

English counterparts who bankrolled the development of the 'Don't Suffer in Silence' resource kit.

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Further information about *The Anti-Bullying Handbook* can be found at: <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/education/anti-bullying>

HELEN MAY. *Politics in the Playground: The world of early childhood in post-war New Zealand*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books with the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (2001). 310 pp. NZ\$39.95 (ISBN 1-877242-18-7)

This thoughtful history of early childhood in New Zealand encapsulates the essence of the development of early childhood services, and related pedagogical and political swings, during the period from 1947 to 2000. It is a sequel to *The Discovery of Early Childhood* in which the author examines the concepts of care and education in institutions in Europe and New Zealand (May, 1997). The cover photograph of *Politics in the Playground*, taken in 1987, is in synchrony with the storyline of the book. Juxtaposed in the photograph is an infant (the author's) on a swing, observed by the Prime Minister at the time, Rt. Hon. David Lange, during his visit to a childcare centre in Hamilton, New Zealand. The book outlines and analyses the post-Second World War campaign in New Zealand for state support of preschool/early childhood education. Helen May introduces it this way:

At the heart of this campaign are the see-saws, swings and roundabouts in a seeming playground of political, educational and social opinion on the best place for the rearing and education of young children, and a century of emancipation of women from the confines of the home. The politics of this new world of early childhood impacted on homes, schools, communities and workplaces. Its story provides new insights into the major social, ideological, economic and political changes that characterised the twentieth century. (p. 1)

The book is carefully structured into three chronological and thematic parts. Part one focuses on *Growth and Expectation* during the 1940s to 1960s. It addresses the "psychology of freedom", including the concept of understanding children through observing play, and the emergence of playcentres (New Zealand parent co-operative early childhood centres with a parent education component), free play at kindergartens and "permissive parenting". It elaborates on "the psychology of disorder", encompassing contemporary

ideas about family and social disorder, working mothers and full-day childcare. This first part also makes reference to the eventual rise of regulation of childcare, and to early initiatives to include Maori children and families in preschools.

The second part, concerned with *Challenge and Constraint*, covers the period from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. Issues addressed include the politics of early childhood, international perspectives on young children's rights, liberation of young children and mothers, and matters related to working within the various early childhood education settings – playcentres, family daycare (home-based services), kindergartens and childcare centres.

The third and final part, *State Interest and Devolution* from the 1980s through the 1990s, examines political shifts and reforms, together with a range of quality initiatives. Several local initiatives outlined or further discussed in this section are currently a focus of international attention and acclaim. Examples include the rise of the Kohanga Reo movement, the administrative transfer of childcare to the Ministry of Education in 1987, and the development and implementation of Te Whariki, the New Zealand early childhood curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996), and related assessment and evaluation processes.

The book as a whole draws extensively on a wealth of national and international bibliographical and archival material, research studies, policy and position papers, and the unpublished theses and research essays of New Zealand postgraduate students. Moreover, it includes vibrant excerpts from interviews conducted by the author between 1990 and 1999, representing the voices of at least 33 early childhood professionals and other educationalists.

Helen May points out that two main 'policy frames' connect into the overall structure of the book. The 'Bailey Report' of 1947, which recommended that the state be responsible for early childhood education, provided the basis of the government's plan for early childhood education for four decades. The emphasis of this report was on part-day, sessional education of children aged three and four years who attended kindergartens (Department of Education, 1947). *Before Five*, the Government's response to *Education to be More*, was inclusive of children from birth to school entry (usually at age five years) attending a wider range of early childhood education and care services (Department of Education, 1988; Lange, 1988). As Helen May elaborates, both the 1947 report and the 1988 reports positioned early childhood as a "political priority for social policy" (p. 6). A decade of considerable discontent about aspects of the implementation of the *Before Five* policies was followed by the development in 2001 of a further Strategic Plan for early childhood education (Early Childhood Education Strategic

Plan Working Group, 2001). The launching of *Politics in the Playground* therefore precedes the likely emergence of a third policy frame.

Several key themes, evident in early childhood education during the time span under review, are addressed consistently throughout this book. They include, for example, indigenous issues and catering for diversity, the politics of advocacy and access to quality services. Helen May interweaves a cogent discussion of these, and a number of other main themes, into her coherent story line. The themes are clearly situated and analysed within their historical, social, cultural, political and economic contexts.

The book traces the conceptualisation of education for Maori preschoolers from post-colonial views on assimilation, through integration, to self-determination as evident in the birth of the kohanga reo (language nests) in 1982, and the subsequent expansion of the kohanga reo movement. Consolidation of this service during the 1990s is noted in part three of the book, where there is clear evidence of continuing political and administrative swings.

In a succinct statement about access to early childhood services, Helen May notes that:

By the 1950s those children not attending preschool came to be regarded as unfortunate, by the 1960s as disadvantaged, by the 1970s-1980s as disenfranchised, and by the end of the century as 'at risk'. (p. 2)

Her analyses of themes and issues are inclusive of a wide range of theoretical and philosophical perspectives. This is evident, for example, in relation to the themes of access to quality curriculum, and of advocacy. Amidst some considered critique of the influence of psychological paradigms on early childhood education, the text tracks through European and North American influences, from Arnold Gesell and Erik Erikson on the concept of child-centred pedagogy, to links between Jerome Bruner's and Lev Vygotsky's work and the development of the national early childhood curriculum Te Whariki. With regard to advocacy, particular reference is made to the influence of Urie Bronfenbrenner, who made an impact both during his 1979 visit to New Zealand and through his writing. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model has provided a theoretical underpinning for advocacy in early childhood in this country.

This book is a landmark achievement for the author and the publishers, marking the conclusion of what, in 1900, Swedish feminist author Ellen Key declared to be the "century of the child". In the front-cover photograph of *Politics in the Playground*, the light and focus are on the young child, not on the politician. The book focuses more clearly on the theme of advocacy – for early childhood education, for infants and young children, and for women – than on details of the complexities of government political proc-

esses. Another type of book might focus more on the machinations within political arenas. This positioning is entirely appropriate, and the book effectively serves the early childhood community – practitioners, policy-makers, undergraduate and postgraduate students, teacher educators and researchers – both within and well beyond New Zealand.

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V. CARPENTER, H. DIXON, E. RATA AND C. RAWLINSON (EDS.). *Theory in Practice for Educators*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press (2001). 241 pp. NZ\$42.95 (ISBN 0 86469 396 6)

C. MCGEE AND D. FRASER. *The Professional Practice of Teaching*. 2nd edition. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press (2001). 358 pp. NZ\$74.95 (ISBN 0 86469 3907)

Education reforms in New Zealand from the mid-80s until today have brought with them a range of changes across all sectors, not only in education but also in the public sector more generally. One of the unifying themes is the concept of the marketisation of education, which encompasses the notions of choice, competition and the creation of quasi-markets. In the reform process, the curriculum, its teaching, and the educational providers, i.e. teachers, were unfairly blamed for economic failure, essentially for not providing an education to meet market needs. This conjunction of ideas and pressures has had an unusual effect upon the course of teacher education in