

**THEORY AND
PRACTICE OF THE
KINDERGARTEN**

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Theory and practice of the kindergarten by Nora Atwood

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NORA ATWOOD

**THEORY AND
PRACTICE OF THE
KINDERGARTEN**

Educational
Teach
A

Riverside Educational Monographs

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THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE KINDERGARTEN

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PREFACE

THE young woman who has finished her course in kindergarten training and is about to begin the business of teaching often finds it difficult to adjust herself to the new relation; difficult to bring to bear upon the problems which she now meets the various phases of knowledge which she has been acquiring in the past two years. It is possible that she has been surfeited with new ideas and facts, and many salient points in relation to child-training, and in relation to the agencies at her command, have strayed from her memory. She will have frequent recourse to her notebook; but even this repository of information will sometimes be found lacking.

To help the young kindergartner to refresh her memory, and to gather together some essentials in relation to kindergarten practice, is the excuse for the being of this little book. If it leads young kindergartners to a better appreciation of their work, it will have served its purpose.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THE kindergarten is about to come into its own. For years it has been an institution little appreciated among the general run of sober-minded school folk. Traditionally it has worn an air of happy playfulness that concealed its educative worth from minds that are wont to see pedagogical value only in the difficult and the irksome. The most it received from pedagogues was a kindly tolerance which expressed the conventional belief that young tots are privileged to be pleasantly entertained while they are waiting for the responsible age of six to arrive.

But recent years of thought have greatly changed the professional status given to the kindergarten. Kindergartners themselves have become critical of their own doctrines. They now speak less of a mystical language and more of a scientific one. They have reinterpreted Froebelian principles in terms of modern psychological wisdom, and made both their words and their deeds more intelligible to the ordinary student of education.

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If the kindergartner is more comprehensible, the school-teacher is more comprehending. She, too, thinks more in general laws of psychology and less in the grooves of ancient pedagogical habit. She is receptive, in fact eager, to know any institutional experiences and resources which will offer proved ways and means of realizing modern pedagogical principles. More particularly is this true of primary teachers who work with children of near-kindergarten age. Already the more progressive among them know, appreciate, and utilize the principles and practices of the kindergarten. Soon all teachers in the elementary school will wish to understand and apply those truths regarding human growth which Froebel explicated.

The current professional interest in the kindergarten attaches to more than the teachers of the youngest children. The school executive and the educational theorist have been roused to an open-minded interest in the kindergarten. A constantly accumulating experience with playgrounds has led the schoolmaster to attach a new respectability to naturalistic modes of learning. A popular interest in the doctrines and methods of Madame Montessori has exerted a pressure on the minds of school managers, forc-

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ing them to think critically of prevailing procedures in the education of young children. The resulting appraisal has been favorable to the kindergarten, especially where its practice has been revised so as to conform to twentieth-century information about childhood. Now superintendents and boards of education discuss most earnestly the issue, Shall the kindergarten years become part of the universal provisions of a regular system of public schools? The answer given will depend on many factors in the argument, but one — the clear comprehension of the kindergarten itself — will be primary and fundamental.

To offer a small treatise which will satisfy the new interest of the public, the school administrator, and the class-teacher is a considerable service. The volume that follows offers more. It is a simple and helpful guide to the young kindergartner who hesitates between conservative dogma and radical theory, and knows not which way to turn. This monograph offers an excellent, working reconciliation of the worthy elements in both the old and the new kindergarten. Moreover, the readable form of the presentation will insure it a hearty welcome.