

## Institute of Education Archives Subject Guide No. 5 Child Psychology



### Introduction

Psychology originated in Ancient Greece, though children were largely seen as 'incomplete' adults. Philosophers from the 17<sup>th</sup> century discussed the minds of child in relation to education and whether humans were born with innate knowledge or were a *Tabula Rasa* or 'blank slate'. In the late 19th century psychology began to be seriously pursued as a science. Psychologists, encouraged by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, began to research evolutionary reasons for psychological development. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the systems of psychology were defined and there were attempts to define the psychological stages of human development by psychologists such as Jean Piaget and Sigmund Freud. The French psychologist Alfred Binet, who created the Binet-Simon intelligence scale, was also influential in the development of child psychology.

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From 1880-1950 UK psychologists pioneered methods for helping children and parents and were the forefront of the progressive education movement. Compulsory state education also encouraged educational psychology as some teachers' implemented psychological theories to deal with the influx of children from a variety of backgrounds and varying abilities. Despite this psychologists had to cope with scepticism from established academic community and educationalist. The child study movement also arose from the Victorian concern about the future population. James Sully, one of the leading members of the British Child Study Association, opened the first explicitly psychological laboratory at University College, London, which encouraged teachers and parents to bring in difficult children for assessment. Similar work was also carried out in Liverpool by Cyril Burt, who later was appointed in 1913 as the psychologist to the London County Council. At the suggestion of Burt, the first Child Guidance Clinic opened in 1927 in London shortly followed by the London Child Guidance Training Centre in Islington, providing training for psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Susan Isaacs was another important child psychologist who studied children's intellectual and social development (see below) who implemented her ideas at Malting House School and help popularised the theories of Freud, Piaget and Melanie Klein in the UK.

By the 1950s educational psychology had become a profession and used scientific methods of modern science; developed tests for measuring intelligence; provided information for government committees on school children; and made important contributions to all areas of education and child development.

Child psychology has always been an important aspect of the curriculum at the Institute of Education. Both Cyril Burt and Susan Isaacs were employed at the Institute as well as other educational psychologists such as Herbert Russell Hamley and Philip E Vernon. The child development course, which was headed by Isaacs from 1933, was one of the oldest courses of its kind in the UK. In 1948 a Research and Training Centre was opened to carry out research on the health and psychology of young children. In 1973, Jack Tizard, the first Professor of Child Development, was responsible for the setting up of the Thomas Coram Research Unit. Child psychology is still taught and researched today under the Faculty of Children and Health.

*Image: Postcard from the Papers of Hilde Jarecki (DC/HJ)*

## **Related collections**

Please click on the name of each collection for more information.

### **[Child Development Society \(DC/CDS\)](#)**

The Child Development Society, formed in 1949, stemmed from the IOE's Child Development Course. It promoted child development studies and provided a forum for ideas in relation to the young child. The collection, 1942-2004, contains administrative papers; papers re. the organisation of conferences and lectures; news letters.

### **[Papers of Dorothy Gardner \(DC/DG\)](#)**

Dorothy Gardner was a nursery and primary school teacher and was the Head of the Department from 1943. Her papers, 1933-1992, include annual reports of the Child Development Department; newsletters of the Child Development Society; pamphlets relating to child development; correspondence and papers relating to reading skills; and correspondence.

### **[Papers of Amelia Fysh \(DC/AF\)](#)**

Amelia Fysh was the head of Beech Green Nursery School, which pioneered the integration of handicapped children into mainstream schooling. Her papers, 1951-2002, mainly relate to her work at Beech Green.

### **[Papers of Nathan Isaacs \(DC/NI\)](#)**

Nathan Isaacs lectured and wrote on child development. He was closely involved with, his wife, Susan Isaacs' work at Malting House School. The collection, 1913-1966, includes his lectures, unpublished writings and notes, publications and correspondence.

### **[Papers of Susan Isaacs \(DC/SI\)](#)**

Susan Isaacs was Head of Malting House School, an experimental school which fostered the individual development of children, and the first head of the Department of Child Development at the IOE. Her papers 1928-1979, contain personalia; correspondence; writings; and press cuttings concerning her role as the agony aunt 'Ursula Wise'.

### **[Papers of Hilde Jarecki \(DC/HJ\)](#)**

Jarecki worked as the Senior Professional Advisor for the London Playgroup Association.. Her papers, 1945-1997, contain biographical papers, material for publication and papers relating to the playgroup associations.

### **[Papers of Eileen Molony \(DC/EM\)](#)**

Eileen Molony, BBC television producer. The collection comprises material relating to the production of the her television series 'The Expanding Classroom' (1969) which gave an insight into schools which were implementing some of the recommendations of the 'Plowden Report', 1967

### **[Papers of Cynthia Reynolds \(DC/CR\)](#)**

Cynthia Reynolds was the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) Advisory Teacher under the direction of the Home Economics Inspectorate from 1971. Her papers, [1970s-1980s] include material about the design and development of school and further education child development courses.

### **[Papers of Louis Christian Schiller \(DC/CS\)](#)**

Louis Christian Schiller, Staff Inspector for Primary Education from 1945, was a promoter of progressive ideals and child-centred teaching in primary education. His collection, 1909-1986, includes papers regarding his educational ideas including notebooks, working notes, writings and

scripts of his lectures; correspondence; material relating to courses for teachers; personalia; printed material, and photographs.

### [Papers of Denis Herbert Stott \(DC/DS\)](#)

Denis Herbert Stott was an educational psychologist who worked on delinquency, behavioural problems, child and adolescent development, and learning difficulties. His papers include notebooks, 1940s-1950s, and a collection of Stott's published papers, 1950s-1970s.

### [Records of the Institute of Education \(IE\)](#)

The records of the IOE cover every aspect of the business of the IOE. The Institute collection also contains papers on the Susan Isaacs research fellowship; records of the Department of Child Development and Educational Psychology (IE/CDE); biographies of staff at the Institute including those involved in psychology, such as Maureen Shields, Thelma Veness, Professor Philip Vernon, and Jack Tizard (IE/PC/1); publications by staff on child development and psychology, (IE/PUB/B).

### **Bibliography and other printed sources**

Bradley, B S, *Visions of infancy: a critical introduction to child psychology* (Cambridge, 1989).

Sampson, O *Child guidance: its history, provenance and future* (Leicester, 1980).

Woolridge, A, *Measuring the Mind: education and psychology in England c.1860-c.1990* (Cambridge,

### **Other relevant archival collections in the UK**

The British Psychoanalytical Society hold the personal papers of various psychoanalysts including Susan Isaacs and papers regarding Melanie Klein; the Wellcome Library holds the personal papers of Melanie Klein (PP/KLE); The University of Roehampton hold the Froebel Archive for child studies and the records of the Froebel College.

Institute of Education Archives.

Information Services, Institute of Education, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL

Tel: +44 (0)20 7612 6983

Email: [arch.enquiries@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:arch.enquiries@ioe.ac.uk)

<http://www.ioe.ac.uk/services/4389.html>

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