The story of an Australian nursery school

Mary Valentine Gutteridge
THE STORY OF AN AUSTRALIAN NURSERY SCHOOL

BY

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The opening of this Nursery School forms a part of an extensive movement that is taking place in many countries of the world. The Nursery School has sprung into existence to meet the needs of the child, who, no longer a baby in arms, is not yet ready for the activities of the kindergarten.

This child at eighteen months has outgrown the ordinary nursery; is longing for something that will challenge his growing powers of mind and body, and for the opportunity of playing with those of his own age and strength.

The Nursery School is a definite result of an intense interest in this young child, to whom the experiences of life are so new that he may be said to be at the beginning of his career as a social being in a social world. Medical men and women, psychologists, educators, nurses and parents have in recent years specialised in studying the needs of this age; have discussed and combined their conclusions. It was inevitable that there should result a movement to embody this newer knowledge in such a way that the child himself would benefit.

The name Nursery School seeks to convey the thought that, together with child nurture based upon the high standards set by recent knowledge of the child's physical needs, there is also a realisation that this is a period when the child is making innumerable adjustments in a world in which, with his newly-acquired powers of walking, he is for the first time free to move about.

The Nursery School Established in Collingwood, Melbourne

An anonymous gift of £200 in September, 1930, led to the formation of a Nursery School Committee, with power to administer this fund and to carry out the wish of the
donor, the establishment of a Demonstration Nursery School.

This committee, in conjunction with the Educational Committee of the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria, was then in a position to approach the committees of the 27 Free Kindergartens affiliated with the Union, offering to open a Nursery School in connection with one such centre.

Three kindergarten committees applied. The application of the Keele Street Kindergarten Committee was accepted, because of the excellent possibilities provided by the newly-completed open-air rooms and roof playground. This committee agreed to share the financial responsibility in order to make the demonstration possible.

The Staff of the Nursery School

The Principal of the Kindergarten Training College has acted as Director of the Nursery School.

Scholarships were offered to two trained kindergartners, who would act as student assistants, and who would attend lecture courses at the Kindergarten Training College during the year in Nursery School Procedure, Child Research, Parent Education, Educational Tests, Speech Training and Child Development.

On November 1, 1930, the Nursery School was opened in the building of the Keele Street Kindergarten, Collingwood, Melbourne. For the last six weeks of 1930, the work was carried on with a group of 30 children between the ages of two and four years, who had been in attendance in the baby room of the kindergarten during the year. In February, 1931, the age range was changed, and children were admitted from eighteen months to three years of age, the elder children passing on to the kindergarten in the same building. All through the year an attempt has been made to have some children of each of the periods, 18 to 24 months, 24 to 30 months, and 30 to 36 months, so that their development at each stage might be watched and the needs of each of these periods might be met. In 1931 this became
a student training centre for kindergartners who had entered for the Nursery School course.

*Aim of the Nursery School*

In line with the Nursery Schools abroad, the Nursery School undertook to further the happy, harmonious development of each child in its care; to watch and study him, first, in order to progressively discover his individual needs, and then to provide for him opportunities to bring about a natural growth of body and mind.

*Records*

Records have been kept which date from the entry of each child into the Nursery School. These attempt to give an exact picture of the child's actions as an expression of his development. The records are made by an observer at the time of their happening, in order to remove as far as possible any mistakes due to erroneous memory. The notes are examined at the end of each week, and are written on the cards bearing the name of each child. These record respectively his physical, intellectual, social and emotional reactions.

As examples of such entries, let us turn to some of these cards:

*Physical*

"G. (aged 19 months) held his glass in one hand when drinking."

"G. (aged 23 months) climbed ladder two steps at a time."

*Intellectual*

"G. discovered that a hammer would balance on its head; repeated this act many times, laughing each time he pushed it over and stood it upright."

*Social*

"F. was crying on arrival. A. went to him and said, 'Don't cry, F.'"
Emotional

“A. hit his finger with a hammer; did not cry, but sat and looked at it, and then continued hammering.”

Staff Meetings

These records have formed the basis of discussion at weekly meetings of Director, staff and students. At these meetings the records for the past week are reviewed, and the whole discussion revolves round the question of the progressive needs of each child. Existing procedure and methods are criticised by their effect on each child, and are adjusted accordingly. After such a discussion, all have a similar point of view, so that the child finds consistent treatment on the part of all adults around him, at least in the Nursery School. The staff seeks to take as much responsibility as possible for the child during the whole of his 24-hour day, and not merely for the hours he spends with them.

Co-operation with the Parents

The year’s work has proved that it is possible to interest parents in keeping simple home records; for example, records of sleep, elimination, food, as well as of emotional disturbances, such as temper, fear, and of likes and dislikes. The parents take a keen interest in their child’s Nursery School activities. Monthly meetings with a voluntary group of about fifteen take the form of a friendly discussion, and have proved wonderfully helpful to us in learning more of the child at home. The freedom and frankness of the parents in talking over difficulties and their probable causes has brought about a feeling of very happy co-operation, and a wish to act with us in safeguarding and promoting the development of each child. Parents have visited the school, their homes have been visited, and thus the bond between the two has been strengthened in every possible way.

The Building

The suite of rooms and the flat roof, which have been the home of the Nursery School this year, have proved
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admirably suited to the needs of children of this age. The eastern aspect of the open-air rooms, the protection from the cold south-west wind, the maximum amount of air and sunshine made possible by the provision of the roof playground, have contributed to the development and growth of each child. On a very few days the roof proved too hot, even with the shelter of the awnings, and on wet days the rooms proved too small for an average attendance of 25 children, working and playing individually, and also eating and sleeping therein. With these exceptions, the happiness of the children seemed assured, because the roof proved a very practical play place for all the activities for the two- and three-year-old children. The folding doors between the playrooms and along the whole eastern side made adjustment to weather conditions an easy matter, and it was found that few fires were necessary to keep a suitable temperature, as the absence of direct wind and the maximum of sunshine in the rooms kept the temperature even and comfortable.

The dressing room, with its individual lockers, of a height such that each child could hang his own garments, and the bathroom, with the low washing trough and small lavatory seats, have emphasised the home aspect of such activities as washing and dressing, and have done away with the institutional aspect which so often induces fear and dislike. As these rooms have been placed so that they are equally accessible to playroom and roof, it has been easy to help each child to make a satisfactory adjustment to these bathroom and dressing room activities, which at this stage of development have by no means become habitual.

Furniture

The tables, of a size to hold four children or one adult and three children, have made it easy to keep the home atmosphere, and at meal times to help each child to a successful attempt at independence in managing for himself. The chairs were well graded as to height of the seat, but we found that they should have been more carefully graded
as to depth of seat, so as to allow each child to sit back in his chair with his feet on the floor. The stretcher-beds, chosen after much investigation of different types, have proved very satisfactory, and are light enough for a child of two and a half to three years to carry and open out for use.

**Educational Equipment**

Each piece of equipment has been tested by months of observation, and nothing is now included except that which has proved its usefulness in ministering to child development. It has for the most part been made by fathers of the children attending kindergarten and nursery school. It is strong, durable, and such that it will challenge the child to experiment in all legitimate ways, to achieve and to use his powers to the full.

**Physical Examination**

Each child was examined by the Medical Officer of the Free Kindergarten Union at the beginning of the year, and his medical card, with its record and its recommendations, is attached to his other record cards. Through the co-operation of the parents with the staff, all the recommendations of the Medical Officer were carried out.

**Dental Examination**

During the year the Dental Officer of the Union examined the children of the Nursery School, and carried out necessary filling and cleaning of the children's teeth. In three cases recommendations were given the parents for treatment at the Dental Hospital.

**Daily Inspection**

Daily inspection by a member of staff, with due attention to throat, eyes, ears, the condition of the skin on chest and back, has led to the detection of sores, of colds, etc., and has given some definite knowledge of the daily well-being of the child. To exclude any who might carry infection to the group is the natural outcome of this inspection, and the parents, having understood from the beginning the reason
for this action, wait until the child has been examined before leaving him. This daily consultation with the mother, father, grandmother or elder sister leads to a very valuable daily insight into the child's home life.

Causes of absence are recorded simply in a colour chart, which makes comparison of the health for any given week or month an easy matter.

Regular Monthly Weighing and Half-yearly Measuring

This enables the child's general physical state to be watched, and if the results are recorded by a graph on a card, fluctuations in weight are easily noted, and individual curves compared.

Diet

The parents have been consulted as to the child's diet and eating habits at home, so that the food given him at the Nursery School could supplement and provide that which was lacking. It was found that in most cases the child had an over-starch diet and an insufficiency of fruit and vegetables. After the medical inspection, and with the help of the Medical Officer, the children were divided into three divisions, which were reviewed and adjusted at each monthly weighing: (a) over-weight; (b) normal; and (c) under-weight. A suitable diet of full vitamin content was then provided for each individual child, to supplement his home diet, and the result as indicated by his weight and individual fitness was noted through the year. Until September, all children early each morning had a drink of orange or tomato juice and a teaspoonful of cod-liver oil at mid-morning lunch. As little starch as possible has been given, and that in the form of thin, sliced, stale whole-wheat bread, cut to form sandwiches with butter and fresh-scraped carrot, chopped lettuce, apple, etc. In most cases this food has been taken with a small glass of milk.

Since September, it was found financially possible to institute a midday meal, in place of mid-morning lunch, for a group of 12 most needy children. This has consisted of a
vegetable and a meat or egg dish, stewed fruit with custard, junket or jelly. This was given at midday, following orange juice and cod-liver oil at 10 a.m., and a glass of milk at 3 p.m., after the afternoon sleep. Many dislikes for milk and other foods were encountered. The records show that these have gradually diminished as a confidence in the taste of any particular food was established gradually by the introduction of very small amounts, which were unostentatiously increased until the requisite amount could be readily taken. Given opportunity for independence at meal times, children have been able to lay their own table, wait on themselves, pour their own milk and successfully manage breakable dishes. The development of the necessary confidence coinciding with co-ordination of muscular development has led to quite remarkable precision of movement and successful adjustment to a difficult situation in childhood.

Sleep

The mothers quickly co-operated in recording the time the children went to sleep at night and woke in the morning. It was found that very few children were having even the minimum amount of sleep, and that this was chiefly due to the late bedtime hour, and the absence, in most cases, of an afternoon sleep. All through the year the children have had 20 minutes’ rest at the close of the morning session, but since September, in the case of 12 children, the midday meal has been followed by an afternoon sleep. The records show that even in the case of those children who were unaccustomed to such a procedure, this habit can be formed when consistent opportunity is given and the conditions of quietness, etc., are observed.

Quoting from the daily sleep records, we find that:

1. whose records show the longest sleep time, has an average afternoon sleep of 1 hour 55 minutes.

C., who had the lowest record, has an average of 40 minutes, because he often did not go to sleep.
Elimination

We are fully of the opinion that habits of elimination in children under two years are given too great prominence and are the subject of much discussion between child and parent. We have been able to show that if an adult takes responsibility until physical control is established, habits of self-control come as a natural development, and all punishment, scoldings and unpleasantness can be avoided.

Bowel Movements

It was recognised that it was important for parents and staff to keep a joint record, each having access to the records of the other, so that a child's regularity should be established. Although all these physical habits are very important in the physical development of the child, they are, we feel, surely a matter more for the attention of the adult, and, to a much lesser degree, of the child. They should not be allowed to become of such moment in the child's life that they absorb attention and energy and interrupt his rightful interests. An attempt has been made this year to be consistent and thoughtful in these routine matters so that they will take up just that amount of time, thought and attention that they are worth in a child's life so that energy can be increasingly used in other channels. A record chart was kept of those children in whom the habit of elimination was not yet fixed; times were noted and a schedule for each child was made out and adhered to. When repeated every day this soon brought the co-operation of the child, until he was able to take some measure of responsibility.

Independence

In the planning of the building and of the equipment and in the daily procedure, independence of the child has been one of the main objects. The gradual substitution of the independence of childhood for the dependence of babyhood brings from the child a wonderful adjustment to his situations and surroundings. Many of the anger storms and much of the sulkiness, the babyish dependence on mother or
other adult, are reactions to the false babyishness forced upon him. Once given the increasing independence that his physiological and intellectual development will allow, he becomes a purposeful being.

**TO THE CHILD THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF THE DAY IS HIS PLAY LIFE**

We have tried to place this first in our thoughts and to allow the maximum amount of his time in Nursery School to be spent in purposeful activity. It is interesting to examine the records of each child in an endeavour to trace the gradual development of physical and mental power and personality.

*The Child's Physical Growth and Development at Eighteen Months*

At eighteen months a child is still uncertain in his movement; he needs most of all opportunity for free motor activity. His records show that he will, when given scope, run, balance, climb, lift, push and pull, roll, build and experiment with all suitable equipment and toys. These needs have been listed, and equipment has been chosen to provide ample opportunity for carrying out all these natural activities. Thus planks, ladders, a carpenter's horse, boxes, large and small, large hollow blocks are provided; while solid carts and wooden motors, baskets and wheelbarrows suggest all manner of adventure. Records show that the greatest development of the child under two is along the line of his biological needs, and that if only he is not hampered, he will try out his powers to the full, and attempt quite difficult experiments in muscular co-ordination. For all these reasons, it is wise that he should spend most of his time out of doors, where he is free from the constraint of keeping quiet, free to run, to build and throw down, to climb, to hammer, to play freely with sand and water. Yet even for this young child there are other needs; quiet indoor activities have their place in giving opportunity for other interests. He is soon glad to listen to nursery rhymes and
Nursery School at Keele Street Free Kindergarten, Collingwood

Playroom in Nursery School at Keele Street Free Kindergarten, Collingwood
songs, and such toys as solid indoor blocks suggest more
exact piling and building.

He needs to have touch with nature in planting and
watering his flowers; the interest in pets is quite a real in¬
centive to care for them and is necessary in order to build up
a confidence which will make any fear of them impossible.
He is fascinated to look at pictures of well-known animals,
of trains, trams, cars, and of other children. This gives
definite encouragement in understanding and using words.
He is not too young to enjoy the rhythm of words and
music, and these, if introduced early, will contribute much
to his appreciation later on.

The Child of 30 Months

As the child reaches 30 months a great difference
begins to make itself felt. He now shows, if he has had
plenty of opportunity for experimenting with all kinds of
material and play equipment, that he has gained power
over material, as well as assurance and confidence in his
own powers of achievement. He will now show purpose
in planning his play. His attention span is increasing
until it is long enough to work out some definite idea and
his interest is deep enough to carry it through in spite of
the unavoidable interruptions of lunch or midday sleep.
This is an intellectual achievement which will only come
after months of experimenting, and it needs a sympathetic
encouragement and understanding on the part of adults.
For this reason any real project such as a crude building
or house of boxes should if possible be undisturbed, so that
he may have the incentive to return to it. The greatest
respect should be shown him, so that his attention is not
needlessly diverted or his play interrupted. Miss Johnson,
in Children of the Nursery School, says "Growth is a pro¬
gress towards maturity. It is, however, a continuous and
a gradual process, complete at each stage or perhaps better,
capable of functioning at each stage. The duty of the edu¬
cator is to see that the capacities of each stage are fully
realised."
We believe that inventiveness and purpose are not only within the scope of the intellectually gifted, but that all children, if they have the opportunity, will, through the satisfaction of successful experimenting, be led to create, to discover, to plan, and that they possess potentially the necessary persistence and power to carry out these plans.

The Child of Three Years

The scope of the child approaching three years is still wider, and his interests now embrace HIS ENTIRE WORLD. He is much interested in the community, in the manifold activities of the household, as well as in nature, in his garden and the vicinity, in books with their pictures and stories. He will now dramatise most happenings, if given the opportunity. His vocabulary is sufficient to relate incidents, to converse, to express his own desires, and to give names to his plans and drawings. Through his play with others and his dealings with older children and adults, he takes his place, and often shows distinct powers of leadership.

When some of the children in the nursery school approached three years, we found that we had underestimated their powers which had developed through the wider opportunities afforded them throughout the year. We had to review our equipment with the purpose of estimating its value to these three-year-olds. Much more intricate sorting and planning were needed, and the Decroly and Montessori material and that from the L'institut Jean Jacques Rousseau were found to be of inestimable value. More quiet time indoors was allowed so that the more vigorous activities of the two-year-olds might not interfere. With a table or floor mat each, they had every incentive to use the material to the utmost and to prolong their attention span in order to complete or to thoroughly investigate any particular problem. Excursions were thoroughly appreciated and the ordinary buying of the nursery school was carried on with their help. They became familiar with trains, trams, shops, and these were suggestive in their play and led to their
working out new ideas. Actual quotations from the records will point more conclusively to actual signs of development.

**Physical Development and Development of Independence in Routine Activities**

O., aged 18 months:

2/7/31: Appeared not to be able to drink from cup unless held to his mouth, nor to eat solids unless he is fed. Stands with legs wide apart for balance; squats on the floor instead of sitting. When washing hands, leans against basin until helped by adult to move.

9/7/31: Drank from cup. Can get on and off low stretcher bed.

30/7/31: Poured out milk, holding jug with one hand.

13/9/31: Can carry plate of food (brains and sauce with green vegetable) to table without spilling.

26/10/31: Uses spoon efficiently, and feeds himself successfully.

**Physical Progress as Shown by Use of Play Equipment**

O. (same child, 18 months):

7/7/31: Sat on heels for 7 minutes, watching other children. Adult threw him ball. He made attempt to get it—collected two balls, and tried to hold three at one time.

10/7/31: Tried to go down small slide on his front.

6/8/31: Swept with small broom. Turned wheel of barrow.

7/8/31: Climbed into doll's pram and sat there.

13/8/31: Came down head first on slide which was resting on roof of cupboard (3½ feet high).

18/8/31: Climbed ladder slowly and got on cupboard roof (3½ feet) tried to reach large slide backwards, but found it too difficult; went back to ladder and lay down, waving his legs until they reached the second rung. Got down carefully; found small slide resting on carpenter's horse; slid down 11 times in succession. He then climbed ladder and tried large slide again; was unsuccessful, and returned to low one.

G. (19 months):

10/3/31: Sat in wooden motor car, watching children and passers-by, and nursing and playing with doll.

11/3/31: Found hammers and nails on the work-bench, and handled them inquiringly. Found engine and finally sandbox; by grunting, asked to be assisted to get in.
16/3/31: Climbed to third step of ladder and down. Tried to sit on one of the motor tyre swings without holding on. Carried three nails across roof on a tin lid and tipped them into right box.

9/4/31: Stood watching other children in playroom for five minutes. Moved nearer table, where children were using clay; picked up piece of clay and sat with others.

21/4/31: Tried to walk up slide; balanced for a second and took one further step upward. Can hold large 3 inch cube in one hand.

3/6/31: Climbed ladder by himself and got on to toy cupboard roof. Could not get down by himself.

10/6/31: Climbed on to box, then carpenter’s horse, and finally, by a long struggle and stretch, to roof of cupboard.

14/7/31: Climbed on to ladder with doll in his hand. He ran down the slide. Later slid down on his front.

27/7/31: Wanted to get into sand box; piled three large spools one on the other, climbed on them and stepped inside box on to sand.

I. (aged 25 months):  
26/2/31: I. came up stairs to nursery school on hands and knees.

9/3/31: Sat on slide, legs dangling, and wriggled down.

11/3/31: Walked up and down slide.

12/3/31: Stood on wheelbarrow and then on edge of barrow to see over edge of concrete wall.

20/3/31: Found a tin lid, and got peg and hit it as drum.

2/4/31: Pulled two children along in engine (quite heavy).

10/6/31: Built train with Kraft cheese boxes, putting one on top of another to make engine.

19/6/31: Made a shop out of five large hollow blocks (2 feet in length). He stood on one block and said “Shop!”

28/9/31: Built tower of large reels; stood on chair to place eighth; could not place ninth.

28/10/31: I. and A. put three carts and two motor-cars together in a row. A. sat in motor-car, and I. pushed them all along together; they played thus for 10 minutes.

(I. was 2 years and 11 months at the time of the last entry).

Intellectual Development

In the daily life of a social community, such as is provided in the nursery school, there is ample opportunity for a child to recognise his own belongings, to know the simple
routine, the uses of the various rooms, utensils and toys, to know where things are kept, and how to carry out his own plans. His gradual understanding and use of language marks his intellectual development and increases the possibility of participation in community life.

**Quotations from the Records Showing Recognition and Memory**

G. (19 months on entry):
- 10/3/31: Entered nursery school.
- 13/3/31: Found own towel and toothbrush, and went in right direction for comb. Found all three without any hesitation.
- 10/6/31: After holidays knew his own peg and cupboard, and recognised his rest mat by its picture after nearly a month's absence.

A. (25 months on entry):
- 20/2/31: First day: Learnt his own towel; put back on wrong hook; found his mistake and changed it himself.
- 25/2/31: A. told I., "This is your towel." (He knew not only his own but several other children's belongings).

K. (30 months):
Knew the names of all the children who were in the room. Asked for staff and students by name.

**Examples of Language Development at the Different Stages**

O. (18 months):
- 15/7/31: Does not say any recognisable words but makes sounds to attract adult's attention; talks to himself without actual words.
- 3/8/31: Said "Shoe"; asked for "Mummie." Tries to repeat last word of whatever is said to him.
- 7/8/31: Said "bread", "book" (pointing to book adult was using), "shoe" (looking for shoe under bed).
- 10/8/31: Mother reports that he says "butter" "sugar", and "Ta".
- 12/10/31: Can say "All gone" and "Had enough". Saw glasses of milk and said "Drink".
O. (2 years):
24/3/31: Looked at caterpillar and said “Chook, chook”; later at picture of bird and said “bird”.
27/3/31: Adult carrying tray asked child to open door. Child did not hear, but O. jumped up and opened door.
30/3/31: When looking down at children below in kindergarten garden, said, “Leila, look!”.
31/3/31: Pointed to pictures of dog and fish and said names.
14/6/31: Sang “Baa, baa, black sheep” throughout. Said names of all children she could see.
13/10/31: Asked for “Tick, tock” song; sang in tune, and knew the names of all usual songs.
9/11/31: Said to adult, “Play a march”.

F. (aged 30 months):
24/3/31: Held out dress, and said “Look, I have another one like this. I’ve got a nice hanky. I have a penny; I brought it for the money box”.
25/3/31: Stood on chair beside piano and said, “I’m nearly as big as the piano”.
10/4/31: Went a message, repeating to herself, “Miss R. wants a penthil”.
14/4/31: Said in reference to paint, “Red, I like red. When I use all that up you will give me some more. I like red”.
11/8/31: Brought a small child, O., to adult, saying, “This little boy’s got a dirty nose”.
14/10/31: Some of the little ones had brought the indoor toys out on the roof. F. went to the children and said, “These stay inside”, and took the toys back.

The Social Environment of the Child
The social environment is as important as the physical. The very fact of our placing the child in a group brings immediately the necessity for many social adjustments. The normal development as shown in our records is manifested in the following order:—First, to ignore or to show merely a passive interest; this leads gradually to happy play in proximity to others; later, to playing with the same equipment but independently; and lastly, to spontaneous play with others. It is useless to press this development, as children seem to have to live through all stages in order to achieve the desire for social play.
It is possible to introduce play equipment that requires more than one child to make its use satisfying, such as large hollow blocks, planks, large wooden engines and carts which invite both a passenger and one to push or pull.

As adults, in a child’s environment we have found that our place is in the background. Our part is that of providing opportunities, directing energies into deeper channels, of planning excursions, and all manner of experiences that will furnish ideas for further activities. The adult voice need never be raised to dominate the group except when, as in the telling of stories or singing a song, she has something to contribute. Especially is it true that any necessary correction or suggestion for an alternative action should be between the child and the adult, and should not be made a community concern; in this way any needful interference with an individual child’s activity is kept in the background.

**Development of Social Living and Attitude Toward Others**

*Records of Newly Arrived Children Under Two Years of Age*

G. (19 months) sat in toy motor car, watching children, holding doll, and smiling at children when noticed by them.

K. (19 months):
- 2/7/31: Played by himself.
- 13/7/31: Older girl came to him but he preferred to play by himself.
- 17/7/31: Wanders from room to room happily, still content to play by himself.

*Record of Child of 2 Years*

O. (aged 24 months):
- 20/3/31: Followed G. round roof, pointed to him, patted him and laughed happily.
- 26/3/31: Noticed new little girl; went to her; spoke to her and patted her.
- 31/3/31: She and two others sat round box of beads, which they had taken from the cupboard by themselves.
27/4/31: Took the end of skipping rope when M. offered it to her. They both turned the rope.

Records of Children of 2½ Years

A. (30 months):
23/4/31: Played happily with O., P. and F. with outdoor blocks. They placed three in tower form and sat on them. A. added a fourth block, and I. a fifth. They stood side by side on the block tower (49 inches high). Later A. and two other boys played with the big engine, A. sat in it, I. pulled and F. pushed.

I. (28 months):
20/3/31: Welcomed A. on slide by smiling at him. Showed pleasure when P. placed block on his tower.
13/4/31: Threw ball right across roof twice to A.
20/4/31: Big reel fell on A. He began to cry. I. ran to him and patted his face. He knocked F. over when running. Adult said, “Be careful of F”. I. turned round and helped F. up.
1/5/31: I. and another boy pulled boxes together to make house in corner; were joined by still another—they seemed to have definite game. Were joined by girl. I protested at first, then let her in. Later I. and another small girl played together with indoor blocks—she handed them to him, and he built.
9/7/31: While hammering, I. stopped to see if two smaller children had hammers. He gave each one some nails and said, “This way”, and started hammering.

Same Child Nearing 3 Years
15/9/31: F. and A. were quarrelling over a cart. I., who was watching, went up to them and said to A., “Nemmind”. He pointed to another cart. A. got in and I. pulled him up and down roof.
15/10/31: Played with two large hollow blocks with A. They each took an end. Piled 12 on top of one another to make a tower nearly 6 feet high. Had to climb on small shed to reach last block.
5/11/31: A., with two other boys, carried small hollow blocks to small slide, which was resting on carpenter’s horse. They lifted up slide and made a bridge. Three other children walked across, climbing the horse, and jumping from other end.
By three years, in addition to all the co-operative planning and organising that is generally evident in their play, there also comes a definite feeling of responsibility for the younger children and a wish to help adults. If this is not forced or over-suggested, it comes from the child as a definite step in development. It is then a creative act, and gives him a constructive attitude towards those definitely younger on the one hand, and the adult in his community on the other. It is unwise to forestall this development by too distinct suggestions or requests. It comes to boys and girls alike, built up step by step as the first experience of this kind is happy and successful.

F. (3 years of age):
13/6/31: Washed new little boy’s hands, took him to his towel, and dried them. Did this quite successfully. Took him into lunch and said, “I washed O.’s hands.”
7/8/31: Took charge of O. as soon as he arrived. Took him to bathroom and then to the roof. Showed him how to climb the carpenter’s horse and put his foot on the rung. Attempt was not successful, so she took him to the ladder and put foot on the bottom rung. O. climbed to top of shed (3½ feet), followed by F., who helped him to sit down.

F. (2 years and 10 months):
14/7/31: F. said to A., “I’ll help you up”. Tried to help child on to slide, but she said, “I’ll get up myself”, and scrambled up.

“The adult attempts to safeguard the social environment for each child until he arrives at a stage in which he can pursue his investigations with profit to himself and without harm to his fellows. We believe that at that point of development he can build up his social technique experimentally.”—(Johnson).

Emotional Development

The culminating test in the adjustment of a child to his environment, and the real test of the adjustment of the environment to the needs of the individual child, are clearly
shown in his emotional development. It will readily be seen that this must be an individual problem, and that one cannot plan for the collective adjustment of a group. The development of personality and character are so much a matter of emotional adjustment to each element in the environment (be it adult, other children, animals, concrete objects, or the situation as a whole) that a record of the child’s emotional reactions should give a picture of his growth and development as he becomes gradually adjusted to each situation.

Emotional Development as Shown in the Relation of Parent and Child

The child’s leave-taking as he comes up the stairs and leaves his mother, older sister, etc., affords a good index of this relationship.

O. (23 months):
16/2/31: Cried when left by mother.
26/2/31: Cried on arrival but stopped almost immediately afterwards. (O. was then absent through illness, and then the holidays intervened, throwing her development back to a former stage).
8/7/31: Arrived crying.
10/7/31: Arrived happily. Well adjusted all the morning; played happily with others.
17/9/31: Arrived happily; said good-bye to mother at the gate.

K. (19 months):
8/7/31: Arrived happily on his first day.
10/7/31: Cried on arrival, but stopped as soon as he became interested.
13/7/31: Comes without crying, laughs and sings happily during the morning. He meets his mother at end of morning, smiling.

O. (20 months):
It is interesting to note individual adjustment to nursery school life. It calls for adjustment to certain routine, to adults, and to other children.

**Attitude at Nursery School to Routine Activities**

**C. (30 months):**

17/6/31: Cried when he found he had orange juice in his glass. Refused cod-liver oil.

30/6/31: Reacted normally throughout morning. Drank milk, keenly interested in pouring out from jug to cup.

9/7/31: Takes cod-liver oil reluctantly. Leaves play more willingly now at lunch time or at rest.

13/7/31: Appears to be shy; is passive when strangers are present, sometimes stopping work and hiding face.

27/7/31: Takes cod-liver oil as a matter of course with the other children.

28/7/31: Helped to prepare lunch. Carried tray with eight glasses on it from kitchen to table.

**K. (an only child of 25 months).** K. was at first feverishly anxious to make friends with the other children. She was successful with the children of her own age, but her overtures were refused by the younger ones, who disliked being treated like her dolls.

24/3/31: Enrolled. Was quite happy and excited at seeing so many children.

25/3/31: Saw I.; patted her and said “Bubbie”. Played on slide with A.

1/4/31: Watched children at lunch; sat down with them. Gave doll to F., and said “Nice girl”.

20/4/31: Saw sand spilt on floor; said, “I’ll sweep that up”. G. came out and she said to adult, “Look, Bubbie!” and patted him. G. resisted. K. gave him a doll and tried to talk to him. G. still resisted and lay on floor; K. tried to lift him up, and said, “Come on, get up”. She smacked him with her hand. As it was lunch time, she went away, and G. got up as soon as she had left.

13/8/31: Played with I., L., and A. on the see-saw. Later played with I., M., and Q., placing large blocks in a circle and sitting inside to play houses.

This difficulty of adjustment has been solved quite successfully owing to the fact that there were many children.
of her own age, and purposeful play with suitable material induced co-operation.

J. (aged 26 months) is an example of a child who rarely shows emotional reactions and is particularly well adapted to other children.

2/7/31: D. could not find her shoe. J. got it from under her stretcher bed and gave it to her.
6/7/31: Played with F. in engine.
10/7/31: Talked to children at lunch time. Sat next to S. on mat, with material. They laughed together while playing.

Ja. has been a problem because of his quiet inactivity, his shunning of all companionship, and his acceptance of anything the other children may do to him.

2/6/31: Did not play with other children.
13/6/31: Stood by himself in dressing-room and watched all the children. Stood outside in the playroom door, watching the children. Adult offered him blocks and cotton reels, but he sat looking at them for 15 minutes without touching them.
16/7/31: I. went to pull a stick from Ja.; he resisted, and then let I. have it.
7/8/31: A. came and pushed over Ja.’s tower of large reels. J. stood and watched, showing no resentment. J. played with one reel, rolling it, but when A. had gone, he went back to the big pile again.
16/9/31: J. ran to the slide, laughing and talking to G.
17/9/31: J. played with G. for 15 minutes. They played with prams and then went across to slide. They played there for ten minutes and talked together, J. laughing.
18/9/31: J. co-operated with Ii. in carrying large reels and handing them to Je., who stood on top of a cupboard on the roof.

I. (aged 32 months) is an example of a child who is poorly adjusted to both adults and to other children. She seems under a continual strain, and this is shown in thumbsucking and frequent irritable or anger reactions, if crossed. Her parents are both out of work, and there seems much strain at home, owing to a recent tragedy in the loss of a baby sister.
23/6/31: I. snatched pram from D., doll from Ie. I. was quietly given opportunity to play alone. Played happily away from others. Much thumb-sucking.

17/7/31: Played house with K. and D., using large and small hollow blocks.

10/8/31: Another child broke a cup. I. ran to adult and said, "I didn’t break that, did I?” Showed anxiety.

I.’s difficulty was carefully studied at the weekly staff meeting. It was decided that the thumb-sucking was a sign of deep unrest, unhappiness and strain.

An endeavour was made to make I.’s life simpler and to avoid over-stimulation. Thumb-sucking was never to be mentioned, but as the records showed that when she was interested and busy the manifestation did not appear, it was decided to foster her interests and give them full scope. When she was moved into the all-day group, with its midday meal and long sleep, her attitude became happier, and her irritability and thumb-sucking lessened.

Later Records Show Signs of Adjustment

13/10/31: Brought brush to adult and asked if she could paint. Painted happily for 45 minutes.

27/10/31: Gave O. a rock in rocker. Played with L. Took O. to bathroom.

12/11/31: Dressed herself and was pleased with her accomplishment.

(There was no mention of thumb-sucking during November, so that it must have been less in evidence). However, she is not yet perfectly adjusted as a later record shows some irritability with another child.

18/11/31: Pushed Ie. over when out shopping with adult. She wanted to carry his parcel.

G. is an example of a child who negatived all requests and frequently showed temper when crossed or asked to follow some routine activity.

In April he resisted all adult suggestions, and had many stormy mornings. Adults agreed to make the fewest demands possible and to foster his independence in all routine activities of dressing, washing, eating, etc.
By the beginning of May he was willing to leave play and go with an adult to lunch or sleep. Records show that temper tantrums had decreased by that time, as there were then few recorded. This improvement has been continuous and temper tantrums have seldom been mentioned in records since July.

Ie. spent most of his first weeks in nursery school, storming against all, whether human beings or objects. His early records show that he had recourse to biting, hitting, and tell of many tears and temper tantrums.

His development has been such that he now has an adjustment to other children and to adults that is above the average. His mother says it is a miracle, as she feared he was not like other children. He is happy and desirous of co-operating with all, and has been recorded as organising group play, of picking up a younger child who has fallen, of stepping in to stop a quarrel. He has very marked interests and shows a particular appreciation of music and rhythm.

Results and Conclusions

We set out at the beginning of the year's demonstration to endeavour to further the development of each child in the group. In this report actual records have been quoted as being the most reliable source from which to test results. The individual cards of each child are filed, and can be further investigated by any who are interested in following the history of any child.

If the development of a child has shown an harmonious progression; if he has moved from one step to another; if problem children have been helped to make a more satisfactory adjustment, we can claim that in these ways the Nursery School has been a successful demonstration.

The Keele Street Kindergarten Committee, after watching the work for a year, has decided to carry it on on the same lines as part of their activities for the future.
Thanks

Thanks are due in many quarters: to the wonderfully generous donor of the initial £200, to the Committee of the Keele Street Kindergarten, to the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria, to our own Nursery School Committee, staff and students, who have made this year’s work possible and the results attainable.

It is felt that this was but an initial year; that we have gained much ourselves from this experimental period, and that we shall be able to improve and extend the work in the future, when we shall avoid mistakes and more nearly adapt Nursery School principles to Australian conditions.