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KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION
1918-1920

By

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[Advance sheets from the Biennial Survey of Education in
the United States, 1918-1920]



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KINDERGARTEN EDUCATION, 1918-1920.

By JULIA WADE ABBOT, Specialist in Kindergarten Education.

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KINDERGARTEN EXTENSION.

The unified effort of women during the war for the conservation of child life has brought about an active interest in the extension of kindergartens. Two aspects of kindergarten work relate directly to needs discovered during the stress and strain of the war: (1) The need for organized child-welfare work in the preschool years; (2) the need for emphasizing the social aspect of school work, such as home visiting and mothers' meetings. A number of women's organizations have undertaken kindergarten extension work.

An organized campaign for kindergarten extension in Texas was undertaken early in 1919 as the outcome of activities pertaining to "Children's Year." The combined strength of the child-welfare department of the State Council of Defense, the State Federation of Women's Clubs, the State Congress of Mothers, and the kindergarten section of the State Teachers' Association has been directed toward making effective the law enacted by the Texas Legislature in 1917. A fund devoted to child-welfare activities by the child-welfare department of the State Council of Defense made it possible to defray the expenses of a field worker for a time, with the result that in a number of Texas cities kindergartens were established for the first time as part of the public-school system.

The education department of the General Federation of Women's Clubs has begun a campaign which has as its object a kindergarten in every elementary school in the United States. The subject of kindergarten extension was presented at two sessions of the biennial meeting in Des Moines, June, 1920. A kindergarten chairman has been appointed in each State, and will cooperate with the kindergarten chairman of the General Federation in making a State survey of kindergarten conditions. The subject of kindergarten extension is to be a part of the program of each State meeting.

The National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations has had a department of kindergarten extension for six years. In cooperation with the National Kindergarten Association, progressive legislation has been secured in a number of States. Following the passage of the mandatory-on-petition law in California, the National Kindergarten Association has maintained a field secretary, and the rapid growth of kindergartens in that State has proved the value of this plan.

An intensive campaign is being carried on in North Dakota by the State kindergarten chairman. The names of organizations and individuals interested in kindergarten extension are being secured through the cooperation of county superintendents. Presidents of local clubs are then to form a kindergarten committee to cooperate with the county superintendent. In this way it is expected that public interest will be aroused and petitions, with the required number of signatures requesting the establishment of kindergartens, will be presented to local school boards. Local club presidents are including the subject of kindergarten education in their yearly program. When it is not possible to secure a speaker, a lecture with accompanying lantern slides provided by the kindergarten division of the Bureau of Education is presented.

The formation of State Kindergarten Associations, provided for by an amendment to the constitution of the International Kindergarten Union, is proving another means of coordinating kindergarten interests in the State. Indiana has formed a State organization, and Michigan, New York, and Wisconsin have tentative organizations on a State-wide basis. Ohio has had a State organization for a number of years, and is carrying on a vigorous campaign for more kindergartens under the slogan, "First Aid to the Uninjured!"

Virginia, at its State Teachers' Association meeting in Richmond, passed a resolution dissolving the separate kindergarten and elementary sections and established in their stead an organization "which shall have as its aim the education of children from 4 to 8 years of age."

The New York State Association is working for the passage of a mandatory-on-petition kindergarten bill. Illinois is also organized for progressive kindergarten legislation, and Washington is carrying on an educational campaign under the auspices of the State Normal School. The Louisville Kindergarten Association is planning a State campaign.

As a result of the activities of the Baltimore Kindergarten Club, Maryland, the board of education has made provision for 10 new kindergartens in the public schools, and a preprimary training department has been established in the Baltimore Teachers' Training School.

KINDERGARTEN LEGISLATION.

Arizona.—The influence of the kindergarten movement in California and Texas has made itself felt in Arizona, and a kindergarten law was enacted by the legislature of 1919. The two main provisions of the measure are as follows: (1) Upon petition of the parents or guardians of 15 or more children between the ages of 4½ and 6 years residing within 2 miles of any elementary school building, the board of school trustees of a district shall "employ proper certificated teachers in kindergarten schools in such elementary school buildings"; and (2) the board of supervisors of each county is authorized to levy such additional tax upon the taxable property within such school district as will be sufficient to cover the expenses of kindergarten classes.

Changes in Indiana law.—The new law in Indiana includes several improvements upon the former law. State funds for tuition may now be used for kindergartens as well as for other grades of the common schools; the power to levy a tax of 2 cents on the \$100 is now extended to incorporated towns and cities of less than 6,000 population; and the turning over of the fund resulting from this tax to a kindergarten association for the support of kindergartens is now left to the discretion of the school authorities.

New school code in Delaware.—A new school code adopted in Delaware gives to county boards of education the power to provide kindergartens.

Permissive kindergarten legislation in Alabama and Virginia.—In the new school codes of Alabama and Virginia permissive kindergarten legislation authorizes the use of local funds for the maintenance of kindergartens.

KINDERGARTENS IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES.

In towns and villages of fewer than 2,500 inhabitants there were enrolled in kindergartens during the school year 1917-18 approximately 21,000 children, under the direction of nearly 600 teachers. The leading States for kindergartens in smaller places are Michigan and Wisconsin, with Nebraska, Iowa, and California coming next in order.

The need for further extension of the kindergarten in the rural districts has been recognized in other States. A campaign to reach rural communities has been organized in Texas. That this campaign is in relation to a real need is evidenced by letters received by the kindergarten division of the Bureau of Education. A mother in Texas writes:

I have just read in the Dallas Times-Herald that you are launching a movement for better kindergarten work in Texas, and I want to wish you Godspeed.

I am a country mother with two small sons and I have a horror of putting them in a school, knowing they will have to sit on a seat from 8 a. m. until 4 p. m., with perhaps two or three 10-minute reading lessons and maybe a little number work. I believe every rural school should have a kindergarten teacher. They might combine kindergarten and first-grade work.

A teacher in a Maryland country community writes:

We are in great need of a kindergarten here in this town. Many children are solitary little ones from isolated small farms and country homes and need badly the socializing influence of the kindergarten and supervised work and play. They have few toys and no books in the homes, and we do the best we can during their first and second grades to have the play spirit, but with our course to cover and 78 little ones in the first and second grades it is about impossible.

A county superintendent in North Dakota writes:

In our consolidated school I can see my way clear to strongly recommend the installation of kindergartens. In this county there are about 600 children who should receive the benefit of kindergarten training. So far as I know, there has been only one attempt made at this work in this county, and that was a private kindergarten in which I had my two little youngsters enrolled. This is a work that the public in general has had very little time to consider so far, but I keenly feel the great necessity for vigorous and determined action along this line of work.

In one town in Texas a small group of club women solved the problem of securing a kindergarten by collecting \$1 for each inhabitant and building a beautiful little bungalow, which was presented to the board of education, and Lufkin had a kindergarten.

A kindergarten-primary course is being given at the Chico Normal School, California, with special emphasis upon training teachers in rural schools to meet the needs of the younger children. The fact that all of the State normal schools of Texas have opened kindergarten training departments gives promise of enough trained kindergarten teachers for the towns and villages that open new kindergartens.

TWO WAR ACTIVITIES CONTINUED.

Two important phases of kindergarten work that were carried on during the war are still furthered by kindergarten teachers throughout the country. They are Americanization among the foreign-born children and the support of the kindergarten unit in France.

The kindergarten unit in France.—In appreciation of the services rendered by the 15 kindergarten teachers sent by the kindergartners of America to minister to the little French children, Dr. William Palmer Lucas, chief of the children's bureau of the American Red Cross in France, congratulates Miss Curtis, director of the unit, on the record achieved, and says: "Your choice of the personnel and the place they have made for themselves in every community where they

have worked is, in my opinion, one of the finest records made in France."

The unit has extended its field in these days of reconstruction by sending traveling kindergarten camionettes, in little Army wagons, to the villages in the Aisne during the summer of 1919. The kindergartners go from village to village, telling stories and playing games with the children, and leaving with them interesting handwork which keeps the children busy and happy until the kindergarten camionette can make its next visit. The French Government has given a camionette to establish the same type of work around Lille, with headquarters at Arras.

The unit brought joy to many French children at Christmas time, when large Christmas trees were brought from Belgium and erected in the devastated villages of the Aisne, where the unit has been carrying on its work. The children of Boston sent 1,500 dolls to their little French sisters.

The French Government has been convinced of the value of the educational methods of the American kindergarten teachers as well as of the value of their social work. A *jardin d'enfants* training department is to be opened in Sèvres College in October by the French Government. Mademoiselle Amieux, the president of the college, is heartily in sympathy with the aims and methods of kindergarten work and welcomes the incorporation of a kindergarten training department in this college for training teachers in France.

In July, 1919, Miss Curtis, with Miss Aborn, president of the International Kindergarten Union, went to Serbia, and as a result of their visit a kindergarten is to be opened the first of October, 1920, in an orphanage for war orphans in Belgrade.

Americanization.—The kindergarten has always been an important Americanization agency. Before the war had awakened the whole Nation to the need for Americanization work among the foreign born the kindergartner was going to the homes of the foreign mothers and giving them friendly help and advice in relation to the customs and institutions of their adopted country and concerning the care and welfare of their children. The foreign women were persuaded to attend mothers' meetings in the kindergarten room, and so were brought into close sympathy with the school.

This social aspect of kindergarten work was carried on more intensively than ever before by the kindergarten teachers during the war period; and in the days of reconstruction the work with the foreign born has been expanded through affiliation with other organizations. In several cities the kindergarten teachers have worked in conjunction with the international institute of the Young Women's Christian Association.

The International Institute of the Young Women's Christian Association is a service bureau for the foreign born. In appreciation of the value of the kindergarten to the foreign mother a kindergarten pamphlet has been prepared and published in 16 foreign languages. It explains in a simple, readable manner what the kindergarten does for the child and how it helps the mother. Through cooperation with the kindergarten division of the Bureau of Education, this pamphlet has been widely distributed in cities throughout the country having a large foreign population. The practical work of the International Institute is divided into two classes—case work and group work. From Pittsburgh is sent this statement:

The group work is both educational and recreational in character, with a strong emphasis on the recreational side. In all group work, as far as possible, the idea of reciprocity is brought out, and the fact that American culture is composed of contributions from all the world is emphasized. Groups are gathered from various sources, but it is felt that work with the groups formed in seven schools through the cooperation of the kindergartens will have a far-reaching result. Pittsburgh kindergartners in the foreign districts of the city realize the immense difficulty of getting the foreign-born women to come to the mothers' meetings. The reluctance on the part of the foreign women is quite understandable. Inability to speak or to understand English, timidity in the presence of the American mothers, often makes the meeting anything but pleasurable. However, the kindergartens have met with a measure of success, but after the children leave kindergarten the mothers practically never come in contact with the school.

The kindergarten teachers in the public-school kindergartens of Pittsburgh have done such effective work in home visiting that their services are to be employed as school visitors in the homes of the children in the grades as well as in the homes of the kindergarten children. This social work is made the basis upon which the kindergarten teachers receive the same salary as the teachers of the elementary grades. In Chicago, Ill., Springfield, Mass., and Washington, D. C., kindergarten teachers, because of their special ability, have been appointed directors of the Americanization work of the public schools. In Minneapolis a group of kindergarten teachers have worked in a large Polish district under the direction of the visiting teacher of the public school, making a house-to-house canvass, and bringing information to the school authorities of the condition of the families in the district. The kindergarten teachers, through their local club, volunteered to do this work. Following their example, a group of primary teachers have offered their services.

THE KINDERGARTEN AND THE HOME.

The Bureau of Education committee of the International Kindergarten Union is making a study of the curricula of women's colleges in order to determine what these institutions for higher

education are doing to train young women for the responsibilities of home making and child training. To quote from the report of the chairman of the committee:

The inquiry has hardly more than begun, but it is already apparent that a conception of fundamental importance in the preparation of young women for life is being ignored—that of the significance of the child in the home and to society, and the relation of women to its development and training. Many of the colleges whose curricula have been studied have well-equipped home economics departments and offer admirable courses in dietetics, textiles, household management, and the several household arts. Practically none of these offer courses in that highest of arts—the directing of young lives into channels of right thinking and doing. The kindergarten training school has been almost alone among educational institutions in standing for the need of training for motherhood. Because of the experience of kindergarten graduates as to the value of such training, kindergartners feel that they have a contribution to make to the curricula of other institutions for the education of young women. To attempt to convert the women's college to this view may be an ambitious task, but it is one to which the committee in question is committed.

The University of Minnesota has recognized the importance of including child training as a part of home making by offering a course in child training by a kindergarten specialist to the students of the home economics courses.

Two newspaper bulletins on kindergarten principles applied to the training of children in the home have been prepared by the kindergarten division of the Bureau of Education and have been widely distributed to newspapers throughout the country. Such topics as *Baby Talk*, *Common Sense in Managing Children*, *Children and Their Toys* have been treated by the foremost specialists in kindergarten education in the country, with the purpose of helping mothers in the upbringing of their children in the complexity of modern life.

THE KINDERGARTEN AND THE SCHOOL.

Salaries of kindergarten and first-grade teachers.—A comparison of the salaries of kindergarten and first-grade teachers is based upon data compiled from the answers of 72 cities to a questionnaire sent out by the Bureau of Education. The cities are in the following States: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

The maximum salaries of kindergarten teachers range from \$495 to \$1,800 a year. These figures represent the salary schedule of 1918. In a number of cities a new salary schedule goes into effect during 1919 which will bring the range of maximum salaries from \$600 to \$1,800 a year.

In 31 cities kindergarten and first-grade teachers receive the same salary and teach two sessions with the same hours of classroom work.

In 17 cities kindergarten teachers who teach two sessions, but whose classroom work is from 30 to 90 minutes less than that of the first-grade teacher, receive the same salary as the first-grade teacher.

In 12 cities where the kindergarten teachers have one session and shorter hours of classroom work, they receive a lower maximum salary than the first-grade teachers.

In 17 cities the teachers of the upper grades receive higher salaries than the kindergarten and first-grade teachers. In 13 of these cities kindergarten and first-grade teachers receive the same salary. In 1 city the kindergarten teacher receives a higher minimum; in 3 cities the first-grade teachers receive a higher maximum than the kindergarten teachers, but not as high as the upper-grade teachers.

This study indicates that the kindergarten and first-grade positions are on an equal salary basis in the majority of cities.

New tendencies in kindergarten practice.—Modern educational theory is bringing about changes in the methods and materials of both the kindergarten and first grade. An inquiry concerning the educational equipment of a modern kindergarten reveals not only interesting changes in the material used but a decided change in methods.

Indoor equipment.—Large material in bulk is replacing a limited number of small blocks in boxes. The use of cloth and wood and other industrial materials is replacing the sewing cards and fine paper-weaving mats. Free choice of materials on the part of the child and invention in carrying out his play purposes characterize this type of kindergarten work.

Outdoor equipment.—Emphasis upon out-of-doors play suggests that a modern kindergarten be equipped with swings, seesaws, balancing boards, slides, and sand piles, and that, when weather permits, other kindergarten activities be carried on out of doors.

Standardization of kindergarten practice.—While a freer method is becoming more general in kindergarten practice, a widespread desire to determine standards for kindergarten procedure has been shown by superintendents, assistant superintendents, supervisors, and teachers. The large demand for the kindergarten curriculum prepared by a committee of the International Kindergarten Union and recently published by the Bureau of Education is an evidence of the fact that a better knowledge of the kindergarten is desired by school people. Another committee has been appointed whose work will be the preparation of a primary curriculum based upon the kindergarten curriculum.

Changes in the elementary school.—Reports of two committees of the National Council of Primary Education give evidence of the

fact that the work of the kindergarten is beginning to affect the first grade. A committee reporting on an adequate equipment for a first-grade room emphasizes the need for movable furniture, a space for games and free dramatization, and the kind of materials that will carry on the processes already begun in the kindergarten. The report of a second committee deals with the time allotment given to the various activities of the primary school and the nature of the work of the between-recitation periods. An increasing emphasis is being placed upon activities in which the children exercise their own initiative instead of having the work of all the periods prescribed by the teacher.

Supervision of kindergarten and primary grades.—A more organic relation between the kindergarten and the elementary school has been brought about in a number of cities by employing teachers in the kindergarten and the first grade who have had training in both kindergarten and primary work. It is possible to secure the service of teachers with this training because kindergarten-primary courses are being offered in many normal schools. Because of this training the kindergarten teacher understands the work of the grade for which her children are being prepared, and the primary teacher is able to build upon work of the kindergarten. In a number of cities, among which are Denver, Colo., Trenton, N. J., and New York City, the kindergarten teacher passes on with her children into the first grade, alternating terms in the kindergarten and first grade. In this way there is established a continuity in the work, just as there is continuity between any other two grades in a school system.

Supervision of the kindergartens and primary grades by one who has had training and experience in both fields has also tended in a number of cities to unify the work of the first years of school life.

A kindergarten representative in the State department of education in Pennsylvania is to be appointed by the State superintendent, whose duties shall be the extension of kindergartens throughout the State and the unification of the work of the kindergarten and the primary grades in those cities where kindergartens are already established.

SURVEYS RECOMMEND ESTABLISHMENT OF KINDERGARTENS.

A survey of education in Hawaii made by the Bureau of Education recognizes the valuable work being done by the Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Association of Hawaii. The following statement occurs in the report:

Recently one of the members of the survey commission, visiting the public plantation school at Hamakuapoko, Maui, observed that the children of the class of beginners, made up almost entirely of orientals, were unusually responsive to the questions of their teacher, and replying in language of a much better

quality than most beginning children on the plantations can command. Upon inquiry it was learned that the entire class had had training in a near-by kindergarten maintained privately by one of the plantation owners.

Largely in response to the excellent work done by the Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Association of Hawaii, the Territorial legislature at its last session authorized the department of education to organize one kindergarten on each of the four principal islands. While this program has not yet been fully executed, as insufficient funds were provided, nevertheless it is the first step in a plan which the commission sincerely hopes will lead, within a very short time, to the organization of a kindergarten in every school in the Territory. The commission is convinced, after a careful study of the conditions which obtain in the islands, that no more important, single step in Americanizing the children of the foreign born can be taken than in the establishment of a kindergarten or kindergartens in every settlement in the Territory. In order to make such a project a success, it will be necessary for the department to secure an efficient head to this work and to establish training courses under competent directors for the training of teachers for kindergarten work. In this connection the commission would recommend that the training of teachers for the kindergarten be made a part of the work of the educational department of the university, which the commission has recommended elsewhere.

The kindergarten specialist was a member of the survey commission which conducted a survey of the schools of Winchester, Mass. The recommendation was made to increase the number of kindergartens so that all the children of Winchester might have the privilege of kindergarten training now enjoyed in only two of the elementary schools.