

Orientation Day, formerly called "Kindergarten Day Breakfast" was held in May of each year. Parents having children to be enrolled in school in the fall were invited to attend. Breakfast rolls and coffee were served and a get-acquainted hour preceded a demonstration by the present kindergarten children, followed by an informative talk regarding the aims of the kindergarten program.

A number of years ago an event called "Summer Round-up" combined schools in a given area and children to be enrolled in kindergarten that year were taken to the specified school at a scheduled time for a physical check up. School doctors and dentists made quick, on-the-spot checks. While this was a big step forward in the health conditions of our kindergarten folks, nevertheless, the program was not felt adequate. In many instances the examination was not thorough enough to serve the best purpose. Frequently, referrals to family doctors were necessary anyway, so in recent years a much more satisfactory procedure has been instituted. Blanks regarding the child's history of inoculations, vaccinations, childhood diseases, impairments etc. were mailed to the parents in advance of Orientation Day. The blanks were filled in by the parents as to birth records etc. and then completed by the family physician. The blanks were returned to the school for records of enrollment on Orientation Day. This was found highly successful in most school areas. Pre-school members assisted with Orientation Day by welcoming the parents, making them feel at ease, introducing them to other parents, serving the breakfast, and giving whatever assistance was needed in helping with the enrollment.

While this does not concern Pre-school particularly, but does concern the Kindergarten program, I would like to mention here the role of the Kindergarten Assistant. Several years ago a need was recognized to relieve teachers of some of the responsibilities that absorbed precious time from teaching duties. In many areas experiments were being conducted where mothers were being employed to take care of these time consuming tasks. A special need was recognized with regard to kindergarten teachers, since often the self-help training of kindergartners is limited, to say the least. With classes unusually large in number (enrollment of 80 or more) it was found that the assistant could help with the story hour, simple art work, self-help instruction such as mastering boots, tying shoes etc., the banking program, attendance records, rhythms, finger-plays, etc. The person did not need to be a licensed teacher but of course had to be competent with children.

Miner was one of four schools in Fort Wayne needing the services of such an individual and, at first, Rychie Smell doubled as Kindergarten Assistant and School Secretary. When she was transferred to another secretarial post, one of our own PTA mothers was interviewed for the position. Her natural ability for understanding children and her kind, patient manner with them endeared her to the hearts of our youngest school members and their mothers as well. This mother is Mrs. Donald Theurer, a past-president of PTA and a loyal and devoted patron of Miner School even though the family has moved into another school district.