

THREE NECESSARY THINGS:

THE INDIANAPOLIS FREE KINDERGARTEN AND CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY, 1880-1920

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*There are three things necessary:
First, that the teachers shall be trained;
second, that the children shall be trained;
third, that the parents shall be trained.¹*

¹ Ida A. H. Harper, *The Associated Work of the Women of Indiana* (Indianapolis: Wm. H. Burford, 1893), 14.

INTRODUCTION

In September 1885, Onis Williams, a “very bright colored boy” kept running away from his home in Indianapolis to attend classes at the nearby kindergarten. Onis’ clothing embarrassed his mother, a hard-working woman whose husband abandoned her five years before. Although she took in washing and ironing, she could not provide better clothes for Onis. She forbade him to go to the kindergarten dressed in “rags,” but every day, Onis ran off to the school.

Fortunately for Onis, Nettie Duzan, a Friendly Visitor for the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society, soon appeared at his mother’s door. Nettie brought Onis two sets of underclothes, pants, a coat, and two shirtwaists. In November, Nettie brought Onis a pair of much needed shoes. Nettie recorded that “the boy has now been completely clothed by us but the clothing is kept clean and the new pride and self-respect of the boy repay our care.” Onis, with his mother’s permission, attended kindergarten “clean and bright every day.”²

A group of well-to-do women formally organized the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society with the goal to open kindergartens for children like Onis Williams.³ Reverend Oscar C. McCulloch, a social gospel proponent, was influential in organizing these

² “Friendly Visitor Records 1885-1891,” Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society Records 1884-1972, Bound Volume 1510, Manuscripts and Visual Collections, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, September 1-November 7, 1885, pp. 31, 35-36. In the collection guide, this particular bound volume is listed as “Reports of the Superintendent.” These records are actually monthly reports from the Friendly Visitors. I have used “Friendly Visitor Records” throughout.

³ The Children’s Aid Society was founded in 1881 and affiliated with the Charity Organization Society in Indianapolis. In 1884, the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society was incorporated by law. Later, in 1927, the organization dropped Children’s Aid Society from its name. See Indianapolis Free Kindergarten Society, *Indianapolis Free Kindergarten Society 1882-1942* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Free Kindergarten Society, 1942), 23.

women as well as several other Indianapolis charitable organizations.⁴ The clubwomen of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society collected funds and goods from local businesses and wealthy businessmen to support their work; the clubwomen also hosted teas, parties, and an annual ball to raise money. At first, the women of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society (hereafter IFK) opened kindergartens and distributed clothing to young children in the poorest districts of the city. Over time, however, IFK expanded to include adult programs, programs for children of all ages, and opened a teachers' training school.

Studies of Progressive reform have largely concentrated on New York City and Chicago, while smaller cities, such as Indianapolis, have been ignored. Robert Barrows, author of a recent biography of a notable Indiana reformer, Albion Fellows Bacon, contends that "smaller cities were also important in the overall process of urbanization." Barrows continues,

[i]n 1900 a slightly larger number of the country's urban residents lived in cities smaller than 100,000 than in places of 100,000 or more. Although often overlooked, Dayton, Terre Haute, Peoria, and the like were as representative of the nation's urban experience as were the much more frequently examined New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago.⁵

This thesis will show that women in Indianapolis, a second-tier midwestern city, built a nationally recognized, sustainable, and important system of kindergartens beginning in the

⁴ Genevieve Weeks explains that McCulloch "was an early advocate of the movement for social justice which later became known as the Social Gospel, in which the teachings of Jesus were held to be applicable to all facets of society—to the economic and social order as well as to the individual. While its principles and practices were disseminated more widely in the preaching and writings of others—Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong, Richard T. Ely, Walter Rauschenbusch—McCulloch was the most effective and influential exponent of this movement in Indiana and thus contributed to its early growth and development." See Genevieve C. Weeks, *Oscar Carleton McCulloch: 1843-1891: Preacher and Practitioner of Applied Christianity* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1976), xv. Allen F. Davis describes the impulse for reform as "related to the desire to apply the Christian idea of service to the new challenges and the new problems of the city." See Allen F. Davis, *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement 1890-1914*, 2d edition (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1984), 29.

⁵ Robert G. Barrows, *Albion Fellows Bacon: Indiana's Municipal Housekeeper* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), xv.

1880s that ultimately became the basis for kindergartens in the Indianapolis Public Schools in the 1950s.

Karen Blair argues that the woman's club was "a realm in which proper ladies flourished," although many may have been "feminists under the skin." Blair explains that the ideology of the lady was "the belief that every woman was a moral and domestic creature who embodied the desirable traits of loving maternity, intuition, and sensitivity."⁶ Often elite members of the community, IFK clubwomen certainly would have considered themselves to be ladies.

The women who joined IFK were often upper-class white women, who were married to prominent men in the Indianapolis community. Their husband's status and financial standing allowed these women the free time to participate in IFK activities. Evaline Holliday, a president of IFK, was married to John Holliday, the founder of the *Indianapolis News*, *Indianapolis Press*, and the Union Trust Company.⁷ Several members had political and personal connections to Indianapolis resident, President Benjamin Harrison. Arabella C. Peelle, the first IFK president, was married to Stanton Peelle, a former congressman and one of Harrison's campaign advisors in 1884 and 1888.⁸ The Peelles left Indianapolis when Stanton was appointed to the United States Court of Claims in 1892.⁹ Two IFK members were married to Harrison's law partners: Mrs. John Elam and Mrs. William Henry Harrison Miller.¹⁰ Miller was later appointed United States

⁶ Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1980), 1.

⁷ "John Hampden Holliday," in *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, 700-701.

⁸ Harry J. Sievers, *Benjamin Harrison: Hoosier Statesman* (Newton, Connecticut: American Political Biography Press, 1996), 250, 330.

⁹ "Stanton Judkins Peelle," Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, <<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=P000185>>.

¹⁰ Sievers, *Benjamin Harrison*, 279 and Charles W. Calhoun, *Benjamin Harrison*, The American Presidents, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 56.

Attorney General by Harrison in 1889.¹¹ These women, and others like them, were part of a long line of benevolent clubwomen who joined clubs when the Market Revolution and new technologies began to free women from their work in the home.¹² In addition to having more free time, some women were also motivated to join charitable causes due to their religion. Anne Firor Scott explains that benevolence was expected of Christian women, “especially those whom God had favored with health, wealth, and standing in the community. Taking care of the less fortunate was not only a Christian duty, it might also insure one a place in heaven, and certainly enhanced the reputation of one’s family.”¹³ Additionally, these women were able to “apply the values of the home to what they saw as teeming, troubled cities.”¹⁴

Barbara Springer’s study of progressive women in Indiana, “Ladylike Reformers,” notes that Indiana’s first women’s club, a reading group at New Harmony, was created in 1858.¹⁵ James Madison, however, notes that a political club was formed even earlier, this one the Indiana Women’s Rights Association in 1851.¹⁶ Springer explains that although Indiana women initially joined clubs that were “intellectual” in nature, after some time, they joined clubs that supported philanthropic or reform efforts.¹⁷ Springer also argues that Indiana’s late development in industrialization, urbanization, and immigration, as well as the history of conservatism in the state, contributed to the conservatism of women’s clubs in Indiana.¹⁸ For

¹¹ “William Henry Harrison Miller,” Office of the Attorney General, <<http://www.justice.gov/ag/aghistpage.php?id=38>>.

¹² Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women’s Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 11-12.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁴ Anne Durst, “Of Women, By Women, and For Women’: The Day Nursery Movement in the Progressive-Era United States,” *Journal of Social History* 39 (Autumn, 2005): 142.

¹⁵ Barbara A. Springer, “Ladylike Reformers: Indiana Women and Progressive Reform, 1900-1920” (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1985), 32.

¹⁶ James H. Madison, *The Indiana Way: A State History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press and Indiana Historical Society, 1990), 226.

¹⁷ Springer, “Ladylike Reformers,” 32-3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

example, Indiana clubwomen relied heavily on “‘ladylike’ methods of political persuasion—petitions and memorials.”¹⁹

Another way Indiana women displayed their basic conservatism was through their emphasis on traditional roles for females. Springer explains,

[p]rogressive era female reformers also did little to change the popular image of women as wives and mothers. Indeed, they continually stressed these themes themselves. On the other hand, they did see motherhood as an active, not a passive role, one that required a certain amount of education and involvement in the community, which they viewed as merely an extension of the home.²⁰

IFK clubwomen certainly emphasized traditional roles for women by training young women to become teachers and teaching mothers how to “properly” raise their children.

Scott describes that many clubwomen were drawn to children’s issues due to “a long tradition of seeing the right training of children as the best hope for improving society.”²¹ Some women went further and “believed that education would rescue the children from poverty and ‘render them useful and respectable in the sphere to which it has pleased God to place them.’”²² There are multiple references to ideas like these in IFK minutes and other records.

Although many clubwomen provided the financial support for IFK, the driving force behind the organization was Eliza A. Blaker, the longtime superintendent of the Indianapolis Free Kindergartens. After training to become a teacher in Philadelphia in the 1870s, Blaker accepted a position at a private school in Indianapolis in 1882. Soon thereafter, Blaker accepted a position with IFK because she felt work with the poor and needy was more rewarding. Her biographer, Emma Lou Thornbrough, explains that Blaker had a distinctive vision for the kindergartens of Indianapolis: to “benefit all of the needy children of the city” by “a system of social work that would reach not only the children but all members of the family, and which

¹⁹ Ibid., 30.

²⁰ Ibid., 250.

²¹ Scott, *Natural Allies*, 150.

²² Ibid., 20.

would serve to uplift the entire community.”²³ Blaker continued as head of the organization until her death in 1926. In addition to her work with IFK, Blaker was an active member of the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Indianapolis Orphan’s Home, the Juvenile Court, the Jewish Community Center, Flanner House, the Board of Children’s Guardians, and the Indianapolis Council of Women.²⁴

IFK was part of a larger, international kindergarten movement in the nineteenth century. Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) created and implemented the kindergarten in Germany in the early nineteenth century. He opened his first kindergarten in 1837 to educate young children whom he felt were unprepared to enter school. Although Froebel’s schools met with success at first, the German Revolution in 1848 pushed the liberals out of power.²⁵ Many of these liberals left the country and some of them brought the idea of the kindergarten with them to America, as well as other European countries. A former pupil of Froebel founded the first American kindergarten in Wisconsin in 1855. Another American educator, Elizabeth Peabody, supported the maintenance of American kindergartens and traveled to Germany to learn from and study with those who had practiced with Froebel. Many of the first American kindergartens were private schools for children of the wealthy.²⁶

²³ Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker: Her Life and Work* (Indianapolis: The Eliza A. Blaker Club Inc. and the Indiana Historical Society, 1956), 17.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁵ The Prussian government banned kindergartens in 1851. The government repealed the ban in 1860. See Ann Taylor Allen, “Children Between Public and Private Worlds: The Kindergarten and Public Policy in Germany, 1840-Present,” in *Kindergartens and Cultures: The Global Diffusion of an Idea*, ed. Roberta Wollons (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 23-6 and Ann Taylor Allen, “Gardens of Children, Gardens of God: Kindergartens and Day-Care Centers in Nineteenth-Century Germany,” *Journal of Social History* 19 (Spring, 1986): 440-1.

²⁶ For information on the beginnings of the kindergarten in Germany see Barbara Beatty, *Preschool Education in America: The Culture of Young Children from the Colonial Era to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 38-51 and Michael S. Shapiro, *Child’s Garden: the Kindergarten Movement from Froebel to Dewey* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), 19-28. For information on the introduction of Froebelian kindergartens in the United States, see Beatty, *Preschool Education in*

Some Americans supported charity or free kindergartens for the urban poor beginning in the 1870s, usually in response to problems of urbanization, industrialization, and immigration. Over 1,000 free kindergartens opened during the 1880s and free kindergartens flourished in cities such as San Francisco, Chicago, Louisville, and Boston. Women often led the free kindergarten movement; these women included Blaker in Indianapolis, Kate Douglas Wiggin and her sister, Nora Archibald Smith, Anna Bryan, Alice Putnam, Elizabeth Harrison, and Susan Blow. American male educators also supported kindergarten ideas, including William Hailmann, William Harris, Stanley Hall, and John Dewey.²⁷

The national kindergarten movement had strong ties to the settlement house movement and many settlements included kindergartens. The kindergarten movement also influenced parents' organizations that still exist today, mainly the Parent-Teacher Association. The kindergarten movement only ended when public schools adopted kindergartens into their standard curriculum. The kindergarten was one of the few progressive reforms that endured into the twenty-first century. Today, nearly every American child attends a kindergarten before entering first grade.

Indianapolis, a small city with few immigrants, did not face many of the urban problems of larger cities.²⁸ Clifton Phillips explains that “[a]lthough Indiana absorbed many thousands of

America, 52-71; Shapiro, *Child's Garden*, 29-44; and Elizabeth D. Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade: The Establishment of Preschool Education in the United States* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976), 1-17.

²⁷ For information on the charity, or free kindergarten movement in the United States, see Beatty, *Preschool Education in America*, 72-100; Shapiro, *Child's Garden*, 85-105; and Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 34-51.

²⁸ In 1880, only 7.3% of Indiana's population was foreign born; by 1900 that number had dropped to 5.6%. See Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 368. Although the total number of immigrant was larger in Indianapolis than other Indiana cities, proportionally Indianapolis (at 22 percent) ranked behind Michigan City (39 percent), Evansville (30 percent), La Porte (30 percent), Fort Wayne (28 percent), and Lafayette (27 percent) in percentage of foreign born population. See Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1965), 547.

Germans, Irish, and other northern Europeans in the nineteenth century, it remained remarkably homogenous, with a proportion of foreign-born residents which was extremely small in comparison with most other industrial states.”²⁹ However, IFK seemed intent on combating the urban problems of larger cities, particularly poverty. Even before the group had chosen kindergartens as its work, a suggestion regarding the “importance of adopting and influencing such measures in the training and care of these children as may tend effectually to destroy hereditary pauperism and enable good men and women” was discussed at an early meeting.³⁰ IFK opened the first of its kindergartens in the poorest neighborhoods, based on observations and reports of IFK Friendly Visitors, women who went door to door visiting with families and children. Minutes from March 18, 1882, noted that the women of the Children’s Aid Society were to take a “census” of 600 families that were dependent on aid from the Indianapolis Benevolent Society and to “ascertain the condition of the children belonging to these families.”³¹

When IFK organized its first kindergarten in 1882, Indianapolis was still a young city. The capital was incorporated as a town in 1832 and formally became a city in 1847. Thornbrough explains that the completion of the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad in 1847 “was the event which set Indianapolis on the road to becoming the leading city in the state.”³² In 1850,

²⁹ Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, 368. Indiana also had a small percentage of African American residents. In 1850, African Americans comprised only 1 percent of the population. By 1880, the population of African Americans had grown to just over 39,000, only two percent of the total population in the state. See Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 541-2.

³⁰ “Minutes, 1881-1888,” Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society Records 1884-1972, Bound Volume 1545, Manuscripts and Visual Collections, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, February 18, 1882, p. 28.

³¹ *Ibid.*, March 18, 1882, p. 31.

³² Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 557.

Indianapolis had a population of 8,000. By 1870, due to the growth and expansion from the Civil War, Indianapolis had a population of nearly 49,000 and grew to 75,000 by 1880.³³

The Panic of 1873 hit the fledgling city hard. The Panic “was more severe and prolonged in Indianapolis and had the effect of retarding her growth.”³⁴ Though Indianapolis outranked all other Indiana cities in terms of manufacturing establishments, employees, and capital, it trailed other nearby midwestern cities, including Louisville, Kentucky; Detroit, Michigan; and Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1880 in manufacturing.³⁵ Thornbrough contends that the depression was at its worst during 1877 in Indianapolis: business failures not only continued but increased, unemployment became “acute,” many Hoosiers were unemployed or homeless, and labor clashes intensified.³⁶

The Panic forced employers to cut wages in Indianapolis, as in other cities. For example, a carpenter’s daily wages fell nearly a dollar from \$2.40 before the Panic to \$1.43. Employees who made carriages saw their wages fall over a dollar from \$2.50 to \$1.42. In addition to per diem wage decline, many employees were limited in the number of days they worked during the Panic. Thornbrough estimates that many workers were only employed eight or nine months of the year.³⁷ Meat packing companies in Indianapolis turned away 1,000 job seekers daily during 1873.³⁸ Thornbrough states that industrial workers in Indianapolis made an average of \$391 in 1880. Rent for a modest size home would have ranged from \$120 to \$180 per year in Indiana’s smaller cities; in Indianapolis, rent would have been more expensive.³⁹ An average worker in Indianapolis would have seen over one-half of his annual wages spent on rent.

³³ Ibid., 1, 547 and Ruth Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order: The Settlement Movement in Two Industrial Cities, 1889-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 11.

³⁴ Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 415.

³⁵ Ibid., 415.

³⁶ Ibid., 307.

³⁷ Ibid., 441.

³⁸ Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order*, 16.

³⁹ Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 441-2.

The Panic of 1873 not only reduced wages and increased the number of employed, it also changed poverty within the city. Frederick Kershner, in his 1950 thesis, explains that “[p]overty in early Indianapolis was really no community problem at all.” There were only a few “chronic paupers” and the Indianapolis Benevolent Society handled nearly all the aid to the poor.⁴⁰ Kershner explains that the Depression of 1873 changed

the nature of poverty, it brought Indianapolis the first acute, large-scale poverty it had ever known. Moreover the poor were not of the old familiar sort; they were temporarily instead of chronically indigent and they were demanding and aggressive rather than meek and properly thankful. The new poverty was an upsetting experience for the harried citizens, and it produced many unforeseen results.⁴¹

The Benevolent Society in Indianapolis, which had previously received only private donations, began to receive money from the government due to the depth and duration of the Depression.⁴²

Ruth Crocker explains that “beneath the prosperity and growth lay poverty and unemployment. . . . Inadequate housing, unsafe water supplies, poor schools, and high crime rates were urban problems calling out for action.”⁴³ Roy Lubove, a social historian, wrote that “nearly all [cities] had slums inherited from . . . free-wheeling expansion.”⁴⁴ Kershner, too, describes the housing problems in Indianapolis. He explains that the “post-war tenements were deteriorating into small-scale slums. Although the word ‘Slum’ was not yet in current use, such names as ‘Poverty Flats’, ‘Dumptown’, ‘The Bowery’, ‘Greasy Row’ and ‘The Crib’ revealed well enough that in many spots housing was decidedly substandard.”⁴⁵ It was not until 1901 that the

⁴⁰ Frederick D. Kershner, “A Social and Cultural History of Indianapolis, 1860-1914” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1950), 274.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 275.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 276.

⁴³ Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order*, 16.

⁴⁴ Barrows, *Albion Fellows Bacon*, 47.

⁴⁵ Kershner, “A Social and Cultural History of Indianapolis,” 274-5.

Indianapolis Charity Organization Society “discovered” slums in the city. Kershner describes these slums in detail:

The slums consisted principally of one story tenements or flats containing from six to twelve ‘apartments’. Investigators found them lamentably bad for a ‘city of homes’. ‘The odor is so offensive that the tenants keep windows and doors closed all the time. . . .’ Less than half had cellars or sewer connections, less than one-fifth used city water, between 70 and 80 per cent lacked either electric or gas lighting and more than 90 per cent did not have inside plumbing. Although there was a tendency to identify slums with the new immigrants, ‘domestic’ slums actually outnumbered the foreign. In these spots children grew up who had never taken a bath, little girls who had never seen flowers and little boys who believed firmly that only sissies slept on beds. Another form of the slum was to be found in the alleys of some of the city’s best residential districts. Here flimsy structures were erected which brought high rents from Negro domestic servants and laundresses who could thus save time and transportation costs by living within a few blocks of their employment source. On White River were squalid house boats, sheds and shacks inhabited by squatters and drifters.⁴⁶

It is these slums that IFK Friendly Visitors first visited in search of pupils for their new kindergarten classes.

IFK records reveal the physical conditions of many of these neighborhoods where the first kindergartens were built. One article described the “slimy, sticky, bottomless mud” that organizers had to wade through because “sidewalks were as rare as exotics in Greenland” in that locale.⁴⁷ One Friendly Visitor explained that the poorest part of Indianapolis was the west side. She explained, “[h]ere we find families crowded into one room in basement or third story. There are very few fences and gates in these two districts.”⁴⁸ In another entry, the Friendly Visitor explained that someone had to inform her where the Dickson family was living “for I did not know there was a house in that alley.”⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid., 287-88.

⁴⁷ Laura Sheldon Inman, “How We Got Our Oak Hill Kindergarten,” *The Kindergarten Monthly* II, no. 8 (May 1898): 128.

⁴⁸ “Friendly Visitor Records,” March 17, 1886, p. 67.

⁴⁹ Ibid., February 5-March 5, 1886, p. 65.

In addition to responding to the economic havoc created by the Panic of 1873, IFK clubwomen set up kindergartens in response to the dismal state of education in Indiana. William Reese notes that “Hoosiers have never spent excessive amount of money on education and child care, and that legacy persists today.”⁵⁰ The 1816 Indiana Constitution stated that the General Assembly would “as soon as circumstances will permit . . . provide, by law, for a general system of education, ascending in a regular gradation from township schools to a state university, wherein tuition shall be gratis, and equally open to all.”⁵¹ Unfortunately, as Thornbrough explains, “public education had made little progress before 1850” in Indiana and that the school system that was hoped for “existed only on paper.”⁵² As evidence of the lack of educational opportunities in the state, Indiana had the lowest literacy rate for any northern state.⁵³ For example, 7.5 percent of Indiana’s population could not read or write in 1870; by 1880, 4.8 percent could not read, while 7.5 percent could not write.⁵⁴

Hoosiers again addressed education after its next Constitution was written and ratified, in 1850-1851. The General Assembly passed a school law in 1852, which provided for tax support of public schools.⁵⁵ Indianapolis opened a system of ward schools in 1853 where pupils paid some type of fee. Three years later, Indianapolis had twenty public schools with 1,500 children enrolled. One year later, in 1857, Indianapolis opened graded schools with a thirty-nine-week school term.⁵⁶ After the Indiana Supreme Court invalidated an incorporated town or city’s ability to tax for educational purposes in 1858, all the city schools except one closed. Over

⁵⁰ William J. Reese, “Indiana’s Public School Traditions: Dominant Themes and Research Opportunities,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 89 (December 1993): 292.

⁵¹ Indiana Constitution (1816), art. 9, sec. 2.

⁵² Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 461.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 483. Thornbrough notes that although Indiana’s illiteracy rates were the highest in the North, they were, in fact, significantly lower than nearby Kentucky.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 461. The Indiana Supreme Court overturned this tax provision in late 1854, see 467-68. In 1858, the Court also overturned the same tax provision in regards to incorporated towns and cities, see 472-74.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 471.

two-thirds of school age children were unable to attend a public school. Thornbrough explains that “[i]t was not until the years following the Civil War that the public school system was firmly established throughout the state.”⁵⁷ The General Assembly adopted laws giving local governments the power to tax.⁵⁸ Abram Shortridge, the Indianapolis Superintendent of Schools, adopted a program of twelve years in Indianapolis. This system consisted of primary, intermediate, and high school levels.⁵⁹ Kindergartens were not part of this early system and would not be for many years. IFK, and other kindergarten advocates, saw the kindergarten as preparation for this very new school system.

The original purpose of IFK was “[t]o surround the young with wholesome influence; to make the children happy; to lead them to the formation of right habits; to prepare the child for school and future life; to give the unfortunate child an opportunity to get a fair start in life; in fact, to feed the soul, and where necessary, to feed and clothe the body—the aim, in short, is character forming.”⁶⁰ In 1902, IFK amended its constitution and its purpose by adding that it would both seek to form and manage kindergartens throughout the city and “adopt other such measures as shall be deemed advisable for the purpose of bettering the homes and lives” of the children.⁶¹ By this time, IFK had already expanded from its original mission, opening kindergartens. IFK had opened a nationally recognized teacher-training school, operated multiple kindergartens, started programs for children of all ages, and implemented programs for the entire family, with a special concentration on mothers.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 474.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 475. In 1885, the Indiana Supreme Court upheld this law.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 479.

⁶⁰ Lois G. Hufford, “Free Kindergarten Work in Indianapolis: Twenty Years of Character Building,” *Kindergarten Magazine* XI, no. 5 (January 1899): 307.

⁶¹ “Constitution of 1902,” Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society Records 1884-1972, Manuscripts and Visual Collections, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

IFK opened a training school for teachers in 1882. Eliza Blaker served as the superintendent of the Kindergarten Normal Training School concurrently with her duties at IFK. The Kindergarten Normal Training School trained and certified young women for kindergarten teaching.⁶² To save money, IFK offered free scholarships to many young women in exchange for their work as a kindergarten teacher.⁶³ Practice in the kindergartens also met graduation requirements. The Kindergarten Normal Training School quickly expanded from a graduating class of eight in 1883, to 143 in 1893, to 344 in 1903.⁶⁴ IFK decided to allow African-American women to enroll unless “a decided object was raised by the white pupils.”⁶⁵ It is unclear if the white students ever objected to the black students’ enrollment.

IFK served children from age three to eight and helped prepare them for entrance into the public school system. A few private kindergartens opened and closed in the city in previous years, but these latter free kindergartens endured and quickly expanded. In 1887, there were five free kindergartens. By 1900, there were seventeen kindergartens run by IFK and by 1910, there were twenty-nine kindergartens. In 1902, nearly 2,700 children enrolled in IFK’s kindergartens.⁶⁶ IFK’s kindergartens were concentrated in present-day, downtown Indianapolis.

⁶² Later the school was renamed the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School; in 1905 it was renamed the Teachers College of Indianapolis. According to Thornbrough, in *Eliza A. Blaker*, the training school often was referred to as “Mrs. Blaker’s” school. In 1913, the Teachers College legally separated from the Indianapolis Free Kindergartens, although the two organizations continued to work closely together, with Eliza Blaker serving as president of the Teachers College and superintendent of the Kindergartens. Blaker wanted the Teachers College to unite with Butler University’s training school for secondary teachers to eliminate competition between the two schools. In 1930, the property of the Teachers College was transferred to Butler, and by 1933, the Teachers College of Indianapolis was fully a part of Butler University’s College of Education. See Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 29, 66.

⁶³ In kindergarten literature and histories, those training to become kindergarten teachers are called “kindergartners.” For the purposes of this thesis, to prevent possible confusion with the young children enrolled in kindergartens as students, I have not used this term, and refer to the teachers as “kindergarten teachers.”

⁶⁴ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 73.

⁶⁵ “Minutes, 1881-1888,” September 17, 1885, p. 143.

⁶⁶ Eliza A. Blaker, “Superintendent’s Report,” in *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 15. In 1904, Indianapolis counted just over 42,600 children, although only

Many of these kindergartens were associated with or even housed within hospitals and other Indianapolis institutions, such as Long Hospital, Riley Hospital, Christamore House, the Indianapolis Orphan's Home, several churches, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union Chapel. Each kindergarten served fifty students and formed its own district. At the kindergarten, children played games, sang songs, played with blocks, and did paper activities. Some children ate breakfast at their kindergarten and the schools served all children lunch. Children attended kindergarten for three hours a day, usually in the morning. IFK's kindergartens were open from September to May, although a kindergarten or camp occasionally opened during the summer. IFK segregated kindergarten classrooms and the first African-American kindergarten opened at the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Although IFK separated black and white children in classrooms, IFK concerned itself with the well-being of the African-American children and families from the beginning of its existence. The African-American kindergarten was one of the earliest that IFK started, opening in 1884.⁶⁷

Additionally, IFK opened programs and clubs for children of all ages. Students who were too old to attend the kindergartens could attend Saturday morning classes held at the schools, including cooking, sewing, and woodworking classes. Additionally, children could join clubs, including science and book clubs. IFK also hosted social parties and events for these children.

IFK began special programs for mothers by 1884. What began as a simple sewing meeting quickly grew into multiple types of meetings. IFK teachers invited mothers to their classrooms, both for social and educational meetings. Fathers were occasionally invited to

26,500 actually attended a public school. See F.A. Cotton, *Education in Indiana: An Outline of the Growth of the Common School System* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford: 1904), 84.

⁶⁷ "Minutes, 1881-1888," November 11, 1884, p. 81. Eliza Blaker's own sister, Mary T. Cooper, held the position of principal at the African-American kindergarten until her unexpected death (around 1908), when the school was renamed in her honor. See Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 18, 23, 81.

classrooms, too, although IFK was primarily concerned with improving motherhood within the community.

This thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter will focus on the Indiana Primary and Normal Training School, the teacher training school run by IFK. The second chapter will discuss the various social and academic programs available to Indianapolis children, including the actual kindergarten. The third chapter will focus on six different programs available to mothers whose children attended kindergartens and other programs. In this way, this thesis will show the cyclical nature of the IFK system. Blaker explained the system best:

Notice, the all-sided, the encircling idea of the free kindergarten. First, the visitor enters the home, and from it leads the children to the kindergarten. Here they are prepared for the public school. They return to us again each Saturday, and grow into young manhood and womanhood before they leave the various departments of the Domestic Training School. The mother carries her baby to the crèche and then to the nursery class of the kindergarten. She visits the latter in the interest of her child. The visiting teacher continues her friendly intercourse with the family. The mothers' meeting, the mothers' instruction class, the evening entertainment, the occasional party, again call the parents and the children to the kindergarten building. . . . Will not the free kindergarten plan be able to accomplish much toward uprooting pauperism, intemperance and vice?⁶⁸

This thesis will show how some Indianapolis clubwomen used the teacher's school, the kindergartens, and the programs for mothers of IFK to create a successful Progressive program that endured for nearly seventy years.

⁶⁸ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society for the Year Ending April 16, 1894*, p. 24.

CHAPTER ONE:
TRAINING WOMEN TO BE TEACHERS AND MOTHERS:
THE INDIANAPOLIS NORMAL TRAINING SCHOOL

*“The thought fills one with awe and with wonder at the daring which undertakes so stupendous a task as that of training for God’s kingdom these most precious of his jewels. Surely there can be no nobler work than the uplifting and beautifying of immortal lives.”*⁶⁹ Alice W. Dresser, 1900

By the end of the Victorian Era, many women were growing uncomfortable with the expectations of domesticity. Historian Michael McGerr explains,

[b]y the end of the nineteenth century, the middle class was giving distinctive new answers to the questions that confronted all social groups about the relationship between the individual and society, the nature of men, women, and the home, and the place of work and pleasure in daily life. These answers added up to a novel set of guiding values, a new ideology for the middle class: Victorianism gave way to progressivism.⁷⁰

In the midst of this transition to Progressive life, many women delayed marriage, delayed having children, and found it slightly easier to divorce.⁷¹ Other women attended the growing number of women’s colleges.

After college, though, women found it difficult to find a career outside the fields of teaching or nursing.⁷² Robert Wiebe argues that the fields of nursing, social work, and teaching were considered to be in line with “the traditional image of women as tender mothers, angels of mercy, and keepers of morals.”⁷³ Wiebe explains that women “followed these paths not because they were necessarily more moral or humane, or even oftentimes because they were mothers, but because they were women.”⁷⁴ Wiebe explains that men and women had agreed on acceptable boundaries for women in the public sphere. These boundaries “accounted for [women’s]

⁶⁹ Alice Winifred Dresser, “The Kindergarten Movement in Indianapolis,” *Kindergarten Magazine* XII, no. 8 (April 1900): 440.

⁷⁰ Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 42.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 47.

⁷³ Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order: 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 122.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

remarkably smooth arrival into a professional middle class.”⁷⁵ The few women who were able to enter the legal or medical field specialized in areas such as juvenile crime or pediatrics, which were acceptable roles for women as they dealt primarily with children’s issues.⁷⁶ Many of these women were responding to a “sense of uselessness” and “felt they had to prove their right to a higher education by doing something important.”⁷⁷

Among these acceptable careers for women was kindergarten teaching. Robyn Muncy explains that the “development of kindergarten teaching as an alternative for these professional women rested on the willingness of monied women to fund the professionalization process.”⁷⁸ In Indianapolis, the Indianapolis Free Kindergartens and the Normal Training School had some funding from the wealthy. Local businessmen funded programs through their wives, who were active in the organization. The President of IFK, Martha Baldwin, explained in 1894, “[w]e have no Mrs. Leland Stanford to give us \$175,000, and therefore we must tax our wit, individually and collectively, to devise schemes for making the necessary funds, and then practice scrupulous economy.”⁷⁹

Robyn Muncy explains that settlements were attractive to young women because the work “offered them wholly new opportunities in public life that could be justified as an extension of accepted female activities.” The settlements were somewhat “conventional” because they “extend[ed] female philanthropic activities” because “they seemed to fulfill the imperative to female self-sacrifice.” However, settlement work was also “innovative” as it “promised women independence from their families, unique possibilities for employment, and

⁷⁵ Ibid., 123.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 122.

⁷⁷ Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*, 37.

⁷⁸ Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 17.

⁷⁹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 9. Mrs. Leland Stanford was a prominent supporter of the Silver Street Free Kindergarten in San Francisco, California. The Indiana State Library has numerous Annual Reports for both IFK and the Teacher’s College.

the sort of communal living arrangement they had cherished in college.”⁸⁰ Muncy’s view of the settlements could also apply to the Indianapolis Normal Training School, which was founded by IFK in 1882. At the Training School, women from Indianapolis and women from other states lived together in dormitories, boarding houses, or sorority houses, ate their meals together, studied together, and worked together in the Free Kindergartens. The students also performed “charitable service” to others, and sometimes, “self-sacrifice,” to the betterment of the group, just as Robyn Muncy describes. Ann Taylor Allen describes this in a similar way: “Mother Blaker” encouraged “familial values [such] as individualized concern for the kindergarten children, affectionate friendships among staff members, and communal life among students.” The Normal Training School in Indianapolis, and other similar schools often became “female communities, where the values of the private sphere formed the basis for new approaches to educational methods and institutional structure.”⁸¹ The young women students in Indianapolis lived together mutually in a system much like the settlement house system that Muncy and Allen describe.

Another reason some women might become kindergarten teachers was expressed by Friedrich Froebel. He believed that young women could learn to become good mothers. One way to learn good mothering was through training and work as a kindergarten teacher. Froebel wanted young women to leave the private sphere of the home and “to apply their maternal qualities in the public context of an institution,” such as the kindergarten.⁸² Froebel encouraged German women to use their natural motherly qualities for the good of the public. Allen explains,

[b]y demanding that women emerge from the private sphere and use these distinctive traits in a professional context, the kindergarten movement was among the first of many nineteenth-century movements that urged women to

⁸⁰ Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion*, 9.

⁸¹ Ann Taylor Allen, “‘Let Us Live with Our Children’: Kindergarten Movements in Germany and the United States, 1840-1914,” *History of Education Quarterly* 28 (Spring 1988): 30-32.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 26.

find public applications for the virtues of the private sphere. In short, the kindergarten movement sought to transcend the public/private, or home/school dichotomy. . .⁸³

G. Stanley Hall, an American educator, promoted kindergarten training for women “as an ideal enhancement of innate maternal instinct.”⁸⁴

Many schools and teachers instructed the young women training to be kindergarten teachers to model being good mothers as they interacted with their students.⁸⁵ Carolyn Steedman notes that teachers of young children were often taught “to model themselves on ‘good’ mothers.” Steedman also points out that Froebel often taught that an ideal teacher should be like “a mother made conscious.”⁸⁶ Nora Archibald Smith, a writer and kindergarten teacher herself, explained that,

a kindergarten training-school is the only place where a young woman can get a specific preparation for motherhood. During a year or two of study required, the pupil will not only gain a fund of information regarding the wise treatment of infants and young children, but by daily practice, frequently among the poorer classes, will add to her instinctive tenderness and sympathy the wisdom, good judgment, firmness, and self restraint, and devotion to ultimate ideals needed by the true mother. Nor need she fear, be she an absolute predestinate spinster, that any of this work will be wasted; for failing offspring of her own, there is no dearth of the world’s forsaken children who hunger and thirst for her loving services.⁸⁷

Smith’s words reveal the importance of preparation for motherhood through kindergarten work. Froebel, however, worried that many young American women only saw teaching as “a convenient pastime between their own years of school and marriage.”⁸⁸ Smith felt that kindergarten training could be useful to young women even if they chose not to marry or have

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 44.

⁸⁵ Carolyn Steedman, “‘The Mother Made Conscious’: The Historical Development of a Primary School Pedagogy,” *History Workshop* 20 (Autumn 1985): 156.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 149.

⁸⁷ Nora Smith, *The Children of the Future* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1900), 28-29.

⁸⁸ Shapiro, *Child’s Garden*, 26.

children of their own; women's role as mothers could be fulfilled through work as teachers. Women's careers as teachers also met the requirement that they were doing something useful in their work in the public realm. Froebel hoped that by properly educating young women, they would see the importance of their role as both educators and mothers because if poorly trained, they would certainly fail as teachers.

In Indianapolis, Eliza Blaker, like Froebel, emphasized the importance of the kindergarten teacher's role and its connections to motherhood. She explained that the "real teacher's life, like a true mother's, is one of self-sacrifice, of patience and sympathetic interest, and a constant study of the unfolding child."⁸⁹ Blaker explained that

[e]very school teacher is a foster mother. She is helping the mother in the rearing of her children. The teacher that has not a great mother heart should not have charge of your children in a school room for a number of hours every day. School teaching would be drudgery if we did not love it. It would be abject slavery to any one who did not love children. We must love little children if we are going to help them.⁹⁰

The woman who truly dedicated her heart to service and the interest of the child made the best teacher.

IFK opened a Training School for young women in the fall of 1882. Since cash was tight and the total enrollment of the school was only twelve, Blaker held classes in her own home. One of the students from the first graduating class, Mary L. Edwards, once explained that "[o]ur theory of teaching was literally learned at Mrs. Blaker's feet for her bedroom was our classroom and late-comers sat on the floor."⁹¹ In another article, Edwards explained that "[w]e used to take our theory of practice, psychology and child study at Mrs. Blaker's home, going there at 4

⁸⁹ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 73.

⁹⁰ Eliza A. Blaker, "Child Welfare," *Proceedings of the Twenty-Third State Conference of Charities and Correction, Madison, Indiana, October 17-20, 1914*, pp. 288-89.

⁹¹ Virginia Negley Hollingsworth, "The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis" (Master's thesis, Butler University, 1946), 17.

p.m. after our soliciting and kindergarten practice was over. She would lecture to us and then we would go home and study often until midnight.”⁹²

IFK minutes indicate that the organization had great difficulty in finding a permanent home for the training school. For example, on August 6, 1885, IFK clubwomen organized a committee to find a room for the Normal Training School classes.⁹³ On September 3, this committee reported that it had been difficult to secure a room for this work.⁹⁴ However, two weeks later, on September 17, the committee had found a suitable room and the Training School was to be opened immediately.⁹⁵ Blaker, too, recalled the hardships of finding a permanent home for the Training School. She told a reporter that

Mrs. May Wright Sewell used to marvel at how we ever lived through some of our early struggles, and it was hard. Once we conducted classes in the basement of a colored church. We have struggled through all sorts of conditions, but never once did I have the slightest fear of the future of the teachers’ college. For my motto has always been ‘the thing is right! I have faith it will be done’ but through work, self-sacrifice, prayer and the guidance of a Higher Power than I.⁹⁶

Fortunately for the school, some sort of location was always made available through Blaker’s hard work and her network of wealthy businessmen.

Students also learned how to ask for donations to further the cause of free kindergartens. Mary Edwards, one of the first students of the College, explained that “[t]hree afternoons a week we were divided into groups and did outside work. Some of us solicited children from poor homes, others solicited clothing for the children and money for lunches.

⁹² “Home-coming, 4 o’clock Reception and Formal Evening Banquet to Mark Golden Anniversary of ‘Miss Blaker’s,’ Now Butler Teachers College,” *Indianapolis News*, October 8, 1932.

⁹³ “Minutes, 1881-1888,” August 6, 1885, p. 137.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, September 3, 1885, p. 141.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, September 17, 1885, p. 141.

⁹⁶ Maude Swift Anthony, “Wellknown Indianapolis Women: Mrs. Eliza A. Blaker,” Indiana State Library Clippings File.

Others visited wealthy men and solicited money for financing the work.”⁹⁷ In another source, Edwards explained that

[o]ne of the main branches which was especially stressed, but was later omitted from the required studies and duties, was the fine art of begging, in which we all became proficient. We begged for children to come to school, visiting their homes and trying to develop an interest in the school. We begged for money from our business and professional men and begged for clothing and for hot lunches from the ladies of the town.⁹⁸

IFK’s resources were limited and the teachers training in their Normal School were the perfect candidates to solicit money and other goods from Indianapolis townspeople.

IFK’s teaching students supplemented the work already being done by IFK clubwomen.

Normal Training School Requirements

Eliza Blaker and other administrators of the Normal Training School had a very specific type of young woman in mind for applicants to their new school. Blaker wanted only women to apply. She felt “women were better equipped than men for the teaching of small children.”⁹⁹ Until 1914, all board members, all faculty, and all students at the school were women.¹⁰⁰ Additionally applicants had to be eighteen years old. Blaker required the applicants to “give satisfactory evidence of a good moral character,” probably a recommendation letter from former teachers or clergy from their home church.¹⁰¹ Blaker preferred students who had graduated from other institutions, presumably high schools.¹⁰² By 1907, the school required the students to pass a physical examination, as well as provide a certificate of health.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ “Home-coming, 4 o’clock Reception. . .,” *Indianapolis News*.

⁹⁸ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 32.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁰⁰ Hollingsworth, “The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis,” 16. In 1914, all men were elected to the board.

¹⁰¹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 51.

¹⁰² Harper, *The Associated Work of the Women of Indiana*, 14.

¹⁰³ *Teachers’ College of Indianapolis For the Training of Kindergartners and Primary Teachers 1907-1908*, p. 7.

In 1887, Blaker noted that the school added an entrance examination for each student.¹⁰⁴ Some students were exempted from this examination if they were already an experienced teacher or held an Indiana teaching license.¹⁰⁵ In 1912, the school required a young woman to have a high school diploma or the equivalent certified by the Indiana State Board of Education.¹⁰⁶

Many schools across the United States had a variety of time spent in classes required for graduation, ranging from six weeks to two years. Barbara Beatty notes that the training required for kindergarten teachers was usually shorter than the training required for elementary school teachers.¹⁰⁷ By 1908, the Teachers College in Indianapolis offered three separate degrees, one required twelve weeks work, the second required twenty-four weeks, and the third required three years of coursework.¹⁰⁸

Admitted students were held to high standards. Blaker required students to dress and act modestly. Emma Lou Thornbrough explains that the students

were expected to be ladies in every sense of the word. . . . [Blaker] retained Victorian ideas of modesty and decorum. Severly [sic] simple dress, including black stockings, was required of girls who visited in the kindergarten districts, and the wearing of jewelry was forbidden on these visits. Wearing a too sheer blouse to chapel or appearing downtown without gloves might bring a personal rebuke from the president herself.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ "Superintendent's Report," Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society Records 1884-1972, Bound Volume 1511, Manuscripts and Visual Collections, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, December 3, 1887, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ Hollingsworth, "The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis," 44.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁰⁷ Barbara Beatty, "Child Gardening: The Teaching of Young Children in American Schools," in *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work*, ed. Donald Warren (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1989), 75.

¹⁰⁸ *Teachers' College of Indianapolis For the Training of Kindergartners and Primary Teachers 1908-1909*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁰⁹ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 56.

Even when fashion styles changed in the 1920s, bobbed hair was frowned upon and dresses or skirts were still required to be no less than twelve inches from the floor.¹¹⁰ Blaker occasionally held fashion shows to “encourage the girls to dress according to their personality and dignity of position.”¹¹¹

Blaker also had strict rules about where the girls could live, as well as rules about their behavior outside of school hours. Students had to tell their “matron,” the woman they boarded with, where they were during evening hours. Students were only allowed to talk on the telephone for five minutes.¹¹² Young women were not allowed to entertain men after 10:30 in the evening.¹¹³ Blaker even set up special meetings with matrons to discuss problems; matrons were required to report violations of school rules directly to Blaker.¹¹⁴ Blaker explained that these meetings had “resulted in the adjustment of several problems of great importance.”¹¹⁵ For girls who lived in the dormitory at the school, rules were even more strict. They were required to study from eight to ten every evening from Monday to Friday and were held to a 10:15 bedtime.¹¹⁶

Sometimes, students did not complete their studies due to a variety of reasons. Some students did not meet Blaker’s high standards. For example, a Miss King, a young student in the Primary Department, “went on a pleasuring trip and thus lost much valuable time in the Normal School. She, also, in this way failed to fill her free scholarship.” Blaker requested Miss King’s

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Hollingsworth, “The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis,” 75.

¹¹² Ibid., 73-74.

¹¹³ Ibid., 74.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 73-74.

¹¹⁵ “Annual Meeting,” Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society Records 1884-1972, Box 1, Folder 1, Manuscripts and Visual Collections, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, July 3, 1911, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ Hollingsworth, “The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis,” 74.

resignation immediately.¹¹⁷ Another student, a Miss Wasson, had to drop out of the training school because her father objected to her education.¹¹⁸ Several students were unable to complete their studies due to illness. A Miss Elda Crabbs, from Illinois, left the school in 1890. Blaker explained that “[s]he came in poor health and continued to teach but finding that she did not grow better I advised her to return home.”¹¹⁹ Later the same year, a Miss Rose Merrick left to return home to North Dakota. Blaker explained that she had “been ill for more than three weeks. Her sickness is of such a nature that it would not be possible for her to take her morning practice and I advised her to return to Dakota, at once.”¹²⁰

Many of the students enrolled in the Normal Training School worked in exchange for free tuition. Blaker may have arranged for some Normal Training School students to work as nannies for wealthy Indianapolis families. These families, in turn, paid the young woman’s tuition at the school.¹²¹ Many students worked in IFK’s free kindergartens as part of their education. The Normal School provided scholarships for these students in exchange for their service in the kindergartens and in this way, could save money instead of employing salaried kindergarten teachers. One writer explained in 1914 that

[a] number of the teachers engaged in the College give service in the Kindergarten during the morning. This is a saving on the salary list of the Free Kindergarten Society [sic]. The statement was made that through the aid of the College students who practice in the Free Kindergartens the College saves \$1,893.00 per month for the Free Kindergarten Society [sic].¹²²

¹¹⁷ “Superintendent’s Report,” Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society Records 1884-1972, Bound Volume 1513, Manuscripts and Visual Collections, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, March 3-April 7, 1890, p. 65.

¹¹⁸ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1511, December 3, 1887, p. 5.

¹¹⁹ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1513, March 3-April 7, 1890, p. 65.

¹²⁰ Ibid., October 6- November 1, 1890, p. 211.

¹²¹ Roger W. Boop, *Fulfilling the Charter: The Story of the College of Education at Butler University and More* (New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2008), 7.

¹²² “Statement in Reference to the Free Kindergartens,” Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society Records 1884-1972, Box 1, Folder 1, Manuscripts and Visual Collections, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, July 4, 1914.

Blaker often noted how valuable these scholarship students were to her. For example, in 1890, she wrote that four young women requested scholarships for the upcoming term in the Primary Department. Blaker wrote to the IFK Board, "I really need their services in the Kindergartens and hope that you will decide to give them scholarships."¹²³ Blaker also noted that without a large Normal Training School, the kindergartens would have to be limited in their services to the community. She noted in 1888, "[t]he enrollment in the Free Kindergartens will be greater this year than ever before. I wish that we could reach all the children; but the schools, especially Colored and Riverside will have to be limited, unless we should have a very large Training School."¹²⁴ Another author explained that "[w]ithout the Training School the maintenance of the kindergartens would be impossible."¹²⁵

Fortunately, the school continued to grow. In 1883, eight women graduated in the school's first class.¹²⁶ In 1894, there were 78 students enrolled in the school.¹²⁷ The 1911 Annual Report noted that there were 559 students in the College and 54 graduates.¹²⁸ And in 1926, the year of Blaker's death, there were 274 graduates.¹²⁹

In the Annual Report for 1894, President Martha Baldwin explained that the Normal Training School was continually growing and,

has outgrown the Pearl street building, and makes a loud demand for recognition as an important institution of higher education. Your present executive board believes the time has arrived when the Normal Training School should be moved to a central and more suitable location. We believe that a self-supporting institution would be the immediate result of this move, and that in

¹²³ "Superintendent's Report," Bound Volume 1513, January 6-February 3, 1890, p. 7.

¹²⁴ "Superintendent's Report," Bound Volume 1511, June 7, 1888, p. 121. The kindergarten for African-American children was frequently called the Colored Kindergarten. Other schools were usually known by the name of the street they were located on, such as Pearl Street Kindergarten, Yandes Street Kindergarten, or Market Street Kindergarten. Other times, the kindergarten for African-American children was called the Coe Street Kindergarten.

¹²⁵ Harper, *The Associated Work of the Women of Indiana*, 16.

¹²⁶ Hollingsworth, "The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis," 80.

¹²⁷ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 16.

¹²⁸ "Annual Meeting," July 3, 1911, p. 4.

¹²⁹ Hollingsworth, "The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis," 81.

the future you would derive a considerable revenue with which to carry on the work in the poor district.¹³⁰

Although the school needed a new building, it did not move into a permanent, new building for several years, until the fall of 1903.

IFK began a concentrated fundraising campaign to build a permanent building around 1900. Mrs. John Holliday, the IFK president, and Mrs. H. S. Tucker, the IFK treasurer, were responsible for the financial success of this effort. Even former President Benjamin Harrison was involved in this campaign. He spoke at a meeting and said, "I think it is a shame that any community should place on these good women the burden of raising this money. It should be enough that they give their time and their sympathy and their good judgment to this work. They ought not be obliged to carry the financial burdens of it."¹³¹ In 1903, the fundraising effort had been successful enough to begin work on a new building. The William N. Jackson Memorial Institute was built at the corner of Alabama Street and 23rd Street in Indianapolis. The new building cost \$45,000.¹³² The Annual Report for 1904 explained that the Memorial Institute "affords every facility for efficient work. It is located on high open ground in the northern part of the city. It is substantially built of brick and stone, comfortable, thoroughly sanitary, and completely equipped for all lines of work necessary to the Normal School."¹³³ Lois G. Hufford, a longtime faculty member of the college, explained how much the new building was appreciated by all the students:

We all know that, no matter how great may be the devotion of workers, their efficiency is greatly multiplied if they work under conditions favorable to physical vigor and mental clearness. For years, free kindergartens in Indianapolis were compelled to make their preparation for this great work in buildings

¹³⁰ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 9.

¹³¹ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 42.

¹³² "Silver Anniversary Letter," Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society Records 1884-1972, Box 1, Folder 1, Manuscripts and Visual Collections, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, March 1907.

¹³³ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 9.

whose limited space tended to physical exhaustion. Now all this is happily changed. A sufficient number of schoolrooms makes it possible for the instruction in the different lines of work to be given with out overcrowding or interference.¹³⁴

The cornerstone for the new building was laid in April 1903.¹³⁵ IFK chose to dedicate the building to William N. Jackson, an Indianapolis resident and supporter of the kindergartens, who had recently died. A marker inside the entrance to the building read:

This building is erected
In Memory of William N. Jackson
1809-1900
Whose precept was
Honor God and serve your fellow men;
Whose life was an examples to all who
knew him, and whose heart was full of
love for little children.¹³⁶

The William N. Jackson Memorial Institute housed seventeen rooms including offices, a gymnasium, a library, the Assembly Hall, college classrooms, and rooms for domestic training classes.¹³⁷ Thornbrough explains that the new building allowed all the students and teachers to meet together either socially or for daily chapel. Additionally, the Assembly Hall provided adequate space for the Mothers' Mass Meetings, large gatherings of mothers who had children enrolled in the kindergartens.¹³⁸

In 1915, the school had outgrown the Jackson Institute. Mrs. Charles Sayles donated \$20,500 for an addition. This addition, called the Armenia B. Tuttle Addition, in honor of Mrs. Sayles' mother, housed fourteen rooms, including a dining room, a kitchen, a cafeteria, and a

¹³⁴ *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1906-1907*, pp. 15-16.

¹³⁵ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 43 and Hollingsworth, "The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis," 28. Though Thornbrough reports the cornerstone was laid April 3 and Hollingsworth records the date as April 21, the *Indianapolis News* reported that the cornerstone was laid on April 7, 1903. See "W. N. Jackson Memorial," *Indianapolis News*, April 7, 1903, p. 10, c. 5. Both Hollingsworth and Thornbrough report that it was also Friedrich Froebel's birthday, although Froebel's birthday is April 21.

¹³⁶ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 42-43.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 43 and Hollingsworth, "The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis," 29.

¹³⁸ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 44.

dormitory.¹³⁹ Martha Baldwin, president of IFK, had suggested the addition of some type of dormitory as early as 1894. She explained, “[t]here is also great need of a Normal Training School Home for those pupils who come from a distance, all of whom expect to pay from \$3 to \$5 per week, which is sufficient to make that department self-sustaining.”¹⁴⁰ Although the dormitory provided many conveniences, in the 1920s, the dormitory was converted to classrooms, again due to lack of space.¹⁴¹

The dining room was appreciated by many of the students. Virginia Hollingsworth, who wrote her thesis on the Teacher’s College, explains that the cafeteria

offer[ed] accommodations to feed all the students who wished to eat in the College dining hall. No one outside of the school family could appreciate what a change was brought about in the health and happiness of the girls. . . . The new building made possible more ideal conditions because the girls had an opportunity to become better acquainted not only with each other, but also with members of the faculty, thus gaining much general culture from each other.¹⁴²

The students ate breakfast and lunch cafeteria style, which met their differing work schedules at various kindergartens across the city. Dinner, however, was served at tables, in groups of eight. A “hostess” served food to her table and “was responsible for the conversation.” Hollingsworth explains that “meals were planned according to food value, the food being simple and wholesome, but plentiful.”¹⁴³

Students also used the kindergartens for their student teaching requirements. Similar to today’s teaching students, students at the Normal Training School in Indianapolis both observed and practiced teaching in classrooms. Hollingsworth explained that the kindergartens supplied

¹³⁹ Hollingsworth, “The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis,” 30-31. Thornbrough notes that Mrs. Sayles donated \$25,000. See, Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 50. In any case, Mrs. Sayles made a sizeable donation to the organization.

¹⁴⁰ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 10.

¹⁴¹ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 51.

¹⁴² Hollingsworth, “The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis,” 32.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

both the children and the “didactic materials” for the teaching students.¹⁴⁴ Hollingsworth explains that every kindergarten

offered a different combination of these elements, hence experiments could be made and results discussed in conferences. As a result of this varied experience in the kindergartens the students went out with a wide personal knowledge of child natures and its interests, instincts, activities and reactions, and an ability to fit the educational program to the individual child.¹⁴⁵

Prices for classes varied. In 1894, the school gave 45 free scholarships and charged \$40 per year for the other students. There was also a \$2.50 charge for entrance into each department. Additionally, students were “required to furnish their own books and materials, the cost of which will not exceed \$25 for the entire work.”¹⁴⁶ By 1902, tuition was \$50 per year for non-scholarship students. The school also charged a \$10 entrance fee to all students, a \$2 graduation fee, and a \$3 diploma fee.¹⁴⁷ By 1904, the cost of books and materials had risen to no more than \$20 per course. All fees were due in advance.¹⁴⁸

Academic and Social Life

In 1894, Normal Training School students studying for a kindergarten certificate were required to study ten areas:

(1) the Theory and Practice of Froebel’s System as embodied in kindergarten gifts, occupations, games, songs, stories, etc.; (2) Philosophy and Psychology; (3) Pedagogics and the History of Education; (4) Special Studies and Practice in English; (5) Vocal Music; (6) Physical Culture; (7) Voice Culture and the Delsarte System of Expression; (8) Drawing and Painting; (9) Botany; (10) Manual Work, including color, clay modeling, sand and pasteboard work, paper folding, paper cutting and mounting, weaving, sewing, etc.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 60.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 60-61.

¹⁴⁶ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 51.

¹⁴⁷ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁸ *The Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 51. Delsartism became popular in the United States during the 1880s and 1890s as a way for women to exercise. Based upon Francois Delsarte’s teachings in acting and singing, the American Delsarte system, or “applied aesthetics,” allowed “a considerable number of late-nineteenth-century white middle- and upper-class

By 1904, these areas had been slightly altered. These eleven required areas of study included “Psychology and Pedagogics,” or a “study of mind, and the laws of mental development, their relation to nerve physiology and their application to the pedagogics of the kindergarten and primary school.” The “History of Pedagogy” was a “general survey of the evolution of education from the earliest historic times, its relation to modern methods and ideals.” The “History of Pedagogy” also included special lectures about Friedrich Froebel’s life and work. “Froebel’s Philosophy of Education” involved studying the play between mother and child and included several readings about “child-nature.” Students also studied Froebel’s theory of “Gifts and Occupations,” and learned how to use them in a classroom. Students studied “Stories,” which involved “[l]ectures on their sources and values, with special training in their composition and narration.” Additionally, students studied “Songs and Games,” which involved “[r]egular practice in kindergarten songs, games, and rhythmic movements” to be “supplemented by vocal training and gymnastics.” Students studied “Physical Culture,” which included their own physical exercise in the gymnasium and “games of strength and skill,” as well as “lectures on the adaptation of exercise to various ages of children.” Students studied “Manual Work,” sometimes referred to as Slojd. These “simple lines of constructive work” involved drawing, painting, bead designing, paper folding, and paper weaving. Students also studied “Primary Subjects,” where they studied primary school subjects and the “correlation of the kindergarten and primary school.” The tenth and eleventh areas were “Special Lectures” that the students were required

American women and children . . . to pay attention to their bodies in a socially acceptable manner, to undergo training in physical and expressive techniques, and even to present themselves to selected audiences in public performances.” The Delsarte system was also influential in American dance and the training of American actors. See Nancy Lee Chafta Ruyter, *Cultivation of Body and Mind in Nineteenth-Century American Delsartism* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), xvi-xviii.

to attend and “Practice,” or student-teaching in a kindergarten under the supervision of a trained teacher.¹⁵⁰

Prominent community members often gave special lectures at the school. Attendance for students was required. In 1894, Reverend J. A. Rondthaler, the Pastor at Tabernacle Presbyterian Church, gave a lecture on “Moral Training.” Josephine Nichols, the president of the Indiana State Women’s Christian Temperance Union, gave a talk on “Purity.” Daniel Thompson, a medical doctor, gave a lecture on “The Eye.” Others gave lectures on “Chivalry,” “Life in Japan,” “The Child in Song and Story,” and “Architecture.” Additionally, May Wright Sewell, the principal of the Classical School for Girls in Indianapolis, and a well-known suffragist, also gave a lecture in 1894.¹⁵¹ In 1904, Dr. William Hailmann, a nationally known educator, gave a lecture on “Schoolishness in the Kindergarten.”¹⁵² These lectures must have been popular; educators not currently enrolled in classes who wanted to attend the lecture series could pay \$5 for the “Special Lectures Course,” which included twelve lectures.¹⁵³ In 1906, Susan E. Blow was listed as a faculty member, offering a Special Lecture Course. Her course included lectures on methods and a “theoretic presentation” of Froebel’s gifts, as well as lectures about artwork and stories. She also lectured on “Froebel’s Mother Play—The Family Song.”¹⁵⁴ Martha Baldwin, president of IFK in 1894, explained that the school was “greatly indebted to a number of gentlemen and ladies of the city for a course of gratuitous lectures before the Normal Training School. These lectures on miscellaneous subjects are highly appreciated by the pupils.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ *The Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁵¹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, pp. 56-58.

¹⁵² *The Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 10.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁵⁴ *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1906-1907*, p. 4. Susan Blow opened a free kindergarten as part of the St. Louis Public Schools in 1873. According to Ross in *The Kindergarten Crusade*, Blow’s successful system helped the spread of kindergartens across the United States and became a model for other cities to follow, see 13-15.

¹⁵⁵ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 8.

The Normal Training School offered several different types of classes for non-traditional students. The Normal Training School also opened a summer school, known as the Winona Summer School, near Warsaw, Indiana. The summer school featured a model kindergarten and lectures and lessons on kindergarten and primary school subjects. Additionally, “[s]ongs and games form a part of the course. Manual work in color papers, clay modeling, paper and textile weaving, basketry, etc.” Teachers who attended the summer school earned credits at the Normal Training School.¹⁵⁶

Teachers who already had teaching experience could sign up for classes each spring. The student could “attend from year to year until the work is completed.” The Annual Report for 1904-1905 explained that this “special normal course from May 15th to June 15th is offered for primary teachers who desire to understand the use of kindergarten methods and materials in the graded schools.” These classes included both lectures and observation. These “Special Courses for Teachers of Some Experience” cost \$10 at the initial enrollment; students were not charged again until they completed coursework and qualified for graduation.¹⁵⁷

The school also offered courses in Domestic Training, which involved “both theory and practice in every detail of housekeeping.” This course cost \$20 and lasted three months. Students could enter the course at any time during the year.¹⁵⁸ For a time, the Normal Training School also offered a class for young women who wanted to learn to teach kindergarten with blind students. These students trained for five months with children who could see and five months with blind children at the State Institution for the Blind. This course also cost \$20.¹⁵⁹ In

¹⁵⁶ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁵⁷ *The Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁵⁸ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 51.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 52.

1894, the Normal Training School added a nursery governess training class, as well as a preparatory class.¹⁶⁰ The course for nursery governesses was created to

prepare girls to become intelligent mothers' help in the care of little children. It includes studies in the threefold nature of the child, with practical training in the feeding, bathing, dressing and entertaining of infants and small children; the intelligent use of kindergarten gifts, etc; simple cooking, and whatever pertains to the proper care of children.¹⁶¹

Young women who were interested in kindergarten work, but had not received a high school education, could enter the "Course in Preparatory Study." This class provided "the instruction necessary to enable them to enter the Kindergarten Department." The time required in this course varied for each student.¹⁶² By the 1902 Annual Report, there was no mention of classes for the teaching of the blind or nursery governesses.

The school also added classes for Sunday School teachers, as well as classes that taught about playground work. The Sunday School class was a two-years course where the president of the College gave "lectures, accompanied by illustration and practical example, in the skillful presentation of Bible stories and other stories of ethical value; on the choice of suitable pictures and wise explanation of the same; on child psychology, and such kindred subjects as tend to the bettering of Sunday School teaching." The course on playground work featured "manual work, stories, games, and whatever will contribute to efficiency in the conduct of playgrounds for children."¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 26.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 52.

¹⁶² Ibid., 51.

¹⁶³ *Teachers' College of Indianapolis For the Training of Kindergartners and Primary Teachers 1909-1910*, p. 15.

The school also required gym classes for the young women. The school's "Department of Physical Culture" included "free standing gymnastics, fancy steps, and Delsarte's harmonizing movements."¹⁶⁴ The dress code for these classes was strict and students were

required to dress for gymnastics without corsets or restriction to free movement of the neck, chest, arms, waist and feet. Measurements for dress waist should be taken loosely while the lungs are fully inflated. The weight of all clothing should depend upon the shoulders. Shoes should have low heels, with broad ball and toe measurements. A short divided skirt or bloomers of material like the school dress may be buttoned with the outer dress skirt to the dress waist (made suitable for street wear and loose enough for gymnastics). The short skirt may be worn all the time for a petticoat if desirable, and the outer skirt removed for gymnastics.¹⁶⁵

By 1904, "Physical Culture" required not only "exercise in a well-equipped gymnasium," but also "lectures on the adaptation of exercise to various ages of children."¹⁶⁶ Lois G. Hufford, a teacher at the College, explained that the gymnasium in the new Jackson Memorial building was "of uncounted benefit in renewing exhausted strength, and in developing healthfully these teachers whose tasks make heavy demands upon their vital force."¹⁶⁷

Not only were the Normal Training School teachers expected to work and practice in IFK's kindergartens, they had many other responsibilities. Blaker summarized the teacher's various duties: "Students of this Normal School are required to study the theory of Domestic Science, and to practice in the Domestic Training School and Slojd Classes, and to work in the Mothers' Departments of the Kindergarten Districts."¹⁶⁸ For example, the students-in-training were expected to assist at the various Mothers' Meetings. Blaker recorded in 1892 that "[e]ach student teacher of the Normal Training School has an opportunity of assisting at these

¹⁶⁴ *The Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 7.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *The Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁷ *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1906-1907*, p. 16.

¹⁶⁸ *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 11.

entertainments.”¹⁶⁹ In another report, Blaker noted that the “the teachers prepare the literary and musical programme. If they cannot do this work themselves they call to their assistance several friends. . . . After the exercises are over, the teachers are required to talk with the parents, especially the mothers of the children in their individual classes.”¹⁷⁰ The teachers and principals of the schools often read or played the piano or organ at these meetings.¹⁷¹ Additionally, the Mothers’ Sewing Class, which was organized in 1902, was run by Mrs. Blanche Mathews, a member of the third year students at the Normal Training School.¹⁷²

Teachers also were responsible for all the activities for the older children, outside of the kindergartens. Blaker explained that every “Domestic Training School has its system of Clubs and Societies conducted by teachers especially prepared for the work. . . . The work is carefully planned to reach and interest the young.”¹⁷³ For example, each teacher was responsible for “five Saturday mornings in the Kitchen-Garden work and receives five whole Fridays for holidays. She gains an extra half day each week.”¹⁷⁴ Other teachers ran the Children’s Reading Circles, where school-age children read and discussed books. The “teacher sits among the children as an older sister and leader. She takes part in all discussions.”¹⁷⁵ However, the teacher was only there to facilitate and make suggestions; the circles were run by the children.¹⁷⁶

In addition to their duties at the kindergartens with children and mothers, the teaching students were also expected to attend a daily chapel service. Blaker prepared the service, which

¹⁶⁹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society for the Year Ending April 16, 1892*, p. 18.

¹⁷⁰ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1511, December 3, 1887, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷¹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society for the Year Ending April 16, 1891*.

¹⁷² *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 11. It is unclear if some students were married, although this Mrs. Mathews appears to have been. It would be possible for some students, who already held teaching licenses and had returned to school to take extra courses, to have already married.

¹⁷³ *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 19.

¹⁷⁴ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1513, January 6-February 3, 1890, p. 9.

¹⁷⁵ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1892*, p. 19.

¹⁷⁶ *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 19.

consisted of “Bible reading, singing of a hymn and a kindergarten song, music either by the students or a faculty member, and an address” by Blaker.¹⁷⁷ Blaker felt that spiritual training must accompany the academic training that the school was known for.¹⁷⁸ Lois Hufford, a teacher at the College, explained that the Assembly Room in the new building allowed Blaker to “meet the entire body of student-teachers each day in the spacious assembly hall, thus enabling her to communicate her own enthusiasm, and to give helpful and stimulating suggestions for the daily management of every kindergarten, and by this means to unify the entire system.”¹⁷⁹

Hollingsworth even claims that the chapel service was the most important aspect of college life for the students: “If former students of The Teachers College were to select the one phase of their training which influenced their lives most, it would undoubtedly be Mrs. Blaker’s chapel discussions.”¹⁸⁰

There were numerous clubs and activities for the young women of the Normal Training School to be involved with, including a newspaper, Glee Club, and sororities.¹⁸¹ In 1904, one student helped to organize the William N. Jackson Memorial branch of the Young Women’s Christian Association. The purpose of this club was to encourage “the spiritual growth and development of the members.” This club occasionally had special speakers, including the State YWCA secretary.¹⁸² Twelve African-American graduates of the Normal Training School organized the Middendorf Club in 1904. Named after Friedrich Froebel’s assistant, the purpose of this club

¹⁷⁷ Hollingsworth, “The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis,” 61.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 61-62.

¹⁷⁹ *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1906-1907*, p. 16.

¹⁸⁰ Hollingsworth, “The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis,” 62.

¹⁸¹ For information about the Glee Club, see Bertha Raymond Ellis, “Teacher’s College Notes,” *The Educator-Journal* XX, no. 11 (July 1920): 638. For information about the newspaper see Bertha Raymond Ellis, “Teacher’s College Notes,” *The Educator-Journal* XX, no. 7 (March 1920): 392. Ellis explains that the “Teachers’ College has entered the newspaper field again, after the lapse of a number of years.” She gives no indication as to the name of the previous college newspaper.

¹⁸² *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 19.

was to promote “self-culture and to further the kindergarten cause among colored children.”¹⁸³

The students could also join the Froebel Alumnae Association, organized in 1891, after their graduation. The purpose of the Alumnae Association was to provide opportunities

for a more extended study of the methods and philosophy of teaching and subjects of general cultures; to elevate the standard of professional training for kindergarten and primary teachers; to discourage the teaching of children by untrained persons; to aid in all effort to care for, train and make happy the children.¹⁸⁴

This club sponsored an alumni banquet during graduation week.¹⁸⁵

For a time, young women could join sororities. Blaker was “reluctant to permit such groups” because “[s]he felt that they would inevitably impair the spirit of unity among the college girls and perhaps create discord.”¹⁸⁶ However, the sororities existed until 1915, when the Board of Trustees disbanded them. Sororities were later reestablished in 1924.¹⁸⁷ Six Pan-Hellenic sororities were then organized, including Zeta Kappa Phi, Sigma Delta Pi, Phi Kappa Theta, Beta Sigma Delta, Psi Omega Xi, and Phi Delta Psi. The African-American students established a sorority, known as Scholae Sorores.¹⁸⁸ Blaker, however, had strict rules about the sororities. First, any young woman who joined a sorority was ineligible for a free scholarship. And second, Blaker required that the sorority elect her an honorary member so she knew of all their plans.¹⁸⁹

The students also organized a “culture hour” on Monday afternoons. Many different speakers from around the area addressed the students. For example, a Miss Eliza Niblack, spoke about “Textiles,” and showed European cloth. An organist from Second Presbyterian Church

¹⁸³ *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 20.

¹⁸⁴ Harper, *The Associated Work of the Women of Indiana*, 15.

¹⁸⁵ *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 23.

¹⁸⁶ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 58.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁸⁸ Hollingsworth, “The History of the Teachers College of Indianapolis,” 84.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* and Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 58.

gave a piano recital, a teacher from the public schools lectured on penmanship, and Mr. Demarchus Brown from the State Library spoke about "Bible Manuscripts." A graduate of the college and current teacher in the Indianapolis Public Schools, Miss Velma Root, returned to the school for the culture hour. She spoke about "The Land of Mother Goose" and used pictures and songs to illustrate her story.¹⁹⁰

The Normal Training School students celebrated many holidays, including Froebel's birthday. The school was decorated for the occasion. Blaker explained that "[a]fter a grand march, kindergarten games were played. As the beautiful Froebel birthday songs were sung, each member of the school, Alumnae Association and faculty marched up to the bust of Froebel and deposited her offering of flowers, principally the daisy." Next, "each kindergartner gave a quotation from Froebel's works."¹⁹¹ The school had a May Party, with flowers, a May pole, and special costumes "so that the guests easily imagined themselves in a garden for the May day frolic."¹⁹² At a Christmas dinner and party held at the school in December 1919, the students sang songs and enjoyed a visit from Santa Claus. Some students "white robed, carrying evergreen boughs, and each a big lighted candle, sang a number of the beautiful old Christmas carols."¹⁹³ After Christmas, the students who lived in the dormitory celebrated Twelfth Night by burning greens and telling Christmas stories.¹⁹⁴

Graduation was a special ceremony for all the students. Mrs. Mary Lewis Edwards, one of the graduates of the first class in 1883, recalled the first ceremony:

We were dressed in white and carried flowers. In the orchestra pit a display of our handwork was arranged. I remember vividly the colored fruit made of clay

¹⁹⁰ Ellis, "Teacher's College Notes," (March 1920): 391-92 and Bertha Raymond Ellis, "Teacher's College Notes," *The Educator-Journal* XX, no. 9 (May 1920): 518. While these meetings are similar to the "Special Lecture" series offered by the college, it appears that these were separate from the other meetings.

¹⁹¹ *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 21.

¹⁹² Ellis, "Teacher's College Notes," (July 1920): 638.

¹⁹³ Bertha Raymond Ellis, "Teacher's College Notes," *The Educator-Journal* XX, no. 6 (February 1920): 333.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 334.

in handwoven baskets that were part of it. Each girl read a short essay, we had music, and Dr. Eliza Blaker presented the diplomas. About 150 friends and relatives were present and you can imagine how many rows of empty seats faced us around that handful of people. But we thought it was perfect and were scared and happy!¹⁹⁵

Eliza Blaker and another speaker, usually a clergyman or another Indiana college president, always addressed the girls.¹⁹⁶ In 1912, when Blaker spoke to the graduating class, she reminded the graduates to always continue their learning: “Is your course to continue to be that of a student? She who fails to be a learner fails to be a teacher.” Blaker next reminded her students to continue to study the teachings of Jesus and learn from them:

Keep ever before you the model of the most noted teacher the world has even known. A teacher whose influence grows greater as the Centuries pass. Study His principles. Consider His Sympathy, justice, simplicity and His enthusiasm for teaching. He always understood the needs of His Hearers, and drew His illustrations from their immediate neighborhood. . . . A teacher whose pupils are counted by millions to-day. A study of Jesus, the teacher, will always uplift and inspire.

Finally, Blaker concluded by reminding the graduates to not forget the school: “The Teachers College of Indianapolis feels a responsibility for you and your work. The Faculty of this school stands ready to help. We are glad to have been associated with you. We love you. Write to your school-home. Come back sometime. Always remember that a warm welcome awaits your coming.”¹⁹⁷

Influence of Graduates

The graduates of the Normal School often left Indianapolis and went on to teach all over the United States and the world. Blaker wanted to attract out-of-state students in order to

¹⁹⁵ “Home-coming, 4 o’clock Reception . . .” *Indianapolis News*.

¹⁹⁶ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 57.

¹⁹⁷ Eliza Blaker, “Speeches, 1908-1913,” Eliza Blaker Collection, Special Collections and Rare Books, Irwin Library, Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana, June 18, 1912.

ensure the influence of the school spread quickly. In 1887, Arabella C. Peelle, the president of IFK, wrote that

[i]t is necessary that our Normal School should be well advertised for the coming term. We offer special advantages and these should be made known. We should have not less than fifteen new pupil-teachers in January. I am anxious that we should secure the greater part of these outside of our city. They will then go away from Indianapolis to teach. In this way the work spreads, our school becomes better known, and we gain new pupils.¹⁹⁸

Blaker later reported in 1890 that the Normal School's "value is great to us in furnishing teachers for our Kindergartens, but that is not all, for its graduates are carrying its influence, the earnest, energetic and progressive spirit of its principal to other communities, and people of other States are calling them to come and open free Kindergartens in their midst."¹⁹⁹ The school must have made quite an impression on graduates, as well. Blaker often noted when graduates wrote to her of their work. For example, a Miss Emma Farnsworth from Cresco, Iowa, sent Kindergarten material and furniture back to the school. Miss Farnsworth's accompanying letter read, "I am anxious for my goods to be used by the children of the Free Kindergartens. I love the little ones and think of them so often."²⁰⁰

Blaker reported, too, when recent graduates obtained jobs. A Miss Korner reported that she would open a private school in Indianapolis near St. Clair Street and Massachusetts Avenue. Miss Daisy Lowes was appointed to a position at the Feeble-Minded Asylum in Richmond, Indiana. Another graduate, a Kate Ellis, accepted a position at Falls City, Iowa.²⁰¹ At least four students, Hellen Wallick, Anna Fern, Rubie Stapp, and Ruth Patterson, returned to the school after graduation as teachers.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸ "Superintendent's Report," Bound Volume 1511, December 3, 1887, p. 5.

¹⁹⁹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society for the Year Ending April 17, 1890*, p. 7.

²⁰⁰ "Superintendent's Report," Bound Volume 1511, September 3, 1888, p. 123.

²⁰¹ "Superintendent's Report," Bound Volume 1513, March 3-April 7, 1890, pp. 65-67.

²⁰² Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 59.

A pamphlet prepared for the Chicago World's Fair by Ida Husted Harper explained the influence of the Indianapolis graduates best. By 1893, 160 women, from seventeen different states, had graduated from the school. Harper wrote that the graduates "are teaching or have taught in twenty-one different States, extending from Washington, D.C., to Utah, and into Mexico. Applications for teachers have been received from Calcutta, India, and from Africa, and letters from high authorities have been received testifying to their efficiency." Additionally, Indianapolis graduates ran training schools and kindergartens based upon the Indianapolis model in Chattanooga, Tennessee, New Albany, Indiana, and Detroit, Michigan.²⁰³ In 1911, Blaker noted that graduates "may be found at work in all parts of the world."²⁰⁴ For example, Anna Gould helped to start kindergartens in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Louise Brouse went to the Reed English School in Lucknow, India, to work in the kindergartens.²⁰⁵ These women were fulfilling a speculation President Peelle made in 1890,

[i]f such Kindergartens could be opened to receive all the poor children throughout every state and territory of our land to day, not only those in town and city, but country too, and train them daily from the age of two to six years, when they could be passed into the public schools, do you doubt that the next generation would be far superior to this, intemperance, pauperism and crime marvelously decreased and illiteracy a things of the past?²⁰⁶

While Blaker helped to organize kindergartens across Indiana, in cities including Terre Haute, Anderson, Muncie, Vincennes, South Bend, Fort Wayne, and Columbus, the Training School also had a great influence locally, in Indianapolis.²⁰⁷ Blaker and a Mrs. William Foulke worked to open kindergartens in the Indianapolis public schools.²⁰⁸ According to Harper, the system of teacher training was introduced into the Home for Feeble-Minded, the Girls' Industrial

²⁰³ Harper, *The Associated Work of the Women of Indiana*, 16.

²⁰⁴ "Annual Meeting," July 3, 1911, p. 4.

²⁰⁵ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 39.

²⁰⁶ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1890*, p. 7.

²⁰⁷ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 56.

²⁰⁸ Harper, *The Associated Work of the Women of Indiana*, 16.

Homes, and the Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphans' Homes, the Surgical Institute, and other orphanages.²⁰⁹

The graduates of the Normal Training School, however, had the most concentrated influence on the children in Indianapolis. While studying and training for their teaching licenses, some of the Normal Training School students worked with Indianapolis children on a daily basis. The students either taught in the children's kindergarten, visited the children's homes after classes were over, taught in Saturday Schools, cared for the children while their mothers attended meetings, or set up special events and parties for the children. The following chapter will discuss how both the teaching students and IFK provided for Indianapolis children educationally, physically, and socially.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

Photographs



*A group of students of the Teachers College of Indianapolis, circa 1913-1917.
Eliza Blaker Collection, Butler University.*



*A group of five teachers of the Indianapolis Free Kindergartens, circa 1895-1905.
Eliza Blaker Collection, Butler University.*

CHAPTER TWO:
TRAINING CHILDREN FOR THE FUTURE:
THE KINDERGARTENS

“The kindergartens are essentially the children’s gardens, so if the plantlets are brought at ever so tender a stage of development they are permitted a chance to grow within the fostering walls.”²¹⁰Alice W. Dresser, 1900

As the name of the society indicates, the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society’s main focus was children. The original Children’s Aid Society worked to collect clothing and shoes for children, while the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten Association set up kindergartens for children ages three to eight. After the two groups merged and incorporated in 1884, they continued both lines of work.

IFK provided for the children in three distinct ways: education, physical care, and social activities. As IFK expanded, it developed numerous educational programs for children of all ages, in addition to the kindergarten classes. These educational programs included cooking classes, sewing classes, woodworking classes, book clubs, and science clubs. Many of these classes and clubs reinforced ideas, like cleanliness, that were taught in the kindergarten. IFK also provided for the children’s physical care. IFK provided clothing to the children to wear to the kindergartens, and served lunch on school days. Finally, IFK provided for the children’s social well-being by celebrating holidays and having special parties for older children.

Why did IFK choose children as their primary recipients of aid? Elizabeth Dale Ross, author of *The Kindergarten Crusade*, explains that “kindergarten pioneers saw child-saving as the most effective grassroots remedy for the hopelessness and misery in the slums.”²¹¹ Many statements from IFK’s leaders are in accord with this statement. Other statements reinforce the idea that training the child would produce better adults. Eliza Blaker, the superintendent of IFK, wrote that “[o]ur work is not short-lived. It does not stop with the child of to-day and his

²¹⁰ Dresser, “The Kindergarten Movement in Indianapolis,” 441-42.

²¹¹ Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 31.

environment but it will be felt in the family of the future when our child is the man—the father.”²¹² In another report, she wrote, “[t]here is always the hope that some of the early impressions received in these infant gardens may germinate into good actions in later life. It is, however, to the future homes, the homes in which our boys and girls of today will be the fathers and mothers, that we look for the realization of our work.”²¹³ American reformers saw school reforms as the “fundamental approach to social improvement” and change.²¹⁴

Educational Care

Although Blaker contended in several documents that the “kindergarten is not a school,” the Indianapolis Free Kindergartens had educational programming for the young children who attended.²¹⁵ Blaker and other kindergarten advocates believed children needed to be reached before it was too late to rescue them from influences at home. Blaker explained,

[t]he first period of childhood is the most important in human development, whether we refer to physical, mental, moral or religious growth. This truth finds its recognition in the well-devised system of education termed the Kindergarten. Here the child is trained in habits of self-control, industry and of considerateness for others. His powers are gradually unfolded; his desire turned toward the Giver of all good. This plan of education is “to lead the human being from birth to maturity on the road of a wise and useful activity.”²¹⁶

²¹² “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1511, April 19, 1888, p. 74.

²¹³ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1891.*

²¹⁴ Reese, “Indiana’s Public School Traditions,” 290.

²¹⁵ Eliza A. Blaker, “Obstacles to Kindergarten Progress in our Large Cities,” *Kindergarten Magazine* VI, no. 5 (January 1894): 359.

²¹⁶ Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1511, April 19, 1888, p. 73. Blaker is quoting Dr. William Hailmann, a Swiss-born educator and promoter of kindergartens. Hailmann left Germany during the Revolution of 1848 and relocated in America. Hailmann worked in various positions across the country, including a principal at the German Academy in Louisville, the Superintendent of Schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Superintendent of Schools in LaPorte, Indiana, and the head of the United States Government Indian School in Washington, D.C. See Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade* 37-8, 88, and Shapiro, *Child’s Garden*, 29-30, 67. For Hailmann’s quote see Ada Van Stone Harris, “Introduction,” in *The Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Scientific Study of Education: Part II The Kindergarten and its Relation to Elementary Education*, ed. Manfred J. Holmes (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1907), 10.

One newspaper article from the *Indianapolis Journal* described the kindergarten and its activities. Jacob Piatt Dunn, the author of the article and an Indianapolis historian, described the physical kindergarten at West Pearl Street as a “neat little house” with “its white walls, its painted floors, its colored pictures, its cabinet of very modern bric-a-brac, and its groups of happy faces.”²¹⁷ The pictures on the wall included portraits of Jesus, the Madonna, Friedrich Froebel, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. One kindergarten room had a piano, a fireplace, and plants “to help give a feeling of homeliness to the room,” and little tables and chairs.²¹⁸ Nettie Duzan, an IFK Friendly Visitor, recorded that when she was not spending her afternoons visiting the homes of the children, she was working in the classroom, making it “as attractive as possible.” Duzan’s kindergarten classroom had a piano; she explained how much the children enjoyed the piano:

I hardly know which pleases the children most, to look at themselves in its shiny case or to listen to its sweet mellow voice. I cannot express in a few words the wonderful effect of this music and pictures and all the beautiful refining influences brought to bear in this pleasant homelike place upon these poor misled little ones. To see the light of intelligence and appreciation suddenly flash over the little faces as they catch the idea of the song. Ah, this is one of the rewards of a kindergartner in a charity school.²¹⁹

Unfortunately, IFK records reveal very little about what the teachers actually tried to teach the children at the kindergarten. Jacob Dunn did describe some of the children’s activities, albeit briefly. In one classroom, children learned about colors; in another, children learned to draw straight lines with rulers. In a different room, some children were “embroidering very simple designs on perforate card-board; and still another is engaged weaving colored paper in

²¹⁷ Jacob P. Dunn, “Playing While they Learn: A Glimpse of Happy Scenes in the Free Kindergartens of the City,” in *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society for the Year Ending April 19, 1888*, p. 33.

²¹⁸ Dresser, “The Kindergarten Movement in Indianapolis,” 443.

²¹⁹ “Friendly Visitor Records,” September 5-October 1, 1887, p. 163.

easy patterns.”²²⁰ A baby class made pies out of clay. Dunn explained, “[t]hese children are getting an education of the eyes and the hand that will be of use to them in any department of skilled labor.” Dunn explained that the girls who could make a clay pie were learning skills that would help them make a real pie when they were older; the young boys might become molders or potters.²²¹ In her monthly Friendly Visitor reports to IFK, Nettie Duzan reported that “[e]ach little tot in the baby class was . . . given a spool box containing red and white corn, bit of bright paper and cloth and flowers from our garden to sort by colors.”²²²

In the same newspaper article, Jacob Dunn also described the physical games and activities the children performed as a group. One game, “The Bird Cage,” involved some children standing in a large circle while children in the middle practiced “motions of nestling to sleep, waking, flying away, and coming back at night” while the other children in the outside circle sang “a song descriptive of these movements.” During another game, “The Brook,” the children played parts as birds, bees, flowers, and children. The bees “buzz[ed] about at a great rate and [stuck] their fingers into the hands of the flowers . . . in a supposititious search for honey.”²²³ Eliza Blaker felt these plays were of utmost importance: “The plays of the kindergarten have the deepest significance. They contain ideals of beauty and goodness. Through them the child’s special senses are trained and his mind is furnished with true ideas for present and future happiness. His body is developed; his hand is made skillful.”²²⁴

Anna Bryan, the director of the Louisville Free Kindergarten Association, developed new kindergarten curricula to “reach the children directly and capture their interest.” Bryan felt that

²²⁰ Dunn, “Playing While they Learn,” 34. Nettie Duzan reported that the children made weaving mats at school. See “Friendly Visitor Records,” March 7-April 2, 1887, p. 143. Another Visitor’s Reports noted that the children made sewing cards. See *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society for the Year Ending April 19, 1888*, p. 26.

²²¹ Dunn, “Playing While they Learn,” 34.

²²² “Friendly Visitor Records,” September 5-October 1, 1887, pp. 163-64.

²²³ Dunn, “Playing While they Learn,” 35.

²²⁴ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 12.

Friedrich Froebel's abstract activities meant little to urban, American children, so her new kindergarten activities were based around things the children would find in their own home. The children made everyday objects out of Froebel's materials and stitched everyday objects into paper cards. Additionally, the children acted out skits, where they did an everyday activity, such as mail a letter. Bryan's kindergarten activities were controversial, but were nationally known. It is probable that Bryan's methods were introduced in IFK kindergartens, due to the proximity of Louisville to Indianapolis and the shift away from strict adherence to Froebelian teachings in kindergartens across the United States.²²⁵

The kindergartens reinforced Christianity through prayer and Bible lessons. IFK kindergarten classes taught Bible lessons from the very beginning of their existence. Blaker explained the importance of Bible lessons in the kindergarten: "A kindergarten in which the name of our Heavenly Father is not breathed in prayer nor uttered in song would be devoid of all that means life. Indeed, it would not be worthy of the name child-garden. The true kindergarten inculcates a universal brotherhood of love and a reverence for and obedience to God."²²⁶ The Bible lessons sometimes were illustrated with crayon drawings.²²⁷ Two children in the St. George Kindergarten district were so excited about the Bible lessons they learned at kindergarten their mother reported "it keeps us busy looking it up at night."²²⁸

In addition to the Bible lessons, the children were required to pray before their lunch meal. Blaker related a story about Clarence, a boy in one of the kindergartens, who was "accustomed at kindergarten to thank god before eating his food, went home one day and

²²⁵ Barbara Beatty, "The Letter Killeth': Americanization and Multicultural Education in Kindergartens in the United States, 1856-1920," in *Kindergartens and Cultures: The Global Diffusion of an Idea*, ed. Roberta Wollons (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 48. Bryan learned about kindergarten methods in Chicago. She started a free kindergarten in Louisville in 1887 and remained there for six years, until 1893.

²²⁶ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 12.

²²⁷ "Friendly Visitor Records," March 7-April 2, 1887, p. 144.

²²⁸ Superintendent's Report," Bound Volume 1511, November 5, 1888, p. 153.

startled his father by asking him to thank god for the supper set before him.”²²⁹ In another entry, Blaker reported that Bible lessons and prayer at school “have been the means of more than one family uniting with the church. Numbers of our children return thanks to God at each daily meal, while the father and mother sit with bowed heads.”²³⁰

The emphasis on religious training was not unique to Indianapolis. Elizabeth Dale Ross writes that “[m]any kindergartners believed that if they indoctrinated a belief in God and moral social behavior in their students, they would be teaching them the concepts of good citizenship and in doing so they would prevent crime.”²³¹ Sarah Cooper, a kindergarten teacher in San Francisco, wrote that the purpose of the kindergarten was “to lead the little ones to their Heavenly Friend. They are taught to love Him. They are taught to love one another, to be kind to one another, to care for one another. No one can love God who does not love his fellows.”²³²

One of IFK’s biggest concerns was with the environment in the kindergarten classrooms. Eliza Blaker wrote of her concern about the early years of a child’s life. She wrote,

[d]uring these early years we must place the child in an atmosphere of love with a firm will, a true heart and a cultivated mind to guide him. He must be lead [sic] to gain orderly habits; learn obedience to law, cleanliness and politeness. Attention must be given to the regular development of his faculties. The natural desire for play and hand work must be recognized as a means of bodily, moral and mental growth. The religious instinct must be nurtured and the child’s thoughts turn to God.

In the same entry, Blaker wrote, “[t]he purpose of our work, the training of children for good and useful lives, can only be accomplished by putting the young child for, at least, a part of the day, where he can be kept from harmful influences. Upon the first years of life should be

²²⁹ Superintendent’s Report,” Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society Records 1884-1972, Bound Volume 1512, Manuscripts and Visual Collections, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana, April 18, 1889, p. 19.

²³⁰ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1513, April 17, 1890, p. 77.

²³¹ Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 35.

²³² *Ibid.*, 36.

bestowed the greatest care.”²³³ For Blaker, the kindergarten was the answer to solving some of society’s problems.

The kindergartens created numerous clubs and activities for older brothers and sisters of kindergarten children. Many of these clubs had an educational purpose; activities with a social purpose will be discussed later in this chapter. Blaker explained that the “work is carefully planned to reach and interest the young. Books are loaned to the children and they are led to think, talk and write on the subjects suggested.”²³⁴ The clubs were organized through the Domestic Training Schools, located at each kindergarten. The children were responsible for their own clubs, served as officers, and ran their own meetings according to Robert’s Rules of Order, with a teacher present only to offer suggestions.²³⁵

For example, the Book Club read and discussed *Hans Brinker* in 1902. In preparation for reading this book, the children studied Holland and the “extent of country, soil, rivers, climate, cities, kind of government, products, manufactures, peculiarities of the country, etc.”²³⁶ The Book Club had four main purposes: “To lead the child to read the books that will help them to form the right mental and moral habits; to teach them how to read a book; to train them to tell intelligently what they have read, and to interest the family in good reading.”²³⁷ A Current Topics Club was also organized; in 1902 the students in this club studied and discussed a wide variety of topics, including, Arbor Day, the Philippines, Theodore Roosevelt, William McKinley, and “the importance of good streets.”²³⁸ The Science Club discussed shells, glass, the Davy lamp,

²³³ Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1512, April 18, 1889, p. 1.

²³⁴ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 19.

²³⁵ *Ibid.* and *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 25.

²³⁶ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 16.

²³⁷ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 25.

²³⁸ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 16.

coal, and butterflies and moths.²³⁹ One school had a Gardening Class “to learn some facts about soil and the treatment of it to raise the vegetables selected to best advantage, and to learn some botanical facts about the growth of plants.”²⁴⁰

Slojd classes were founded in 1890, primarily as a manual training class for boys.²⁴¹ In these Saturday classes, young boys worked with paper, clay, card-board and sand; they also designed patterns and drew. Older boys learned to make clay models and whittled wood. Eliza Blaker explained that the purpose of the Slojd class was “to instill a love and a respect for manual work of every kind, no matter how rough it may be. It gives the hearty physical training that the growing boy should have.” Later, she explained that “Slojd-work trains the eye, the hand, and, if properly taught, creates habits of neatness, cleanliness, order, and attention. Slojd is closely related to all school-work; it deals with form, number, measurement, drawing. It is a part of the unit of all educational training.”²⁴² IFK ran successful manual training classes for several years until Indianapolis Public Schools began to offer the same courses. One report of the Training School explains that the

Teachers’ College took the lead in the Middle West in the introduction of practical Domestic Training, opening its first Domestic Training School in 1889. Within the past eight years the same work has been made a feature of the city public school system of Indianapolis. Therefore, the Association, feeling that it was no longer needed in that field, and that it could expend its means more wisely in other ways, has closed all but two Domestic Training Schools.²⁴³

Although IFK provided educational classes and clubs for children, members realized that little could be done effectively without addressing the physical needs of the children. Children

²³⁹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 25 and *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 17.

²⁴⁰ “Report of Gardening Class at Kindergarten No. 15,” *The Kindergarten Monthly* II, no. 8 (May 1898): 127.

²⁴¹ Harper, *The Associated Work of the Women of Indiana*, 15.

²⁴² *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1891*.

²⁴³ *Teachers’ College of Indianapolis For the Training of Kindergartners and Primary Teachers 1907-1908*, p. 23. One of the schools kept open was for teachers training at the Normal Training School.

who attended IFK kindergartens sometimes lacked basic clothing or shoes, which prevented their attendance at schools. Other children were sick and their families could not afford to pay for proper care. The original Children's Aid Society, with the help of the Indianapolis Benevolent Society, cared for the physical needs of many Indianapolis children. IFK members realized that physical care of Indianapolis' poorest children was essential to their endeavor.

Physical Care

Historians Ann Taylor Allen, Barbara Beatty, and Michael Shapiro all discuss the national kindergarten movement in their works, but their statements also hold true when looking at IFK. Allen argues that kindergartens were concerned with the child's "total environment."²⁴⁴ Beatty explains that kindergartens in urban areas "were faced with the reality of children who needed physical care as well as education. Thus, in addition to the usual Froebelian activities, urban kindergartners supplied breakfast, washed children, and did home visiting in the afternoon. They . . . also dealt with health, housing, and other welfare problems."²⁴⁵ Shapiro argues that kindergarten teachers and clubwomen had to meet the physical needs of the children even before the educational lessons could begin:

Free kindergartners firmly believed that through ignorance, neglect, or circumstance, the immigrant mother often sent her child to school physically unprepared. In response to the needs of working mothers, the free kindergarten opened its doors early in the morning to receive the children. The teacher first attended to the children's physical needs. . . . Personal hygiene and nutrition for the socially minded Froebelians preceded the abstract and at times physically demanding lessons of the kindergarten. Hands and face washed, clothing cleaned, and breakfast provided, the urban child was ready for his morning kindergarten lesson.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Allen, "Let Us Live with Our Children," 32.

²⁴⁵ Beatty, "Child Gardening," 76.

²⁴⁶ Shapiro, *Child's Garden*, 99-100.

Eliza Blaker explained that the free kindergartens went further than simply providing an education for three hours a day: “The Free Kindergarten idea embraces not only this thought of education but such auxiliaries as clothing and feeding the children and visiting their homes. All these phases of work tend toward making self-respecting, independent and noble characters. If children were better guarded and fostered in infancy how few miserable men and women we should see.”²⁴⁷ Children living in the poorest neighborhoods in Indianapolis often lacked basic clothing, shoes, and food. Other children lived in run-down or inadequate homes, often unkempt, dirty, and sometimes, unsafe. The women of IFK became aware of these problems when they visited families themselves, or learned of problems from the reports for the appointed Friendly Visitor. IFK clubwomen and kindergarten leaders hoped to remedy many of these problems, often by directly providing assistance to families, especially children. Additionally, the kindergartens quickly implemented programs and classes that taught kindergarten-aged children and their older brothers and sisters about food and cooking, how to care for the home, and how to clean and launder clothing. In Indianapolis, physical care of the children included providing clothes and lunches at school. Additionally, cleanliness played a large part of the physical care of children: children were given lessons on cleanliness at school and expected to keep clothes, as well as themselves, clean.

When the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society incorporated in 1884, its statement of purpose included offering “material assistance of those for whose parents are unable to make adequate provision” in addition to providing educational and moral training to the poor.²⁴⁸ The Friendly Visitors relied on the members of IFK to supply them with clothing for distribution. The clubwomen, who had the financial means to buy fabric, the time to sew

²⁴⁷ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1511, April 19, 1888, p. 73.

²⁴⁸ Article II, “Articles of Incorporation- Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society, 1884,” Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society Records 1884-1972, Box 1, Folder 1, Organizational Records 1884-1914.

clothing, and the time to collect donations from others, complied. Even before IFK was founded and the clubwomen decided on what type of club to form, they investigated the conditions of poor children. The clubwomen noted the lack of shoes among the poor as early as December 11, 1881, but the subject was not “decided on.”²⁴⁹ At a meeting the following January, each member was to have her shoe dealer make an extra pair and leave them at the city’s Benevolent Room for distribution to the needy.²⁵⁰ The Children’s Aid Society minutes from September 23, 1882, indicated that a special committee had formed “to take charge of cutting and making garments for the children.”²⁵¹ On October 4, 1883, the minutes noted that “Mrs. Blaker desired the assistance of the Children’s Aid Society in money and in furnishing clothes.” The group decided to provide the clothing in addition to \$25 a month.²⁵² Two weeks later, Blaker sent a letter “expressing thanks” for the aid, but asked for additional “clothes at once.”²⁵³

The Friendly Visitor visited every home in her district to ensure that children had adequate clothing so they could attend school. The Friendly Visitor was the primary contact with the family and the one who usually distributed clothing to families. Eliza Blaker explained that the Friendly Visitor “goes to the home as a friend. Her attention is at first directed to the child, and through him, she hopes to reach the entire family. Her mission is not to relieve the physical wants of any one except the child. All other cases for material relief must be reported to the proper societies in organized charity.”²⁵⁴ Nettie Duzan, one of the original Friendly Visitors, noted the need for clothing in many of the homes she visited. She wrote that many children

²⁴⁹ “Minutes, 1881-1888,” December 11, 1881, p. 25.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, January 11, 1882, p. 26.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, September 23, 1882, p. 35.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, October 4, 1883, pp. 42-43.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, October 18, 1883, p. 44.

²⁵⁴ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1892*, p. 12.

“can only be gained into the kindergartens by completely clothing them.”²⁵⁵ In another entry, Duzan wrote that the Moore boys “were almost naked for lack of clothing.”²⁵⁶

Historian Paul Boyer describes the Friendly Visitor as the “keystone” to the “entire charity organization structure.” A middle- or upper-class woman visited families assigned to her by a charity organization in cities across the country.²⁵⁷ The goal of the Friendly Visitor was to develop a close relationship with the family, to set a good example, and to help the family with their moral development. Historian Walter Trattner explains that this relationship was generally a professional relationship; the relationship could not be personal because the visitors did not see their “clients” as equals.²⁵⁸ Boyer explains that the Friendly Visitor was to “bring the poor to share her own values and moral standards—to make them more like herself.”²⁵⁹

In Indianapolis, there was a Friendly Visitor for each district of the kindergarten. The visitor was usually the district kindergarten teacher, although some IFK clubwomen made occasional visits. In 1898, IFK visitors made 6,332 visits to the homes of families in their districts.²⁶⁰ These visitors kept detailed records of their visits, including the living situation of the families, the employment, if any, of the parents, and what items they left with the families. Trattner explains that these records helped to “evaluate progress and insure continuity.”²⁶¹ Blaker wrote that it was “necessary to go into these homes and to ascertain the desires, the ambitions, the tastes, the needs of these parents that one may know how to help the children.

²⁵⁵ “Friendly Visitor Records,” no date, 74. The entry that Nettie Duzan wrote on pages 73-78 of this Bound Volume are some type of Annual Report that she wrote tallying total items received and given out for the year. The entry most likely was written sometime in the spring of 1886, but no exact date is given.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., October 4-October 30, 1886, pp. 101-2.

²⁵⁷ Paul S. Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 150.

²⁵⁸ Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 101.

²⁵⁹ Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America*, 152.

²⁶⁰ Eliza A. Blaker, “Superintendent’s Report,” *The Kindergarten Monthly* II, no. 8 (May 1898): 121. Hereafter, “Superintendent’s Report 1898.”

²⁶¹ Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, 102.

To see the little ones in the kindergartens only gives but a partial insight into their needs.”²⁶²

One of the purposes of the visit was to identify potential students and encourage parents to bring their children to the kindergarten schools. After children were enrolled in the kindergarten, the visitors were responsible for distributing invitations directly to the homes, to invite parents to programs that occurred at the schools.

The Friendly Visitors kept detailed notes of what type of clothing they distributed and lists of recipients. For example, Nettie Duzan found the Rice family in a “distressing condition” in the fall of 1885. An extended family living together but with only one wage earner was unable to provide adequate clothing for two young girls of kindergarten age. The little girls had watched neighbors go off to the kindergarten the day before and cried because they could not attend. Duzan must have reported the condition of this family to the Society immediately, because the next day “three dresses and two pairs of stockings were . . . given to the society especially for this family.”²⁶³

Another time, Duzan found the Dickson family living in an alley where she “did not know there was a house.” After finding an appropriate reference to vouch that Mrs. Dickson was an “honest industrious woman worthy of assistance,” Duzan gave Mary and Jerry Dickson two pairs of shoes, two sets of underwear, a hood, and three aprons so they could attend the kindergarten.²⁶⁴ Another time, Duzan found Dan Donahue a new pair of shoes so he could get a job as a bellboy and contribute financially to his family.²⁶⁵

As seen with the bellboy, aid was not solely restricted to children of kindergarten age; clothing and shoes were often given to older children, as well as infants and toddlers. For example, Duzan gave “[t]wo aprons, two pairs of shoes, four pairs of stockings, hood, skirt, cap,

²⁶² *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 18.

²⁶³ “Friendly Visitor Records,” September 1-November 7, 1885, p. 30.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, February 5-March 5, 1886, p. 65.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

and cloaks, pair of mittens” to three children in the Montgomery family who attended kindergarten. Duzan continues, “[o]f the baby clothing which was given to me to distribute, three aprons, two pairs of stockings, pair shoes, were given to the baby at this house. Also a baby shawl.”²⁶⁶ Another time, Duzan gave two flannel skirts and two nightgowns to a baby at the Sanders house.²⁶⁷ On a few occasions, IFK reported giving a few adults pieces of clothing, although the circumstances prompting this are unclear.²⁶⁸

The clothing given to the children came with two expectations: it was to remain clean and the children who received clothing would attend kindergarten regularly. Duzan explained that the families “are impressed that the neat clothing they receive for their children must be kept clean.”²⁶⁹ She noted when families or children complied and kept the clothing clean. For example, Duzan gave one boy a full set of clothing and later a pair of shoes.²⁷⁰ She explained, “the boy has been completely clothed by us but the clothing is kept clean and the new pride and self-respect of the boy repay our care.”²⁷¹ Later, Duzan explained that though she did not always understand why, children who lived in dirty homes came to school with clean clothing. She wrote, “[p]erhaps their pride or I know not what, is touched for as a general thing the children when they have the proper clothing come clean to kindergarten.”²⁷²

Although IFK was generous with their aid to families, not every family with children received what they asked for. There was some type of reference system in place to ensure that only the “worthy” poor received aid, although none of the Friendly Visitors fully explained this system. For example, the Williams family with two young girls was given four aprons. Mrs.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., November 9-December 4, 1885, p. 36.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., December 7-December 30, 1885, p. 46.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., September 1, 1885-March 17, 1886, p. 67. Duzan reports that five adults were given aid during this time.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., November 9-December 4, 1885, p. 36.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., September 1-November 7, 1885, p. 31; November 9-December 4, 1885, p. 35.

²⁷¹ Ibid., November 9-December 4, 1885, pp. 35-36.

²⁷² Ibid., December 7-December 30, 1885, pp. 45-46.

Williams asked for more clothing, but Duzan found that “the man earned good wages and nothing seemed to make it impossible for him to provide for his own family.”²⁷³ At other times, a family was felt to be unworthy of aid, but the Friendly Visitor and IFK could not let children suffer because of a parent’s lifestyle or poor choices. Duzan wrote about a young African-American boy named Alexander Churchill who “again needed shoes.” Duzan told the mother that IFK “did not propose to keep him in clothing but the situation was so hard from the boys standpoint that he was granted a pair.”²⁷⁴ Duzan did not note why she felt the family did not deserve the clothing. Another time, Duzan explained, “[w]e sometimes give not because the family is worthy but simply as a means for separating the child for at least three hours from his unpleasant surroundings. The children have been helped where we would not recommend giving substantial aid to either parents.”²⁷⁵ Eliza Blaker reaffirmed Duzan’s choice to give the child clothing. Blaker wrote that the visitor “clothes the little one, no matter how unworthy the parents. It is her duty to make him comfortable and get him into the Kindergarten.”²⁷⁶

Most families, and most children, seemed genuinely grateful for the clothing they received. However, Duzan did recount at least one story of a family who took advantage of IFK’s aid. The Sanders family had two young girls, Ruth and Hattie, and a baby. Duzan explained that

the family picks chickens at a cent apiece and in this may pay rent to the grocery above. Mr. Sanders does odd jobs and you would suppose that they just had enough to live on, yet much is spent for drink. The mother tried to sell one apron we had given Ruth for beer. This is the first time this year any unfair advantage has been taken of us, yet it has given the mother much work. When Ruth appears without an apron she is asked the reason. To avoid questioning the one apron is kept constantly clean.²⁷⁷

²⁷³ Ibid., 43.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., March 8-April 3, 1886, p. 70.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., August 13, 1886, pp. 75-76.

²⁷⁶ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1892*, p. 12.

²⁷⁷ “Friendly Visitor Records,” December 7-December 30, 1885, p. 45.

Duzan did not indicate that any type of action was taken against this family; apparently, she felt some satisfaction that Mrs. Sanders had to work hard to keep the one apron constantly clean.

In March 1886, Duzan tallied the amount of clothing she had distributed for the school year. She made over 1,500 visits to children's homes in addition to the 231 visits made by the kindergarten teachers. The visitors had distributed 468 articles of clothing to 103 children and 5 adults.²⁷⁸ A report prepared for the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 reported that IFK teachers made over 4,000 visits and distributed 1,700 articles of clothing for the previous school year.²⁷⁹ However, eighteen years later, the numbers were much lower: in 1911, it was reported that only 289 garments were distributed to 71 people.²⁸⁰

Though the women of IFK contributed much time and effort to supplying clothing for the children, clothing was always needed and the group relied heavily on donations from elsewhere. In 1893, the *Indianapolis Journal* reported, "[t]here is great need for clothes and almost everything else for the children, so that donations of any kind will be accepted."²⁸¹ In 1886, Duzan reported that a sewing club from First Presbyterian Church "gave shoes and aprons to the children."²⁸² In 1890, Blaker noted in her Superintendent's Report that children could obtain shoes from the Benevolent Society.²⁸³ IFK clubwomen sewed clothing especially for the kindergarten children and donated used clothing from their own households, but the group had to solicit outside donations from all over Indianapolis to meet the needs of the poor children of the kindergartens.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, September 1, 1885-March 17, 1886, p. 67.

²⁷⁹ Harper, *The Associated Work of the Women of Indiana*, 15.

²⁸⁰ "Annual Meeting," July 3, 1911, p. 4. It is not clear if the lower numbers were attributable to less need in the community or if the Society was more stringent with its giving and resources.

²⁸¹ "Early Day News in Indianapolis," *Indianapolis Journal*, February 21, 1893 in Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society Records 1884-1972, Box 3, Folder 8, "Articles and Newspaper Clippings, 1893-1925," Manuscripts and Visual Collections, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

²⁸² "Friendly Visitor Records," March 8-April 3, 1886, pp. 70-71.

²⁸³ "Superintendent's Report," Bound Volume 1512, December 7-January 6, 1890, p. 185.

In 1894, Blaker wrote an article for the *Kindergarten Magazine*, the official publication of the International Kindergarten Union. Critics charged that the free kindergartens distributing food and clothing to poor children and families only fostered poverty. Blaker explained that “[c]lothing given to a destitute child of the free kindergarten need not engender poverty, if it be given on the condition of regularity in attendance except in cases of sickness.”²⁸⁴ Blaker also maintained that it only cost \$2 to keep a child in kindergarten for a year, including food and clothing.²⁸⁵

In addition to clothing, the clubwomen of IFK ensured that the children were fed a lunch at school. In 1884, the by-laws of IFK included a rule that the “lunch fund shall be partially provided by the payment of five cents or more each week by members present at the meeting.”²⁸⁶ The IFK Annual Report for 1891 included a “Luncheon Report” that explained that lunches were served five days a week.²⁸⁷ Thornbrough explains that “[s]ome of the kindergartens also served hot breakfasts, and all of them served free lunches.”²⁸⁸

The lunches varied, both in substance and in cost for IFK. For example, on October 14, 1884, the children ate ginger cakes at a cost of \$.10. On September 3 and 4, 1884, the children ate bread, butter, and apples both days. The cost on the September 4 was only \$.10. But, on October 24, the children ate beef sandwiches at a much higher price of \$1.04. The price of lunch was always significantly higher when meat was served.²⁸⁹ The total cost to feed the children for

²⁸⁴ Blaker, “Obstacles to Kindergarten Progress in our Large Cities,” 359.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 358.

²⁸⁶ “Minutes, 1881-1888,” May 3, 1884, p. 59.

²⁸⁷ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1891*. This document reports that lunches were only served from December to May, but an earlier document from 1884 lists lunches for September, October, and November. See “Minutes, 1881-1888,” November 8, 1884, p. 85.

²⁸⁸ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 19. However, I found no record that breakfast was served to children.

²⁸⁹ “Minutes, 1881-1888,” November 8, 1884, p. 85.

the first three months of the school year for 1884 was \$21.27 out of the \$28.20 donated to the lunch fund for this period.²⁹⁰

The clubwomen relied on parents of schoolchildren to supply what food they could for weekly lunches to supplement their own weekly dues. The Friendly Visitor, after she had ensured that the children were clothed and attended school regularly, often solicited parents for food donations by requesting that they send a lunch with their child. Duzan explained that the “mothers were first all visited in reference to admitting the children to the kindergarten. Those able to furnish the luncheon once a month or to pay a small tuition were thus found.”²⁹¹ In another entry, Duzan noted in her monthly report that two fathers, whose children attended kindergarten in one district, were grocers and were “needed especially for the luncheon and tuition lists.”²⁹² In the Luncheon Reports, Blaker often noted when a parent donated food. A Mrs. Metzler, a mother of one child, donated food every week in January 1890 including ginger snaps, cakes, and crackers.²⁹³ A parent in the St. George’s district donated \$.30 to the lunch fund on January 18, 1890.²⁹⁴

Nettie Duzan noted when certain parents sent lunch, sometimes as a type of payment or appreciation for the clothing their children had received. For example, after Duzan gave clothing to Charlie and Bessie Fournety, Mrs. Fournety indicated she would send lunches when she could to show her appreciation.²⁹⁵ Another woman, who had never received aid from IFK, sent a lunch a week.²⁹⁶ IFK’s efforts to find other sources for lunches must have been successful;

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 86.

²⁹¹ “Friendly Visitor Records,” no date, 73.

²⁹² Ibid., August 23-September 4, 1886, p. 88.

²⁹³ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1513, January 6-February 3, 1890, p. 13.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 15.

²⁹⁵ “Friendly Visitor Records,” February 5-March 5, 1886, p. 62.

²⁹⁶ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1512, December 2, 1889, p. 149.

Duzan recorded in 1888 that “[n]early one half of the children attending kindergarten bring at least one luncheon or a mite for the tuition fund.”²⁹⁷

IFK also developed programs to ensure that the children were taught about food and cooking. The Domestic Training School and the Cooking Classes both served this purpose. The Cooking Classes were designed “to keep the cooking, as far as possible, within the kinds of food that the children can find at home, or could afford to have, but to teach her how to use it economically and to prepare it healthfully.”²⁹⁸ The children worked on an exhaustive list of recipes, including bread and rolls, fried ham and eggs, cookies, creamed corn, tomato and celery soup, and potatoes in all forms: baked, boiled, fried, made into balls and soup.²⁹⁹ After the children cooked meals, they practiced serving food to invited guests. Leftover meals from this Saturday class were saved for the kindergarten’s lunch on Monday or sent to sick families in the area.³⁰⁰ The girls were supposed to cook the same meals for their families during the week and make a report to the cooking class the next week. The girls also cooked food for the kindergarten lunches occasionally. In February 1890, the girls cooked oatmeal and boiled potatoes at the Pearl Street Kindergarten and potato soup and boiled cabbage at the African-American Kindergarten.³⁰¹

The Cooking Classes went further than simply cooking food. The children learned to shop at the market and learned about different cuts of meat. The children were required to keep recipe books in their best handwriting. The children also had lessons on setting the table

²⁹⁷ “Friendly Visitor Records,” no date, 74.

²⁹⁸ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1891.*

²⁹⁹ Blaker, “Superintendent’s Report 1898,” p. 123.

³⁰⁰ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1891.*

³⁰¹ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1513, February 3-March 3, 1890, pp. 26, 29, 31.

and tending to the kitchen, pantry, and cellar.³⁰² In this way, IFK enabled children with valuable skill sets for their future roles as parent, servant, cook, or maid.

The Domestic Training Classes, Cooking Classes, and Slojd Classes, explained above, expose several potential problems within the kindergarten movement, as well as other reform movements. For example, some women's groups wanted to create training programs for women who worked in factories and encourage these factory workers to take positions in domestic service. However, Anne F. Scott points out that these training programs "coincidentally" provided patrons of clubs "with well-trained household help."³⁰³ Barbara Beatty argues that there were "clearly racial overtones" in some domestic training programs, as they were often implemented especially for African-American students.³⁰⁴ She explains that "[s]ome whites argued that black children needed the kindergarten more than white children because of the manual training it provided, and some blacks concurred."³⁰⁵ In Indianapolis, however, it appears that both white and black children could attend Domestic Training Classes on the weekend, albeit in separate classes. While the Domestic Training, Cooking, and Slojd classes all had practical value for poor, urban children, it is understandable that modern historians have questioned motives behind some of these programs.

As previously discussed, IFK showed a strong concern with the children's cleanliness, particularly with donated clothing. Many times, Nettie Duzan noted when a family she had visited was particularly dirty. She described the Sharp family, who had a little girl, Lizzie, attending the kindergartens. Duzan described Mrs. Sharp, a washerwoman, as being "tied at home with a number of poorly dressed, dirty little children. . . . Perhaps there is no excuse for

³⁰² *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1891.*

³⁰³ Scott, *Natural Allies*, 114.

³⁰⁴ Beatty, "Child Gardening," 80.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

the dirt, perhaps there is.”³⁰⁶ In another entry, Duzan noted that “[m]any of these dirty, diseased women and children” lived in a particular kindergarten district.³⁰⁷

Cleanliness was integrated into kindergarten lessons. Eliza Blaker once wrote that kindergarten “work has for its aim the harmonious growth of both body and soul; the present well being and happiness of the child; his preparation for the home and school life and for future citizenship. This involves clean and healthful conditions, the inculcation of correct desires and right action—the formation of a true and noble character.”³⁰⁸ Thornbrough observes that “[t]eachers and members of the society also went early to the kindergartens in some districts to wash faces and hands and comb the hair of small tots who did not receive these attentions at home” to teach and foster cleanliness to the children.³⁰⁹ Eliza Blaker recalled a story from the Pearl Street Kindergarten, about “Little Willie of the baby class” who “had been given a lesson [in] cleanliness” at school. The following day, “he rushed in to the janitress and said, ‘Laura, Laura, give me some water quick to wash my face.’ The janitress asked him if his mother washed him before he came to kindergarten. He said ‘No, nobody ever washes me and I can’t go in school dirty.’”³¹⁰ In an entry from 1888, Blaker noted that the recent visitors to the kindergartens “have noticed how much cleaner and happier the majority of our children are now, than they were three years ago.”³¹¹ Blaker must have concluded that the children were cleaner because of the lessons about cleanliness taught at the kindergartens.

In addition to expectations of cleanliness at the kindergartens, IFK opened programs for older children to reinforce these ideas about cleanliness. The Nursery Maids Class taught young girls about the proper way to bathe, clothe, and feed infants. In the Cooking Class, boys and girls

³⁰⁶ “Friendly Visitor Records,” November 9-December 4, 1885, p. 36.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., August 23-September 4, 1886, p. 88.

³⁰⁸ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 71.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 19.

³¹⁰ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1511, December 31, 1887-February 4, 1888, p. 20.

³¹¹ Ibid., April 19, 1888, p. 75.

learned about how to clean and care for table linens, how to wash dishes and utensils, and how to mend, wash, iron, and fold clothing. In the Kitchen-Garden, “every phase of house work is taught, with tiny dishes, stoves, closets, furniture, brooms, tubs, irons, etc. In this miniature school the young children pass through all the different lines of housework before being promoted to the practical departments.” The Kitchen-Gardens also incorporated songs and games about housework.³¹² The Kitchen-Gardens were originally organized for girls, but expanded to include boys when the boys asked to be included.³¹³ The Domestic Training Schools were organized in 1889 and met on Saturdays. The schools’ purpose was “not intended to train servants, but to make them useful sons and daughters. The children are taught the cooking of many simple articles of food, the care of a dining room, dishwashing, waiting on the table, bedroom work, preparing dishes for the sick, washing and ironing, mending, plain dressmaking and bonnet trimming, under competent teachers.”³¹⁴ Thornbrough explains that

[m]ost of the pupils in the Saturday classes came from homes in which they did not have an opportunity to learn good housekeeping. As a result of the training received in the classes, they were expected to improve the conditions in their own homes by putting into practice during the week the lessons which they learned on Saturday. The primary purpose of the classes was not vocational training but to teach the child to be useful in the home . . . The influence of the children, it was hoped, would in turn benefit the parents.³¹⁵

Thousands of children responded to the Domestic Training programs offered by IFK. In 1902, enrollment at the Domestic Training Schools was 2,360.³¹⁶ The total enrollment in the Domestic Training Schools from 1889 to 1907 was 33,627.³¹⁷

³¹² *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1891.*

³¹³ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1513, February 3- March 3, 1890, p. 26.

³¹⁴ Harper, *The Associated Work of the Women of Indiana*, 15.

³¹⁵ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 24-25. Anne Durst discusses a similar situation in the Day Nurseries in New York. Matrons bathed the children at school, hoping to teach “the mothers through the children” about their expectations of cleanliness. Durst, “Of Women, By Women, and For Women,” 150.

³¹⁶ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 15.

³¹⁷ “Silver Anniversary Letter.”

Thornbrough claims that the Domestic Training Classes were one of the most important programs implemented by IFK and that they were the “pioneer efforts at domestic training in the Middle West.” As with the Slojd classes, IFK continued to run this program until the public schools took over its content. Thornbrough observes that other cities around the country adopted similar programs based on Indianapolis domestic training classes.³¹⁸ For example, a Flora Kelt, of Boston, wrote to Blaker in 1894, that “[i]t gives me much pleasure to tell you that at last one kitchen garden has accomplished a dinner to visitors by the cooking and dining room classes. It was our first attempt, although I have been interested in it for more than ten years, as you know.”³¹⁹ It appears that Kelt visited Indianapolis to observe these programs, or at least had been in close contact with Blaker about the IFK Domestic Training Classes.

There were also other instances when IFK tried to care for the physical well-being of the children. For example, a little boy named Stanton McKinney from the Riverside Kindergarten needed a leg brace that cost \$25. The clubwomen worked to ensure that Stanton got needed medical attention. Mrs. Samuel Merrill asked Oscar McCullouch for help. McCullouch gave Mrs. Merrill \$12.50 from the Benevolent Society fund. Mrs. Stanley Peelle, the president of IFK, asked a physician at the Surgical Institute for half off the brace and the physician agreed.³²⁰ In 1888, Belle Moore, another Friendly Visitor, reported that she had taken several children to an institute to receive some sort of leg treatments.³²¹

IFK also worked to ensure the children were physically safe on their way to and from school. In one district, a “nurse girl” met children who lived on Maryland Street and helped them to cross the railroad each day. Belle Golay recorded that she found this girl to be a “great

³¹⁸ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 25.

³¹⁹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 7.

³²⁰ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1511, March 2, 1889, p. 217.

³²¹ “Friendly Visitor Records,” June 2-June 18, 1888, pp. 221-22.

help” and that many parents “would not let [their children] come were it not that she is there to take care of them.”³²²

Although IFK provided for children’s physical needs in a variety of ways, many kindergartens across the country operated in similar ways. For example, Felix Adler opened a kindergarten for children whose parents were unemployed in 1878 in Manhattan. At these schools, he provided educational lessons in addition to clothing, food, and “personal-hygiene facilities.”³²³ In San Francisco, kindergarten teachers collected enough money to pay the rent for a sick family.³²⁴ Also in San Francisco, when a fire left hundreds homeless, the Stanford Kindergarten let families live in their classrooms until other facilities were made available.³²⁵

Social Activities

IFK generally marked holidays and special occasions by special decorations, food, presents, and parties. Thanksgiving and Christmas were celebrated, as was May Festival and Froebel’s birthday. Reports indicate that the children celebrated both Washington’s and Lincoln’s birthdays, but there is very little information about these particular holidays.³²⁶ IFK also marked the end of the school year with special picnics or parties.

Even in one of its earliest years, IFK clubwomen served a special Thanksgiving lunch to 58 children.³²⁷ Another year, the kindergarten classes were decorated with corn, apples, potatoes, onions, and pumpkins. The children also enjoyed games, stories, and songs about

³²² Ibid., October 13-October 29, 1887, p. 171.

³²³ Shapiro, *Child’s Garden*, 86 and Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 21-22.

³²⁴ Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 29.

³²⁵ Ibid., 44.

³²⁶ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 17 and *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 20.

³²⁷ “Minutes, 1881-1888,” no date, 46. This entry is written between an entry for November 23, 1883 and December 14, 1883, but the exact date is not given.

Thanksgiving.³²⁸ In 1888, the kindergartens were decorated with paper chains and pressed ferns and leaves. One child was so impressed by the holiday lunch, he said the room “seem[ed] like a hotel.” The children also had a Bible lesson on “God remembers his people” and heard stories about the Mayflower and Miles Standish.³²⁹ Blaker noted that the kindergarten children had been “bountifully remembered” for that Thanksgiving 1890. She also noted that the girls at the Pearl Street Kitchen-Garden and the Kitchen-Garden for African-American girls had been served a lunch or refreshments by volunteers and teachers.³³⁰ The same year Blaker also recorded several food donations for the children’s special lunch, which included pumpkins, coffee, nuts, and flour. Indianapolis Public School Number 22 donated half a barrel of turnips to the kindergartens.³³¹ There was so much food donated for the Thanksgiving lunch that the kindergartens had “a quantity of provision left to help with the lunches next week.”³³² In 1892, one clubwoman wrote to many Sunday School classes across the city, asking for donations to IFK’s Thanksgiving fund. Nine Sunday Schools from various churches responded, donating a total of \$95.93. The same year, the Indianapolis Public Schools donated an additional \$165 to the Thanksgiving fund.³³³

In December 1883, the clubwomen arranged to place a Christmas tree in the kindergartens. The same year, the clubwomen also gathered toys and candy for 100 children.³³⁴ Another year, children at various kindergartens received toy horses, sheep, trumpets, dolls, balls, and marbles. Santa Claus visited the St. George Street Kindergarten.³³⁵ For Christmas 1891, Blaker recorded multiple donations for the children, including popcorn, gum drops, toys, dolls,

³²⁸ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1511, December 2, 1889, p. 135.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, December 3, 1888, p. 165.

³³⁰ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1513, April 19, 1890, p. 99.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, November 3-December 1, 1890, p. 221.

³³² *Ibid.*, November 3-December 1, 1890, p. 223.

³³³ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1892*, p. 7.

³³⁴ “Minutes, 1881-1888,” December 14, 1883, pp. 46-47.

³³⁵ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1512, January 6, 1890, pp. 179-80.

picture books, and a tree.³³⁶ Blaker also explained that the Christmas story was told in every class. Every child made a special “Christmas book” to take home; Blaker wrote that these books were “highly treasured in the families.”³³⁷ Mary Cooper, a Friendly Visitor and teacher, described the Christmas party at one kindergarten, “[t]he children were very happy at Christmas time. They enjoyed their dinner of turkey, light rolls, cake, etc. Their eyes fairly danced with delight, at the sight of the bags of candy, oranges and bananas. They had a feast with enough candy and nuts left over for two days lunch, after the Holidays.”³³⁸ Belle Golay, another Friendly Visitor recorded that “[o]ur Christmas entertainment at St. George’s was a success. The child had all the luncheon they could eat. The parents willingly donated the luncheon and seemed to think it was their duty to do so. There were sixty children present and I never saw them look happier than they did that day, and the order was excellent.”³³⁹

IFK ensured that children who could not attend the Christmas “entertainments” still received presents. Nettie Duzan noted that she gave a pop gun, a whistle, blocks, a stocking with candy, and oranges to Jakey Trump especially for Christmas.³⁴⁰ Jakey was a sickly child with alcoholic parents and it appears that IFK took special care of him.³⁴¹ It is doubtful that every child received as many things as Jakey for Christmas. Nettie Duzan wrote, “[i]t has been a pleasure to me to carry to these sick, the toys left over from the Christmas entertainment.”³⁴² Duzan also made a special effort to get the Maxwell family toys for Christmas. She recorded this episode:

³³⁶ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1513, December 1, 1890-January 5, 1891, no page number. Blaker ran out of pages in the notebook and attached small sheets of paper to finish her last report for the year.

³³⁷ “Superintendent’s Report,” Bound Volume 1512, January 6, 1890, p. 179.

³³⁸ “Friendly Visitor Records,” December 3-December 31, 1887, p. 187.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, December 7-December 30, 1885, p. 41.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, March 8-April 3, 1886, p. 71.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, January 3-February 5, 1887, p. 128.

Lizzie and Charlie Maxwell had moved too far away to attend the Free Kindergarten No. 1 Christmas entertainment, and were reported to me by the Benevolent Society since they were not well enough to attend the Christmas at Tomlins' Hall [sic] and would therefore have no Christmas. I accordingly hunted them out and gave to Charlie a Noah's Ark and watch and to Lizzie a doll and set of dishes. This is a very deserving family and one that seems to appreciate the kindergarten.³⁴³

On April 13, 1889, the Society took 633 children to Tomlinson Hall to celebrate Froebel's birthday. The children were given Easter eggs and candy.³⁴⁴ On April 26, 1890, nearly 800 children went to Tomlinson Hall to celebrate Froebel's 108th birthday. The children played games and some girls demonstrated lessons they had learned at the Kitchen-Gardens.³⁴⁵ The children who could not attend due to sickness or bad weather were not forgotten and received candy.³⁴⁶ The children were also given packets of flower seeds so they could plant their own garden at home.³⁴⁷

IFK also celebrated with picnics at the end of the school year. For example, in 1886, Nettie Duzan gave out 333 tickets to children and their mothers. The tickets were to be a reward for good attendance.³⁴⁸ In May 1889, several kindergartens held picnics either at the schools or took a special trip to nearby woods for the celebration.³⁴⁹

In addition to holiday celebrations and special celebrations for kindergarten children, IFK held monthly "Children's Parties" for children from age nine to eighteen. The purpose of these parties was to "offer pure, refined social pleasure to the growing boys and girls."³⁵⁰ At these parties, held on Saturday afternoons, the children sang songs, read and told stories, played

³⁴³ Ibid., 128-29. Duzan consistently misspells Tomlinson Hall throughout her records.

³⁴⁴ "Superintendent's Report," Bound Volume 1512, May 6, 1889, p. 27.

³⁴⁵ "Superintendent's Report," Bound Volume 1513, April 19, 1890, p. 105 and April 7-May 5, 1890, p. 129.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., April 7-May 5, 1890, p. 135.

³⁴⁷ Dresser, "The Kindergarten Movement in Indianapolis," 449.

³⁴⁸ "Friendly Visitor Records," June 5-July 1, 1886, p. 85.

³⁴⁹ "Superintendent's Report," Bound Volume 1512, June 1, 1889, p. 47.

³⁵⁰ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1892*, p. 24.

games, and enjoyed some refreshments.³⁵¹ A small admission fee was charged to defray the cost of entertainment and refreshments.³⁵² But, “[t]he matter of giving a fee and the amount to be given is left to each one to settle for himself or herself. No child is deprived of being present because he lacks a penny.”³⁵³ One hundred and fifty girls attended the first of these parties, held in 1892. Eliza Blaker’s report indicated that a separate party for boys and a separate party for African-American children would be held in the future.³⁵⁴ In 1894, over \$75 was collected and pooled into “The Teachers Entertainment Fund” to help purchase books and other materials for these parties.³⁵⁵

One of the most elaborate celebrations was an annual event called Playfest. An *Indianapolis News* article indicated that this annual event was held at Tomlinson Hall until IFK outgrew this location. In 1909, the event was held at the State Fair Coliseum, with over 3,000 kindergarten children in attendance.³⁵⁶ The children gathered by school in the center arena of the Coliseum, while parents and other visitors watched from the stands. For entertainment, the children played games, such as pretending to build a snowman or pretending to be a bird or frog. The *Indianapolis News* Newsboys Band provided musical accompaniment to many activities, including the singing of “America.”³⁵⁷ This event was also a fundraiser for the Kindergartens as visitors were charged twenty-five cents admission.³⁵⁸ The *Indianapolis News* reported that, “[t]he play festival was the sole topic in hundreds of Indianapolis homes

³⁵¹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 18.

³⁵² Harper, *The Associated Work of the Women of Indiana*, 15.

³⁵³ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 18.

³⁵⁴ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1892*, p. 24.

³⁵⁵ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 18.

³⁵⁶ “Bigger and Better Than Any Circus,” *Indianapolis News*, May 22, 1909, p. 12, c. 8.

³⁵⁷ “Twas a Sight to See in the Colosseum,” *Indianapolis News*, May 31, 1909, p. 16, c.1.

³⁵⁸ “Bigger and Better Than Any Circus.” *Indianapolis News*.

yesterday. It was such a complete success that it will undoubtedly be repeated in future years.”³⁵⁹

IFK clubwomen and teachers ensured that children’s educational, physical, and social needs were met. However, IFK realized that to be truly effective in changing the children’s lives, they had to enter the children’s home. Blaker explained, “[i]t is demonstrated that we must influence the child in the home as well as in the school.”³⁶⁰ By frequently meeting with the children’s parents, IFK clubwomen and, especially, teachers, could encourage certain behaviors at home. Since IFK teachers and Friendly Visitors already went into the children’s homes as part of their kindergarten work, inviting mothers to special meetings was a relatively simple process. Soon, IFK had at least six programs created especially for mothers and a smaller program for fathers in addition to their numerous children’s programs and Normal Training School.

³⁵⁹ “Twas a Sight to See in the Colosseum.” *Indianapolis News*.

³⁶⁰ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1892*, p. 11.

Photographs



A group of students at the Rhode Island Street Kindergarten in their classroom, decorated for the fall season. Eliza Blaker Collection, Butler University.



A group of Russian, Austrian, and Hungarian children enrolled in the Indianapolis Free Kindergartens, October 1914. Eliza Blaker Collection, Butler University

CHAPTER THREE:
TRAINING MOTHERS TO BE BETTER MOTHERS:
THE MOTHERS' PROGRAMS

*"It is a very sacred office to be a father and to be a mother. It is a high calling. It requires study, and work, and self-sacrifice, and prayer; we must have ideal ideals and try to reach some of them."*³⁶¹ Eliza A. Blaker, 1914

Motherhood was a central focus of both the national kindergarten movement and the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society. Johann Pestalozzi, a Swiss philosopher and proponent of education for the poor in the eighteenth century, believed that those studying childhood education could learn from observing mothers.³⁶² Pestalozzi's ideas influenced Friedrich Froebel, the father of the kindergartens. Froebel emphasized the importance of motherhood and childhood education throughout his books and work. He worried that industrialization had separated the roles of woman and mother, to the ultimate detriment of the child. Froebel believed this separation of women's roles had occurred among both working and upper class women. He advocated for the reunification of these roles, which he called a "primordial union."³⁶³ In order to restore motherhood, Froebel wanted to reform preschool education and the family structure and child rearing practices that surrounded childhood education.³⁶⁴ Froebel sought to set up special training centers to train mothers and teachers.

Froebel even published a book specifically for mothers; *Mother-Play* (1843) was a guide for mothers in their play with their children. *Mother-Play* included examples of games and songs for a mother or kindergarten teacher to use with her child or student. Froebel believed play activities should have a purpose and direction. These games and songs were "intended to provide ample opportunity for the child's social and personal development." Many of the

³⁶¹ Blaker, "Child Welfare," 290.

³⁶² Steedman, "The Mother Made Conscious," 153.

³⁶³ Shapiro, *Child's Garden*, 25.

³⁶⁴ Allen, "Let Us Live with Our Children," 25.

activities fostered cooperation and taught children that they were a member of a group.³⁶⁵

Later, other American kindergarten advocates wrote their own books, games, and stories to update *Mother-Play* and make the activities more applicable to the lives of American children. For example, songs about castles and knights changed to songs about firefighters or police officers.³⁶⁶

Republican Motherhood and the Cult of Domesticity, terms historians have identified to describe women's roles in the United States, contributed to the progressive ideas of Scientific or Educated Motherhood practiced by the American kindergarten movement. Republican Motherhood, an eighteenth century idea, instructed mothers to educate their sons to become good, virtuous citizens.³⁶⁷ The Victorian idea of the Cult of Domesticity taught that women should be pious, submissive, pure, and domestic.³⁶⁸ Historian Molly Ladd-Taylor explains that Educated Motherhood perpetuated both Republican Motherhood and the Cult of Domesticity in three different ways: "It considered motherhood women's chief duty and function; it assumed that children should be raised in their own homes; and it emphasized women's need for instruction on their domestic responsibility." Ladd-Taylor notes that the shift from religious and moral themes to scientific and medical information was distinctly new to the idea of Educated Motherhood.³⁶⁹

Educated Motherhood stated that "[c]hild-rearing demanded very sophisticated skills of management" and that "different types of responses and discipline were appropriate at

³⁶⁵ Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 7.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 72. Updating Froebel's work to meet the needs of American children led to a significant split in the American kindergarten movement between those who wanted to update Froebel's works and activities and those who felt Froebel's work and kindergarten curricula should remain unchanged. For more information, see Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 67-82, and Beatty, "The Letter Killeth," 42-58.

³⁶⁷ Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment—An American Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (Summer, 1976): 202.

³⁶⁸ Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1966): 152.

³⁶⁹ Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 4.

different stages in the child's growth."³⁷⁰ Therefore, women needed training to become good mothers. Historian Sheila Rothman explains that a "mother had to respond to the budding 'intelligence' of the infant with more than affection; she had to study, read, and think to know precisely how to react."³⁷¹ Kindergartens, settlement houses, and other women's voluntary groups (nearly all populated by the middle- or upper-class) felt they understood new scientific information best and that it was their duty to enlighten the public with their knowledge. Educated Motherhood influenced the programs that IFK implemented, especially its programs with mothers. This idea of Educated Motherhood particularly fits with two programs offered to mothers of kindergarten children in Indianapolis, the Mothers' Instruction Classes and the Mothers' Council, during which mothers read and thought about kindergarten theory and how to apply it to their own children. Kindergarten teachers, usually young, middle-class women, taught these classes to working-class mothers, whose children attended the free kindergartens.

The kindergarten was one of the chosen institutions to disseminate the idea of Educated Motherhood to American mothers. Rothman maintains that one of the kindergarten movement's goals was to "bring its knowledge of child training to all American families" and "to become the great transmitter of the ideology of educated motherhood to all classes."³⁷² At first, IFK emphasized training children properly so they in turn could impress what they had learned upon their parents. Anna Bryan, leader of the free kindergartens in Louisville, Kentucky, believed that the school could educate the parents through their children. The kindergarten was not to take away from the responsibilities of motherhood, but through "subtle influence, its transforming power over the little ones through song and play, strengthening the family relations, and binding the child closer to the mother" should awaken the mother "to a sense of

³⁷⁰ Sheila M. Rothman, *Woman's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1978), 97.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ibid., 103.

duty.”³⁷³ Education historian Marvin Lazerson observes that kindergarten leaders believed that “[c]hildren who were clean and thrifty taught cleanliness and thrift to their parents. Through the child, the family could be reached, and through that, the society.”³⁷⁴

Rather than only relying on children to teach their parents lessons learned in the kindergartens, IFK women and teachers and other kindergarten associations across the country quickly realized that their goals would be easier to attain if they extended their work into the children’s home through a more direct approach. Almost from its founding, IFK focused on helping and educating the entire family, not just the young children in the kindergartens.³⁷⁵

Education historian Elizabeth Dale Ross explains that one of the purposes of the local kindergarten associations was to establish “a working relationship with the parents.”³⁷⁶

Members of IFK organized numerous programs for mothers, older children, and occasionally, fathers. Blaker wrote, “I always hold that it is absolutely impossible for a teacher to do the best for any child without some knowledge of the home from which it comes.”³⁷⁷ In another instance, Blaker wrote, “[t]o influence the child in the home one must win the confidence of the parents, at least of the mother. Why the latter? Because it is, usually, she who makes the home. Let her be idle, coarse and a slattern, and the abode will become a house of utter misery—‘A place to fly from rather than to fly to.’”³⁷⁸ Lois G. Hufford, a teacher at the Normal School in Indianapolis, explained that “every member of the families must be reached by wholesome influence—parents and older brothers and sisters as well as the children of

³⁷³ Beatty, *Preschool Education in America*, 81.

³⁷⁴ Marvin Lazerson, “Social Reform and Early Childhood Education: Some Historical Perspectives,” in *As the Twig is Bent: Readings in Early Childhood Education*, ed. Robert H. Anderson and Harold G. Shane (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971), 26.

³⁷⁵ IFK opened a trial kindergarten in the winter of 1881; at least one program for mothers was organized less than three years later in January 1884.

³⁷⁶ Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 19.

³⁷⁷ Blaker, “Child Welfare,” 288.

³⁷⁸ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1892*, p. 11.

kindergarten age.”³⁷⁹ These IFK programs were a type of community outreach and sought to bring the entire family into closer contact with the organization. Contact with mothers began with a Friendly Visitor who was responsible for visiting every home in her assigned district. After this initial contact, every program for mothers took place outside of the home, except for the Cottage Meeting, a meeting that took place inside a private home.

It was not unusual for clubwomen to create clubs for other women, often working class women. Anne F. Scott explains that “[c]lubs, missionary societies, the WCTU, the YWCA, as they discovered the realities of wage-earning women’s lives, undertook to organize working women’s associations of various kinds hoping, as the New England Woman’s Club had once said, not to condescend.”³⁸⁰ As with the clubwomen who joined IFK, working or lower class women were able to leave the home and attend these meetings because the meetings were focused on domestic concerns. Studying child-rearing techniques, health, and sewing at IFK Mothers’ Meetings could “justify their departure from the home” because these were still consistent with their role as mothers.

The Friendly Visitor, usually a kindergarten teacher who was required to visit families within her district in the afternoons, often initiated contact with families. The Friendly Visitor often distributed clothing to young children. The visitor also kept detailed records of who received clothing and other aid. Often the IFK visiting teacher did much more. Lois G. Hufford described visitors as “friends and counselors and helpers in all the homes of the district.”³⁸¹ She sometimes referred sick parents to the appropriate society that could help them, such as the Maternity Society. Nettie Duzan, one of the Friendly Visitors in Indianapolis and a kindergarten

³⁷⁹ Hufford, “Free Kindergarten Work in Indianapolis: Twenty Years of Character Building,” 307.

³⁸⁰ Scott, *Natural Allies*, 163.

³⁸¹ Ray E. Boomhower, “‘The Thing is Right!’: Eliza Blaker and the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten Movement,” *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 16 (Winter 2004): 35.

teacher, summed up her purpose when she began regular visiting for the school year beginning August 1885: "The mothers were first all visited in reference to admitting the children to the kindergarten. . . . Children absent have been visited and the cause sought out. All applicants for help have been visited and those to whom they referred me for credentials."³⁸² Although one of the initial purposes was to identify new students, the visitor often visited local families with older children or women with no children at all.

The Friendly Visitors noted that it often took several visits to earn a mother's trust. Duzan reported that the reason Charlie and Bessie Fourtney had not been attending kindergarten was because they had no clothing to wear. Only after "the mother's confidence was slowly gained" did Duzan learn this information.³⁸³ It is understandable that these poor, sometimes immigrant, women would have been wary when a young woman showed up at her door and asked personal questions about their children, their husband, or their living situation.

Over time, the women began questioning the Friendly Visitors. Some women must have felt comfortable enough with the visitor to request her advice on various topics and saw her as a source of valuable information. Nettie Duzan listed the varied questions she sometimes received,

[w]e have been called upon for sympathy with deserted wives and one mother sent for advice as to what to do with her stove which had cracked. We have the naming of numerous little brothers and sisters. Was not their house rent too high? Would her straw hat be appropriate to wear to the Mother's Meeting? What should she do for her sick child? Do we approve of insuring children's lives, are questions arising out of thes [sic] friendly relations and to which as intelligent answers as possible have been given.³⁸⁴

These questions were similar to the questions mothers later asked at Mothers' Meetings, monthly gatherings of mothers of kindergarten students, and cover topics that the meetings

³⁸² "Friendly Visitor Records," no date, 73.

³⁸³ Ibid., February 5-March 5, 1886, p. 62.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., no date, 73-4.

later addressed. IFK records, however, only record selected comments from the mothers, so it is difficult to get a complete picture of what types of questions the mothers asked.

The notes of Duzan often reveal her personal judgments of these families, particularly the mothers. In June 1886, Duzan distributed over three hundred tickets to a kindergarten picnic to “encourage poor, tired decent mothers and to be an extra treat to the children in regular attendance.” She, however, omitted “mothers we knew to be bad women” and children who had poor attendance from her list of tickets.³⁸⁵ Special events, such as picnics and other social parties, reinforced the behaviors that IFK expected from students and mothers and rewarded those who attended school and participated in other events. These tickets rewarded families who met the moral and behavioral expectations of the visitor.

Mrs. Johnson, a poor, but “thrifty, prudent wife” was grateful for the shoes, coat, and shirtwaist her son, Oscar, had received. Mrs. Johnson was willing to work for the kindergarten to “pay” for the clothing. IFK supplied her with yarn and she knit five pairs of stockings for the kindergarten to distribute to other needy children.³⁸⁶ Another mother, Mrs. Fournety, sent a lunch to her children’s kindergarten when she could afford it, in return for the clothing her children received. Duzan noted her generosity and mused that “it [was] a pleasure to find a poor family not living off the county and really trying to help themselves.”³⁸⁷ Mrs. Fournety and Mrs. Johnson may have felt it was necessary to donate to IFK what they could; this may have assuaged the fact that neither was able to provide enough clothing for their children.

IFK soon began to expand both the number of kindergartens and its work with families, based on the success of the friendly visiting program. IFK began to create and expand programs for mothers, along with other programs for children of all ages. IFK first organized Mothers’

³⁸⁵ Ibid., June 5-July 1, 1886, p. 85.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., February 5-March 5, 1886, p. 66.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 62.

Meetings. Following the success of this type of meeting, IFK organized five other types of meetings, including the Mothers' Mass Meetings, the Mothers' Instruction Class, the Mothers' Council, the Mothers' Sewing Class, and finally, the Cottage Meeting.³⁸⁸ These meetings varied in size, location, and purpose. Some meetings were social meetings, while others served an educational purpose. A description of each type of meeting follows.

The Mothers' Meeting

On January 12, 1884, IFK meeting minutes indicated that some type of mothers' club formed in one of the kindergarten districts. At Eliza Blaker's request, mothers in the new club were to take over the sewing that IFK clubwomen had been doing.³⁸⁹ However, the minutes indicated that the mothers never took over all the sewing and that the clubwomen continued sewing garments at their weekly meetings to distribute to needy children. Less than a year later, the mothers were no longer sewing at these meetings at all. Blaker explained that sewing was dropped from these meetings because many of the mothers "were tired when they came to us, many discouraged, some few lazy and indifferent."³⁹⁰ Blaker's explanation might cover up a struggle between the mothers and the organizers of these meetings. IFK women may have believed that the mothers needed to learn to sew themselves, but found that the mothers were less than enthusiastic about this "opportunity." Perhaps the mothers could not sew and were embarrassed to admit they needed lessons. Or perhaps, the mothers were overworked and tired and wanted to spend the meeting time socializing, not working. The cause is unknown, but the purpose of these meetings changed from a sewing class to "an hour of rest and change, of

³⁸⁸ The order of these meetings is arbitrary and does not reflect their chronological order. However, the Mothers' Meeting was the first of the mothers' programs in Indianapolis and the other programs developed afterwards.

³⁸⁹ "Minutes, 1881-1888," January 12, 1884, p. 47.

³⁹⁰ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1891*, p. 23.

pleasure and conversation, of instruction and social intercourse.”³⁹¹ Blaker and other leaders decided that the program should be “in direct contrast to the individual home lives” of the women.³⁹² Similar to the purpose of the kindergarten, the Mothers’ Meetings removed the mothers from their own environment to provide new experiences and information, based upon the idea of Educated Motherhood.

Each kindergarten district held a Mothers’ Meeting on a monthly basis. Between fifty or sixty mothers and older sisters attended these meetings, often bringing along babies and young children.³⁹³ Realizing that the mothers could not find, or afford, other care for their young children, the kindergartens welcomed the children and even planned for their care during the meetings. Some of the kindergarten teachers were responsible for taking care of the young children and took “pleasure in relieving the tired mother of her charge.”³⁹⁴

The students of the Normal School, who were studying to become kindergarten teachers, prepared the lessons and led these Mothers’ Meetings as part of their coursework. The meetings were never to be “hastily or carelessly arranged” as it was especially important that the mothers felt like the teachers had gone out of their way for them. Blaker explained that to many mothers “it is a precious and new feeling that some one [sic] is thinking of and planning for them.”³⁹⁵ Careful preparation included the arrangement of flowers and plants on tables and the provision of coffee, tea, and sandwiches.³⁹⁶

Within a few years, the meetings expanded from lessons about kindergarten pedagogy to include talks on various topics related to home life, including “Training for Citizenship,” “A

³⁹¹ “Notes,” *The Kindergarten Monthly* II, no. 8 (May 1898): 123. Anne Durst describes power struggles between working mothers and the matrons at Day Nurseries that provided care for their children. See Durst, “Of Women, By Women, and For Women,” 141-59.

³⁹² *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1891*, p. 23.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

³⁹⁴ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1892*, p. 18.

³⁹⁵ Eliza A. Blaker, “Superintendent’s Report,” *The Kindergarten Monthly* I, no. 7 (May 1897): 107. Hereafter, “Superintendent’s Report 1897.”

³⁹⁶ “Notes,” *The Kindergarten Monthly*, 123.

Baby's Rights," "Stories for Children," and "Home-making and Housekeeping."³⁹⁷ Other topics later included health, clothing, hygiene, or food and cooking. At other times, the mothers used clay to create models, just as their children did at school.³⁹⁸ Sometimes the kindergarten classes performed plays for their mothers.³⁹⁹

One of the purposes of the Mothers' Meetings was to explain what the kindergarten did for children in simple, direct conversations because some mothers were wary of the kindergarten, an idea they knew very little about, at least at first. Just as with the Friendly Visitors, IFK teachers and leaders realized it took time to build relationships with the mothers and earn their trust. IFK's minutes reported that "wherever work is best understood, we have the warmest sympathy."⁴⁰⁰ The Mothers' Meetings provided another opportunity to inform the mothers about the purposes of other kindergarten programs. In 1891, Blaker explained, "we have made it a point of explaining the purpose of the Domestic Training School" (a Saturday class for grade school children to learn about cooking and housekeeping) at the meetings.⁴⁰¹ Duzan recorded that "[s]ome of the parents know nothing of the kindergartens except that they keep the children out of the street, but the Mothers' Meetings are enlightening them."⁴⁰² The Mothers' Meetings provided an opportunity to disseminate information directly to the mothers.

The Mothers' Meetings included literary and musical components led by the kindergarten teachers, and included singing and songs for the group. The teachers usually prepared the songs, but occasionally, a mother would offer to perform for the group. Blaker noted that the mothers at the African-American kindergarten "always sing several sacred songs at each gathering." The closing song for all meetings was always "Home, Sweet Home" and was

³⁹⁷ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 16.

³⁹⁸ Blaker, "Superintendent's Report 1897," p. 107.

³⁹⁹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1891*, p. 24.

⁴⁰⁰ "Minutes, 1881-1888," April 21, 1887, p. 179.

⁴⁰¹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1891*, p. 24.

⁴⁰² "Friendly Visitor Records," no date, 74.

written on the blackboard so that those who could read could participate in the singing.⁴⁰³ The closing song often reinforced the kindergarten's emphasis on home life.

After the formal program, the mothers and teachers gathered to talk informally about the children. The kindergarten teachers "exchange[d] opinions upon the various phases of housework taught in the Saturday school" and "discuss[ed] the disposition and the habits of the children and tr[ie]d to be mutually helpful."⁴⁰⁴ This discussion added a social element to the meetings and allowed the teacher (usually the visitor) to have additional personal contact with the mother, this time outside of the home. Years later when numerous schools had created Parent Teacher Associations, Blaker explained that in these meetings

it is imperative that the relationship of the father and mother to the child and of the teacher to the child should be thoroughly discussed. There are three different phases of work to be considered: the social phase, the discussion of topics pertinent to child training and an explanation of what we are doing in the kindergarten . . . The parents should understand something of what we are doing and why."⁴⁰⁵

The Mothers' Meetings reinforced the idea of Educated Motherhood; the kindergarten teachers and IFK clubwomen brought the mothers together to educate them about childrearing, health, and the kindergarten. Elizabeth Dale Ross explains that Mothers' Meetings "were a derivation of Froebel's idea that mothers must be trained in the ways of child development and in kindergarten techniques," similar to the idea of Educated Motherhood. These meetings "took on added meaning in crowded urban centers where harassed women often appreciated the advice, interest, and hints offered by the trained kindergartner. Ignorance of nutrition and child care plagued many a mother."⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰³ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1891*, p. 24.

⁴⁰⁴ "Notes," *The Kindergarten Monthly*, 123.

⁴⁰⁵ Blaker, "Child Welfare," 288.

⁴⁰⁶ Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 42.

Several IFK documents report that these meetings were popular with the mothers, although records directly from the mothers are not available. Blaker explained that the “eagerness with which these monthly meetings are anticipated, the numbers which attend, the difficulty in closing them at a stated hour, the demand that they shall be held weekly in some districts, the verbal or written regret that comes from the detained mothers, all tell the story of the results of these gatherings.”⁴⁰⁷ One mother, after being invited to a Mothers’ Meeting, explained, “[w]ell, I had promised to go some place [sic] else, but the Kindergarten always comes first with me. It has done so much for my child and for all these poor children that I feel that we cannot do enough to show we appreciate it.” Another mother claimed that she would not move until she ensured her child could attend kindergarten in another district.⁴⁰⁸

Over time, the teachers relied on the mothers to do more work and take over more responsibilities at these meetings. By 1894, the African-American kindergarten on Margaret Street had a committee of mothers who helped to prepare the musical part of the program.⁴⁰⁹ Some African-American mothers organized a Mothers’ Band that met at regular intervals and held socials to support a summer kindergarten. The Mothers’ Band also canned fruit for kindergarten lunches.⁴¹⁰ By 1904, some mothers organized into committees to distribute invitations and prepare refreshments for meetings, alleviating some of the work of the teacher who often had work to do in the classroom.⁴¹¹ Other mothers helped to organize evening entertainments for the entire family or helped to beautify classrooms.⁴¹² The success of the Mothers’ Meetings encouraged the development of many other programs for the mothers, all

⁴⁰⁷ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1891*, pp. 23-24.

⁴⁰⁸ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1892*, p. 18.

⁴⁰⁹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 23.

⁴¹⁰ Hufford, “Free Kindergarten Work in Indianapolis,” 312.

⁴¹¹ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 16.

⁴¹² Hufford, “Free Kindergarten Work in Indianapolis,” 312.

based upon the successful model of these meetings in individual districts. The next program, the larger Mass Meeting, built upon the same concepts of the smaller Mothers' Meetings.

The Mothers' Mass Meeting

The second type of mothers' group was the Mothers' Mass Meeting, which included the same literary and musical elements of the Mothers' Meeting on a larger scale. IFK visitors invited every mother in each district to attend a Mothers' Mass Meeting held in the Normal School Building three times a year.⁴¹³ Residents of individual districts gathered to walk to the meeting as a group. At the Mass Meeting, Eliza Blaker, the superintendent, delivered the keynote address. Her talks and addresses included topics such as "The Madonna Spirit," "The Care of Yards," and "Remember the Golden Rule."⁴¹⁴ Blaker's addresses often reinforced the topics that the local Mothers' Meetings had discussed in the preceding months. Her addresses were supposed to "impress these truths and to call forth individual opinion upon them."⁴¹⁵

Blaker's addresses at these meetings often focused on the sacredness of motherhood. Blaker's address for a Mass Meeting in November 1912 was titled, "What Constitutes a Good Mother." Unfortunately, only an outline is left of the speech, but during the address, Blaker suggested the word mother "suggests love, protecting care, sympathy and trust." Blaker added that a good mother should cooperate with the father and teach the child to love and respect the father. She later discussed punishment, self-control, the purpose of Sundays, and setting a good example for children.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹³ It is unclear if every mother of every kindergarten student was invited to these meetings or if every mother of every child involved in IFK programs was invited to these Mass Meetings.

⁴¹⁴ Blaker, "Superintendent's Report 1897," p. 107 and Blaker, "Superintendent's Report 1898," p. 120.

⁴¹⁵ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 24.

⁴¹⁶ Blaker, "Speeches, 1908-1913," November 19, 1912.

Blaker insisted that these meetings include both practical lessons and inspirational thoughts to encourage mothers in their work. Lois Hufford, teacher at the Normal School and a member of IFK, echoed these sentiments and explained that the “grand union meeting” was “full of enthusiasm and inspiration for the heavily burdened mothers.”⁴¹⁷ Nina Vandewalker, author of a 1908 history of the kindergarten movement and a kindergarten teacher herself, explained that “the inspiration that the kindergarten association gave to thousands of young mothers was one of the reasons for its success.”⁴¹⁸

One mother suggested that Blaker award a special banner to the mothers of the kindergarten district with the highest attendance at Mothers’ Meetings held throughout the year. Blaker presented the banner at each Mass Meeting, an event which all the mothers looked forward to. In March 1897, when Blaker presented the banner to a group of mothers, she explained that “it did not stand for the highest number [in attendance], but for the greatest interest in a little child.”⁴¹⁹ Blaker did not let the banner interfere with the true purpose of the meetings.

Blaker wrote that the Mass Meetings were “a beautiful illustration of the universal spirit of kindergarten work, which unites all classes, ages, races and religious faiths in the search for light and power for the development of the little child.”⁴²⁰ Although there were separate kindergartens for African-American children in Indianapolis, it appears that African-American mothers attended the Mass Meetings with the white mothers. Hufford, a teacher, explained that “[i]t is strong evidence of Mrs. Blaker’s delicate tact that she has been able to bring into

⁴¹⁷ Hufford, “Free Kindergarten Work in Indianapolis,” 310.

⁴¹⁸ Nina C. Vandewalker, *The Kindergarten in American Education* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1908), 59.

⁴¹⁹ Blaker, “Superintendent’s Report 1898,” p. 108.

⁴²⁰ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 17.

harmonious conference, on a plane of social equality, white and colored mothers.”⁴²¹ Although the African-American women attended these meetings, it is doubtful that they were viewed as equals; but it is quite unusual that the women attended these meetings together since their children were segregated. IFK recorded very little about the interaction between the black and white mothers, so it is difficult to understand how these mothers and the larger Indianapolis community perceived these meetings.⁴²² It is interesting that IFK actually did unite mothers of “all classes, ages, and races” during the Mass Meeting, although it does not appear that they brought together black and white mothers during any other event. The Mothers’ Meeting and the Mass Meeting were mostly social programs, while the next two types of mothers’ programs had a more prominent educational focus.

The Mothers’ Instruction Class

The Mothers’ Instruction Class, the third type of mothers’ group, was based upon the success of the original Mothers’ Meetings. For the Mothers’ Instruction Class, mothers met every two weeks and studied different aspects of childrearing with the help of a local kindergarten teacher. They discussed parenting or studied a book on kindergarten methods. Their text of study was usually Elizabeth Harrison’s book *A Study of Child-Nature* or selections from Friedrich Froebel’s *Mother-Play*. Other classes studied *A Mother’s Ideals* by Andrea Hofer Proudfoot.⁴²³ This class was more intensive than the regular Mothers’ Meetings. During this class a mother “trie[d] the methods suggested to aid her in the training of her little ones. She narrate[d] her failures and successes to the leaders of the class” and sometimes asked for more

⁴²¹ Hufford, “Free Kindergarten Work in Indianapolis,” 310.

⁴²² It is interesting the children were segregated into different classrooms, but the Mothers’ Mass Meetings were not; however, the physical configuration of these meetings is not mentioned, so it is possible that all mothers attended these meetings together, but sat in separate spaces.

⁴²³ IFK notes do not indicate if these mothers could read or write. Perhaps some mothers were literate or perhaps the teachers read aloud to all the mothers.

advice.⁴²⁴ A question box helped ensure the mothers could ask difficult questions about their children anonymously and comfortably. The question box produced questions such as “How can I cure my child of stuttering?,” “How may I break my child of whining?,” or “How can I learn to be more patient with my children?”⁴²⁵ Blaker explained the purpose of these meetings was “to make the mother conscious of her duty to her children, and to aid her to do this responsible work.”⁴²⁶

The questions the mothers asked reveal that the mothers felt the women of the kindergarten could supply the right answers, not only for child rearing but also for broader issues involving the home. By 1902, these meetings incorporated cooking lessons and distributed recipes for “healthful, economical, and tasteful dishes.” Accordingly, the purpose of these meetings broadened from a class discussion on child rearing to “defining child-study” and the “interchange of ideas on domestic economy.”⁴²⁷ The question box soon yielded questions such as “Why would you interdict the moderate use of pepper?” and “What is the best diet for a ten-years-old [sic] girl?”⁴²⁸ The Mothers’ Instruction Class required the mothers to study, similar to a young woman training to become a teacher. Blaker explained the importance of studying children and believed that classes like the Mothers’ Instruction Class could solve some of society’s problems:

Parents must study to help the child reveal the best that is in him. They can never nourish children mentally unless they know their interests. Do you know what interests a child of six months and how it changes when a year old and then two and three years, and so on? Have you noticed the changed interest of growing girls? This is a wonderful study and will give a keen insight into children that will help to start them right in life and prevent much that is known as delinquency.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁴ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1892*, p. 18.

⁴²⁵ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 17.

⁴²⁶ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children’s Aid Society . . . 1891*, p. 19.

⁴²⁷ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 16.

⁴²⁸ “The Mother’s Instruction or Child-Study Class,” *The Kindergarten Monthly* II, no. 8 (May 1898): 125.

⁴²⁹ Blaker, “Child Welfare,” 291.

The success of the Mothers' Instruction Class led to the development of an even more intensive class, taught in the Normal School Building and known as the Mothers' Council.

The Mothers' Council

In 1898, IFK created the Mothers' Council, the fourth of the mothers' organizations. Each kindergarten teacher selected two mothers from her district, with one to serve as an alternate.⁴³⁰ The Council met in an assigned room in the Normal School Building and had a specific class time, similar to classes for the kindergarten teachers in training. This class, like the Mothers' Instruction Classes, also studied Froebel's *Mother-Play* and its implications for childrearing. After reading and discussing *Mother-Play*, the mothers "were asked to make observations of the imitations to be found in the child's plays. From the study they learned the practical application of Froebel's thought on the power of environment." After class, the mothers, provided with questions to consider, observed their own children at home. The mothers recorded their children's actions and watched for repetitious play or imaginary friends. At the next meeting, the mothers discussed their observations and appropriate responses to their children. One mother observed, "[w]e make a practice of playing with our children, and as for imitative plays I think they depend on the persons they imitate after, and that we cannot be too careful how we conduct ourselves in the presence of our children." Another noted that her "children imitate playing father and mother and keeping house and talk and try to do just as they see us do." Another observed that her children repeated housekeeping activities they had learned at the kindergarten.⁴³¹ Eliza Blaker, one of the early proponents of behavioral psychology, felt that students and mothers should spend significant time in observation of

⁴³⁰ I found no indication as to what criteria was used to select the mothers to participate in the Mothers' Council.

⁴³¹ Blaker, "Superintendent's Report 1898," p. 119.

children.⁴³² Her support of observational study must have contributed to the development and success of the Mothers' Council.

Notes from a Mothers' Council meeting in October 1912 indicated that the program included information on table setting, bed making, sweeping and dusting, and bathing of a baby.⁴³³ A meeting in April 1915 consisted of music on the victrola, the reading of "Sleeping Beauty," and refreshments. Eliza Blaker gave an address entitled "The Greatest School and the Greatest Teacher." There were discussions on the "good and wrong side" of moving picture shows, and who should have the right to use the Normal School building. The meeting concluded with a cooking demonstration on bread pudding and bread griddle cakes, two recipes that called for stale bread.⁴³⁴

The Mothers' Council had the most academic focus of all the mothers' programs, but incorporated many social elements from other types of Mothers' Meetings. The cooking demonstrations in the Mothers' Council helped to teach skills that the women could use in their homes, similar to the techniques taught at the next type of meeting, the Mothers' Sewing Class.

The Mothers' Sewing Class

In 1902, some mothers requested the organization of a sewing class, the fifth of the mothers' groups. The first class met weekly in the kindergarten building and a third year student at the Normal School led the group. The mothers each created a shirtwaist, a sack, a housedress, and children's clothing. In addition to the sewing instruction, "[g]eneral talks on materials, shrinking, setting of colors, and durability have been a part of each lesson."⁴³⁵ By 1904, the

⁴³² Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 62.

⁴³³ Blaker, "Speeches, 1908-1913," October 22, 1912.

⁴³⁴ Eliza A. Blaker, "Mother's Council," Eliza Blaker Collection, Special Collections and Rare Books, Irwin Library, Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana, April 20, 1915.

⁴³⁵ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 11.

sewing classes expanded to include three districts, but the demand for more classes was greater than the number of teachers who could lead a class. The “mothers [were] appreciative and anxious to learn that which will help them to make the best and wisest use of means they have.”⁴³⁶

The implementation of the sewing class indicates that the mothers recognized their need for sewing instruction and were willing to ask IFK for assistance in planning. The mothers realized that IFK had the resources to provide this instruction. IFK respected the mothers’ request for these sewing classes and provided the resources to fulfill this request. It is interesting that IFK was willing to provide this instruction, as sewing was unpopular with the mothers and abandoned only a few years before. Perhaps the mothers were willing to sew this time because *they* requested this instruction; this time IFK did not expect that the mothers sew clothing, as they had been during the very first Mothers’ Meetings. Perhaps the mothers saw a distinct difference between being forced to sew and learning a useful skill to use in their own homes. These sewing classes also indicate that the mothers were willing to learn to make their own clothing, and not just receive handouts from Friendly Visitors. The implementation of these sewing classes indicates that at least some of the mothers were included in IFK’s decision-making. The next type of meeting, the Cottage Meeting, also required some mothers’ involvement because the meeting took place inside that mother’s home.

The Cottage Meeting

All of the mothers’ programs mentioned above took place outside of the home, either in the local kindergarten building or in the Normal School Building. The Cottage Meeting, the final type of mothers’ program, was the only program that took place within the homes of the

⁴³⁶ *Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 17.

mothers and often marked the end of the Mothers' Meetings for the school year. One mother within each district opened her home to the other mothers and hosted a meeting there.⁴³⁷ In 1897, 2,005 mothers attended various Cottage Meetings.⁴³⁸ IFK held the Cottage Meetings only once a year. Blaker noted that these meetings represented a "new relation" between mothers and teachers.⁴³⁹ Blaker recognized that these meetings were different from the others; IFK could still control the content, but had less control over the environment. However, the kindergarten teacher still attended and ran these meetings. The only difference from other meetings was the location.

The timing of these Cottage Meetings is interesting. Since it was the last Mothers' Meeting of the school year, one wonders how much content IFK covered during these meetings. Perhaps this was a review meeting or perhaps the meeting was more of a social meeting than the other meetings. If the purpose was entirely social, perhaps IFK was not as concerned about the location of the meeting. IFK only yielded control over the location for the last meeting of the year, possibly indicating that the meeting was of less importance to them or that their most important work for the year was complete.

IFK also supported some programs for fathers, although these programs appear to have been less formal in structure than the Mothers' Meetings. While IFK carefully planned the Mothers' Meetings, the Fathers' Evening Entertainments had no set program. The local kindergarten room was "made homelike" and the teachers provided entertainment for one hour.⁴⁴⁰ The evening programs included refreshments and the kindergarten teachers made an effort to converse with each guest and make him feel welcome. Mention of these fathers'

⁴³⁷ There is no indication as to how the mothers were chosen to hold this meeting.

⁴³⁸ Blaker, "Superintendent's Report 1898," p. 111.

⁴³⁹ *Report of the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society . . . 1894*, p. 23.

⁴⁴⁰ Blaker, "Superintendent's Report 1898," p. 109.

socials appear in the IFK Annual Report in 1897, but there is no mention of these meetings in the report for 1898. In the 1900 President's Report, Evaline Holliday mentions the Fathers' Meetings only briefly: the "fathers are not forgotten. They meet for a social hour stated at intervals."⁴⁴¹ While the Mothers' Meetings included both parental instruction and social elements, the fathers' evening meetings appear to have had a purely social purpose. As with the Mothers' Meetings, the Fathers' Meetings took place outside the home.

In the 1904 Annual Report, Eliza Blaker reported that evening socials, which were planned "distinctively for the fathers," had more fathers in attendance than the year before. Unlike the mothers' programs just for women, these programs were for *both* mothers and fathers. Blaker continued by explaining that one of the most popular of these meetings recreated a kindergarten session, including the "opening exercise, games, soap bubble party and sand table." Blaker continued, "the mothers and fathers forgetting the lapse of years and becoming children again."⁴⁴² At these meetings, IFK teachers were able to bring together both parents and inform them about what happened at the kindergartens. In this way, teachers had a direct line of communication with both parents.

Unfortunately, IFK records for other Fathers' Meetings are scarce. IFK devoted much more time and energy toward its kindergarten classes, activities for children of all ages, and mothers' organizations, than it did for fathers' programs. It is likely that IFK members knew many fathers worked during the time of the Mothers' Meetings. Perhaps IFK members expected fathers to work during the meeting times, indicating that the primary role of the father was to earn money to provide for his family. While IFK did not discount fatherhood, it is obvious that IFK felt mothers were the key to furthering their work with children. Similarly, the concurrent settlement house movement struggled to attract men to its events, although programs were

⁴⁴¹ Evaline Holliday, "President's Report," *The Kindergarten Monthly* IV, no. 9 (May 1900): 132.

⁴⁴² *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 20.

popular with immigrant women and children.⁴⁴³ In San Francisco, the Silver Street Kindergarten was successful at implementing monthly fathers meetings, although this appears to be an anomaly in the kindergarten movement.⁴⁴⁴ Very few kindergarten systems were able to figure out how to involve fathers in programs.

Barbara Beatty, who has written extensively on preschool education, observes that “it is hard to know how women struggling to raise children in the environment of an urban slum felt about being schooled in Froebelian child-rearing techniques by zealous (and usually unmarried) women, some of whom may not have understood much about the conditions of their charges’ lives.”⁴⁴⁵ Similarly, Ann Firor Scott laments, “one would like to see the benevolent societies through the eyes of those they presumed to help—but alas, no recipient seems to have left her reflections.”⁴⁴⁶ However, the Indianapolis mothers must have found the meetings somewhat enjoyable, such events continued to grow in attendance and frequency. The mothers may have been enticed by the idea of spending the afternoon outside of their home, relieved of the care of their children for a few hours. Possibly some mothers were eager to attend meetings due to the goods, especially clothing, their children received.

The volume and the variety of programs that IFK prepared must have been taxing on both kindergarten resources and staff. In 1904 alone, IFK held 105 Mothers’ Classes and 167 Mothers’ Meetings.⁴⁴⁷ Since IFK records do not record the voices of the mothers directly from the mothers, attendance is one of the only available indicators of success. In 1902, total attendance at all mothers’ programs was nearly 2,500 and the total number of children enrolled

⁴⁴³ Davis, *Spearheads for Reform*, 88.

⁴⁴⁴ Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 43.

⁴⁴⁵ Beatty, “Child Gardening,” 79.

⁴⁴⁶ Scott, *Natural Allies*, 16.

⁴⁴⁷ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 23.

in kindergartens was 2,700.⁴⁴⁸ In 1904, the total attendance at all mothers' programs rose to 3,229.⁴⁴⁹ In 1902, there was one Mothers' Sewing Class with an enrollment of 13; by 1904, there were five classes with an enrollment ranging from 9 to 30. The Mothers' Council enrollment more than doubled from 89 mothers in 1902 to 196 in 1904.⁴⁵⁰ If the mothers had not enjoyed and willingly participated in so many programs, it is doubtful that these events would have proliferated. Eliza Blaker even noted that the "majority of mothers regret that there was [sic] no kindergartens and domestic training schools in their childhood days," indicating the mothers recognized the value of kindergartens.⁴⁵¹

One mother claimed that if she ever had money, she would give hundreds to the kindergarten because, she said, "it has been the making of my children." Another claimed that the kindergarten "took care of my children when I was too drunk to do it. I will never forget that kindness. They have made me a better woman." An African-American mother explained that the kindergarten "develops the soul as well as the mind, and teaches each little child how to be active and quick and useful in many ways, besides training them how to eat correctly, and how to be loving and true to one another."⁴⁵² Many mothers expressed their thanks for the kindergarten's work with their children. Perhaps their gratefulness for their children's education and activities motivated their attendance at the various mothers' programs.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁸ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 15. The attendance at Mothers' Meetings may have included older sisters, who often attended these meetings along with their mothers. The attendance numbers recorded in various Superintendent's Reports may have included the same mother attending more than one event and counted her for every type of meeting she attended; the originals are not clear on how attendance was counted.

⁴⁴⁹ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 22.

⁴⁵⁰ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 15 and *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1904-1905*, p. 22.

⁴⁵¹ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 12.

⁴⁵² Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 23.

⁴⁵³ Many of these quotes were taken from IFK's Annual Reports and all are positive reviews of the kindergarten system. IFK chose not to record any negative comments from the mothers, so it is difficult to assess how the mothers really felt about IFK.

One episode reveals the impact IFK had on the Indianapolis community. In November 1897, a group of mothers met to form a Parents' and Teachers' Council in School District 38 of the Public Schools. One mother, a Mrs. S., "a very energetic and enthusiastic member of the council," wanted a kindergarten within District 38. She had even opened her home to neighborhood children and practiced kindergarten games and songs with them, although she had no formal training. Mrs. S. headed a committee to canvass the neighborhood to see what kind of support there was for a kindergarten. Next, this committee met with Blaker, who agreed to open and staff a kindergarten if the committee could raise money to keep the kindergarten running and supply housekeeping items for the Domestic Training Schools. Less than four months after the Parents' and Teachers' Council was formed in District 38, the Oak Hill Kindergarten opened on March 16, 1898, with thirty-two children in attendance the first day. The neighborhood responded with donations of money, household items, and time. The author of the article explains the amount of community involvement:

The running expenses of the Kindergarten are met by subscriptions from the families of the district. Each family is asked to give five cents a week, whether it sends one or five, or no children to the Kindergarten or Saturday school. A number contribute five or ten cents a week who have no children, although some of these give the money for grandchildren. Nearly all the families in the district, in which there are children under fourteen, give the five cents a weeks, and several give more. Nearly all the business house in or near the district have given money, labor or material, and stand ready to give more. One real estate dealer, who owns largely in this vicinity, has given us money.⁴⁵⁴

Men in the community helped with the "heavier work necessary in getting the house ready to use." One could assume that at least some of these men and women were

⁴⁵⁴ Inman, "How We Got Our Oak Hill Kindergarten," 128-29. Although the kindergartens were "free," several children in all the kindergartens brought a few pennies a week to contribute to the operating expenses of the kindergartens. The Oak Hill Kindergarten, however, seems to have had the greatest expectation of being self-supporting.

mothers and fathers of children who would attend the Oak Hill Kindergarten, who were eager to be involved in their young children's educations.⁴⁵⁵

Mothers' Clubs were not unique to IFK programs and are part of a long history of women's literary and benevolent clubs and societies that emphasized traditional roles for women and mothers, but later expanded into the public realm.⁴⁵⁶ In Indianapolis, Flanner House, an African-American settlement house, featured a Mothers' Council that included instruction in health and nutrition.⁴⁵⁷ Christamore House, another Indianapolis settlement, invited neighborhood women to work at clothing sales, volunteering their time.⁴⁵⁸ Nationally, kindergarten associations and other organizations sponsored Mothers' Clubs. In Chicago, Alice Putnam, one of the founders of the Chicago Free Kindergarten Association, organized a mothers' group to study Froebel's work in 1874. This study group became the Chicago Froebel Association in 1880.⁴⁵⁹ Also in Chicago, Jane Addams incorporated mothers' clubs into Hull House activities. In kindergarten associations in New York City, Louisville, and Boston, mothers held office and planned programs for their own mothers' clubs. Many mothers remained involved with the kindergarten even after their child entered public school.⁴⁶⁰ A Mothers' Club in Springfield, Missouri, provided books, clothes, and balls for local schools in addition to organizing an anti-smoking campaign.⁴⁶¹ Another Mothers' Club in Gardner, Massachusetts, raised money for a playground, a lunch program, and a camp for a local tuberculosis society.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ See Blair, *The Clubwoman as Feminist*; Scott, *Natural Allies*; and Lori D. Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

⁴⁵⁷ Crocker, *Social Work and Social Order*, 85.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 32.

⁴⁵⁹ Beatty, *Preschool Education in America*, 84.

⁴⁶⁰ Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 43.

⁴⁶¹ Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work*, 53.

Additionally, this club distributed special meals and baskets at both Thanksgiving and Christmas.⁴⁶²

Nora Archibald Smith, who operated the Silver Street Free Kindergarten in San Francisco with her sister, wrote *The Children of the Future* in 1898. One of the chapters, “The Priestly Office” (a reference to Froebel’s description of motherhood), described the Mothers’ Meetings she envisioned. Kindergarten teachers should invite mothers by written invitation and prepare the meeting room with flowers and refreshments. Smith recognized that many mothers would have little time to study outside of class and that many may not be able to read. She noted that these meetings should be “briefer, simpler, and cover a more restricted field of subjects” than classes for upper class, educated women, like Alice Putnam’s.⁴⁶³ Smith, like Blaker, hoped these meetings could be gatherings of women of all races.⁴⁶⁴

Elizabeth Harrison, leader of the free kindergartens in Chicago, developed some of the most successful Mothers’ Meetings, beginning in 1885. Originally organized for educated women, such as herself, Harrison’s Mothers’ Meetings expanded to include working class women. She then organized a three-year lecture course for mothers, very similar to the Mothers’ Council in Indianapolis. Harrison also organized Mothers’ Meetings that were nearly identical in content and program as Indianapolis meetings, including topics such as “The Mother as Example,” “The New Baby,” and “Children’s Diseases and Remedies.”⁴⁶⁵ Her mothers’ classes at the Chicago Kindergarten Training School educated 5,000 mothers between 1886 and 1895. Harrison’s book, *A Study of Child Nature: From a Kindergarten Standpoint*, published in 1895, was used in many mothers’ groups, including those in Indianapolis. Following the success of her local Mothers’ Meetings, Harrison organized the Annual Convocation of Mothers, a forerunner

⁴⁶² Ibid., 51.

⁴⁶³ Smith, *The Children of the Future*, 52-53.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 54.

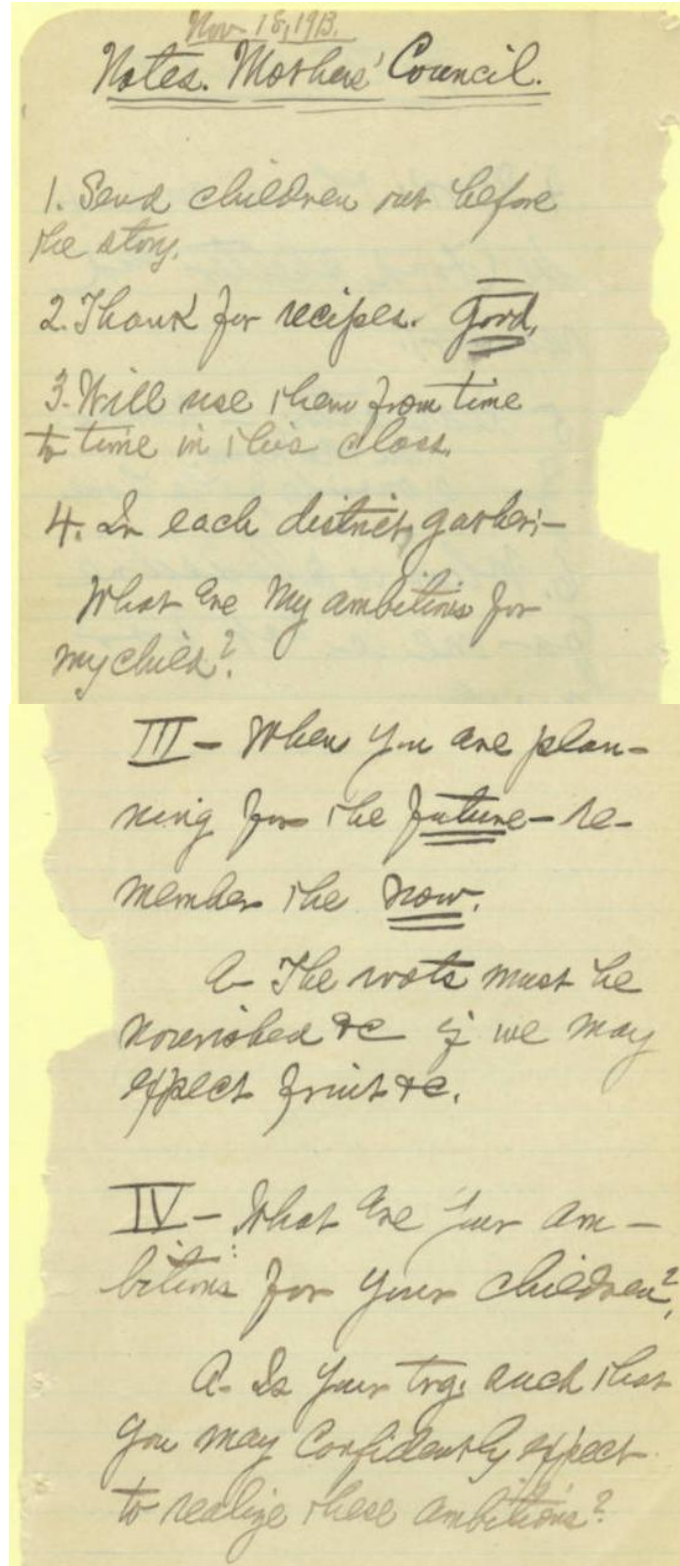
⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 55.

to the modern Parent-Teacher Association. These meetings helped educate mothers of all classes about the “moral, physical, and mental development of their children.” Unfortunately, few poor mothers ever attended these national conferences.⁴⁶⁶

Armed with the progressive concept of Educated Motherhood, IFK members, teachers, and teaching students sought to educate the mothers of their kindergarten students. Just as the kindergarten class removed students from their own home for three hours a day, IFK removed mothers from their homes for nearly every mothers’ program it offered. Removing the mothers from their normal environment helped the mothers to see the environmental differences in the local kindergarten classroom and the Normal School Building from their home. IFK hoped that this contrast in environment would help the mother to see the benefits of running her home according to new ideas about childrearing, hygiene, cooking, and health. IFK continued to operate mothers’ programs and kindergartens until the late 1940s.

⁴⁶⁶ Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 44.

Mothers' Council Notes



Pages from Eliza Blaker's notes for a Mother's Council Meeting, November 18, 1913. Eliza Blaker Collection, Butler University.

CONCLUSION

The national kindergarten movement also shifted during American involvement in World War I. Many school systems began to require the kindergarten teacher to lead a morning and afternoon session, leaving little time for visiting children's homes or holding Mothers' Meetings.⁴⁶⁷ As public schools across the country incorporated kindergartens for all children, free kindergarten associations that had opened kindergartens for destitute children during the late nineteenth century became obsolete. Although IFK remained an important and influential organization in Indianapolis until the early 1950s, the years 1880-1920 represent the organization's greatest and most focused involvement with children, families, and teaching students and coincide with the height of the national free kindergarten movement.

During the 1910s and 1920s, IFK experienced significant changes that indicate a break from the early days of the organization. For example, IFK began to focus on Americanizing recent immigrants to the city. IFK opened Italian kindergartens in 1910 and 1913, a Slavic kindergarten in 1911 in Haughville, and a Jewish kindergarten in 1913.⁴⁶⁸ Additionally, IFK began to shift to a focus on health education and disease prevention. By 1922, the Public Health Nursing Association began to supervise the schools for immigrant children and by 1924, the Board of Health employed a school nurse specifically for the kindergartens.⁴⁶⁹

Additionally, the Teachers College legally separated from the Indianapolis Free Kindergartens in 1913, although the two organizations continued to work closely together, with Eliza Blaker serving as president of the Teachers College and superintendent of the Kindergartens. Additionally, school enrollment began to decline and operating costs began to

⁴⁶⁷ Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 99.

⁴⁶⁸ Thornbrough, *Eliza A. Blaker*, 44-45.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 45.

rise.⁴⁷⁰ Blaker wanted the Teachers College to unite with Butler University's training school to eliminate competition between the two schools. In 1930, the property of the Teachers College was transferred to Butler. By 1933, the Teachers College of Indianapolis was fully a part of Butler University's College of Education.⁴⁷¹

Finally, the most significant change to IFK was the end of Eliza Blaker's forty-four year term as superintendent. Blaker's husband, Louis, died on April 28, 1913. Thornbrough describes his death as a "shattering blow" to Blaker "from which [she] never fully recovered."⁴⁷² Blaker threw herself into her work with IFK and the Normal Training School. However, she suffered a physical breakdown in 1916 due to overwork.⁴⁷³ Blaker's failing health forced her to be less involved in IFK activities; she took a yearly vacation to Florida each winter.⁴⁷⁴ Blaker died on December 4, 1926, after a sudden attack of bronchitis.⁴⁷⁵ Although Blaker was irreplaceable, both IFK and the Teachers College were able to continue with their mission due to continuity in the remaining staff.

IFK continued operating kindergartens until the 1950s because Indianapolis was very late in incorporating the kindergartens into its public schools compared to other cities and states. By 1949, IFK and the Indianapolis Public School system began working closely together. By 1952, Indianapolis Public Schools took over all the remaining IFK kindergartens. In contrast, Chicago incorporated ten kindergartens decades before in 1892; Washington, D.C., opened and funded twelve public kindergartens in 1898; and by 1915, the State of California was operating hundreds of kindergartens. Additionally, both Richmond and LaPorte, Indiana, supported public

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 66.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 29, 66.

⁴⁷² Ibid., 82.

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 83.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 85-86.

kindergartens decades before Indianapolis.⁴⁷⁶ One reason for this delay may have been the success of IFK's kindergartens; since IFK's kindergartens were successful and free for students, Indianapolis Public Schools may have been less inclined to implement a competing and costly system. As noted above, William Reese explains that Hoosiers are often reluctant to spend money on education.⁴⁷⁷

The influence of IFK on the Indianapolis community can be illustrated by a penny collection the organization undertook in 1902. Teachers and IFK members solicited pennies from across the city and some recorded their experiences. One "poor, hardworking mother" gave nine cents and was upset she could not give more. A bartender told a teacher, "God bless the Free Kindergarten people. Some think I am a rough fellow, but there is always a place in my heart for the little folks." He contributed thirty-five cents. One butcher explained, "I haven't any little ones to send, but other people have, and I will give for them." Others were unable to contribute financially, but did what they were able. For example, one woman donated a postage stamp, another donated "her only glass of jelly," and still another donated a car ticket.⁴⁷⁸ The Indianapolis community donated enough pennies to total \$235.63.⁴⁷⁹

By involving the entire family and the surrounding community and by implementing a program to train teachers, IFK built a large program centered around its kindergartens. Though children were its primary mission, IFK quickly expanded its mission to become more effective. Instead of solely teaching kindergarten-age children, IFK offered multiple clubs and classes for children of all ages. Through these programs, IFK was able to remain involved in children's lives until they reached adulthood. By including parents, especially mothers, in their programs, IFK

⁴⁷⁶ Ross, *The Kindergarten Crusade*, 87-9.

⁴⁷⁷ Reese, "Indiana's Public School Traditions," 292.

⁴⁷⁸ *Report of the Indiana Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School 1902-1903*, p. 17-18.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

ensured direct communication with mothers about the schools. Mothers' programs also offered opportunities to teach mothers the same lessons about cleanliness, cooking, and hygiene that were taught to young children. This helped increase the possibility that the children's lessons were being reinforced at home. Finally, IFK opened a training school for teachers, which cured the need for able teachers in an economical way. By affiliating the training school directly with the kindergartens, IFK remained in absolute control of who was accepted to the school, what lessons were taught at the school, and the social and academic activities of the students. By controlling programs for children, parents, and teachers, IFK created a successful community organization.

IFK's integrated system of training programs for teachers, children, and mothers helped to create a unified, successful organization. The women who opened the first kindergarten in 1882 on West Market Street with few supplies and no money hoped to change the lives of poor children in Indianapolis. They certainly had no idea that their idea would eventually grow and become a part of the Indianapolis Public Schools and affect the educations of Indianapolis children up to the present day.

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