and doctors persuaded the Graduate's Association to change the programme at Forest Hill to one for "temporary emergency care, at a time of family crisis or breakdown or desertion."

Fifteen years later, the need still exists and each year several hundred children are cared for at Forest Hill while social workers and referral agencies work with families to sort out their problems. Most of the children being cared for have stories with a "happy ending". Given time and professional help, most families can cope with a crisis situation, as long as the immediate problem of caring for the children is organised for them. Very few of the children have to face long term institutional care, or are forced to become wards of the State.

For many years, Forest Hill depended entirely on the generous donations of friends, investments from the sale of land and an annual grant towards maintenance from the Hospitals and Charities Commission. An opportunity shop in North Carlton run by the Graduates' Association has also been a constant and reliable source of income. However, with spiralling salaries and rising

costs, these funds became hopelessly inadequate. Submissions to the Australian Government have so far produced no assistance at all, but as a result of the submission to the State Government's Consultative Council on Pre-school Child Development in 1973, the Minister for Health agreed in December 1974 to subsidise 80 percent of the award salaries for two mothercraft nurses and a part time kindergarten teacher. This is in addition to the normal allocation to every Victorian kindergarten of the salary of a kindergarten teacher or her assistant. This assistance has enabled the centre to stay open for 48 weeks of the year, but does not take into consideration the over award rates for evening and weekend staff—nor does it cover the wages of domestic staff.

In August 1974, an auxiliary of local residents was formed, and by their enthusiastic and unflagging efforts has already made a wonderful contribution to Forest Hill, not only by financial support, but with practical help on the property as well. Local service organisations have shown tremendous interest and are undertaking several projects to improve the property.

It is 40 years since Forest Hill was built, and the time has come for renovation and modernisation. The staff quarters are inadequately heated and not of the standard which staff expect in 1975. One improvement this year has been to install a kitchenette for the staff. Nunawading Council has described Forest Hill as providing "an incomparable community service."

WARRAWONG

Warrawong Day Care Kindergarten was originally established in the 1930's as a holiday home for children attending the Free Kindergarten Union Kindergarten. This was done through the generosity of Colonel F. J. Davey who offered his home "Ware" in East Ringwood for this purpose.

After World War II it was decided that "Ware" was no longer an adequate building for its purpose and the present building was erected with the assistance of J. B. Were and Sons as a memorial for the men from J. B. Were and Son who served in the war.

The programme of the Kindergarten has changed several times over the years, to cater for the needs of the time. It is now run as a day care kindergarten for pre-school children, referred by memorial for the men from J. B. Were and Sons who served in the war.

The kindergarten is run by a Management Committee consisting of representatives from a broad spectrum of community interests, as well as

qualified kindergarten teachers. This Committee is ultimately responsible to the Graduates Council of the State College of Victoria, Institute of Early Childhood Development, which maintains "Warrawong".

Warrawong aims to give compassionate practical help based on an understanding of the needs of young children and their families. It helps care for pre-school children referred by hospitals, psychiatric or medical practitioners, social workers, kindergarten teachers, and infant welfare sisters.

Warrawong is subsidised by the Commonwealth Government, and the State Government through the Health Department, and is supported by the Hospital and Charities Commission and other interested bodies and individuals.

The director, Joan Crombie, told us, "We are open between 7.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. There are three trained kindergarten teachers as well as three untrained assistants. An educational programme is provided during the morning, a hot midday meal and an afternoon sleep. We are particularly fortunate in being surrounded by five acres of garden and natural bushland.

THE MOUNT EVELYN MEMORIAL PRE-SCHOOL CENTRE

12 March 1945. Mrs G. Pitt called a public meeting and proposed that Mount Evelyn's Memorial to those who fell in the war be a kindergarten and infant welfare centre.

8 November 1945. Play centre began in the Church of England hall with six children, a retired teacher, and a helper. Donations of equipment were made by members and friends. Enrolments increased rapidly, 18 children at the beginning of 1946.

1947. The original staff left the district and a new teacher was appointed. Because the area was sparsely populated and scattered, and transport almost non-existent, an extended session was introduced providing an Oslo lunch and an afternoon sleep.

1948. Council gave Committee tenancy of the Band Hall, the present site of the Centre. The building was unlined, unceiled, windows did not open, there was neither toilets nor water. Because of the tenancy agreement, no alterations or additions other than toilet block, water tank, and a ramp to the front door, were permitted although there was money available to the Committee to build a kitchen and cloakroom. The local Country Fire Brigade also shared the building until they were able to provide their own quarters. Sessions were, therefore, sometimes disrupted by helmeted

fire-men rushing into the building to collect their equipment! Besides the aforementioned storage, the entire stock of the Centre was kept in the hall—including outdoors equipment. A table in a corner served as the "kitchen", a bench, two basins and two buckets, was the "washroom".

1953. Council advised Committee that it could now proceed with alterations and additions. Plans were drawn up and fund raising commenced.

October 1956. Official opening of the renovated centre. The alterations included—lining, ceiling, bathroom, french doors, window replacing front door, small kitchen, small sunroom entered through single archway. The old toilet block was transformed into a shed, being replaced in the mid-sixties by the present one.

1959. The Centre became a kindergarten with an enrolment of 20 per group and its first kindergarten trained teacher. The final stage of the project was also achieved during this year—the Infant Welfare Centre was opened. This building was erected on the land given by the Council to compensate for some of the land on the west side which the Railway Department reclaimed when they reconstructed the level crossing.

Mid-1960's. As the population of Mount Evelyn increased, so the needs increased and the Centre was extended to meet the demand for pre-school services. In the mid-sixties the west wall was moved out 8 feet, thereby enlarging

sunroom, kitchen, and office (which replaced the tanks when M.M.B.W. water came to the area). This enabled the maximum enrolment of 25 children per session.

1974. The kitchen was divided to provide a separate storeroom and the porch was redesigned to give an entrance-cloakroom. The bathroom was tiled and the adult toilet enlarged to include a handbasin. The outdoor area has seen as many changes too; the sand-pit has been moved three times and increased in size with each move!

The trees on the west side were planted in 1954, some in memory of foundation members, the remainder by the children, past and present, who attended the Centre. The east side has been developed over the years by gardening friends.

The early years were not easy; many times the Centre was not eligible for subsidy through lack of trained staff. This did not deter Committees from providing the service. Apart from the State Government Grants available at the time, all monies were raised by the Committees, parents and community, to erect (and extend) the buildings which were opened debt-free. Until 1972 the Centre catered for children three to five years old; a toddler group operated once a month from 1962-1973. A third group, of four to five year olds, began in 1974, and a new centre funded by Federal Government Grant, will be built this year in another part of the town.

Our quotes in this journal come from several speakers at the A.P.A. Conference held in Melbourne, 15-21 May 1976.

"Adults are so locked up in conventionality." Mr Alex Podolinsky speaking about buildings.

"Democracy for young children—decision making by making a choice." Professor Lucile Lindberg.

"The best building in the world is useless without the best teacher." Professor Lucile Lindberg.

"The concept of a team is the concept where each member knows his limitations." Dr Patricia Minuchin.

The following quotes are all attributed to Dr Lilian Katz.

"Everyone's emotional eggs are in my basket and it's mighty heavy."

"Don't waste too much time converting the faithless."

"Use your energies to help those with similar motives."

"Be remembered by the fruits of your labours than by your rhetoric."

"Never be clinical about your children."

"Always be biased about your children."

"Respond to your children spontaneously."

"Parents are people."

"Accept the authority that is yours as an adult over that of a child."

"To be totally unfair is to treat all children alike."

"Feel right about what you are doing. It may not always be right, so respect the child's feeling that he dislikes the request."

"Our children grow up to be like us—don't worry."

"Would it not be the wonderful thing if you were coming and not going." Hebridean verse quoted by Mrs Agnes Farrance, chairman of the conference committee when she was farewelling delegates.