

The University of Manitoba

THE DEVELOPMENT OF KINDERGARTENS IN MANITOBA

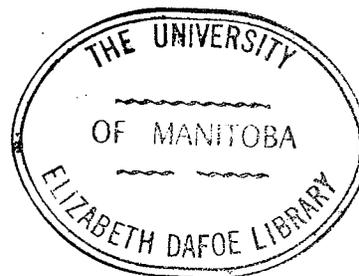
Being An Abstract of a Thesis submitted
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by

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF KINDERGARTENS IN MANITOBA

THESIS ABSTRACT

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to trace the development of kindergartens in the province from their beginnings through to the end of the school year 1959-1960. The study encompassed within its limits public and private pre-school classes, conducted within school hours, in which the enrollment included children approximately five years of age.

Sources of Data

The investigation and collection of data centred around three phases of the thesis problem: (1) the establishment of when the development of kindergartens in Manitoba began; (2) the identification of kindergartens, public and private, that had been in operation in the province at any time up to June 1960; and (3) the securing of information pertaining to kindergarten practices and related topics. The sources of data consisted of the following: (1) published materials, such as various publications of the provincial government, particularly of the Departments of Education, and of Health and Welfare; a publication of the Winnipeg Department of Health; annual reports; convention reports; books; and newspaper articles; (2) unpublished materials, such as minutes, manuscript records and reports, and letters; (3) interviews, both personal and telephone; (4) casual conversations; and (5) replies from two questionnaires.

Procedures

To obtain the desired information from all the foregoing sources

required several methods of procedure. Some of these consisted of referring to pertinent published and unpublished materials, and utilizing interviews and casual conversations. These research techniques established the date of the opening of the first kindergarten in Manitoba as 1892, and of the first documentary reference to kindergartens in the province as 1890. They served to locate and provide information about most of the kindergartens that opened prior to 1940, and about the Winnipeg public school kindergartens, the first of which opened in 1943. However, information was far from complete and further research was necessary. The designing and distributing of two questionnaires was the ultimate outcome.

Questionnaire I was sent chiefly to the medical directors of all the municipalities and rural municipalities in the province, for they would be the licensing agents, if any. The questionnaire requested information concerning the identification, location, and dates of operation of any kindergartens that had been in operation at any time in the municipalities served by the medical director. It also solicited information concerning inspection by the health and fire departments, and requirements regarding licensing and teacher-training.

Questionnaire II was sent to the teachers of the kindergartens or to those responsible for the operation of the classes. This questionnaire was for the purpose of confirming and gaining further information about the identification, classification, and dates of operation of the classes identified chiefly in the replies to Questionnaire I; but it was particularly for the purpose of gaining information about the practices in the kindergartens.

Findings

The development of kindergartens in Manitoba revealed many changes. These appeared to have been related to the social, economic, and geographic changes of the times, and to the developments in the fields of child study and early childhood education.

Following the opening of the first kindergarten, in 1892, new kindergartens opened during each decade within the time-span of the study. Slow but steady growth occurred during the first three decades coinciding with, and resulting from the population explosion due to immigration. The growth in new kindergartens was exceedingly slight during the decade in which World War I occurred. Renewed and slightly accelerated development marked the peaceful and prosperous years of the 1920 decade. The notable increase was in the number of private kindergartens, both those conducted in private schools and those conducted by individuals. A decline in the number of new classes took place during the 1930 decade when prosperity gave way to depression. As might be expected, the notable decrease was in the number of fee-charging private classes. Resumed and accelerated growth marked the years of war and recovery from war of the 1940 decade. The important development that occurred during that period was the increase in the number of school systems in which there were kindergartens. Rapid and extensive increase in the number of kindergartens characterized the 1950 decade when the population shift to urban centres appeared to have created the need and demand for kindergarten classes. This increase was chiefly in the number of private kindergartens opened under the auspices of individual persons.

However, change characterized the development, for the kindergartens were in operation for varying lengths of time. Those in operation for many years were in a decided minority, and those in operation for only a few years were in a decided majority. Most of the latter were private kindergartens operated by individual persons. Nevertheless, in spite of the changes, the total developmental picture was one of extensive growth.

The development of kindergartens in Manitoba was not only in the number of kindergartens, but also in the number of classifications in which the classes belonged and in the number of cities, towns, and villages in which the kindergartens that opened were located.

The years between 1892 and 1960 witnessed gradual changes in the program as well as in some other aspects of this field of education. Findings revealed that until the decade of 1910 kindergarten programs in Manitoba were based entirely on the philosophy and practices of Friedrich Froebel and therefore featured activities with the gifts and occupations. However, beginning in that decade, modifications began to take place resulting from new developments in the fields of early childhood education and of child study, and new trends gradually emerged. Evidence indicated that the controversy regarding the relative values of the old and new practices took place in Manitoba, as elsewhere, and the newer ideas were introduced at varying rates and times. Differences existed within decades.

The 1940 decade marked the end of one era in early childhood education in Manitoba and the beginning of another. This period witnessed the following:

1. The final dropping of the gift lessons, and therefore, of a program based on Froebel's philosophy.
2. A new emphasis on play and on its interpretation as free play rather than directed.
3. The introduction of an informal approach to learning.
4. A renewed emphasis on creative or problem-solving activities in art.
5. An increase in the number of group projects.
6. The beginning of emphasis on readiness for future learning.
7. The initiation of group written language experiences.
8. The use of the expanding number of visual aids.

The 1950 decade witnessed increased provision for the total growth of the pupils, individual differences, problem-solving activities and reading readiness experiences; and also witnessed the continuation or extension of other modifications begun in the previous decade.

The over-all findings revealed that there had been extensive development in the kindergartens in Manitoba, and pointed to a need for continued growth.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The first documentary reference to kindergarten education in Manitoba was made in the Statutes of Manitoba, 1890, which stated:

It shall be the duty of the board of school trustees in cities, towns, and villages,

To provide, if deemed expedient, for children between three and six years of age a course of instruction and training according to the methods practised in kindergarten schools, subject, however, to the regulation of the Department of Education in that behalf.¹

By this enactment the provincial legislators opened the way for the establishment of kindergartens in the public schools.

However, the first kindergarten was founded, not under the provisions of the act, but by the Winnipeg Free Kindergarten Association, a philanthropic organization.² This first kindergarten, established in 1892, preceded by seven years the opening of the first public school kindergarten, in the town of Neepawa.³ During the years following the turn of the century a large number of kindergartens under various auspices became established in a number of centres in Manitoba. The growth during the first four decades was very gradual, but thereafter it gained momentum at an increasingly rapid pace. Some classes continued in operation for many years; others were of short

¹Legislature of the Province of Manitoba, Statutes of Manitoba, 1890, Vol. 1, (Winnipeg: David Philip, Queen's Printer, A.D. 1890), Cap. 38, 86 (12), p. 206.

²Infra, p. 36. ³Infra, p.p. 64-65.

duration. By 1960 approximately one-third of the five-year-old population of Manitoba was enrolled in kindergarten.⁴

I. THE PURPOSE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND DEFINITION OF THE TERM "KINDERGARTEN"

The purpose of this study was to trace the development of kindergartens in the province from their beginnings through to the end of the school year 1959-1960. The study encompassed within its limits public and private pre-school classes, conducted within school hours, in which the enrollment included children approximately five years of age.

The foregoing limits differed somewhat from the original for, as the study progressed, evidence very soon came to light which necessitated broadening the limits in order to develop the thesis. At the initial stage of the study the definition used to define the term "kindergarten" was "a half-day pre-school class for children aged approximately four years nine months to five years nine months."⁵

However, research soon revealed that the definition was too narrow, both with respect to age limits and to the length of the session, to provide a true picture of the development of kindergartens in Manitoba.

The age limits in many kindergartens proved to be wider than

⁴ See Appendix B for evidence.

⁵ See questionnaire in Appendix A.

This definition was applicable to a kindergarten in the public school system with which the writer was familiar. The required age for admission was five years by November 30th. Infra, p. 138.

those defined. The following evidence indicated that this was to be expected:

1. The Manitoba legislation of 1890 regarding public school kindergartens set forth the age-range of the pupils as from three to six years.⁶
2. Friedrich Froebel, the founder of kindergartens, set the pattern for kindergartens for many years. He enrolled children from two to seven years of age.⁷
3. Maria Montessori, a prominent and somewhat influential figure in the field of pre-school education from the turn of the century, enrolled children from three to seven years of age.⁸
4. The introduction of nursery schools into Manitoba post-dated the introduction of kindergartens by forty-two years, for it was not until Idell Robinson opened her nursery school in Winnipeg in 1934 that there were any nursery schools in Manitoba, or in Canada west of Toronto.⁹ At that time the idea of a separate class for

⁶ Supra, p. 1.

⁷ Baroness Marenholtz-Bülow, Child and Child-Nature, trans. Alice M. Christie (second edition; London: W. Swan Sonnenschein, 1879), p. 94.

⁸ Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method, trans. Anne E. George (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1912), p. 70.

⁹ News item in The Winnipeg Tribune, June 6, 1959; and infra, p. 119.

the younger children in the pre-school age-groups was still quite new, for less than fifteen years had elapsed since the introduction of nursery schools into America.¹⁰ Furthermore, it was not until 1952 that the Manitoba legislature repealed and re-enacted the legislation of 1890 regarding kindergartens in the public schools. The new act included "nursery and kindergarten schools" in the three to six age-group.¹¹

In view of the foregoing evidence it seemed justifiable to include classes with the wider age-range in the study as long as the enrollment included some children five years of age, or approximately five. Information secured by means of a questionnaire was on this wider basis.¹²

Limiting the length of the session to "a half-day" proved to be too narrow to provide a complete and accurate picture of kindergartens. In a very few cases the classes were, or had been, full-day sessions - that is, there was an afternoon as well as a morning session for the same group of children. However, the hours were well within those of a school day. Reference to a number of source books revealed

¹⁰Hazel F. Gabbard, "Status and Trends in Early Childhood Education," Those First School Years. The National Elementary Principal, Vol. XL, No. 1, September, 1960 (Washington, D.C.: Department of Elementary School Principals, National Education Association of the United States, 1960), p. 220.

¹¹Legislature of the Province of Manitoba, Statutes of Manitoba, 1952, 1st Session (Winnipeg: C. E. Leech, Queen's Printer for the Province of Manitoba, A.D. 1952), Chap. 50, Pt. VI, 135 (1) (a).

¹²See questionnaire and letter to teacher in Appendix A.

that the authors included full-day sessions, as above, as one among several types of session.¹³ Consequently, the limits of the study were broadened to include these classes.

Another point that required consideration in order to determine which classes came within the limits of the study was the apparent lack of a consistent use of terms to designate specific types of pre-school classes. Some that were designated as "kindergartens" by the operators were licensed as "day nurseries."¹⁴ However, information received from the teachers of all classes concerned established which classes were "kindergartens" as defined in this thesis and so should be included.

The revised definition of the term "kindergarten" then became "a pre-school class, conducted within school hours, in which the enrollment included children four years nine months to five years nine months."¹⁵

II. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

The development of kindergartens in Manitoba was the outcome of certain influential factors. This background of information is presented

¹³Josephine C. Foster and Neith E. Headley, Education in the Kindergarten (second edition; New York: American Book Company, 1948), pp. 120-121; Clarice Dechent Wills and William H. Stegeman, Living in the Kindergarten (Chicago: Follett Publishing Company, 1951), pp. 96-99; Hazel M. Lambert, Teaching the Kindergarten Child (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1958), pp. 91-93.

¹⁴These classes were licensed as "day nurseries" under Manitoba Regulation 5/54 of The Public Health Act, (C.E. Leech, Queen's Printer for Manitoba, 1954), Part V - Division 5, 130 (d). This regulation contained no separate category of "kindergarten."

¹⁵The limits were as of the beginning of September. Generally speaking, the enrollment included children five years of age.

in Chapter II. A statement of the sources of data, the methods of procedure, and the treatment of the findings are located in Chapter III; the account of the development of kindergartens in Manitoba in Chapter IV; a summary of the development and some objectives for the future in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

APPARENT INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF KINDERGARTENS IN MANITOBA AND IN THEIR PRACTICES

... Early childhood education has derived impetus from wars, depressions, religious strife, and industrial upheaval, to the extent that some are prone to claim that it experiences most of its evolution in so-called 'bad' times. However, early childhood education has benefitted markedly also from scientific discoveries, 'booms', philanthropic endeavors, political and religious movements, and geographical and social expansion, all of which might be judged 'good'.¹

As elsewhere, early childhood education in Manitoba derived impetus from both 'bad' and 'good' times. Many influential factors appeared to be similar to the foregoing. Because these factors provided part of the background information for the thesis, the content of this chapter included a brief account of them.

I. SOME FACTORS THAT SEEMED TO HAVE INFLUENCED THE DEVELOPMENT OF KINDERGARTENS IN MANITOBA

Throughout the years covered by the thesis Manitoba experienced geographic, economic, and social changes. All of these appeared to have had their influence on the development of kindergartens. Among these were:

¹Elizabeth Mechem Fuller, "Early Childhood Education," Encyclopedia of Educational Research (third edition; New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960), p. 385.

1. An explosive population expansion due to immigration,² particularly around the turn of the century, and continued growth in the following years.
2. The geographic expansion of the province northward to its present boundaries in 1912, thus increasing the size of Manitoba approximately three-fold.³
3. The gradual development of the north and east sections of the province, and, during the 1920 decade, the establishment of centres such as Flin Flon and Pine Falls.⁴
4. Beginning in the 1940 decade, the provision for families of the armed services personnel to live on the Department of National Defence bases in various parts of the province.
5. During the decade of 1941-1951, the shift in population from rural to urban areas resulting in the growth of towns in both size and number; and, between 1951 and 1959, in the almost three-fold expansion of greater Winnipeg, mostly on the periphery.⁵
6. Periods of prosperity and of depression; of peace and of war.

²James S. Woodsworth, Strangers Within our Gates or Coming Canadians (Toronto, Ontario: The Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, Canada, 1909), pp. 257-258.

³Government of Manitoba, Manitoba's Diamond Jubilee: July Fifteenth, Nineteen Hundred and Thirty (Government of Manitoba for the Provincial Diamond Jubilee Committee), inside back cover.

⁴Department of Industry and Commerce, Province of Manitoba, Economic Atlas of Manitoba (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Stovel-Advocate Press Limited, 1960), p. 80.

⁵Ibid., Preface iv, pp. 28 and 78.

7. At various times, the active interest in kindergarten education of a philanthropic organization, some schools, churches, parent groups, community agencies, and individuals.

As far as could be determined, these were the chief factors from which the development of kindergartens in Manitoba appeared to have derived impetus.

Developments in the field of early childhood education were not only with respect to the number of classes, but also with respect to practices, as the following indicated:

The kindergarten of today shows characteristic trends indicative of its historic background and of its modification in the direction of the newer scientific movement in education and psychology.⁶

Because kindergarten practices in Manitoba showed characteristic trends reflecting similar influences, the content of the thesis, and of this chapter, included a brief consideration of the developments in the fields of early childhood education and of child study as additional background information.

II. SOME FACTORS THAT SEEMED TO HAVE INFLUENCED

KINDERGARTEN PRACTICES IN MANITOBA

Information pertaining to the first kindergarten in Manitoba, and to many established during the next four and one-half decades, revealed the influence of Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), the founder of kindergartens.

⁶Katherine L. McLaughlin, "Kindergarten Education," Encyclopedia of Educational Research (revised edition; New York: The MacMillan Company, 1952), p. 650.

The Work of Friedrich Froebel

In 1837, Friedrich Froebel opened the first kindergarten, in Blankenburg, Germany. Froebel's thinking with regard to the education of young children was in contrast to much of the thinking of his time. Among his beliefs were the following:

1. That children should be treated as children and not as miniature adults.
2. That children could be learning and happy at the same time.
3. That there was educative value in play.
4. That learning experiences could be found outside the covers of books.
5. That education began in infancy.

Convinced of these ideas, he formulated a system of education for little children appropriate to their needs, as conceived at that time, and devised methods and materials to put his ideas into practice.

The principles upon which Froebel based his system were:

1. Each child had within him potentials which would unfold under favourable conditions. The "kindergarten" - or "children's garden" - was to be a place where this unfolding would take place.
2. Little children learned only through self-activity, but the self-activity must be directed into the proper channels.

So, Froebel's kindergarten was a place where the children were happy while learning; where they were learning through participation in a variety of activities, but in very controlled situations. The program included: a morning talk; play experiences of a controlled type built

around songs, stories, pictures, and games; gardening; and caring for pets. Symbolism permeated the program, for there was an underlying symbolic interpretation to all activities. The development of sense impressions and of aesthetic appreciation received emphasis, and nature study held an important place in the curriculum.

Basic to Froebel's program were the materials he designed and called "gifts" and the manual activities he devised and called "occupations." The gifts were designed by Froebel to teach mathematical relationships and sequences, including those of form, size, dimension, weight and number; to teach colours; and also to serve as symbols to interpret his philosophy of the law of unity in the universe. They consisted of a ball, a sphere, cubes which were sub-divided in different ways, a cylinder, sticks, laths, rings, and portions of rings.⁷ Tables, which were marked off in one-inch squares, formed a necessary part of the equipment.

The lessons proceeded from the simple to the complex in a definite sequence. Each exercise consisted of a series of movements that the pupils "executed by word of command, promptly, exactly, and together."⁸ The lesson then continued with observations and discoveries by the children, as far as possible. For a few minutes at the completion of a

⁷Fuller, op. cit. pp. 388-89; and Emily Shirreff, The Kindergarten: Principles of Froebel's System and Their Bearing on the Education of Women, (London: W. Swan Sonnenschein and Allen, 1880), pp. 9-15.

⁸Shirreff, ibid., p. 9. However, the word of command was exemplary in its kind and gentle manner, and thereby formed part of the teaching-learning situation.

lesson, the children built with the gifts according to their wishes; then put the materials into boxes as directed.

The occupation followed the exercises with the gifts and consisted of manual activities such as folding, weaving, modelling, sewing, cutting, pin-pricking, and drawing. The occupation emphasized the same concept as the gift lessons.⁹

Since Froebel maintained that the education of the young child should begin in infancy, his program also included the training of mothers.

The influence of Froebel appeared to have remained dominant in Manitoba kindergartens until the decade of 1910. During that period, however, initial modifications in the program occurred as a result of new developments in the fields of early childhood education and of child study.¹⁰ The work of Maria Montessori (1870-1952), proved to be one of the modifying influences.

The Work of Maria Montessori

In 1907, Maria Montessori, a psychiatrist, opened her school for young children in a model tenement block in Rome and called it a "Children's House." The pupils were from three to seven years of age and were the children of working mothers who were tenants in the tenement. In many ways Montessori's educational ideas were in contrast to those of Froebel. Montessori's program emphasized self-education, systematic sense training, and exercises to fit the children for the duties of

⁹For further details, see Appendix B.

¹⁰Infra, pp. 57-59.

practical life; it minimized play, self-expression, imagination, and social co-operation. Like Froebel, however, Montessori had special materials and activities to carry out her educational objectives. Basic to her program were: (1) didactic materials, and (2) activities of a practical nature. The didactic materials included the following types: boxes of fabrics of different textures, sound boxes, basic sense tablets, colour tablets, solid geometrical insets, sand-paper letters and numbers on smooth backgrounds, a "Montessori tower" of nine graduated cubes, and buttoning and lacing frames.¹¹ The activities of a practical nature included assisting with the housekeeping tasks and with the preparation and serving of the mid-day meal.

Montessori's aim with regard to discipline was in keeping with the type of program she conducted, for it was "to discipline for activity, for work, for good; not for immobility, not for passivity, not for obedience."¹² Outcomes of the program included the development of initiative, of improved sense perception, and of co-ordination. The role of the teacher in this pre-school class was in contrast to the role of the teacher in Froebel's class, for it was that of a guide, an inspiration, and a help when needed.

Montessori placed great stress on having the home and the school work very closely together. In a set of rules and regulations she set forth available opportunities and binding obligations.¹³

¹¹Montessori's didactic materials were larger than Froebel's gifts.

¹²Montessori, op. cit., p. 93.

¹³Ibid, pp. 70-71.

Although Montessori's work bore some influence on kindergarten practices, developments in the fields of philosophy and psychology resulted eventually in the major modifications that took place.

The Work of Philosophers and Psychologists

The turn of the century witnessed the beginnings of studies that were to lead to the opening of a new era in the field of early childhood education. The work of philosophers led to the rejection of Froebel's philosophy of the "unfolding" nature of the child and to the rejection of the mysticism and symbolism in his program.¹⁴ It led to the introduction of an activity type of program based on the interests of the children, direct experiences, and problem-solving situations.

The work of psychologists led to the Child Study Movement.¹⁵ This movement placed emphasis on the mental health of the child, the study of child behaviour under controlled conditions, the keeping of records, and mental and educational measurement. It focused attention on kindergarten practices, and in particular, on the kindergarten child. As a result of observations, the exercises with the gifts, and the activities involved in the occupations, came under criticism. The criticism was due to the physical and emotional strain placed on the child when using such small materials, when using them under such strict direction, and when carrying on activities requiring such fine muscular control. Edward L. Thorndike was one of the psychologists who observed the weaknesses and made recommendations:

¹⁴John Dewey, William James, William Heard Kilpatrick, and Francis Parker, as cited in Fuller, op. cit. p. 386.

¹⁵Alfred Binet, G. Stanley Hall, and Edward L. Thorndike, as cited in Fuller, loc. cit.

Thorndike challenged the inadequacy of kindergarten practices for physical, mental, and emotional development. He advocated activities for large-muscle development and for remedial correction of bodily and mental defects; first-hand experiences rather than verbal knowledge; and more outdoor play. He pleaded for a daily program that suited the child rather than the system.¹⁶

The result was a very strong controversy within the ranks of kindergarten teachers. Some clung to the traditional Froebelian ideas and others adopted the new. The former group received the label of "conservatives" and the latter, of "radicals" or "progressives." The "progressives" began the modifications to the traditional Froebelian program by allowing the children to play imaginatively with the gifts, using them as toys rather than symbols.¹⁷ Gradually the adherents to the new school of thought introduced other innovations designed to stimulate large-muscle activity and dramatic play based on the social experiences of the children. They substituted large blocks for the small blocks, or cubes, of the gifts, and introduced toys such as dolls, tops, and bean-bags. They provided clay in sufficient quantities to make dolls' dishes; wood to make dolls' furniture; and material to weave articles as large as rugs and hammocks. They created songs, stories, and games based on the new approach to learning.¹⁸ Eventually the

¹⁶McLaughlin, loc. cit.

¹⁷Ilse Forest, Early Years at School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company Inc., 1949), p. 33.

C. E. Phillips also reported on the modification in the use of the gifts in The Development of Education in Canada (Toronto: W. J. Gage and Company Limited, 1957), p. 422. He stated that "kindergarten experts up to the beginning of World War I continued to attach"... "mystical significance to the gifts but subsequently retained the objects without claims as to their meaning for the child."

¹⁸Forest, op. cit., pp. 29 and 35; and McLaughlin, loc. cit.