

# Kindergarten

THE

FIRST

STEP

FORWARD





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Kindergarten is usually the child's first experience of living outside the family, and is an outward extension of the home, rather than a downward extension of school.

When a child first starts kindergarten, he needs the reassurance of his mother's company to help him feel secure in this new situation. Even when he has settled in, his mother still brings him and sometimes stays to talk with the teacher. This forms a link between home and kindergarten, which is strengthened if the teacher calls to see him at home. The parents' understanding of the kindergarten is increased through observing the group and assisting in various ways, such as maintaining equipment; preparing milk and with excursions. To enable parents to meet each other and get to know the teacher better, Parent Meetings are held on topics of interest, including ones related to kindergarten. Through these many contacts, the parents and teacher are able to share their knowledge of the child.

## You May See . . .

That the children's play is frequently noisy. Young children cannot be quiet and still for long, as they need to talk and move about as they play.

Children are putting on their own overalls, shoes and socks. Perhaps it takes more time, but by doing these things themselves they are learning.

A child is looking on; the teacher accepts this, as some children need to watch before they join in.

The teacher shows affection to the children. Young children need the support and approval of adults.

The children have frequent disputes. The teacher stands by to see if they can settle the problem themselves, or if she needs to step in with a suggestion.

The children co-operate more willingly because the teacher gives positive directions, such as, "Keep the bike on the path," instead of "Don't ride on the garden."

When a child is expected to pack away playthings, the teacher says, "It is time to pack away now. How many blocks can you carry?" Then the child makes the decision himself, and is more co-operative.



## The Programme . . .

Each week a programme is planned to meet the children's needs and interest, and local happenings are included. This is an extract from a teacher's programme book.

e.g. (1) 5-year-olds needing new activities.

(2) Men laying water pipes.

(3) Ian's new baby brother.

(4) Tadpoles growing legs on the nature table.

(5) Musical instruments, since visiting orchestral rehearsal.

(6) Jenny is very timid.

Examples of ways to follow up these leads could include:—

(a) Excursion to see pipe-laying.

Play in sand pit, using pipes, water and shovels.

Discussion with small group on "Where our water comes from."

Story about the "Steam Shovel."

(b) Percussion instruments available for use outside, and a group time planned for the 5-year-olds to see the inside of a piano.

(c) For Ian, a doll's bath, napkins and powder added to dolls' corner.

Story "Our Baby" for the group.

(d) Jenny may enjoy picking flowers with a teacher and another child, and arranging them in a vase for the library corner.

## Play . . .

The children are free to select where they will play, but limits are set on behaviour. The teacher needs to be aware of each child and what he is doing.



The various experiences available at kindergarten cover the different areas of the development of the child.

Socially, the child is learning to live amongst others by:—

- sharing toys, ideas and experiences.
- being able to take the lead and also accept the leadership of others.
- standing up for his rights and giving in to the rights of others.
- conforming to limits.

Creative development is fostered by experimentation with paints, crayons, clay, finger paint, sand, earth and water. Whatever he produces will be acceptable to the teacher, because he made it; and, to her, the standard achieved is not of prime importance. Children learn by doing.

Imaginative play expresses his ideas and feelings about things and people he has seen. Equipment for this includes dolls' corner, dressing-up clothes boxes, ladders, steering wheels, etc.

Physical skills and development are aided by the use of climbing equipment, tricycles, scissors, threading beads, blocks, etc.

Intellectual growth is stimulated through problem solving during play, with all activities, puzzles, excursions, discussions, and also by the teacher increasing the children's knowledge around their interests as they arise.

The child's ability to express himself is increased through poetry, discussion, conversation, stories, excursions, music, etc.

He learns to appreciate nature and science through caring for plants and animals, through watching insects and the changing weather, and through experimenting with water and weights and measures, etc.

# Kindergarten Information

Compiled by the Kindergarten Teachers' Association  
of Victoria.