

**Day Nursery Association**

615 North Alabama Street, Suite 300

Indianapolis, IN 46204

(317) 636-9197

[www.daynursery.org](http://www.daynursery.org)

Founded: 1899

Location: Rented room in Lockerbie factory district, Indianapolis (1899-1927), 542 Lockerbie St. (1927- )

In 1899, the Indianapolis King's Daughters Society began providing a rented room (in the Lockerbie factory district) and a matron to care for underprivileged children whose mothers worked during the day. With what was surely radical thinking at the time, mothers brought their children to be cared for and were charged five cents per day for the service. The Society supplemented the affordable fees with the offerings at their "Silver Teas" and donations from friends. As more and more working mothers sought the services, the Society became incorporated in 1901 and the founders who signed the document were Grace H. Wood, Belle C. Wilson, Julia F. Walk, Grace H. Smith, and Grace H. Brown.

Children were boarded by the week and by the day until 1930, when only day services were offered. Various buildings were rented as space was needed until 1927, when a 15-room house was purchased at 542 Lockerbie St. In 1940, modern child care standards were established with the advent of the War, and the program grew as many women went to work in the factories.

A volunteer corps, under the leadership of Mrs. James Cunningham, formed the DN Junior Auxiliary in 1938 to provide Day Nursery with fundraising and volunteer support. The auxiliary continues to serve DN even today with more than 200 members. In 1973, an endowment was formed to provide the security of ongoing income into the future.

Two unique features of DN services since the early days that continue to distinguish the agency have been a health program to oversee children's immunizations and routine medical checks and a fee structure based on parents' ability to pay.

DN has carried the banner of excellence in early childhood education for more than a century, making it a leader by example as well as a mentor and trainer for other programs. In 1985, Child Care Answers was born to provide training to child care providers beyond DN as well as referrals to parents seeking care. Today, this service reaches more than 1,500 people each year.

In 1998, the Board of Directors adopted a new strategic direction for Day Nursery. The plan was to partner with employers by placing services at the workplace, trading the burden of real estate for the convenience of on-site child care. Today, six of seven Day Nursery centers (60 classrooms) are located at the workplace serving infants through 6 year olds, and the original mission of reaching low-income children is upheld through the use of government subsidized care and Day Nursery's own sliding fee scale. Fifty percent of the 1,300 children served per year qualify for financial assistance. All centers are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, a distinction held by less than 10 percent of early childhood programs, and 47 percent of lead teachers hold college degrees, with a goal of 75 percent by 2010.