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National Kindergarten Association
 8 West Fortieth Street, New York 18, N. Y.

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April 10, 1945.

Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt,
 Washington, D.C.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

We need your help. I wonder if you could spare us a little time.

A recent applicant for a clerical position in our office, a Czechoslovakian, expressed surprise at our not having kindergartens in all of our schools. She said kindergartens were a regular part of the educational system in her country.

And recently we contacted a representative of the Russian government and learned that they had nearly 2,000,000 children enrolled in their kindergartens last year.

Now, the latest figures we have received from our Office of Education at Washington, were for 1942 when there were only 626,000 children enrolled in our kindergartens.

The late Senator Copeland, who was, as you doubtless remember, Chairman of the Crime Commission appointed by President Roosevelt, made the statement, when introducing our bill for Federal Aid for Kindergarten Extension, that crime costs the nation \$41,000,000 a day, and that additional kindergartens would mean a reduction in crime.

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Would you be willing, Mrs. Roosevelt, to write to the President of General Federation of Women's Clubs, Mrs. LaFell Dickinson, 1734 N. Street N.W., Washington, D.C., and the President of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, Mrs. William A. Hastings, 2241 Hollister Avenue, Madison 5, Wisconsin, for the purpose of inciting them to persuade the local groups of their organizations to put forth an earnest effort to secure the establishment of kindergartens in their own public schools this fall?

I'm sure you feel, as we do, that our children will need wise guidance in the years before them in order to deal intelligently with the problems they will have to encounter.

Most sincerely yours,

Bessie Locke

Executive Secretary.

BL/rk.



The Children's War Tax

Florence Jane Ovens, Editor,
National Kindergarten Association

WOULD you agree that we should make the children's war tax a lifelong assessment? Certainly democracy is a way of life well worth anything it costs. Men are giving their all to protect it, women are bravely suffering deep loss to preserve it, sacrifices are welcomed and even the cold coin of the tax money seems to come to life as the taxpayer warms to the thought that it is a contribution toward democracy's victory. Shouldn't the children, too, pay?

This is a total war. It requires the effort of all of us and all of our effort. We cannot spare time or money now for anything that does not help to win the war. However, let us not forget that winning the war includes winning the peace and *keeping the peace*. The three must not be separated in our thought. The first is useless without the others. While we are engaged in war we must prepare for peace. Surely the world has suffered sufficient torments due to unpreparedness.

Suppose that after we have won the war the treaty that decides the peace is made as perfect as is humanly possible. That is by no means all that has to be done; it is hardly a beginning. Besides winning the war and winning the peace we must *keep the peace*—keep the principles for which we are now fighting constantly operating—as far as it is possible for our country to do so.

This will be really more difficult than carrying on physical warfare. It won't cost so much in life and property but it will be harder to achieve. The further we pass into a forgetfulness of today's tragedies the more will the difficulties multiply. The very little boys and girls who are with us now—many of them sons and daughters of those who are struggling in the present crises—must meet those difficulties. If they fail this struggle will have been in vain. They will need preparation to *keep the peace*, quite as much as we needed preparation in order to win it—but different preparation.

Little children come into this world unable to understand and take advantage of its many opportunities, unable to deal intelligently with the problems that will confront them and quite ignorant of the contribution, which, if they are properly taught, it will be within their power to make. Planned education is designed to unfold to the individual in a normal, logical way, the possibilities that lie before him and the very best way for him to take advantage of them.

The impressions gained during the early years, particularly those from four to six, are especially tenacious. At that age the normal child is physically very active, mentally alert, emotionally sensitive and, as everyone knows, a veritable bundle of question marks. The habits and attitudes that he forms during this period, are, many of them, of lifelong duration.

It is for this reason that kindergarten experiences are so valuable. A five-year-old should not be put into a first grade. This is not because he is mentally unable to do first

grade work, but because he is physically and emotionally unready and unfit for it, and because the background that the kindergarten activities will give him for *all* later school work, and for every other life situation in which he will find himself, will prove itself invaluable. The testimony to this fact is voluminous.

Wherever there are a sufficient number of little children, there should be a kindergarten in the public school, and if there is none, one should be established now. It is an important step in the preparation for *keeping the peace*. First steps must be taken first, and for children now five years of age, this present time is the only time when this first step can be taken.

The American kindergarten is a little democracy. There the child mingles with his peers freely, with just enough supervision to aid his development. He learns not the name but the meaning of liberty and learns it from experience. He soon knows that to deny it to others is to destroy it entirely. He thinks and plans and constructs and allows others to do the same, unmolested. He cooperates in group activities and learns to love fair play.

To deprive boys and girls of kindergarten advantages because we haven't time to attend to the matter, or because we think that the money is needed for other purposes, is taxing the children for this war all the rest of their lives. That's the Hitler way—taking advantage of helplessness. Children, the same as adults, are suffering their share of deprivation now. And besides, it is asking them to "carry on", to *keep the peace*, without equipping them for the service. It is unfair

to the men and women the world over, who now suffer and die for the preservation of democracy, for us to fail to educate our boys and girls so that they will be just as strong to defend as these heroes, as intelligent in their planning, and as willing to sacrifice, for this harder task—to *keep the peace*.

This is a second plea for preparedness. Our youngest generation is faced with a future of difficult peacetime warfare. These children need us to help them forge their weapons. They will need to be armed with confidence in God, with warm sympathy for all members of the human race and with a workable understanding of democracy. The nurserymen know well that the quality of all full-grown fruit depends largely on the care given to the young seedlings, and it has been commonly known and often warned that the attitudes of a town's voters and the members of Congress depend on their early childhood experiences. To be specific and to refer to the future, the attitudes of the men and women on whom will rest the responsibility for *keeping the peace* will depend, to a breath-taking degree, on whether or not we make that small extra sacrifice needed for providing kindergartens—now.



Advice and leaflets on kindergarten values may be obtained free from

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