

# FABIAN SOCIETY

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## NURSERY EDUCATION

Dr. B. STROSS

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*August, 1941*

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# NURSERY EDUCATION

By

Dr. B. STROSS

THE FABIAN SOCIETY

11 Dartmouth Street, SW 1



161511 (255) **NURSERY EDUCATION**

The well-being of young children requires not only the proper care of their bodies but also adequate provision for their minds. This has been increasingly recognised during recent years by those concerned with their welfare.

The primary needs of young children are sound mothering and appropriate opportunities for activity. Help of a specialised nature must be available to maintain and improve general health. Each aspect of a child's development may be fostered and safeguarded by these means. Sound mothering combined with expert advice will make due provision for the care of physical health, but will also contribute to the expansion of genuine intellectual interest. The development of a feeling of stability and confidence will be fostered. The dependence of the child should be accepted, but his growing independence should be welcomed at the same time, and the growth of cooperative social relationships strengthened. In addition to wise mothering of this kind children need further opportunities for the smooth and level development of all their capacities, and they can most simply find these in adequate provision for varied and satisfactory play activities.

These needs of the child and the various aspects of his development must be kept in mind by those who are responsible for his care. On the adequacy of the provision made for these needs his future happiness and health will depend, and our practical arrangements for him must be made in the light of our understanding of his requirements.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to give some account of the history of the special provision made in various ways for young children, to show what is the present position in relation to such work, and what may be its future prospects.

## 1 The History of Child Welfare

The early provision of specialised help for young children resulted from an awakening sense of community responsibility for their welfare. Genuine concern was felt at the high rate of maternal and infant mortality, at the incidence of sickness, and at the general neglect from which many young children suffered.

A beginning was in consequence made towards the end of the last century in the provision of health services for mothers, babies and young children, which was for some time organised on a voluntary basis. This early work was consolidated in 1918 in the Maternity and Child Welfare Act in which the provision of these services was recognised as the responsibility of the State.

### DAY NURSERIES

When welfare work with young children was in its early stages Day Nurseries, also on a voluntary basis, were opened for the care of young children aged 0-5 years whose mothers were at work, and, as was to be expected in the light of the knowledge and pressing needs of the times, emphasis was again put on the care of the physical health of the children. In 1915 government grants given through the Board of Education were made available for this work. When however in 1918 the Local Government Board was merged in the Ministry of Health, Day Nurseries were placed under the care of the Maternity and Child Welfare Department. These Nurseries now provide for the care of children aged 0-5 years. The Staff consists as a rule of a Matron and one or more Nurses who have received hospital training; the younger members of the staff work as helpers or probationers and may train as children's nurses. The number of children in some nurseries has been larger than many authorities consider desirable. The Nurseries have in some cases been kept open for as long as twelve hours and emphasis is placed on the physical care of the children, although each day's programme differs somewhat for the various age groups. It is fair to say that general development and play activity are not fully catered for. Most experts agree that the children are well cared for physically, but that greater emphasis must be placed on their general needs.

### NURSERY SCHOOLS

Early in this century there were indications that a more enlightened understanding of young children and their needs was emerging. During the latter part of the nineteenth century children aged 3-5 years had been admitted to the lower infant classes of elementary schools. Here they were placed in large groups, the teaching was formal, and conditions for the children often bad. In 1904 the Board of Education allotted five women inspectors to enquire into the position. Their report was so unfavourable that from 1908 onwards there was a definite discouragement of the admission of young children to infant classes.

Instead of this the report of the inspectors suggested the opening of Nursery Schools for the children whose homes were 'imperfect'. These suggestions were based on a survey of work already being done in other European countries. In the Nursery Schools there was to be an abundance of air and sunshine, open space, hygienic buildings, opportunities for physical activity and sleep, education on kindergarten lines and training in right habits. The Schools were to be in charge of enlightened teachers. In spite of these recommendations, there was only a slight development. The Board of Education took little action, but a beginning was made, and small Nursery Schools were opened on a voluntary basis in some slum areas, usually in adapted houses. In 1914 Rachel and Margaret McMillan opened a large open-air Nursery School at Deptford. Interest increased, and in 1918 the provision of Nursery Schools by the Board of Education was included in the Fisher Act. In spite of the increasing body of informed opinion on the subject development was slowed down by the economy measures of 1920 and 1931 and in the years before the war there were long waiting lists for all the Nursery Schools in the country.

Nursery Schools have trained certificated teachers, specially qualified for educational work with young children in charge of them. Their assistants are also trained teachers and younger girls are employed as helpers and probationers. The latter usually receive a recognised training for work of some type in connection with children. The size of the group varies, but is commonly rather large; about forty children, ranging in age from two to five years, are in the charge of one teacher with one or two helpers. The programme for the day is flexible; play activity is emphasised and adequate allowance is made for meal times, rest and general physical care.

The provisions for play are varied. The arrangement of the Nursery is given careful thought, and it is true to say that Nursery Schools do promote sound development in children and foster the growth of genuine happiness and self-reliance.

### NURSERY CLASSES

Side by side with the development of Nursery Schools, modifications were made in the running of the infant classes for children aged 3-5 years, and gradually education of a Nursery School kind has been introduced. It is not always possible to provide a mid-day meal in Nursery Classes, but otherwise the life of children in these classes can be similar to that in a Nursery School. In 1937 there were 158,413 children attending Nursery Classes.

## 2 Improvisation for War

At the outbreak of war there was a sudden dislocation of all kinds of work with young children. Day Nurseries, Nursery Schools and Nursery Classes were closed until air-raid shelters could be provided in neutral and reception areas, and in many evacuation areas they have not been reopened.<sup>1</sup> Even after the provision of air raid shelters in neutral and reception areas Nursery Classes have not always reopened, as their classrooms have often been needed by older children evacuated from other areas or have been used for such purposes as First Aid Posts. Day Nurseries and Nursery Schools in some of the safer areas have reopened, but with very few exceptions this has not been possible in evacuation areas. And it has been recently announced that even in 'safe' areas no extension of Nursery School provision during the period of the war is contemplated by the Board of Education.

### RESIDENTIAL NURSERIES

At the beginning of the war it was urgent that emergency arrangements for young children should be made, and most of the existing Day Nurseries and Nursery Schools in evacuation areas were evacuated as residential Nurseries. At the outset the difficulties were many. Premises were unsuitable and the initial staffing inadequate, and there were inevitable troubles arising from the separation of young children from their homes and mothers. In spite of greatly improved conditions in residential Nurseries, many people still regard such separation as a matter of deep concern, and there seems to be a considerable risk of creating a fresh group of institution children who will have to spend their early years deprived in large part of normal mothering and family life.

### CHILDREN IN DANGEROUS AREAS

There is at present little or no provision for young children remaining in dangerous areas, since evacuation remains the official policy. Young children can be evacuated with their mothers, but circumstances often militate against the mother leaving her home. Where this is the case the evacuation of unaccompanied young children seems to be a matter of very considerable difficulty.

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<sup>1</sup> Nursery Schools have been re-opened in some of the larger cities—Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Birmingham. Nursery Classes have been re-opened in Leicester and in most of the other towns. No Nursery Schools have been re-opened in London.

Only those belonging to the 'priority class'<sup>1</sup> can be evacuated with the full billeting allowance of 8s 6d, and for these children vacancies are found in residential Nurseries. By 'priority class' is meant broadly that they are children for whom there can be no proper care at home owing to outside calls upon the mother. Children whose mothers are at home can be evacuated only if the parents arrange accommodation for them, and then an allowance of only 3s per week is available and the children are described as 'hikers'. At present an average of only 75 young children of the priority class can leave London each week, as their selection and the making of arrangements for them appears to be a very slow process. The number of those remaining can be judged from their representation in London's larger shelters.

### BILLETING

The small number of residential Nurseries could not provide for all the young children who were evacuated from dangerous areas, particularly those whose mothers accompanied them. Many such children were placed with their mothers in billets in reception areas, and here many problems arose. It is not easy for a mother with young children to be received into a house where space is limited, or where the various adult members of the household do not readily welcome the presence of children. The evacuated mother is not always cooperative, and there is often great difference of opinion amongst the various adults as to the handling of the child. Circumstances of this kind can hardly be regarded as helpful to a child. There are other features of the situation which require careful consideration. A young child depends largely on his mother and on the general safety of family life for the feeling of security that is so necessary for his well-being. War conditions for him mean the disruption of family life, and there is a difficult change in the quality of his relationship to his mother. Very few mothers are able at this time to give to their children the confident secure mothering of which they would otherwise be capable. This is particularly true of evacuated mothers. They do not welcome the separation from home, and when as in many cases they feel unwelcome—for whatever reason—in their new

<sup>1</sup> The children are selected by a Panel in London. In other cities and towns there are no arrangements at all whereby the Unaccompanied Under Fives may be evacuated unless they are attending a Nursery which is subsequently evacuated as a residential Nursery, or are sent to a billet arranged by the parents.

The priority cases in London are children who suffered injury in an air raid, who have one or both parents killed or disabled, who are without anyone to care for them during air-raids owing to both parents being at work, or who have lost their homes. There are now some 80,000 Under Fives in London, including some 38,000 children who have returned from evacuation.



surroundings, they are unhappy. One mother's verdict was that 'bombs aren't so bad as billets'. They are anxious for the safety of those they love who must continue to live in dangerous places or serve in one or other of the Forces, and they share the general concern at the varying fortunes of the war.

## NURSERY CENTRES

It was with a full recognition of these circumstances that plans were made by the Board of Education in 1939 for the provision of Nursery Centres—a modified form of nursery education for evacuated children—and the relevant Circular from the Board of Education and the Ministry of Health<sup>1</sup> appeared in January 1940. This Circular was issued jointly because education is the concern of the Board of Education and provision for evacuated children that of the Ministry of Health. It was welcomed not only for the provision it made possible, but for the general attitude it expressed. There has been some criticism of the Circular on the grounds that it made possible the provision of a makeshift kind of Nursery School, but such a criticism can scarcely be justified. It was recognised that the building of fresh Nursery Schools during wartime would not be possible, and that in any case it could not be speedy enough to meet the immediate requirements of the children. The choice was never one between Nursery Schools and Nursery Centres, but between Nursery Centres and nothing, and in view of existing conditions few people in contact with the work would have chosen nothing. Be that as it may, Nursery Centres were not intended to replace Nursery Schools, but to have their own particular character. Keeping the essential needs of young children well in mind, the Circular makes possible a more flexible kind of Nursery provision. Premises must conform to the requirements of health, and a simple but adequate kind of provision for play activities and other needs is laid down. Meal times and rest times are preserved. The children can be in small groups with a generous allowance of staffing. The work is under the supervision of a trained Nursery School Teacher who may be responsible for several such Centres, and at each Centre there is a Warden who has had experience with children, and a helper. The staffs are chosen for their personal qualities and for the contribution they can make to the life of the children. It has been possible in this way to provide helpful substitute mothering of a less anxious kind for the children, and at the same time to reconstitute for them something of the life of a more normal family

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<sup>1</sup>Board of Education 1495 and Ministry of Health 1936.

group. As the Centres are part of our educational provision no charge was made except for meals.

### DAY NURSERIES IN INDUSTRIAL AREAS

While progress was being made in the establishment of Nursery Centres in reception areas, there was no such provision for children living in industrial areas. At the same time there arose an increased demand for women's labour, particularly in munition factories. Arrangements were therefore made by the Ministry of Health early in 1940 for the opening of additional Day Nurseries in industrial areas. For use of the Day Nurseries mothers were to pay 1s per day, the Government making a similar contribution. These Nurseries were for children aged 0-5 years and were to be under the care of a hospital trained matron and her staff.

### MINDERS

Later in the war, when the Minister of Labour found it necessary to make still further calls for women workers, he suggested a system of 'minding', whereby the young child of a munition worker might be cared for by a woman relative or neighbour in her own home, the minder receiving in return 6d a day from the mother and 6d a day from the Ministry of Labour. In many industrial cities and towns the system of leaving the child with a 'minder' has existed ever since women have worked in industry. Usually the minder is a relative, or well known to and trusted by the mother, and lives nearby. Supervision of minders is undertaken by Health Visitors in some cities. There is some advantage in the system in that infection and cross-infection is minimised, but obviously no progress in the education of the child or its mother is likely. In some cases the writer has seen infants grossly neglected by minders. Everything has been bad; the children have been dirty and unwashed, deprived of fresh air and sunlight and improperly fed.

### ANOMALIES

It will be evident that at this stage (in May 1941) there were many inequalities in the provision available for young children, and that various authorities were concerned in its administration. Although children evacuated into reception areas could go to Nursery Centres, there was no such possibility for children normally resident in such areas regardless of whether or not their mothers went out to work or had undertaken the care of evacuated children in addition to the care of their own families. In industrial areas extra provision could take the form only of Day Nurseries or

Minders. No additional Nursery School provision was contemplated in these neutral and evacuation areas, so that in effect only children of munition workers have been catered for here since war began. In some districts there was an increase in the provision of Nursery Classes, but this was not general. In many areas the permanent premises of evacuated Nursery Schools remained closed, and Nursery Schools still functioning could not meet the demands of the district.

Official arrangements for the Nurseries were complicated. Evacuated Nursery Schools (residential) were the concern of the Board of Education and of the Ministry of Health. Day Nurseries working in their usual premises remained the concern of the Ministry of Health, and Nursery Schools under similar conditions that of the Board of Education. The new Nursery Centres were cared for jointly by the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education, and the new Day Nurseries by the Ministry of Health, while the Ministry of Labour became responsible for the 'minders'. Local Government officials were confused and became reluctant to help.

In view of the existing anomalies and complications, individuals and organisations interested in this problem suggested the establishment of a government department to coordinate all the arrangements for the care of young children. This would make more uniform provision possible and would simplify official procedure. It was hoped that such a department would be composed of representatives from the government departments already involved, with possibly the addition of informed representatives from the voluntary bodies who had made the understanding of young children and their needs the particular object of their work. The reply to this suggestion was somewhat unexpected in its form. It came in the Circular issued on 31 May 1941 from the Ministry of Health (2388) and the Board of Education (1553).

### 3 The Present Position

This Circular permits extended provision of Nurseries for evacuated children and for the children of all mothers who go out to work. The position of existing Day Nurseries and Nursery Schools, whether or not they are evacuated, is unaffected, and the same is true of Nursery Classes. New emergency provision of two types is to be generally available. There are to be Full-time Nurseries and Part-time Nurseries. Full-time Nurseries will care for children aged 0-5, and Part-time Nurseries for children aged 2-5. There is no Part-time Nursery provision for children

aged 0-2. The Full-time Nurseries are intended primarily for those children whose mothers will be out at work for long periods; and may be open from twelve to fifteen hours a day. The Part-time Nurseries are for evacuated children and for those whose mothers are working for shorter periods, or who can make alternative arrangements for their children during part of the day. They will be open during normal school hours. The Full-time Nurseries are in the charge of a hospital trained matron and staff, with probationers and helpers. There will be a Nursery School teacher during school hours for the children aged 2-5, and she may have the supervision of several such groups. The Part-time Nurseries are under the supervision of trained Nursery School teachers, each responsible for several such Nurseries, and they will be in charge of a Warden with experience of children, and a helper. For attendance at a Full-time Nursery a charge of 1s per day is made, while for attendance at a Part-time Nursery there is a charge of 3d per day, with an additional charge of 3d if a mid-day meal is given to the children.

To simplify procedure there is to be a joint committee of representatives of the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education, and all local arrangements must now be made for both Full-time and Part-time Nurseries through the local Maternity and Child Welfare Committees. There are many points in this Circular that require detailed scrutiny.

A careful study of the present position makes it evident that nursery education will require certain safeguards if the physical and mental health of the child is to be fully protected. The recent Circular (2388 and 1553) is issued jointly from the Ministry of Health and the Board of Education, and arrangements for Nurseries are now to be made by a joint staff of the two Departments. The representation on this joint staff from the Board of Education appears at the moment to be one administrative official from the medical department of the Board. There does not appear to be anyone with special knowledge of Nursery School work on this staff, and the skilled members of the Inspectorate who have been concerned with it are not as yet represented. A group of people were invited to meet the joint committee and to form a 'contact circle'. They are in the main associated with voluntary societies which have made it their purpose to provide in a variety of ways for young children. They serve as private individuals and not as representatives of their own societies. There does not appear to be in this group anyone with full professional knowledge or experience of Nursery School work. It is stated in the Circular that arrangements for the further extension of wartime nursery work are to

be made by the local Maternity and Child Welfare Committees. It is indeed suggested that these committees should act in co-operation with Local Education Authorities and the interested voluntary bodies, but they are under no obligation to do so. It is quite possible for the Maternity and Child Welfare Committees to act without regard to the opinion of the Local Education Authority, and it is equally possible for the Local Education Authority to wash its hands of arrangements for further Nursery work. It is to be the responsibility of the Regional Welfare Officer of the Ministry of Health to approve the necessary arrangements, and there is only a suggestion that he should do so with the ' concurrence ' of His Majesty's Inspector of Schools. The Inspectorate appears to have no real authority in the matter. We know from experience what this inequality of authority and obligation will mean in some areas where it is still possible for a Medical Officer to say, when faced with obvious demands, that he will act ' when the need arises ', or where the local Education officials prefer to ignore the existence of children under five years of age—and may now continue to do so in comfort. There is urgent need for the inclusion on the joint staff of the Ministry of Health and Board of Education of representatives with a genuine knowledge of Nursery School work; and there is an equally urgent need for a reconsideration of the local arrangements. Were the Circular differently worded these local arrangements would be full of possibilities, but there must be a clear statement to the effect that educational representatives should be coopted on to the local Maternity and Child Welfare Committees, or an insistence on the formation of a fresh committee representing the various aspects of the work.

### **FULL-TIME NURSERIES**

The Circular lays down that matrons of full-time Nursery Schools should be State Registered Nurses; they need not have had even continuous hospital experience of children's work. The Pioneers of Nursery Education would surely have thought this most inadequate training for women having the general oversight of young children, and it certainly seems so today in the light of our increased knowledge of children needs. Though hospital training is also emphasised as a qualification for the Nursery's staff, there is a loophole for the provision of more adequate care; during school hours children aged 2-5 are to be in charge of a trained Nursery School teacher who may have the oversight of such groups in several Nurseries. Unfortunately there is no specific statement to the effect that school hours include not only play activity periods

but also meal times, rest times and toilet times, and the term 'school hours' might easily be used restrictively if the Matron and nursing staff considered the 'health training' of the children to be their prerogative. The Circular suggests that probationers and voluntary helpers may be used to help with the 'occupational and social training' of the children, and they presumably will have charge when the teacher is away supervising the 2-5 year old groups in other Nurseries. Such an arrangement might be anything but satisfactory, and needs much more careful definition if it is to be helpful.

A further point about Full-time Nurseries needs prompt reform—they may be open from twelve to fifteen hours per day. We know that the women for whose children they will be primarily intended will be working both day and night shifts. Full-time Nurseries even if open for twelve or fifteen hours can make no provision for children when their mothers are on night work. We know also that women working on day shifts will in many cases be away from home for twelve hours or longer, since many factories are at a distance from the towns. A mother must in consequence bring her child to the Nursery before its normal waking time, and take it home after its normal bedtime. There is a further disadvantage in the size of the groups suggested for such Nurseries; the number of children can be up to sixty, and such a size makes it impossible for the Nursery to have anything of the character of family life. It can only serve as a source of bewilderment and anxiety to a young child. Where it is convenient to group these large numbers of young children together there should be enough trained staff for the children to be subdivided into small units so that each child can have individual care.

### PART-TIME NURSERIES

From the wording of the Circular and its Memorandum the Part-time Nursery would appear to be the poor relation of the Full-time Nursery. There are however some possibilities in this part of the Circular that may be advantageous. The Part-time Nurseries are to be open for normal school hours and are for children aged 2-5. They have replaced the emergency Nursery Centres, and although the arrangements in regard to them are loosely stated, this may prove to be an advantage. The staffing qualifications demanded are more human than the mere certificate of a State Registered Nurse. The Warden, who must have had experience with children, will be trained in her work by the Superintendent, a trained Nursery School or Infant teacher. She will be assisted by a Helper. There will be suitable arrangements for medical

care. In these Nurseries the groups can be small—as few as ten children to a group—and the day can be planned as a day in a good home. There is a chance of reconstituting for the children a friendly family life, with the added advantages brought to it by the insight of people with special understanding of educational work with young children. It is in this aspect of the work that we can see hope for the future, yet here again a most extraordinary—and to an outsider a most unconstitutional—feature has appeared. This work is admittedly educational since it is in charge of people with educational qualifications. And in this country educational provision for young children was in 1918 recognised as the responsibility of the State, and took its place with other kinds of free education. Now in 1941 we find a statement to the effect that the children admitted to these Nurseries are to be charged at the rate of 3d per day, this charge being in no way related to the provision of a mid-day meal since for this an additional charge is suggested. This, together with the outworn vocabulary appearing throughout the Circular, leads one to ask whether this document may not have been produced by people who have long ceased to observe the progress of educational work with young children.

The organisation provided for in the Circular is a disappointing answer to the demand for a government department coordinating the whole work. It may however be possible to obtain the inclusion on the joint committee of educational representatives with experience in the problems concerned. If this can be achieved, the committee may be able to play an important part not only during the war but also in the period of post war reconstruction.

#### 4 Future Possibilities

The knowledge and experience now available is still not being utilised in our practical plans for the welfare of children. The coordination of the work is apparent rather than genuine, and large discrepancies in the quality of the provision made may still remain. In some areas the service may be excellent, but it is quite easy for it to fall short in every essential. Instead of searching diligently into the new forms the work may require, we are retracing our steps and attempting to fit it into an old framework. We should expect nursery education to need some reorientation; as it develops it will not necessarily continue to run along old lines. Already it is obvious that certain modifications are needed.

#### TRAINING OF STAFF

The value and quality of nursery work will depend in large

part upon the understanding and insight of those who care for the children, and the appropriate training of the nursery staff becomes in consequence of prime importance. At present roughly two types of training for those who have charge of Nurseries are available. The training given by the National Society of Day Nurseries is essentially directed to the care of the physical health of young children. For the care of children under two this is at present the only kind of training offered. The usual training for Nursery School work allows for every aspect of development in children aged 2-5, but leaves out of account the care of children under two. No training is therefore available in recognised Nurseries which covers the inclusive care of children from babyhood to five years. Since we know that the behaviour of a two year old is affected by his past, it is somewhat illogical to accept as adequate a training which begins with the consideration of children aged two. A training covering only the physical welfare of children is equally incomplete, whether it be for the care of children under or over the age of two. It would seem then that some modification in our training methods is needed so that it may in future be possible to equip those who will care for young children with a full understanding of general development and needs from babyhood onwards. We shall then know that our Nurseries are in the hands of staffs with appropriate knowledge who can wisely mother the children. In the meantime the best thing we can do is to make effective a suitable form of complementary staffing, so that otherwise troublesome deficiencies may be made good.

### REORGANISATION

We must now examine from the children's point of view what the present classification of nursery work means for them. Children younger than two can be cared for only by those whose training gives them little understanding of the intellectual, emotional and social needs of the young or of the play activities so necessary for their development. Moreover, it has seemed that this training has detracted from what might otherwise have been a sounder intuitive handling of young children. In providing staffing of this kind it seems as though we believed that the more general needs of children do not emerge before the age of two, and in the provision laid down there seems to be no reference to play activities. Even the most ignorant among us can hardly believe that children begin suddenly to play at the age of two. The omission of provision for more general needs is all the more regrettable since it is now well-known how valuable can be the help given to



young babies, and how serious are the consequences of a lack of understanding care and of suitable play opportunities at this early age. It is during this early period that the child's interest turns from himself and his immediate concerns, and on this extension of interest depends the soundness of his intellectual development. His emotional and social behaviour cannot otherwise be satisfactory. In being thus neglectful of his early needs we are to a great extent undermining the effectiveness of our later work with him before it has even begun, and imposing upon him deficiencies which will not readily be made good. We make wiser provision for children older than two, but we must recognise the need for its extension to the younger also. The artificial separation of the needs of these younger ones from those of the older children can only be regarded as harmful. Nurseries need planning so that they include not only arrangements for good physical care for all children, but also for opportunities to develop their capacities to the full. The size of the groups in our Nurseries will need careful consideration and should be as small as possible.

### INCREASED PROVISION OF NURSERIES

We need, then, modifications both in the training of our personnel and in the arrangement of our Nurseries. We also need more Nurseries as a permanent part of our provision for young children. The need for such an increase is shown by the waiting lists for admission to Nurseries in normal times.<sup>1</sup> On 31 March 1939 the position was as follows :

(a) NURSERY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Local Education Authority					
Schools	..	..	58	with accommodation for	6,235 children.
Other Schools	..	..	57	..	2,869 ..
			115		9,104

(b) NURSERY CLASSES

The number of children between the ages of 3 and 5 in public elementary schools was 169,558.

At the moment of writing (July 1941) there are in operation 117 Wartime Day Nurseries (34 whole-time and 83 part-time), and 118 in preparation (83 whole-time and 35 part-time). The total child population below the age of five is approximately 2,232,000, and assuming that some 6,000 children are cared for in Day Nurseries, the total child population receiving some form of nursery service is about 184,600, or one in twelve. Local Authorities should be obliged to assess the needs of their districts

<sup>1</sup> In 1937 only 6,000 children could be admitted to Nursery Schools.

and then to make the necessary provision. It has been hitherto all too easy for them to evade their responsibilities in this respect.

### EDUCATION OF PARENTS

By a wise modification and an increase in the number of our Nurseries all those concerned with the upbringing of children can be given the understanding that they need. Such knowledge is best gained by seeing how children are cared for and by helping in such work. Girls who may later be mothers, and parents with young children, learn readily when they are brought into contact with work whose effectiveness they can see, and much direct training in the wise upbringing of children can be given in this way. Our Nurseries should become centres of education. What there is of value in the kindly intuitive handling of children will be preserved, but that which is haphazard and faulty will be removed. The health and happiness of our children will be safeguarded not only in their Nurseries but in their homes.

It is of the utmost importance that every woman who is fit for work should be able to offer her services to the country during the present conflict, and this may well be equally vital in the first years of the peace, but it is correspondingly important that the mother of young children should be able to establish contact with the work of a properly organised Nursery. She will learn much concerning the standards of nutrition, cleanliness and correct physical education. Gradually but certainly she will appreciate the importance of suitable clothing, of air, water and sunshine. She will understand the development of her baby's movements, and what objects and toys are needed to expand his interest and consciousness in external things. What she learns in this way she will use in the home and she will add to her intuitive and affectionate care the fruits of a generation's scientific observation. When the mother sees for herself how babies who have begun to crawl can be taught the elementary rules of personal hygiene, and that cooperation and self-control may be taught and greed discouraged at meal times, she will at once use her knowledge in her own home. Not only the physical welfare of the nation's children will be affected, but we may look forward to future generations of citizens who have learned the importance of cooperation, independence and affection from the moment their senses begin to unfold.

# SELECT LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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