

PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTENS

A THESIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Statement of the Problem	1
B. Importance of the Study	1
C. Sources of Data	3
D. Limitations	4
II. A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE GROWTH OF KINDERGARTEN-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES	5
III. CURRENT EDUCATIONAL THEORIES AND PRACTICES	19
IV. TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTENS	33
V. PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AND EQUIPMENT	41
VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	49
APPENDIX	56
BIBLIOGRAPHY	58

PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTENS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

It was the purpose of this study to trace the origin and development of kindergartens in the public school systems of the United States with special emphasis on Texas kindergartens.

B. Importance of the Study

Those who live and work with children know that youngsters have certain needs which must be met if they are to develop their full potentialities. But it is not enough to know the needs; one must act upon what is known or believed.¹ Educators now agree that the kindergarten bridges the gap between the home and the school in such a way that the children, through new experiences and social contacts, become better prepared to meet the tasks of the new situation in the school program to follow.

¹ James L. Hymes, Jr., "Interpreting Children's Needs," Childhood Education (October, 1947), p. 51.

Readiness, or a concept-building program for more formal aspects of later school learning, forms the kindergarten curriculum. This readiness is brought about through a program based upon informal instruction centered around activities related to social living. These activities include concepts and generalizations in all the major areas of the curriculum, language arts, social studies, and creative activities, including songs, dances, games, manual training, and art designed to meet the natural tendencies of young children. Then the first grade work will provide new learning experiences and activities in accordance with this readiness or preparedness stage.

There are many concepts which are acquired before a child is six years of age, and during these earlier years he can be developing new interests, skills and habits if given the proper guidance. If the child is given a wide range of experiences in this stage of development, he will not be likely to form undesirable habits and skills which must later be broken. Plenty of oral experiences are part of the school curriculum. These experiences not only give the child a chance to express himself but is an aid to good speech habits during the formative years of his language development. After a short time in a kindergarten group no child need feel shy in taking part in group discussions and plans.

Perhaps the child who would benefit most from kindergarten experiences is the foreign-speaking child. In the present educational system, this child is placed in the first grade with a large group of English-speaking children. While learning to speak a new language, he is also expected to learn to read and write that language. First grade teachers realize the seriousness of this situation and stress the importance of kindergarten work for this group even more than for others.

The unified kindergarten-primary system does not seek to give the child all the information he may need now or later, but its aim is to equip him with the power of thinking and doing for himself and to give him an understanding of how to gain the information he may need.² In this study an attempt has been made to show that a kindergarten is an asset to a public school system when the kindergarten takes its place as an integral part of the primary system.

C. Sources of Data

Books, periodical literature, yearbooks, bulletins, information gained through the use of a check list, and

² Josephine C. Foster and Neith E. Headley, Education in the Kindergarten, p. 33.

miscellaneous sources of information were used in writing this paper.

D. Limitations

In this study no attempt has been made to cover all the fields of kindergarten work, but it has been confined to the field of the kindergarten as a part of the public school system.

CHAPTER II

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE GROWTH OF KINDERGARTEN-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

A knowledge of the historical development of kindergarten education in the United States will furnish a background for a better understanding of present-day trends and practices in this field.

It was in private schools, bilingual in character, which were established by Germans between 1850 and 1860, that the kindergarten had its beginning in America. The first kindergarten was established in the home of Mrs. Carl Shurtz, a pupil of Froebel, at Watertown, Wisconsin, in 1855. Kindertartens were soon opened in other German-speaking communities, and in 1860 the first English-speaking kindergarten was established in Boston by Miss Elizabeth Peabody.¹

In 1854 Dr. Henry Barnard, at that time editor of the American Journal of Education, was influential in stimulating interest in the education of young children. In 1856 he wrote an article for the Journal describing the kindergarten materials and methods he had seen while

¹ Ruby Minor, Early Childhood Education: Its Principles and Practices, p. 9.

on a visit to England. This article and his report of this visit printed in the same year were the first writings on the kindergarten to appear in print in America.²

In 1872 Professor John Kraus and Mrs. Marie Kraus Beelte established a seminary of kindergarten classes for different age groups. Many features now accepted in our progressive kindergarten-primary schools were incorporated in the work of that school.³

In that same year, 1872, W. N. Hailman of Louisville, Kentucky, introduced a resolution at the National Education Association meeting in Boston that a committee be appointed to study Froebel's principles of education and report back at the next meeting. This committee met and reported that it recognized in the kindergarten a potent means for the advancement of primary education. It recommended that more kindergartens be established and experiments made to find the best methods of unifying the kindergarten with the established primary system.⁴

² Henry Barnard, "Froebel's System of Infant-Gardens," The American Journal of Education, Vol. II, (September, 1856), pp. 449-451.

³ Julia Letheld Hahn, A Critical Evaluation of A Supervisory Program in Kindergarten Primary Grades, p. 8.

⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

In 1870 the kindergarten program began to be coordinated with the primary grades. In the beginning the average size of a class was from eight to twelve children. The next year, 1871, some tests were made to determine the value of kindergarten experience with reference to later school efficiency; and these experiments showed that children with kindergarten training were more intelligent, capable, and well behaved than children without this training.⁵

But in 1873 there was much dissension about the value of kindergartens and the Froebelian system of activity. So much was said against them that legislative limitations were placed upon the organization of kindergartens. As a result a period ensued during which there was a certain amount of public embarrassment when any attempt was made to establish a kindergarten system either private or public.⁶

In 1873 William T. Harris, Superintendent of Schools in St. Louis, Missouri, sponsored the first experiment of a kindergarten as a part of the public school system to ascertain what valuable features the kindergarten had that could be utilized in the primary schools.⁷

⁵ Mary Dabney Davis, "A Century of Kindergarten," School Life Index, Vol. XXII, (November, 1936), p. 68.

⁶ Ibid., p. 68.

⁷ Ibid., p. 68.

At the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 a model kindergarten was conducted which attracted a great deal of attention from thousands of visitors all over the country. This exhibition contributed to favorable sentiment in the propagation of the kindergarten idea. Following the exposition many philanthropists, churches, women's clubs, and similar organizations participated in the opening of kindergartens.⁸

Several kindergartens were established between 1874 and 1884. Among these was Mrs. Alice Putman's class, begun in Chicago in 1874. In 1877 Mrs. Pauline Agassiz Shaw opened two kindergartens in Massachusetts; and by 1883 she was supporting thirty-one free kindergartens. The interest in the kindergarten movement continued to be felt, but it was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century that kindergartens gained a foothold in the public schools.⁹

Between 1873 and 1885 schools in various states established free kindergartens but were slow in placing them in public schools. In answer to the inquiry as to

⁸ Samuel Chester Parker and Alice Temple, Unified Kindergarten and First Grade Teaching, p. 10.

⁹ Hahn, op. cit., p. 8.

the prospect of the kindergarten becoming a feature of the public school system, the United States Commission of Education said:

Although the work in St. Louis has been followed with deep interest, as it has been generally felt that it was destined to become a permanent part of the public school work of that city . . . so far the outlook is not encouraging for the general acceptance of the kindergartens as a part of the public schools.¹⁰

During the exploratory years in kindergarten education both kindergarten and primary teachers sensed a need for mutual understanding, but each group experienced difficulty in seeing the point of view of the other. Therefore, the early steps in unification were made gropingly; and it seemed as though success was far away. Nevertheless, the report of the United States Commissioner of Education in 1884 shows that much interest was being shown in this field by the statement that the kindergarten system was having a marked effect in improving the methods of education employed in the primary grades of the public schools that year.¹¹

¹⁰ Report of the United States Commissioner of Education 1883-84. p. 123.

¹¹ Report of the United States Commissioner of Education 1884-85. p. 147.

In 1900 an article was written by Emma Neman for the National Education Association in which she developed the idea that the kindergarten had outgrown its infancy. In so doing, it had proved its power for offering the best opportunity for the fullest development of childhood, and all children should be allowed to profit by the experience the kindergarten was able to bestow. In this article she asked the following question: Would it be more profitable in the end to spend from three to five of the most impressionable years of a child's life in developing technicalities by means of drill; or would it be better to devote this time, as far as possible, to developing skill in the use of muscles and in guiding a child's thinking so that he would develop physically, intellectually, and socially, and later acquire the technicalities at a time when the child's own ability enables him to achieve them with ease and speed?¹²

Criticism of the kindergarten practice became general in the early part of the twentieth century. So much dissension arose that the Sixth and Seventh Yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education each devoted a section to the study of kindergarten-primary

¹² Emma A. Neman, "The Kindergarten and the Primary School in Their Relation to the Child and to Each Other," Journal of the National Education Association, p. 396.

education. In the introduction of the Sixth Yearbook Ada Van Stone Harris urged that kindergarten-primary education keep pace with the advance of scientific, philosophical, and sociological discoveries. She brought out the fact that the coordination between kindergartens and primary schools had encountered a problem because the kindergartens wanted no classroom formality or child restraint whatever, and the primary teachers held to the dogmatic prejudice of long established customs of teaching and discipline. On page fifteen of this article Ada Van Stone Harris says: "The correct theory of our educational system should be that the primary grades and kindergartens are one institution--simply a succession of grades developing naturally."¹³

Other writers of the time asserted that the primary schools were superior to either the old orthodox kindergartens or the newer models and therefore would not profit by the addition of the kindergarten until the Froebelian methods were completely disregarded. Only then could the kindergarten be accepted as a part of the public school system. There were many arguments on each side of the question, both for and against kindergartens; but the demand

¹³ Ada Van Stone Harris, Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, pp. 12-15.

for kindergarten-primary unification was so great that Part Two of the Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education in 1907 was called "The Coordination of the Kindergarten and the Elementary School." The stress in this yearbook was placed upon development and continuity of practice and methods rather than upon externals.

Various persons made contributions to this yearbook. Dr. Jenny B. Merrill discussed certain phases of the course of study. She said that there were several subjects in which the continuity of work was most apparent. These she listed as language, nature study, music, art, and games. She especially stressed oral language by saying that for a child to read well, he must be able to talk well. Therefore, although no symbols are taught, reading experiences really begin in the kindergarten. For that reason reading interest is a carry-over into the first grade. The same may be said for nature study and art. In music the rote song is the common feature of interest for both groups. There is usually an interchange of games between the groups, but one must remember that simple games and those avoiding competition are best suited to young children.¹⁴

¹⁴ Jenny B. Merrill, "Ways and Means for Securing Continuity Between the Kindergarten and the Primary School in the Development of the Child," Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Vol. LXVI, pp.9-21.

Miss Bertha Payne discussed ways in which the training of kindergarten and primary teachers would contribute to the unification. She made a plea encouraging the teachers of both groups to train in broader fields of subject matter, methods, and psychology, leaving specialization until later.¹⁵

Dr. Margaret Giddings discussed the advantages of having one supervisor for both the kindergarten and primary groups. She said that a gap did exist between the two, but she felt that an adjustment might be made by changing the course of study and by using similar materials and methods. By some means she hoped to spread the kindergarten spirit through the primary grades without harm to the kindergarten and during the process give greater spontaneity to the primary system.¹⁶

So long as the kindergartens were private institutions, the training of the teacher was done in private

¹⁵ Bertha Payne, "How Can the Training of Kindergarten and Primary Teachers Contribute to Economy in the Education of Children?", Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Vol. LXVI, pp. 35-39.

¹⁶ Margaret Giddings, "The Relative Advantages and Disadvantages of Having One Supervisor of Kindergarten and Primary Work in the City School System," Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Vol. LXVI, pp. 50-59.

training schools. Thus, the kindergarten was treated as an institution, even to the training of its teachers. As more kindergartens became a part of public school systems, however, classes were offered in the state normal schools for the purpose of training both the kindergarten and primary teachers. As early as 1882 training classes had been set up in Maryland, Wisconsin, California, Indiana, and Kentucky. In 1901 Chicago University offered a course, taught by Miss Bertha Payne, noted advocate of the unification of kindergarten and primary grades, on "Modifications Needed in Kindergarten Materials, Games, and Songs; and a Comparison of Froebel's Psychology with Modern Psychology; and Problems of Adaptation of Organization and Supervision." Later a number of courses were offered in the kindergarten-primary teacher training field in that institution.¹⁷

The use of kindergartens had spread rapidly in the North and West by the turn of the twentieth century; but because of the few large cities in the South and certain peculiar social ideas, very few kindergartens had been established there by that time. Philander Claxton asserts that there was a need for kindergartens in the South as

¹⁷ Hahn, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

everywhere else, because the kindergarten was based upon tried and true principles and presented the best educational practice for young children. His arguments were that the kindergarten would stimulate the interest of parents in the education of their children. If kindergartens were put in the public school systems, they would tend to unite the home and the school. The kindergarten would add a year at the beginning of a child's school life, when he was at the impressionable age, which might be more profitable than two years added at the end of a school career. He also discussed the idea that many people thought the kindergarten was too expensive; but he argued that this objection would not be commonly made once the value of kindergartens, as an educational facility necessary for the full education of the child, was completely realized.¹⁸

During the last twenty-five years many forward steps have been taken in the accomplishment of unification of the kindergarten with the primary grades. Many attempts have been made to develop a unified kindergarten-primary curriculum which would be educationally practical. Many publications are now available concerning art, science, music, and language for the unified kindergarten-primary system.

¹⁸ Philander P. Claxton, "The Need for Kindergartens in the South," Journal of National Education Association, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 377-383.

In 1924 the magazine Childhood Education, covering the nursery-kindergarten-primary field, was inaugurated as the official journal of the International Kindergarten Union. This magazine has done much to further the unification and development of kindergarten-primary education from the experimental stage to a workable system.¹⁹

In 1925 the United States Bureau of Education stated that, although much progress had been made in the unification of kindergarten-primary work, this system was not a universally established practice. In 1926 Dr. Mary D. Davis, of the Bureau of Education, reported that eighty per cent of the teacher training institutions were offering unified kindergarten-primary training courses. She also stated that kindergartens were accepted as a part of the public school system in sixty-two per cent of the 549 cities covered by her survey; 195 of these cities had one supervisor for the combined groups.²⁰

Although the growth of kindergarten education was rapid and widespread from its beginning until the peak enrollment in 1930, there was, even at that time, a need for many more kindergartens, as will be seen by the

¹⁹ Hahn, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

²⁰ Mary Dabney Davis, Nursery-Kindergarten-Primary Education in 1924-1926, Bureau of Education Bulletin Number 28, pp. 40-41.

following figures compiled by Mary Dabney Davis in 1936. The record of enrollment reported to the Federal Office of Education from public and private kindergartens shows 1,252 children enrolled in 1873. Ten years later there were approximately 17,000. In 1900 there were 225,000 and 600,000 were enrolled in 1924. But even the peak enrollment of 750,000 in 1930 was only thirty per cent of the five-year-old children in the country.²¹

Following the peak year of kindergarten enrollment in 1930, there was a decline due mainly to the curtailment of funds brought about by the depression. At that time few parents had money for private kindergarten fees; and as a result the private institutions, even of long standing, were closed. Educators felt the loss of the kindergartens, and the voices of many of them might be heard through the following talk made by Superintendent of Schools Williard A. Frasier of Vermont, who says:

I wish to call the attention of the School Board to the importance of establishing free kindergartens as a part of the public school system. I am satisfied that in so doing we are serving the best interest of the city. The kindergarten is not a matter of experiment; it is based upon well settled principles and abundantly justified by its results. Common sense and common observations bear witness that unwholesome and debasing conditions, moral and physical, work directly to the child's undoing, while those of an opposite character work steadily and surely to the building up of true manhood and

²¹ Davis, op. cit., p. 68.

womanhood. The kindergarten, while moulding the child, fits him for doing all his later school work more efficiently.²²

Although kindergartens were established in America as early as 1855, it was not until 1873, in St. Louis, Missouri, that the first kindergarten was established as a part of a public school system. Educational authorities became interested in this enterprise, and as a result kindergartens were slowly adopted in other public school systems. The early adjustments between kindergartens and primary schools were difficult and were characterized by many mistakes. Before unification could be realized, many of the procedures in both the kindergarten and primary systems had to be changed. When the kindergartners and primary teachers understood that the growth and development of a child was a continuous process, which could not be broken up into divisions, real unification began.

²² Lucy Wheelock and Caroline D. Aborn, editors, The Kindergarten in New England, p. 36.

CHAPTER III

CURRENT EDUCATIONAL THEORIES AND PRACTICES IN PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTENS

The history of kindergartens as reviewed in Chapter I reveals the many influences which have led to changes in kindergarten-primary education in the past. There is a theory that kindergartens are an educational asset and should be incorporated in all public school systems. But practice often tends to lag behind theory, and as a result there has been no nation-wide practice of placing kindergartens in public schools as an integral part of the primary division. This situation exists in about thirty-seven per cent of our larger cities in the western and central parts of the United States but is not an established practice universally.¹

During the depression years from 1932 to 1938, many communities were forced to close their kindergartens because of lack of funds. As a result they were forced to disregard the fact that five-year-olds were as much the concern of the educational system as were older children. But with the coming of the war, there was a mushroom growth of kindergartens and nursery schools all over the nation.

¹ United States Office of Education, Federal Security Agency Leaflet, 1946.

With the close of the war the funds which had been made available during the emergency were withdrawn, and again many kindergartens were closed.

In 1932 kindergartens were discontinued in West Springfield, Massachusetts, as in many other places, because of lack of funds. But in 1944 they were re-established in every elementary school in that city; and Franklin P. Hawkes, Superintendent of Schools, stated that he considered the kindergarten a valuable asset, well worth its cost to any school system because it helped children become acquainted with new terms, materials, and environment and taught them to recognize accepted principles of behavior and education. He felt that the ease with which children adjust to first grade work upon leaving the kindergarten is justification enough for adding kindergartens to public schools.²

In June, 1946 the Research Division of the National Educational Association sent to the following groups inquiry blanks seeking information on the development of child care centers, nursery schools, and kindergartens:

1. State departments of education in all the states and commissioners of education in Alaska, Hawaii, Panama Canal Zone, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

2. Superintendents of schools in cities over 30,000 in population.

² Franklin P. Hawkes, "Passport to School," Childhood Education, Vol. XXIV, (May, 1948) p. 320.

Replies were received from twenty-nine state departments of education, Alaska, Puerto Rico, Panama Canal Zone, and the Virgin Islands, or sixty-two and three-tenths per cent of the entire number of states and territories to which the inquiry was sent. Since this study is concerned only with kindergartens, only that part of the report will be discussed here.

In all the thirty-three states and territories reporting, local school systems had the right to establish kindergartens. Of these, twenty-eight state departments reported that educators in those states were in favor of making the kindergarten a regular part of the public school system. Many of them stated that kindergartens were already a part of their schools. One state reported that kindergartens were being established at that time. Another state reported in favor of establishment, but building programs were needed. No state reported opposition to kindergartens. Two states did not know when they could be established but were in favor of them. Three states did not reply to the question.³

The inquiry was also sent to 346 school superintendents in cities over 30,000 in population. Replies were received from 203 systems or fifty-seven per cent of the entire group.

³ Educational Research Service, Circular No. 8 (September, 1946).

The report showed that 138 cities had kindergartens in operation in their school systems. The cost per pupil ranged from below fifty dollars to two hundred and fifty dollars per year, with an average cost of ninety-three dollars per pupil. Points of view of city school educators indicate opposition to child care centers and nursery schools but an advocacy of kindergartens as a part of all public schools as soon as space and funds permit.⁴

Thirty-two, or two thirds of the states, have now authorized the use of state school funds for the support of public school kindergartens. The public schools, in states other than the thirty-two which authorize state aid for kindergartens, must use local tax levies and private tuition as their only source of maintenance.⁵

There are marked differences in the ratio of children attending kindergartens in the many sections of the country; the highest percentage is along the west coast and in the north central states, while the lowest percentage of children attending kindergartens is in the southern states.⁶

⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

⁵ George D. Stoddard and others, Educational Services for Young Children, Educational Policies Commission, National Education Association, (December, 1945), p. 40.

⁶ Mary Dabney Davis, "Planning for Children Under Six in Public Education," Childhood Education, Vol. XXII (February, 1946), pp. 272-273.

Even in the South, however, there is a general acceptance of the need for publicly financed educational programs for all young children regardless of their families' economic status or social standing.

Entrance to kindergartens is generally a matter of chronological age. Upon entrance to the kindergarten the average child is between four years and nine months and five years or slightly over. The average child enrolled in kindergartens during the last part of the school year is five and one half years of age.⁷

The average size of the kindergarten enrollment per teacher in city school systems of different population groups is fifty-five and six tenths. The average daily attendance is thirty-six. This enrollment usually means that half the children are enrolled in a morning session and the other in an afternoon session, with one teacher serving both groups. Superintendents are making an effort to keep the number in any group below thirty, realizing that the younger the child, the more individual guidance is necessary. A kindergarten session usually does not last longer than three hours, including rest and play periods.⁸

⁷ Mary Dabney Davis, "Current Kindergarten Situation," National Education Association, Research Division, 1941, p. 1.

⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

The trend in the course of study for kindergartens is to combine the kindergarten-primary course of study in as much as the kindergarten is now considered an integral part of the elementary school. In the development of the curriculum by states, counties, and cities the kindergarten and primary divisions are frequently considered as one unit. This is as it should be. There should be no rigid line of demarcation existing between the kindergarten and the primary school. Both are part of a definite period in a child's growth cycle, a period subject to similar biological and psychological laws which vary in degree rather than in kind.⁹

There is a strong tendency in many progressive schools to drop the grade classification and organize the kindergarten-primary children into flexible groups wherein interests and mental ages are the basis for grouping without regard to former grade standards.¹⁰ Holding to the fixed idea of what a kindergarten is, what a first grade is, etc., one places the child into the preconceived pattern of each level and scarcely realizes that it is the same child in separate situations. Some of

⁹ Ruby Minor, Early Childhood Education, Its Principles and Practices, p. 21.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

the most notable breaks in a child's school career occur in his early years just when he is least able to make the necessary adjustment. The kindergarten-primary work should be so unified on the basis of normal objectives for the development of the growing child that no such adjustment would be necessary.¹¹

In the primary schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the kindergarten-primary departments have departed from the traditional grade patterns and have accepted the philosophy of a continuous learning program. In this school system a group of children is classified according to units from kindergarten to the fourth grade. In this program emphasis is placed upon the development of child interest. The individual growth pattern and the rate of learning of each child are studied; and progress, however slow, is recognized and recorded. Children of the same chronological age and emotional and social maturity are kept together so far as possible. The bright child is given experiences to enrich his development but is not placed in an advanced age group. The school's aim is to make today's child happier and tomorrow's child a

¹¹ Winifred E. Baine, "Bridging the Gap Between Kindergarten and First Grade," Childhood Education, Vol. XVIII, (September, 1941) pp. 19-31.

better adjusted citizen.¹² This type of grouping is being tried in a few other school systems; but it is still in the experimental stage, and it will take time to prove its value.

The aim of the modern kindergarten-primary system is the development of the child physically, emotionally, and socially through a carefully devised guidance program. If a teacher is to be able to guide a child wisely, she must understand as much as possible about what has gone on in his life before he enters school, what is going on at home, and what is happening to the child at school. One must realize first of all the wide range of individual differences which one will encounter with any group of children.

No educational plan can be satisfactory if it disregards the fact that a healthy, well-developed body is a necessary foundation for all other development. So the first step is the pre-school clinic and health examination. These are usually conducted in the school building in the spring before the child begins school in the fall. When the examination is over, the child is taken for a short visit to the kindergarten room to which

¹² Florence C. Kelly, "The Primary Schools in Milwaukee," Childhood Education, Vol. XXIV, (January, 1948) pp. 236-238.

he will be assigned in the fall. This short visit acts as an introduction to school and makes the child eager to return. At this time materials on school procedures and requirements may be given the parents to read during the summer.¹³

One must remember that development of any kind means growth. It means growing in body and becoming skillful in the use of it. It means, also, learning about the world and the things in it and using this knowledge to the best advantage. It includes understanding other people and learning to live and work with them, acquiring keener appreciations, more helpful attitudes, and increasing power in the directing of emotional forces.¹⁴

One must remember, too, that along with physical growth the child also learns emotional reactions. He learns to use various techniques to get what he wants, and a habit well established is not easily broken. However, these techniques indicate intellectual development. These various aspects do not take place independently of each other, for development in one respect is usually influenced by development in another. Whether or not it is

¹³ Hawkes, op. cit., p. 318.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Neterer and Louisa Wagoner, "What is a Nursery School?" Bulletin of the Association for Childhood Education, p. 7.

along socially acceptable lines depends upon the wisdom and skill of the child's guide and his own ability to grow. No two individuals ever develop alike. One may be physically perfect and yet not be able to get along well with others, while another may be intellectually superior and yet have trouble controlling his emotions. No individual ever attains perfection in all ways, but everyone has more capacity for growth than he has yet exhausted.¹⁵

Under the guidance of a capable teacher the child has a chance to make the most of his abilities. He learns to work and play with other children and to assume responsibility for the care of his clothing and his materials and equipment. He also learns how to adjust himself happily to people outside his family group. Principles of self-reliance are taught along with the fundamentals of courtesy to make a child feel at ease and accepted by his peer group. The teacher attempts to help the child control those emotional responses which are likely to lead to unhappiness for himself or for others, and to help him express those responses which may prove beneficial.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁶ Josephine C. Foster and Neith E. Headley, Education in the Kindergarten, p. 31.

There is a wide gap between the home and the traditional first grade. The kindergarten is the solution for this difficult transition period. It is a great deal to ask of a six-year-old to step from a period of free play in the home into the regular routine of a first grade room. This can be effected in the kindergarten in such a way that the child will be benefited throughout his school life.

The five-year-old learns many things in kindergarten classes which carry over into his primary work and on into life. First of all, he learns the democratic essential of fair play. He takes turns with others. He learns to share and take his place in a group. There is a kindling of the imagination and a sympathetic understanding, personality traits which need early cultivation. Reading looms ahead as a promised land. Children develop an appetite for reading by listening to stories and poetry, observing picture books, and training in numerous other ways through which children are introduced to printed symbols. Art through pictures, literature, music, and the child's own creative ability can send down roots early in a child's life. Most important of all, the power to use the English language can be stimulated if the child's natural interest in word sounds and meanings is developed. It is no small matter to discern the border line between

individual and social development, between the need for receptivity and the need for self-expression.¹⁷

There have been many studies made to determine the relation of kindergarten experience to later school life. In New York State the figures indicate that in the elementary schools there the provision of kindergarten instruction reduced the percentage of failures in the first grade by fourteen per cent. More than eighty per cent of the kindergarten group made a normal or accelerated progress compared to fifty-eight per cent of those without this training. Moreover, later progress data on these children showed that retardation or non-promotion beyond the first grade is much greater for the group without the kindergarten training than for the children who had that training.¹⁸

Studies show that apparently the results of kindergarten training are more noticeable in reading than in writing and arithmetic. The general average scholarship of pupils with kindergarten training is 3.5 points higher

¹⁷ Mary Louise Culkin, "The Contemporary Kindergarten," The Educational Record, 1943 p. 354.

¹⁸ Louise M. Alden and others, "Examine the Evidence," Kindergarten Portfolio Sec. 4, Association for Childhood Education.

than the general average scholarship of the pupils without kindergarten training. This difference is most noticeable in the third, fourth, and fifth grades.¹⁹

The social effects from kindergarten training are manifest in all the grades. The social rank estimates made by the teachers for both kindergarten and the non-kindergarten pupils of the different grades reveal significant differences. In all grades the pupils with kindergarten training rank on a higher level socially than children without this training. These differences in rank may be the result of the kindergarten curriculum, through which experiences are defined, interpreted, and organized.²⁰

There is now a serious problem affecting five-year-olds. Where kindergartens are not available in the public school systems, the pressure of parents for educational advantages for the five-year-old group and the public demand for more educational opportunities are placing these children in the first grades of the regular system. This practice must be stopped if these children are to have safe, healthy, happy lives. The kindergarten offers them opportunities that will contribute toward the development of the large body muscles. Activity with small

¹⁹ Ibid., Section 4, p. 2.

²⁰ Ibid.

muscles, which is often required in first grade work, if given too early, may result in nervous tension or eye impairment. Five-year-old children should have a regular rhythm of rest and activity and should not be expected to sit quietly for a long period of time. They are not ready either physically or mentally for first grade work.²¹

More and more persons are coming to realize that children four and one half to six years old are educable and these persons are interested in seeing that opportunities are made available for these children. Many of the states are now introducing legislative measures to provide support of kindergartens in the states' general education fund. When this is accomplished in every state, kindergartens will be as much a part of the public schools as any other division.

²¹ Ruth Andrus, "In Defense of Five-Year-Olds," Childhood Education, Vol. XXII, (February, 1946) pp. 272-273.

CHAPTER IV

TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL KINDERGARTENS

In Texas, as in all other states, the kindergarten movement started when a group of philanthropic women banded themselves together to form kindergarten associations to aid needy children. The Women's Study Circle in El Paso supported a free kindergarten as early as 1892. In that same year a kindergarten for needy children was established in Fort Worth. In 1900 the Fort Worth Kindergarten Training School was formed with Myra Winchester and Elizabeth Hommers as teachers. Kindergarten history in Dallas dates back to 1900, when two free kindergartens were established. In 1901 a school for training kindergarten teachers was established in Dallas. San Antonio opened its first free kindergartens in 1894. In 1902 the first kindergarten for non-English speaking children was opened in that city. In 1908 a teacher training school for kindergarten teachers was formed.

These free kindergartens laid the foundation for all educational work in the kindergarten field. Although they were established primarily to aid needy children, nevertheless this enterprise was also educational. Detailed reports

of all these early associations are not available, but they carried on many activities for public welfare.¹

Among the early Texas kindergartens were those partially supported by churches. In such cases the church provided room and equipment, and the kindergarten association provided a teacher. Some orphanages also established kindergartens at about this time. Among these were the Odd Fellows' Home and the State Orphans' Home at Corsicana, Buckner's Orphans' Home and the Christian Home in Dallas, and the orphans' home in Waco. Ursuline Academy in Dallas has maintained a kindergarten since 1922. Churches in Dallas also supported kindergartens for Latin American children which were a great aid in Americanizing these families. These were not only schools, but social centers with activities for the entire family.²

The first public school kindergarten in Texas was established in El Paso in 1902. For thirty-six years kindergartens in El Paso were maintained as a part of the regular school system, but in 1938 public support was withdrawn and the kindergartens were forced to close.³

¹ Mary King Drew, A History of the Kindergarten Movement in Texas, Association for Childhood Education, pp. 1-14.

² Ibid., p. 16.

³ Ibid.

Kindergartens were established in the Highland Park and University Park Schools in Dallas in 1912. The kindergarten held a prominent place in these schools until 1941, when the change was made from the eleven-year to the twelve-year plan in the Texas educational system. At this time Dallas schools dropped the name "kindergarten" and called the beginning class "Low First." However, the work of the first semester embodies the same curriculum and methods as were used when the term "kindergarten" was applied.⁴

In 1906 there were eight kindergartens in the Fort Worth public schools. By 1938 the number had increased to thirty-eight, with an enrollment of approximately two thousand children. At that time many of the kindergartens had to be discontinued because of lack of funds. At the present time Fort Worth employs fourteen kindergarten teachers, with 719 children enrolled.⁵

Houston opened its first public school kindergarten in 1907. By 1915 there was a kindergarten in every elementary school in that city. When the depression came, rather than close the kindergartens, Houston school administrators decided to hold morning kindergarten sessions for the children who were able to pay tuition and afternoon sessions

⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

⁵ Ibid.

for those who were not able. At the present time Houston employs thirty kindergarten teachers with an enrollment of more than 3100 children.⁶

San Antonio opened three public school kindergartens in 1913, but they were all discontinued in 1920 because of the lack of financial support. At the present time there are no public school kindergartens operating in San Antonio although educators in that city realize the need for such training.⁷

In October, 1948, a check list was mailed to the superintendents of the thirteen schools listed by the state department as having kindergartens in operation in 1947-48. Six other schools were also located where kindergartens were in operation. This made a total of nineteen schools whose superintendents were mailed a check list. Replies were received from sixteen, or eighty-four per cent of the schools contacted. The following information as to the number of years in operation, number of children enrolled, and the number of teachers employed was received through these replies.⁸

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

⁸ See Appendix, p. 56.

Port Arthur, Conroe and Ozona have had public school kindergartens in operation for more than twenty years. The kindergarten became a part of the Conroe school system in 1916. Only one kindergarten teacher is employed with an enrollment at this time of nearly one hundred children. In 1926 Port Arthur added the kindergarten to its regular school system. There are now ten teachers employed in that system with an enrollment of about 725 children. Ozona has had a public school kindergarten since 1928. At the present time there are fifty-five children enrolled with two teachers employed.

Galveston and New London have had kindergartens in operation since 1938. At the present time Galveston employs ten kindergarten teachers with an enrollment of 521 children. New London has an enrollment of twenty-eight children and employs one teacher.

In 1942 four school systems added kindergartens to the public schools. These schools were Orange, Overton, Randolph Field, and White Oak School at Longview. Orange now has an enrollment of eighty-two children and employs four teachers in the kindergarten division. Overton employs one teacher for an enrollment of forty-five children. Randolph Field employs two teachers for an enrollment of sixty children. The White Oak School at Longview employs two teachers for an enrollment at this time of forty children.

The San Marcos public school maintains a kindergarten under the auspices of Southwest Texas State Teachers College. The college has had a kindergarten as part of the demonstration school for many years, but three years ago the kindergarten became a part of the public school. This system employs two teachers for an enrollment of fifty-two children.

Two new-comers to the list of schools having kindergartens are Camp Hood with two teachers and forty-five children and Gladewater which will have a kindergarten ready to open in January, 1949. That school will also employ two teachers for an expected enrollment of eighty children.

Other schools listed as having kindergartens in operation are Gaston School with twenty children enrolled and one teacher, Leverett's Chapel School with forty-four children enrolled and one teacher, Spring Branch with thirty children enrolled and one teacher, and Gregg County with two teachers employed for an enrollment of forty children.

Donna School was listed with the state department of education last year as having a public school kindergarten in operation, but the reply from that school shows that there is no kindergarten in operation in Donna Schools at this time.

The reports show that six of the schools reporting were financed from school funds, one was financed by pupil-paid tuition, and nine were financed by a combination of the two, part by the school and part by pupil-paid tuition.

Thirteen of the schools report that the requirements for kindergarten teachers are four years of college training, the same qualifications required of the primary teachers. Two schools report that their present kindergarten teachers have no college training, and one school reports that three years of college training is required in that system for the kindergarten teacher. The two schools who employ kindergarten teachers with no college training report the salaries as being \$1,500 annually in one school and \$2,000 annually in the other. The other fourteen reports show that for kindergarten teachers with four years of college training the salary schedule is the same for kindergarten, primary, and elementary teachers, being based upon training, experience, and, in some cases, tenure.

The average age of enrollment in Texas kindergartens is five years at the beginning of the school term. Only one school reported the enrollment age as four years. The average teacher load is thirty-three children for each half-day session.

The annual cost per child in the kindergartens ranges from a minimum of thirty dollars to a maximum of \$300 with an average cost of \$136.70 per child.

All the schools reporting stated that their records showed that children with kindergarten experience made faster progress in primary work than children without such experience. Each school reported that a carry over of the skills learned in kindergarten aided the child in his later school work.

Instructional materials in eight of the sixteen schools are paid for by the child. In the other eight this material is furnished by the school. Twelve schools report mid-morning or mid-afternoon lunches paid for by the child. Only four state that these are paid for by the school.

All of the sixteen schools state that they consider the kindergarten a valuable asset to their school system.

This report shows that in Texas at the present time there are only 5,786 children enrolled in public school kindergartens, more than half of these being in Houston schools. There is a total of eighty-eight teachers employed in the Texas public school kindergartens today.

TABLE I

Total Number of Children Enrolled in Texas Kindergartens	5,786
Total Number of Kindergarten Teachers Employed	88
Average Age of Entrance	5 years
Average Annual Cost Per Pupil	\$136.70
Number of Kindergartens Financed by Schools	6
Number of Kindergartens Financed by Tuition	1
Number of Kindergartens Financed by a Combination of Both	9
Average Teacher Training	4 years
Average Teacher Salary	Same as for Primary Teachers in the System

CHAPTER V

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AND EQUIPMENT

Two factors which contribute to the efficient administration of any public school kindergarten are (1) such desirable physical conditions as adequate space, convenient cupboards and locker space, good ventilation and lighting, cleanliness, and attractively painted and decorated walls, as well as (2) the right kinds of material for instruction. In other words, if the best results are to be obtained, both children and teachers must have favorable working conditions and suitable equipment and supplies.

The kindergarten division should be so located within the building that as much sunlight as possible may be had. South and east exposures are the most desirable. Northern exposures should always be avoided if possible. The kindergarten should always be on the ground floor and open directly on an outdoor play space. The entrance should be separate from that used by others in the building.¹

Some school systems have provided unusually large kindergarten rooms, large enough to be ample for the tables and chairs and have plenty of extra space for play. In other cases, there are two adjoining rooms of fair size.

¹ Francis M. Berry, "Open a Kindergarten," Kindergarten Portfolio, Sec. 9, p. 1.

This is a better arrangement since it makes possible a division of the class where one group is working and the other is having a discussion. This work room should contain at least two hundred square feet of floor space.² The width of a regular kindergarten room should be not more than twice its height if it is lighted on one side only. The room should be at least twelve feet in height. From fifteen to thirty square feet of floor space should be allowed each child.³

The floor should be warm, durable, and easy to clean, preferably of hard wood or linoleum. The walls should be of a light, pleasing color with not less than fifty per cent or more than seventy per cent of light reflecting value. As near the main entrance as possible, there should be locker space for the child's wraps and galoshes. An adequate number of lavatories and drinking fountains and juvenile type toilets should be provided for both boys and girls.⁴

For adequate lighting the window area should be at least one fifth of the floor area. The window sills should

² Samuel Chester Parker and Alice Temple, Unified Kindergarten and First Grade Teaching, p. 71.

³ Berry, op. cit., p. 2.

⁴ Ibid.

be at least twenty-four and not more than twenty-eight inches from the floor. Available artificial illumination should be at least to the extent of twenty foot candles.⁵

No rigid standard can be set with regard to furniture. Some teachers prefer small community tables occupied by four to six pupils. Others prefer individual desks of the table variety. If individual desks are used, they should be of three heights--nine inches, ten inches, and eleven inches. The tables should be of two heights--nineteen inches and twenty-one inches. Whichever is used, they should be of varying heights so all children could be comfortable when working at a variety of activities. There should be an ample amount of display board throughout the room. About eight feet of wall space should be given to a blackboard. Blackboards and display boards should be about twenty inches from the floor. There should be an ample supply of shelves and locker space for the individual pupils and for the teacher.⁶

When visiting a kindergarten in the public schools today, one notices not only the attractiveness, order and arrangement of the room, the teacher's technique, the response of the children and the relationship between the two, but also the amount and variety of equipment.

⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

⁶ Ruby Minor, Early Childhood Education, pp. 699-700.

and material, its accessibility, the children's self-reliance in selecting and working with it and their freedom of movement and originality.⁷ In speaking of basic equipment and supplies, one generally refers to the furniture and materials which may be permanently used as equipment and to consumable materials as supplies.

It is important to plan the kind and amount of equipment and supplies needed. Organization, curriculum needs, and pupil activities should determine the type of equipment and amount of supplies purchased at any time. When considering the purchase of equipment which is meant to be used for a long period of time, a good policy to follow is to select merchandise of good standard quality. If initial selections of equipment are made wisely and cared for properly, it will be durable for a long period of time. By adding something new each year, gradually the equipment of a kindergarten becomes fairly complete, and there is not such a big outlay of expense at one time.

In January, 1941 the Association for Childhood Education put out a bulletin called "Suggested Equipment and Supplies for Nursery Schools, Kindergartens, and Primary Schools." The following lists of equipment and supplies

⁷ Berry, op. cit., p. 3.

have been taken from this list. This should be adequate material for thirty-six kindergarten children.

Apparatus for Indoor and Outdoor Play

- 1 Balancing or Walking Board
- 1 Horizontal Bar (adjusted in doorway)
- 1 Slide
- 1 Combination Swing for doorway

Art Equipment and Supplies

- 12 Boards, modeling, 9" x 12"
- 1 doz. Brushes, rubber set, 1" camel's hair, 12" handle
- 100 lbs. Clay, blue modeling (powder)
- 2 Clay Jars, stone mason, 15" dia., with covers
- 26 doz. Crayons, bulk, pressed, 5/8" dia.,
 - 4 doz. each, red, green, blue, brown
 - 2 doz. each, black, orange, yellow, violet, pink
- 2 Easels, double
- 1 Paint Color Card
- ½ pt. each color, Enamel--yellow, red, blue, violet, black, green, brown, white
- 1 pkg. each color, Cold Water Paint, 5 lbs. to pkg.--bright yellow, white, blue, violet, red, black, green
- 4 pkgs. Paper, bogus or manila, 12" x 15", 500 sheets to pkg.
- 4 pkgs. Paper, manila, rough, 9" x 12", 500 sheets to pkg.
- 5 pkgs. Paper, cover, 12" x 18", 100 sheets to pkg.--1 pkg. each, yellow, green, red, blue, assorted colors
- 1 ream Unprinted Newspaper, 24" x 36" 32 lbs. to ream
- ½ ream Unprinted Newspaper, 24" x 36" 32 lbs. to ream, assorted colors
- 2 reams Tag Board, manila or colored, 18" x 36"
- 1 roll manila Wrapping Paper, 36" wide
- 1 ream Wrapping Paper, 36" wide
- 1 gal. Poster Paste, glass, glass cover
- 3 doz. Pencils, large lead

Blocks

- 1 set large Building Blocks

Carpentry Tools and Supplies

- 4 sheets Beaver Board
- 1 Brace, 8"
- 6 Paint Brushes, 1", for wood work
- 2 C Clamps, 4" opening
- 2 each Dowel Bits, extension lip, short--
1/2", 3/8", 1/4"
- 6 hammers, 13 to 16 oz. weight
- 6 lbs. nails, 5/8" to 1 1/2", fine wire,
large heads
- 1 quire Sandpaper, mixed numbers
- 4 Saws
- 3 pkgs. Slats, plain, 10" long, hard wood
- 4 pkgs. Slats, plain, 6" long, soft wood
- 3 Yardsticks
- 1/2 load Mill Ends, soft wood
- Scrap material, such as boxes, crates
boards, scraps of Beaver Board,
barrels, etc.

Equipment and Supplies

LAVATORY

- 2 pkgs, Paper Handkerchiefs, 500 to pkg.
Soap
- 1 Paper Towel Container
- 24 pkgs. Paper Towels, 150 to pkg.

LUNCHEON

- 2 pkgs. Paper Napkins, 1000 to pkg.
Straws

Furniture and Equipment

- 1 Bookcase or Shelves
- Bulletin Boards or pinning space
- 2 Cabinets--with individual compartments
or built-in cupboards
- 1 Carpenter's Bench, or 6 individual work
benches
- 40 Chairs, 10" to 14" high (vary size accord-
ing to need)
- 6 Chairs, for adults
- 1 Clock
- 2 Lockers or low Trunks, for blocks and
other supplies
- 1 Paper Cutter, gravity, 18" blade with
holder
- 1 Phonograph, or access to one
- 1 Piano and Bench
- 36 Rugs, 18" x 36", or canvas squares
bound with tape, or small rag rugs
or cots

- 1 Screen
- 6 Tables--suggested sizes 18" x 36", 24" x 36"; 20" to 24" high (vary size according to need)
- 2 Waste Baskets

Miscellaneous

- 2 doz. Brushes, paste
- 4 boxes Paper Clips, large
- 4 boxes Fasteners, round head, 100 to box--1 box 3/4", 2 boxes 1", 1 box 1 1/2" or 2"
- 1 roll Gummed Paper, 2" width
- 1 box pins
- 1 Punch, large hole
- 12 Rulers, 12", marked in inches only
- 3 doz. Scissors, one blunt, one sharp point
- 4 boxes Thumb Tacks, 3/8", 100 to box

Sewing and Weaving Materials

- 6 yds. Cloth, printed cambric
- 3 yds. Cloth, each color, cotton voile--pink, blue, white, yellow, light green
- 2 yds. Cloth, cotton flannel
- 6 yds. Cloth, unbleached muslin, coarse weave
- 8 balls Crochet Cotton--2 each, white, pink, black, yellow
- Cotton, cotton waste, or kapok, for stuffing
- 4 pkgs. Needles--2 crewel, 2 tapestry
- 5 yds. table Oilcloth, tinted, 47" wide
- 4 balls Sansilk or Silkateen, white and colors

Toys

HOUSEKEEPING

- 1 Bed
- 4 Brooms
- 1 Bureau
- 1 Carriage
- 4 Chairs
- 1 set Dishes, unbreakable
- 6 Dolls, unbreakable
- 1 set Family Dolls
- 4 Dustpans (long handle)
- 1 Laundry Set
- 1 Stove
- 1 property Box
- 1 Rocker
- 1 Table
- 4 Toy Telephones

MANIPULATIVE

- 2 sets Animals
- 8 Balls, 6"
- 1 Ball, 8", 10", or 12"
- 6 Bean Bags
- Jig-saw Puzzles, simple wooden ones

WHEEL

- Airplanes
- Automobiles
- Iron Wheel Toys
- 1 Train, wooden
- 1 Wagon
- 2 Wheelbarrows

This suggested list was prepared by the Association for Childhood Education in Washington, D. C., in January, 1941. It was intended to be used only as a guide, not as a maximum or minimum list. It should be varied in accordance with the particular needs and resources of each school and community.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Kindergartens are now seventy-eight years old in this country. Their worth has been shown by repeated studies and by the experiences of hundreds of school systems over the nation. Likewise their operation is not difficult, nor excessively expensive when the kindergarten is once established. Yet more than two thirds of American cities do not offer kindergarten opportunities to their children. Public school administrators need to direct the attention of their communities to the desirability of extending their educational services downward to care for the five-year-old. Kindergartens should need no special pleading in their behalf. They should be considered and evaluated in the light of their own merits.¹

Authorities in child development state that the first five years of life forms the basis for emotional and social development. Medical men and psychologists found during the recent world war that the largest number of men rejected from the armed services resulted from nervous disorders which were traceable, in many

¹ George Stoddard and others, Educational Services for Young Children, p. 47.

instances, to faulty training in early childhood. The mental and physical defects are present regardless of peace or war, but the war has emphasized these and has indicated the need for increased educational services for young children.²

There are many concepts and generalizations which are acquired before a child is six years of age, and during this time, he can also be developing interests, attitudes, skills, and habits if he receives the proper guidance. Adults need to provide ample opportunities for children to find out about the world in which they live. Children can and do, when given the opportunity, make significant progress in science, esthetic expression, and language development in the years before they are six. Especially is this true of language development. Mastery of the mother tongue takes many years, but by the time the average child is ready to enter the first grade in school, free, spontaneous speech without hesitation, lisp- ing, or other impediment is his birth right. If the child is introduced to good speech habits during the formative years of his language development, he may prevent the establishment of poor speech habits which will need later correction.

² Ibid., p. 50.

Five-year-old kindergarten children are capable of following effective and approved guides in the form of speech standards. These may grow out of sharing an experience, the story-telling period, an assembly presentation, or any other oral experience in which it is essential that the child be easily heard and understood. Plenty of oral experiences are part of the kindergarten curricula so that no child need feel shy in answering questions or otherwise taking part after he has been in the group for only a short while.

In this country there is a large group of foreign-speaking children who could derive much benefit from a kindergarten program where they could have the necessary guidance in learning the proper handling of the English language. In the present educational system, where there is no established kindergarten, this group of children is placed in the low first grade where they are usually somewhat unhappy due to their bilingual status. While learning to speak, they are also expected to learn to read and write English and take part in other activities which the English-speaking child is able to handle readily. As a result they become confused, and after a year or two of failure the children begin to lose interest in their school work. Would it not be easier and require less money to give these children one or two years in a kindergarten where

they could gain valuable experiences, learn to speak the English language, and thus gain more nearly an equal opportunity for success and happiness when they enter the first grade? Certainly this would cut down the large percentage of failures as well as the over age group of foreign-speaking children which one often finds in the first and second grades in the schools which these children attend. Perhaps this kindergarten work could also do much to raise living standards and Americanize the adults in the homes from which these children come.

"Readiness" is a word which is being used a great deal in kindergartens and first grades at this time. This is much harder for the average parent to understand than for the teacher. One must always be very careful in the explanation of individual differences in children when explaining a lack of "readiness." Nearly all first grade teachers realize that a readiness for reading is essential before actual reading can be successful. Lack of readiness in the average child usually implies a meagre background of experience and an impoverishment in satisfactions for basic life needs. The problem of creating "readiness" depends upon the provision of a variety of individual and group experiences which are appropriate and satisfying and which lead to feelings of adequacy and security. If these essential experiences have been denied a child, then

he will usually not be able to learn to read during the first year in school. The kindergarten can do much to broaden the experiences of these children by giving them these group experiences from which they will gain the feeling of security, of belonging to a group, along with the feeling of success which these experiences bring.

The eyes of the five-year-old are not well enough developed physically to notice the difference in printed words without strain, but they are developed enough to notice the difference in sizes of children, blocks, balls, and other objects, gradually leading up to small objects and pictures. Kindergarten experiences offer many opportunities for an alert teacher to help children gain the habit of noticing similarities and differences, which is a very important one when children must learn words in formal reading lessons later.³

During the kindergarten year, the child lives richly. He learns to work and play with others, to take part in discussions, to make and carry out plans. He experiments with a variety of materials, creating things to suit his fancy and satisfy his curiosity. He learns to enjoy stories, music, and pictures, learns to interpret his

³ Elizabeth Neterer and others, "Kindergarten's Responsibility Toward Reading," Portfolio for Kindergarten Teachers, Leaflet No. 8, p. 3.

ideas in drawings, painting, building, or making of original stories and dramatization. His speaking vocabulary is enlarged. His speech forms are correctly used, and his health needs are studied and provided for.

The kindergarten year is one of joyous, successful living for the five-year-old. It is the rightful heritage of every American child and educators and administrators are looking forward to the time when the kindergarten will be as much a part of the regular public school system as any other unit. Nowhere else can the American child lay as good a foundation for the work of his later school life. Since this is true every child should be allowed to have at least one year in a public school kindergarten regardless of his race, color, or economic status of his parents.

This study reveals that:

1. Five-year-old children gain valuable experience in learning to live and work with others during the kindergarten period.
2. The child's speaking vocabulary is enlarged and his speech forms are correctly used.
3. The child's health needs are studied and provided for.
4. Records show that children with kindergarten training make faster progress in first grade than children without this training.

From these conclusions the following recommendations are made:

1. At least one year of kindergarten training should be a part of every school system.
2. Wherever building is necessary before kindergartens can be installed, a period of three or four months should be given over to kindergarten practices in the low-first grade.
3. All teachers who instruct kindergarten children should be especially trained for this work.
4. All private kindergartens should be expected to meet the same requirements of those in public school systems.
5. Bilingual children should be given kindergarten experiences as early as possible. These children could benefit from two years in kindergarten.
6. Every normal child in the United States should be given the advantage of kindergarten experience before he attends first grade.

APPENDIX

CHECK LIST

1. Are kindergartens a part of your public school system? Yes No
2. How long have they been in operation? _____ years.
3. How are they financed? ___By the school. ___By tuition paid by the child. ___By a combination of both.
4. How many kindergarten teachers are employed in your system? ____
5. Are these teachers especially trained kindergarten teachers? ____
6. Is their training based on: 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, or 4 years of college work? Check one.
7. Are the qualifications the same for kindergarten and primary teachers? Yes No
8. What is the annual salary of the kindergarten teacher? _____
9. What is the annual salary of the primary teacher? _____
10. At what age are children admitted to the kindergarten? _____
11. How many children are now enrolled in your kindergartens? _____
12. How many kindergarten children is considered a teacher load? _____
13. What is the annual average cost per child in your kindergarten?

14. Do your records show that children with kindergarten training make faster progress in first grade than children without this training? _____
15. Is the kindergarten under the same supervision as the primary grades? Yes No
16. Do you find there is a carry over of the skills learned in kindergarten that helps the child in his later school work? Yes No

17. Is there an interchange of materials and practices between the kindergarten and the first grade? Yes No
18. The instructional material used in the kindergarten is paid for (1) by the school, (2) by the child. Check one.
19. Are mid-morning lunches served to the kindergarten children?
Yes No
20. If so are these lunches paid for (1) by the child, (2) by the school? Check one.
21. The kindergarten children are in school (1) all morning, (2) all afternoon, (3) all day, or (4) as long as the primary children are in school. Check one.
22. Do the kindergarten children have play periods (1) alone, _____ or (2) in connection with the primary grades? _____ Check one.
23. Are the play periods (1) free or (2) supervised by the teacher? Check one.
24. Do you consider the kindergarten a valuable asset to your system? Yes No
25. Please list three other school systems that have kindergartens now in operation in their schools:
- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____

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