

Beginnings of SDN Chippendale

sdn
children's services

"Kindergartens are more necessary than ever, now that so many children have homes where their parents are unemployed"

- Ethel Lakeman, Principal of Golden Fleece Kindergarten, August 28, 1931, Sydney Morning Herald

SDN Children's Services begins in 1905

In 1905 a determined group of women from Sydney's upper classes who understood 'the difficulties that beset the paths of working mothers' founded the Sydney Day Nursery Association (now SDN Children's Services). The Association aimed to improve the welfare of children whose mothers were facing poverty and had to work to provide for their family. Infant mortality was high and the Kindergarten Union was only able to provide day care services for a few hours a day. With no other option, these young children were often left to fend for themselves among the streets of working class Sydney.

In response, the Association opened its first Day Nursery in a terrace house in Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo in 1905, the first long day care centre in NSW. For just three pence a day, babies and children were bathed, fed, clothed and cared for from 7.00am to 6.30pm.

Due to overwhelming demand, the Association opened Day Nurseries in other locations in the inner city soon after. These were all areas of need in Sydney with large working populations.

History of Chippendale

The Sydney suburb of Chippendale has a rich history for such small place. It doesn't announce itself but is part of the fabric of the inner Sydney area between Central Station and the University of Sydney.

The land traditionally belongs to the Gadigal clan of the Eora language group that today encompasses the city centre, out to the inner eastern suburbs of Surry Hills and Paddington and over to Redfern and Erskineville.



Above: Buckland St, Chippendale, 10 September, 1917. Courtesy City of Sydney Archives

The name Chippendale derives from William Chippendale, who was granted 38 hectares of land in the area after squatting there with his family for some time. He did some farming on the land but sold it in 1833 when the area was becoming an industrial powerhouse. The biggest factory in the area was Kent Brewery, constructed in 1835, which was taken over by Carlton and United and is now a thing of the past.

After the turn of the twentieth century the population of Chippendale decreased due to all the industry taking up space. Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) was one company that bought up many terrace houses to make room necessary for its expanding production. For the people who remained, the area became heavily polluted.

As the factories moved out of the area from the 1970s, Chippendale's residential population began to grow. Warehouses were refitted

as apartments, and students and bohemians came to live in the area before it became gentrified in recent years.

Young children have been cared for and educated on the SDN Chippendale premises since 1916 when it was run as a "Free Kindergarten" by the Kindergarten Union. However, its history goes back even further to the Golden Fleece Kindergarten, which began in Chippendale in 1907 in an old boot factory.

Kindergarten Union (KU)

The Kindergarten Union was started in 1895 by a group of idealistic women led by Maybanke Anderson (née Wolstenholme). The group was inspired by Golden Gate Kindergarten Association in San Francisco. Anderson and company aimed to establish Free Kindergartens for the poorest children in Sydney and advocate for kindergarten values and methods.

The first KU kindergarten was opened in Sussex Street Mission Street Hall in 1896 with only three children in attendance. The early years were very tough for the Kindergarten Union but by 1911 they had opened eight Free kindergartens across Sydney.

Throughout its long history, KU has been a progressive educator of young children with a focus on play and "the whole child". This philosophy is shared with SDN, and in fact some of the founders of SDN were members of KU. When KU decided to exclude children under three from its kindergartens in 1903, some KU members started Sydney Day Nursery.

Golden Fleece Kindergarten

In 1906, KU was ready to open another kindergarten and looked to Chippendale as it was an area of significant hardship. To finance the new premises the group sought donors from the country, and in the end was largely financed by woolgrowers via ads in regional newspapers, hence the name Golden Fleece.



Above: View from Pine Lane showing the kindergarten in front of Clark factory. Young boy watching cameraman at right. No date. Courtesy City of Sydney Archives

The initial premises in the former boot factory soon proved to be unsatisfactory and even unhygienic. With the help of donors and KU's "honorary architects", Peddle Thorp, the new Golden Fleece Kindergarten was opened at its current location in Pine St in 1916.

"The Union now desires to open another kindergarten, and believing that the country folk are interested in the work, they propose to call it the 'Golden Fleece', and to endeavour to obtain support for it from the country. Will the readers of this widely read journal help?"

- Maybanke Anderson, Hon. Organising Secretary
Sydney Stockand Station Journal 1906

Ownership of the site passed to City of Sydney Council in 1955 and it has steadily undergone improvements since then. After an extensive refurbishment in 2010, it opened as the Chippendale Child Care Centre in 2011. Like SDN, the site has been associated with the care of children and families for over 100 years!



Above: Children playing at Golden Fleece Kindergarten, Chippendale, 1950s.
Courtesy City of Sydney Archives

SDN Chippendale

SDN has a long and fruitful relationship with the City of Sydney, leasing from the Council the premises for several of our long-standing centres: - SDN Surry Hills, SDN Lois Barker at Waterloo and SDN Pyrmont from them. As of January 2020 we took over the operations of the Chippendale Child Care Centre.

SDN Chippendale is a long day care centre licensed for 36 places per day. While it is located near the bustling heart of the city, the centre is in a quiet and shady street with plenty of tree-covered shelter for children to enjoy.

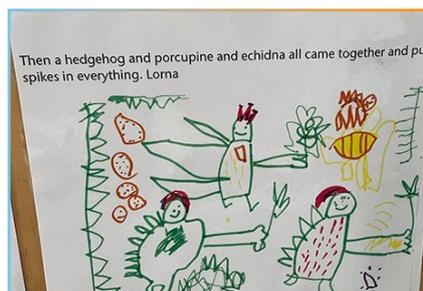


Above: Reading Cuddly Koala at SDN Chippendale in September, 2021

SDN Chippendale's Preschool Program

"The preschoolers at SDN Chippendale love literature! They love reading, interpreting the pictures, and following the adventure of a story. The children decided to create their own story with each story and even created their own illustrations!"

- Emily Murphy, Early Childhood Teacher, SDN Chippendale 2021



Above: Loving literacy at SDN Chippendale, October 2021

Save our Koalas Project

We've been working on an ongoing Save our Koalas project in the 0-3's room at SDN Chippendale. We've talked about koalas: what they look like, what they eat and how we need to protect them and keep them safe. We've also been reading a lot of books about koalas to support this understanding."

- Emily Murphy, Early Childhood Teacher, SDN Chippendale 2021

About this history and the SDN Archive

This history was put together from documents held in the SDN Archive and the Dictionary of Sydney. The SDN Archive, established in 2002, is a unique resource in Australia's early childhood education sector. SDN Children's Services runs 26 children's education and care centres throughout NSW and the ACT, as well as offering disability services for children and young people, and delivering government funded programs supporting children and families and other sector organisations.

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