

PRACTICE.

This Brochure is planned as a guide to students on becoming Staff members.

It briefly summarises recognised practices and courtesies essential to the service.

SECTION A.

ADMINISTRATION

ASSOCIATIONS.

The Association is the employing body. No two Associations function in exactly the same way. A new Staff member must learn all she can about her Association and meet its requirements in administrative matters.

LOCAL COMMITTEES are vitally interested in the welfare of the Kindergarten. They need to be kept fully informed about what is going on in the Kindergarten. They expect Staff to take reasonable care of the building, the out-door play space and the equipment. They expect the Staff to conduct a rich and purposeful programme. Good personal relationships with the Committee cannot be fostered if the teacher says, "At we did things a different way."

PARENTS expect their children's physical well-being to be the teacher's first responsibility. They want their children to be warmly received, to have experiences that contribute to the intellectual development, to have support and guidance when emotionally upset, and to have help in "getting along" with other children.

CHILDREN must feel that the teacher likes them, and that she is quite fair. They must have trust in her.

REPORTS TO COMMITTEES.

The interest of Committee members is hard to sustain if the monthly report is just a series of requests to spend money. They need to know about the general health of the children, but they should be told a great deal more than this. Some suggestions:-

1. Attendance. Proportion of boys and girls. Proportion of 3 and 4 year old.
2. Any unusual activities
3. Excursions that have been profitable - how they were organised, what extra help given by parents and others to make the excursion possible - any follow up activity.
4. Success of any newly purchased equipment. How it is standing up to wear and tear.
5. How basic equipment has been supplemented with teacher-made materials or devised from waste materials
6. What musical, creative or informative experiences have been provided by parents or interested people in the community.
7. The extent of parent activities, and parent participation
8. Names of visitors and why they came
9. State of buildings - any necessary repairs
10. State of play area - what the Staff members have done to add outdoor interest
11. What contacts have been made with Infant Mistresses and the school which the children will attend.

EXPLANATIONS. When Committees or parents question the validity of Kindergarten activities, it is not sufficient to make such statements as -

"but that is what we were taught in College"

"All Kindergartens do this"

"It is right for Kindergarten children to have this activity"

"Oh, well, it's good for children."

The teacher must be able to explain the principle underlying every activity, the principle underlying the use of each piece of equipment or play material and the way each is used.

Note:- (If any teacher does not remember or understand any of the underlying principles she would be well advised to refer to lecture notes or text books. Text books that the teacher does not possess, can always be borrowed from public libraries or the Country Library service.)

SAFETY. Adults want to know what precautions are taken for the safe use of potentially dangerous materials. Teachers must be aware that almost all materials can be dangerous if normal precautions are not taken. Committees and parents need to be reassured that the Staff are aware of such dangers as:-

- (a) Uncleated planks can cause serious accident
- (b) Liquids such as turpentine, disinfectants, need to be kept where children cannot reach them and swallow them
- (c) First Aid cabinets contain dangerous materials
- (d) The lead content of paint could be dangerous through swallowing or through absorption through the skin. (Not to be used for colouring dough)
- (e) Jumping on to concrete or asphalt can jar a child's spine
- (f) Small nails can be swallowed, but children can learn to use them safely
- (g) Wet clothes and wet feet are dangerous, particularly for children with a tendency to chills.
- (h) Rusty tins, protruding nails, sharp edges, can cause real wounds
- (i) Children riding swiftly down a slide and landing on a hard surface can injure their spines, particularly if the drop from the slide to the ground is too great.

ORDERLINESS IN THE KINDERGARTEN. Kindergartens are meant to be used to the fullest extent by the children. Activities need not be restricted if the teacher accepts her responsibility to teach children to use materials in an acceptable way. In some cases the play may be unusual but acceptable if moved to a more suitable situation.

Children need an orderly well-planned environment. They cannot work well in cluttered space. It is the teacher's job to see that this basic orderliness is maintained throughout the session, but she must take care not to interrupt good play situations by being over-zealous in this matter.

It is the teacher's job to provide hygienic conditions and to train children in good hygiene habits.

- e.g. The child must not only have his own towel but a check must be made to see that he uses it (for the right purpose only)

Hands to be washed before eating food

Children with impetigo (school sores) should not use materials such as clay, dough, etc. until they are quite better. All sores to be covered while at Kindergarten.

CLEANING. Most Committees are able to provide daily cleaning, but others for unavoidable reasons may temporarily be unable to do so, and just have the building cleaned at weekends and during holidays. Staff have a responsibility to do their share. It would not be unreasonable for Staff members to:-

- (a) keep the toilet room equipment and walls in a satisfactorily hygienic condition throughout the day
- (b) see that paint is cleaned off walls and floors immediately it is splashed. To see that there is some form of floor protection below such activities as painting - waterplay.
- (c) rub children's finger marks, etc. off windows that have become smeared
- (d) keep floors tidy and remove scraps of food and paper
- (e) keep the kitchen in an attractive uncluttered condition all the time
- (f) take good care of zips and other electrical or mechanical equipment - preserving any parts that come loose so that the article can be repaired.
- (g) keep Staff rooms, Staff toilet rooms and store rooms in a very neat, clean and orderly condition
- (h) keep the out-door area free of litter.
- (i) disinfect all play materials regularly
- (j) really wash vases when not in use
- (k) keep all rooms dust free and well aired.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE. The weekly schedule as required by the Department of Education is an absolute minimum requirement. Any teacher who is doing a satisfactory job, works much longer hours. Late starts in the morning are not conducive to the calm, unhurried atmosphere necessary for pre-school children. Clearing and packing away equipment so that children's activities are curtailed for the later part of the morning (in order to leave at the earliest possible moment) is not doing an honest job. A full three hour session each morning must be devoted to children.

If the Staff are required to spend one, two and one-half hour period per week on Home Contact work, each Staff member must devote a full 2½ hours to this activity. (Refer to lecture notes - home contact covers many aspects of teacher/parent activity and is not only home visiting).

SHOPPING. Kindergarten time is child's time. Shopping at the local stores must be done outside the children's hours. Other shopping is done outside the minimum schedule hours.

BOOK WORK. Refer to Kindergarten Union handbook for all records to be kept. These must be neat and faithfully kept. These records are the only means by which a new Director can learn about the Kindergarten. She is entirely dependent on records kept.

For the benefit of new Staff, or people who may be relieving in an emergency situation, it is absolutely necessary for a destination list covering all children to be up to date and easily accessible at all times:

e.g. Called for by parent	- Peter P. Mary C. Donald E.
Called for by older child	- Esme T. Joan F.
Goes home alone	- Jean J. Terry L.
Needs assistance to cross road in front of Kindergarten gate	- Christine S. Sherryl V.

OCTOBER RETURNS. At the end of October, the Department of Education requires all Directors to furnish the AVERAGE ROLL NUMBER for the month of October.

NOTE. This is not average attendance. The result is not arrived at by dividing the total attendance by the days or weeks of the month. This is a mistake made by so many Staff members.

To arrive at the correct figure :

Morning Roll. Add together the actual number of children on the roll each morning and divide by the number of days the Kindergarten is open. (This will be about 20).

Afternoon Roll. In the same way add together the number on the roll each afternoon that the Kindergarten is open and divide by the number of afternoons that the Kindergarten has been open for children (probably 8).

NOTICES TO PARENTS. These should be written in ink, and carefully worded to give full clear information.

Notes should reach parents in ample time for them to act on information, or make enquiries when in doubt.

Particular attention should be given to notifying holiday dates and commencement of each term. A notice to each parent is essential and in addition this information may be posted on the door of the Kindergarten.

RECORDS. All rolls, waiting lists, enrolment books, cash books, Mothers' Club Minute books and correspondence or any other records must be neatly kept in good systematic order and not destroyed. They are the only guide that an incoming Director has of the work and activities of the Kindergarten. (Refer Union handbook).

STAFF ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS. Those who accept the responsibility for directing a Kindergarten should realize that one of their responsibilities is to attend all meetings. They should be vitally interested in every aspect of the work both administrative and professional. Where necessary, Committee members will arrange for Staff to be escorted to meetings at night time.

LEAVING AGE. A child may remain on a Kindergarten roll until the end of the term in which he turns five. If he becomes five years of age during any holiday period, he may not return to Kindergarten in the new term.

TELEPHONE. The telephone is essential equipment in a Kindergarten, but is installed at the Committee's expense for professional purposes.

Staff can encourage parents and others to phone non-urgent messages outside the children's hours. Most people will gladly co-operate when they understand that Staff should not leave the supervision of children more than is absolutely necessary.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BOOKLET ON SITES, BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT.

Each Kindergarten should possess a copy of this booklet. It is a very valuable guide both to Staff and Committees on many matters. The sections about equipment are of particular value to Staff.

EQUIPMENT. Basic requirements are set out in the above booklet.

Once a subsidy is paid on any piece of equipment it is the Staff and Committee's responsibility to see that this material is always at the Kindergarten - that is, it must be replaced when worn out or damaged beyond repair.

NOTE: It is not necessary to be continually purchasing quantities of costly equipment. The basic needs once they are in the Kindergarten can be supplemented in a variety of ways,

- i.e., (a) by materials made by the Staff
(b) with discard material
(c) by supplementing the activity.

e.g. A Kindergarten may have four strong carts - materials such as sugar sacks stuffed with crumpled newspaper, pine-cones, commercial cotton reels, small sealed-up cartons, etc. are all valuable for imaginative play in conjunction with the carts. This gives the boys something more to do than pull each other about in the carts and stimulates imaginative play.

PLAY MATERIALS. It is essential that these are in good working condition.

e.g. Puzzles and other manipulative material complete with all parts.

Clay smooth and really workable for small hands.

GARDENS AND OUT-OF-DOOR PLANNING.

Staff accept the maxim that children of pre-school years should spend a major portion of their time out-of-doors. Buildings are shelters from intense heat, cold or dampness, but in the fresh air, healthy bodies develop through physical adventure.

There are very few activities that cannot be enjoyed out of doors. If this is so, more attention can be given to the outdoor play area. Committees and parents will contribute to the enrichment of the environment, but the far-seeing teacher will also play her part through,

- (a) doing her share of weeding, planting and watering
- (b) keeping the area free of litter
- (c) making suggestions to the Committee for the enrichment of outdoor activity, perhaps by making further use of the natural features of the site or raw materials such as earth and water. Perhaps by planting a shrubbery or using a wild area.

STUDY.

Two years of study at a College does not complete one's knowledge of the pre-school child or the range of opportunity that a Kindergarten can provide. Teachers are urged to continue reading about their profession and to re-read material that they have become familiar with during the training period. A good use of reference material can extend the educational value of the work in the Kindergarten. It can make the teacher's work more challenging and more satisfying.

WORKING IN KINDERGARTENS WHERE STUDENTS ARE GAINING PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

When she is on section in a Kindergarten, the student is greatly influenced by the attitudes and professional practices of the trained Staff. She expects to find the basic principles which she is studying, carried out in each Kindergarten. These teachers, in particular, have a serious responsibility to set patterns that encourage continuous high standards of achievement. This is their opportunity to influence the future professional people and so contribute towards our efforts to gain public acceptance of the value of pre-school education in New Zealand.

PARENT NEWS SHEETS.

These pamphlets are designed and edited in Australia.

They serve many purposes, such as:-

- (a) Dispensing information about the emotional, social and intellectual growth of children
- (b) Helping teachers and parents to understand normal behaviour patterns in children, and giving suggestions for permissive limits
- (c) Extending knowledge of children's interests and abilities
- (d) Giving practical suggestions for children at Kindergarten, at home and on holiday.

A few of the titles that have been available in the past are:-

- No. 128 - Winter clothing
- No. 47 - Obedience?
- No. 112 - Children's emotions
- No. 113 - Children's interests
- No. 21 - Children's questions
- No. 35 - The Convalescent Child
- No. 103 - Growing up safely
- No. 116 - Making the most of one's backyard
- No. 96 - Aggression
- No. 129 - Teasing
- No. 106 - Punishment
- No. 118 - Hunches about lunches
- No. 99 - Problem or Normal child?
- No. 33 - Swearing
- No. 92 - When Mother has to leave home
- No. 149 - The importance of self-respect
- No. 140 - The quiet child
- No. 145 - Children's fears
- No. 144 - Are you too busy?
- No. 143 - What to look for in a pre-school Centre

Many of the past editions are still available and new titles are coming forward regularly. Staff are advised to approach their Committees, requesting an annual subscription. Each copy costs 3d. Sometimes a Committee buys sufficient for distribution to parents, while others buy a few of each issue, which can be used for group discussion topics or posted on the parent notice board.

News Sheets are obtainable from:

The Secretary,
New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union,
P.O. Box 195,
Rotorua.

SECTION B.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE.

WELCOME.

The warmth of the welcome that children or parents or visitors receive, can be an indication of the sincerity of the Staff towards their profession. An open door leading into a brightly attractive room, a cheery greeting and an atmosphere of good humour and friendliness can do much to reassure a child or parent.

It is a courtesy to introduce Committee members who call at the Kindergarten to all who are working with the children and to mothers who attend for various reasons.

PROGRAMME.

The activity programme can provide a variety of occupations from which children can acquire knowledge, learn to share, to play together, gain emotional stability and develop physically,

OR it can be,

an unimaginative series of occupations, limited in their scope and lacking in appeal to children who meet them day after day.

One approach would be to consider the types of occupation, rather than the quantity of equipment.

e.g. For one morning: so many types of water play

" " " " constructive play

" " " " creative play

" " " " plastic play

" " " " physical play

" " " " dramatic and imaginative play

plus library, nature and science experiences.

This background of interesting occupations would be supplemented by -

Some forms of musical experience

Stories and poems

Nature and science investigation

Games

Excursions

Conversation

} either as they relate to children's interest of the moment

or

} to extend or supplement interests -

} to widen their horizons

In an enriched programme the near fives can generally find something challenging and often something "just for themselves" is provided by teacher or parent, e.g. special story - excursion - more challenging scrap material.

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PERSONAL QUALITIES.

APPEARANCE. Although a warm personality can compensate to a certain extent for carelessness in appearance, a teacher should be aware that her physical appearance affects some children more than others. When people in a community say, "That is an attractive looking teacher in charge of the Kindergarten now", this helps towards establishing good personal relationships. Neatness in dress, alertness, cheerfulness, all contribute to an attractive appearance.

SPEECH. Noise begets noise. Loud voices of teachers beget loud voices in children. Children develop non-listening attitudes when teachers continually call out directions from a distance. Children absorbed in play tend to continue their activity, simply because they are not aware that anyone is speaking to them personally. It is only fair to approach a child and gain his attention before making a specific request.

ROUTINES.

CLOAKROOM PROCEDURE. Assistance may or may not be needed when children arrive, but some person should be at hand. Even three year old children are not too young to be expected to hang coats up, so that they stay on the hook.

A toilet block without soap or toilet paper is not ready for children's use. This block should be under constant supervision from the nearest person throughout the session. To this end, the vision windows became a functional part of the building plan.

MILK PERIOD. A Director may decide to conduct either a formal or a 'free' milk period. In either case, this should be an orderly, friendly, well planned situation.

There are reasons why a 'free' milk period should be given consideration. (The 'free' is not here interpreted that children are free to wander about clutching milk in one hand and apple in the other). It simply means that they are free to choose their time for drinking milk, within certain limits.

- Reason 1. Children who are absorbed in worthwhile activity are not disturbed. Observation shows that once they leave an activity children can seldom resume their occupation where they left off and play loses something of its intensity. Actually it interrupts good play situations.
- Reason 2. Some children have an early breakfast, some a late breakfast. They need refreshment at different times.
- Reason 3. Small sociable groups have reasonable attention from teachers. There is not the bustling about that large groups need, nor is the milk period one of such complete adult domination and control.
- Reason 4. Tables other than those necessary for the group taking milk need not be cleared of other worthwhile activities.

The small piece of apple or carrot supplied after milk, is eaten to clean the teeth. Children should be encouraged to eat this before leaving the table.

HOMETIME. This time can be organised in numerous ways, according to the purpose, the plan of the building or the departure procedures.

If children are to gather together, the smaller the groups the better. A realization that emotionally, this time is just as important as the early morning arrival, can make this a few minutes for reassurance that the teacher is looking forward to the next day's meeting, or it can become a frustrating time of lost articles, unfriendly comment and over-hurried exit. Time for a last minute visit to the toilet room, can save a child from embarrassment, discomfort or punishment on the way home.

DISCIPLINES.

SMACKING. Kindergarten Teachers are not permitted to smack children.

Smacking is far more likely to have harmful effects than good results. It may produce an immediate result, but does not solve the problem and has no educative value.

It is a weapon that can leave scars on a child's personality, or cause evasions and deceptions.

Smacking is a sign of adult defeat or admission of failure.

It is important to understand that there is reason for a child's behaviour. The teacher is there to assist children in this respect and she should not gain discipline through fear.

Smacking does nothing towards establishing good relationships with children.

(If parents smack, that is their own affair and they probably take care to offset any harmful effects by their demonstration that they still love the child).

TEASING is a bullying technique and does not teach anything. A child values what a teacher says of him, so making him feel inferior in front of others, does not make for good personal relationships and it certainly does not contribute anything towards the attitudes required in group situations.

Being teased about things they cannot do well, only emphasises weakness and does not help the child.

PARENT-TEACHER CO-OPERATION.

Teachers are advised to work closely with parents for the following reasons:-

1. Any parent has the right to know what kind of education is provided at the Kindergarten, the pattern of work, the guidance a child is going to receive and the purpose of pre-school education in that Centre.
2. Only by learning from parents about each child as an individual can the teacher help the child. Knowledge of his interests, his likes and dislikes, his fears, his abilities, his opportunities for neighbourhood play, his place in the family, can all help the teacher understand him.
3. Home contact can cover a variety of mutually valuable experiences such as:-
 1. Preliminary interviews
 2. Pre-entry groups
 3. Parent Club functions and meetings
 4. Discussion groups
 5. Home visiting
 6. Parent participation in children's sessions
 7. Social functions
 8. Meeting parents at community functions.

It is at Parent Club meetings that the Staff have a unique opportunity to explain Kindergarten procedures or individual differences or likenesses in children. Short talks are helpful but more profitable if they are linked with displays set out to explain the topic.

Some mothers do not find it easy to relinquish their very young children to the care of strangers. They need to be assured that the teachers are capable and that the welfare of each child is of primary importance. Some just need help in parting with the child at first.

PARENT MEETINGS.

With children we apply the principle of providing occupations that they enjoy. It is wise to apply the same principle to work with adults. These meetings are partly social, partly to further the interests of little children and partly to gain support and appreciation for the work done by the Committee that maintains the Kindergarten. The Committee members may be a group of parents, but they need the support of every parent whose child attends the Kindergarten. The whole responsibility should not rest with the few. Probably there will be time for only six or seven meetings in a school year (apart from the Committee meetings). Six or seven different meetings are not hard to arrange. In some cases the parents will indicate what they would like to do, in others, suggestions from Staff members are appreciated.

Some variations:-

- A social (with good talent)
- A dance (some parents have very few opportunities for dancing)
- A buffet dinner
- A film evening (with discussion to follow)
- A lecture about some aspect of Child Development
- A series of three lectures (probably three weeks running)
- A Kindergarten evening (the parents work with the children's creative materials, hear stories, sing songs)
- A theatre party
- A sewing night for a fair
- A woodwork evening for fathers to make articles for a fair or for the Kindergarten
- An evening when parents talk about their morning as 'Parent participant'
- An evening when fathers tell about their occupations
- An evening for mothers to tell about some other interesting experience
- An evening to plan a newsletter
- A Christmas party
- A discussion topic evening (with an informed leader)
- A panel to answer questions about pre-school education
- A gardening circle.

In conjunction with most of these the Staff can arrange displays that tell about some aspect of pre-school work, about books for Christmas presents, suitable gift suggestions for early age levels, children's emotions or child development. These displays can foster further discussion.

DIARY OF HOME CONTACT.

The Supervisor of Pre-school Services requests that Directors and Assistants of all Kindergartens keep diaries of all home contacts. This diary is to be kept at the Kindergarten for inspection. Notes are to be brief and not personal. Each entry should be dated. This diary should be of great assistance to each succeeding or relieving Director and should give all important information. Any arrangement made with parents must be noted, e.g. Tommy to attend in third term, or Priscilla not ready to attend although her turn has come. Will wait until new year.

PARENT CLUB NOTICE BOARDS can be made a focal point in the Kindergarten.

Suggestions:-

- Do not overcrowd the board.
 - Have some outstanding feature that attracts the eye.
 - Make sure that all literature on the board is based on sound Kindergarten principle.
 - Too many topics mean too much to remember.
 - Neatness makes the material easy to read.
 - Frequent changes keep up the interest.
 - Place the board where mothers can take time to read it without obstructing others who wish to pass through.
 - Place the board where parents are most likely to pass.
 - If asking for help with Kindergarten care - state specific things that need to be done, then parents who don't mind doing that particular thing, will probably offer.
- N.B. Ball point ink fades in strong light.

PARENT PARTICIPATION must not be confused with the emergency roster attendance by mothers who help when a Staff member is absent through illness.

Parent Participation is arranged for the sake of the children

- (a) As a link between home and school
- (b) As a means by which the Staff can learn more from the parent about the child
- (c) As an opportunity for parents to see their children at planned activities and in group situations on different occasions
- (d) As an opportunity for the parent to learn about and understand the procedure at the Kindergarten
- (e) As an opportunity for Staff and parents to work together when some behaviour problem arises
- (f) As an opportunity for parents to enrich the Kindergarten by bringing their talents in music, story telling and other interests to the children (weaving, pottery, nature interests, art).

If each parent spent one half day per term at the Kindergarten a sure foundation for close home-school unity would be laid.

N.B. Parents need to be helped to fit in with the Kindergarten pattern and every effort should be made to make their time there profitable. They must know why they are asked to come.

Parents are not requested to do chores. They need to be invited to take part in the programme and help with supervision, and there should be some simple system of indicating what is permitted or not permitted with each activity. While working alongside each other Staff and parents can share knowledge.