

**A STUDY OF THE KINDERGARTEN  
PROBLEM IN THE PUBLIC  
KINDERGARTENS OF SANTA  
BARBARA, CALIFORNIA, FOR THE  
YEAR 1898-9**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649514557

A Study of the Kindergarten Problem in the Public Kindergartens of Santa Barbara, California, for the Year 1898-9 by Frederic Burk & Caroline Frear Burk

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**FREDERIC BURK & CAROLINE FREAR BURK**

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A STUDY OF THE

# KINDERGARTEN

# — PROBLEM

IN THE PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS OF SANTA  
BARBARA, CALIFORNIA, FOR THE YEAR 1898-9

—BY—

✓  
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GAIL HARRISON GERTRUDE M. DIEHL  
ALICE L. BLACKFORD FANNIE REED  
MAY W. REESE EVALINE ROSE SEXTON  
ANNETTE UNDERWOOD

SAN FRANCISCO:  
THE WHITAKER & HAY CO.  
1899.

E. H.  
Hinsel

TO

**G. STANLEY HALL, Ph. D., LL. D.**

*President of Clark University,*

whose researches in child psychology are giving to the intuitions of  
Froebel a scientific basis and a selective critique, and whose  
leadership is extending throughout education  
the recognition of the genetic principle.



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## PREFACE.

This study is a report upon one year's work in a kindergarten system in which we have felt free to break somewhat from tradition. It is in no sense offered as a finished product, nor are its suggestions anything more than tentative. It is confessedly crude. The conditions have been favorable, but by no means ideal. We have sought to apply to the kindergarten, in a practical way, some of the products of common sense experience and some of the suggestions of child psychology. In a few subjects a limited bibliography has been inserted, but the field is here so wide that it would be impossible to attempt completion. Readers who are interested are earnestly advised to consult, in the matter of child-study literature, the Bibliography of Child-Study, by Mr. Louis N. Wilson, Librarian of Clark University, 1898. (Address Louis N. Wilson, Clark University Library, Worcester, Mass.) The child-study book references in Will S. Monroe's Bibliography of Education (International Education Series) will be found also valuable. More direct, but less accessible, are the topical reference syllabi issued by Professor Monroe for his classes in the State Normal School at Westfield, Mass.

The Santa Barbara kindergartens are a part of the public school system supported by a district tax. They now fully accommodate all children who are sent to them, one kindergarten being in connection with each grammar school building of the city. This public school kindergarten system is an outgrowth of a benevolent effort inaugurated by a number of active and public-spirited women of the city in 1887. For nine years the kindergartens were fostered and maintained by private contributions, but in 1896 the school department proposed a special tax for their support, and they have since been

maintained by this means. The success of the movement is unquestioned. In many other communities, similar in conditions to Santa Barbara, the kindergarten is struggling for public recognition and support, and the history of a successful establishment in our community may be of assistance to sister attempts.

A second purpose in this publication lies in the pedagogical phase of the kindergarten problem. "The kindergarten is having great difficulty in commending itself with sufficient force to the public mind to secure its incorporation into the public school system. We all believe in the necessity for public education of children from four to six years, nevertheless we find it a difficult undertaking to assure the public mind that the kindergarten is not a frivolous nursery room based upon a cheery sentimentalism and framed in notions which no one can understand. On the other hand, the school people, while they openly pat the kindergarten upon the back patronizingly, as they would a fretful child, are not active in supplying real help to the cause. The kindergarten has not yet been able to make the school look upon it seriously!" First grade teachers confide to their superintendents that they would prefer children who have not attended the kindergarten to those who have. They fail to find any product in the kindergarten training of which the school can make use, and, on the other hand, they whisper that the kindergarten children are unruly, lack a spirit of obedience, are dependent, and continually expect to be amused. It may be, of course, that the primary school teacher does not know a good thing when she sees it, but the upshot of the matter is that the kindergarten is having a hard time of it in establishing its place in the educational system. The least we can say is that the school and the kindergarten are out of joint. The kindergartens have in latter years been establishing connecting classes. But this seems an absurd makeshift, for there can, in reality, be no chasmic break in the child's life. There is a steady process of development. If the instincts of the kindergarten age are cultivated properly the work must show evident results for the school. That stands to reason. Of course we must dismiss at the outset any notion that the kindergarten should do the work of the