Merrill-Palmer Institute Records
80.5 linear feet
1920-1981 (bulk 1928-1973)

Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI
Finding aid written by Kathy Makas, January 2011.

Accession Number: 2127

Creator: Merrill-Palmer Institute

Acquisition: The records of the Merrill-Palmer Institute were placed at the Walter Reuther Library in the 1980s and early 1990s, beginning in 1982.

Language: Material entirely in English.

Access: Collection is open for research.

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Notes: Citation style: “Merrill-Palmer Institute Records, Box [#], Folder [#], Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University”

Related Material: Audio reels relating to studies documented in the collection were transferred to the Reuther’s Audio-Visual Department (see note at end of guide). Architectural prints of Merrill-Palmer buildings also transferred to the Reuther’s A-V Department (see dept. for inventory). Additional A-V materials located in the A-V Dept.

Faculty Publications and the Merrill-Palmer Quarterly were transferred to the Library (see inventory at end of guide).

PLEASE NOTE: Material in this collection has been arranged by series ONLY. Folders are not arranged within each series – we have provided an inventory based on their original order. Subjects may be dispersed throughout several boxes within any given series.
Abstract
The Merrill-Palmer Institute was founded in 1920 by an endowment from Lizzie Merrill Palmer. Throughout its 61 years of independent operation, the Institute was greatly respected and internationally known as one of the top institutions for education, training and research in Child Development. Merrill-Palmer staff conducted and published studies on families and children, operated a nursery school, children’s camps and clubs, offered marriage and family counseling, and performed community service work. The Institute accepted undergraduate and graduate students from the U. S. and internationally and taught courses and provided research and laboratory experience unavailable elsewhere.

A nursery school was opened in 1922 to fulfill Merrill-Palmer’s original purpose to train mothers in the proper care of children. It continues to operate 89 years later. In addition, from its earliest years, Merrill-Palmer was on the cutting edge of child and family research, and was well known and often consulted by other institutions in the field. Under the direction of Edna Noble White (1920-47) the early years of the school were focused on Child Development research, with a strong emphasis on physical development and nutrition. The Institute conducted research on children, provided nursery services and counseling for women and families, and trained and educated students from a multitude of colleges. Dr. Esther McGinnis, assistant director under White, assumed the directorship in 1947, carrying on this dual tradition of research and service. In 1952 Dr. Pauline Park Wilson Knapp became director. It was during her 15 years of leadership that Merrill-Palmer’s reputation expanded greatly. Knapp broadened the scope of the Institute into three areas: research, service and teaching, all of which worked with each other under the main goals of the Institute. In doing so, student enrollment was significantly increased. Under Knapp the school also experienced the greatest physical expansion in its history, with the erection of two new buildings. Dr. J. William Rioux became the next director in 1967, coming to the institute during a time of enormous social upheaval in Detroit as well as a major financial crisis in the Institute itself. The focus of Merrill-Palmer drastically changed from serving and studying a mainly middle-class white population to serving and providing resources for the area’s lower-income, urban community. Rioux changed the structure of Merrill-Palmer into six Units, focusing mainly on teaching and service with less emphasis on research. Under Rioux the staff and faculty were diversified and the approach of the Institute became more humanistic.

In 1973 Rioux resigned, and was replaced by Dr. Michael Usdan who instituted a graduate degree program and slowly integrated a stronger research element to the Institute. The next director, Dr. Frances Palmer attempted to emphasize more research as well as a stronger preschool program. During the last two directorships the Institute faced severe financial difficulties, which it was unable to overcome. In 1981, Wayne State University assumed control over Merrill-Palmer Institute, eventually merging it with the Skillman Center for Children and Families to form the Merrill-Palmer Skillman Institute for Child and Family Development in 2005.

The collection illustrates the Institute’s commitment to research, education, and outreach through documentation of its programs, projects, and administration. It includes research and studies the Institute undertook, course information, nursery school, camp and club
information, correspondence with students, individuals and organizations, presidential and faculty files, and day to day operational information.

**Important Subjects:**
- Child Development – Research
- Child Therapy
- Children in wartime
- Community education—United States
- Community service
- Day care
- Education—United States
- Emergency Nursery Schools
- Emotions in children—Study and teaching
- Family services—United States
- Higher Education and state—United States
- Home Economics—Study and teaching
- Homemakers—United States
- Human potential movement—Study and teaching
- Nutrition – Infancy & childhood
- Nutrition – Research – United States
- Preschool education
- Physical growth and development
- Skillman Center
- Teacher training
- Urban youth—Education—United States
Arrangement
The collection is arranged into 4 series.

Folders in each series are simply listed by their location within each box. They are not arranged, so any given subject may be dispersed throughout several boxes within each series.

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Series II: Administration, 1917-1964 (Boxes 36-48)

Series III: Operations, 1919-1981 (Boxes 48-77)

Series IV: Audio-Visual, 1925-1966 (Boxes 79-81)

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18. “A Method for Studying the Activity in Preschool Children” Sholley
22. “Comparison of 9 Children of High Ossification Age with 9 Children of Low Ossification Age,” L Noble, 1928
23. “A Study of the Possible Relationship Between the Bone Development of a Group of 8 Children and their Attitude Toward Food,” M. Walker, 1928
24. “Food Stories and Picture Books for Nursery School Children,” G. Bennett, 1929
27. “A Study of Effects of Corrective Exercises on Poor Posture in Preschool Children,” M. Reed, 1929
29. “Sex Training,” R. Howe, 1930-31
30. “Physical Aspects of Child Development,” E. White, 1930-31
31. “Age Factors in Sociability of Children,” M. Strayer, 1931
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32. “Study of the Relationship of Physical Measurements, Freedom from Colds and Hours in Bed,” F. Roberts, 1930
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35. “Some Psychological Variations in Peripheral Blood Cell Counts,” F. Kenyon, 1930
36. “Study to Establish Reliability and Standards for the Measurements of the Posture of the Preschool Child,” E. Hubbell, 1930
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14. Correspondence; Foreign Students, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal, Philippines
15. Correspondence; Foreign Students, Romania, Scandinavia, Scotland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland
16. Correspondence; Foreign Students, South America
17. Correspondence; Foreign Students, Thailand, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, USSR, Vietnam
18. Correspondence; Idell Pyle

**Box 64**
1. Merrill-Palmer Alumni
2-3 Merrill-Palmer Alumni Secretary
4. Merrill-Palmer Alumni President
5. The Alumni Association of the Merrill-Palmer Institute, Alumni Council
6-7 The Merrill-Palmer Association of Metropolitan Detroit
8. Merrill-Palmer Alumni Outside of Michigan
9-10 Alumni Workshop, 1969
11-13 Alumni Gift Transmittal Records
14. Correspondence; Alumni, A-C
15. Correspondence; Alumni, D-G
16. Correspondence; Alumni, G-H
17. Correspondence; Alumni, I-K
18. Correspondence; Alumni, L-M

**Box 65**
1-2 Conferences
3. Minutes of the Child Research Department at Mooseheart, IL, 1929
4. Foster Homes Conference, 1965-66
5. Groves Conference, 1955-62
6. Home Problems Conference, 1927
7. The Human Cost of Economic Trauma Conference, 1976
8. Infant Conference Report
9. Institute for Parents from the Kellog Foundation, 1940
11. Merrill-Palmer Infant Conference, 1964
12. Merrill-Palmer Leadership Conference, 1964
14-16 National Health Assembly, Washington, D. C., 1948
17-18 Pan-Pacific Women’s Conference, 1930
19. White House Conference, 1960
20. Meeting Minutes
21. Academic Affairs Committee Minutes, 1951-52
22. Administrative Council Minutes, 1953-55
23. Administrative Council Minutes, 1956-59

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1. Administrative Council Minutes, 1960-65
2. Administrative Council Minutes, 1966-69
3. Administrative Council Minutes, 1974-76
4. Board and Lunch Meetings, 1960s
5. Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, 1963-64
6. Various Board Meeting Minutes, 1963-65
7-8 Development Committee Meeting Minutes, 1963-64
9. Faculty Meeting Minutes
10. Faculty Meeting Minutes, 1958-60
11-12 Faculty Meeting Minutes, Merrill-Palmer Transition, 1967-68
13. Faculty Meeting Minutes, Merrill-Palmer Transition, Summer 1969
14. Faculty Meeting Minutes, Merrill-Palmer Transition, 1969-70
15. Faculty Meeting Minutes, Merrill-Palmer Transition, 1970-72
16. Merrill-Palmer Corporation Meeting Minutes, 1964
17. Merrill-Palmer Corporation Meeting Minutes, 1966-67
18. Merrill-Palmer Corporation Meeting Minutes, 1968
19. Merrill-Palmer Corporation Meeting Minutes, 1974-75
20. Program Committee Meeting Minutes, 1963-64
21. Staff Meeting Minutes, 1949-52
22. Staff Meeting Minutes, 1952-53
23. Staff Meeting Minutes, 1954-57
24. Staff Meeting Minutes, 1954-59
25. Records Committee, 1925-48
26. Research Objectives Committee, 1933-39

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1. Advisory Committee, 1944-46
2. Personnel Policies Committee, 1951-52
3. Committee on Early Childhood Education, 1941-42
4. Research Committee
5. External Advisory Planning Committee
6. Organizations, A-B
7. Organizations, B-C
8. Organizations, F-H
9. Organizations, H-J
10. Organizations, K-S
11. Organizations, T-Z
12-13 Detroit Organizations
14. Michigan Organizations
15-17 National Organizations
18. International Organizations
19. American Association for Adult Education, 1935
20. American Association for Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), 1 of 2

Box 68
1. American Association for Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO), 2 of 2
2-3 American Association of University Women, 1934
4-5 American Association of University Women, 1935
6-7 American Association of University Women, January-April 1938
8-10 American Association of University Women, May-December, 1938
12-14 American Association of University Women, Board of Directors Meeting, 1938-11-8-11
15. American Association of University Women, 1942
16. American Child Health Association, 1935
17. American Council on Education, 1938-65
18. American Council of Guidance and Personnel Associations, 1938
19. American Dietetic Association, 1930

Box 69
1-2 American Home Economics Association, 1929-30
3-4 American Home Economics Association, 1930
5-6 American Home Economics Association, 1938-59
7. American Red Cross
8. Association for Childhood Education, 1935-38
9. Bank Street Publications
12. Child Care Coordinating Council of Wayne County, 1974-78
13. Child Study Association of America, 1938
14-15 China Information Service, 1938
16. Cornell University
18. Detroit Citizen’s League, 1935
19. Detroit Community Union, 1930-35
20. Federal Security Agency
21. Higher Education
22. International Federation of Home and School, 1935
23-24 Institute of International Education
25. Metropolitan Detroit Commission on International Year of Children and Youth
26. Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO), 1 of 2

**Box 70**

1. Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (MACRAO), 2 of 2
2. Michigan Congress of Parents and Teachers, 1930
3. Michigan Department of Education, Adult Extended Learning, 1974-80
4-5 Michigan Department of Education, 1974-81
6. Michigan Department of Public Information
7. Michigan Legislative Study Committee, 1957-58
8. National Advisory Committee to the Federal Works Agency on the Child Care Program
9. National Committee for Mental Hygiene, 1930
10. National Committee of Nursery Schools, 1929-30
11. National Council of Jewish Women
13. National Education Association, 1930
15. PCDC Consortium, 1978
16. U. S. Departments of – Various
17. U. S. Department of Agriculture
18. U. S, Department of Agriculture, Committee of Vocational Home Economics, 1918-19
19. Veteran’s Administration, 1970-75
20-22 Wayne State University
23. Personnel Files, A-G
24. Personnel Files, H-P
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**Box 71**

Faculty Personnel Files, A-J.
**Contains sensitive materials – researchers must sign Restricted Use Form.**

**Box 72**

Faculty Personnel Files, K-S.
**Contains sensitive materials – researchers must sign Restricted Use Form.**

**Box 73**

Faculty Personnel Files, S-W
Staff Personnel Files, A-W
**Contains sensitive materials – researchers must sign Restricted Use Form.**
Box 74
1-2  Students General
3.  Foreign Students
4.  Foreign Students; Regulations and Records
5.  Foreign Students; Department of State
6.  Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1929-48
8.  Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1955-62
9.  Student Applications
10.  Special Studies Students
11.  Students; Events and Activities
12.  Former Students, 1933
13.  Student Lists
14.  Student Reactionnaires, Quarter Students, 1959-60
15.  Student Reactionnaires, Semester and Graduate Students, 1959-60
16.  Student Reactionnaires, 1960-62
17.  Student Reactionnaires, 1962-63
18.  Former Student Questionnaire Reports, 1938-47
19.  Former Student Questionnaire Reports, 1947-48
20.  Student Employment
21.  Student Registration, 1937-41
22.  Student Registrations, 1941-47

Box 75
1.  Student Registration, 1951-59
2.  Student Registration, 1958-60
3.  Student Enrollment, 1922-50
4.  Student Enrollment, 1950-54
5.  Student Enrollment, 1954-55
6.  Student Enrollment, 1955-57
7.  Student Enrollment, 1957-58
8.  Coordinator of Student Affairs, 1968
9.  Student Affairs General
10.  Student Affairs Committee, 1929-30
11-12  Student Affairs Committee, 1930-31
13.  Student Affairs Committee, 1931-32
14.  Student Affairs Committee, 1932-33
15.  Student Affairs Committee, 1933-34
16.  Student Affairs Committee, 1934-35
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1-2  Student Affairs Committee, 1936-37
3-4  Student Affairs Committee, 1937-38
5.  Student Affairs Committee, 1938-39
6.  Student Affairs Committee, 1939-41
7. Student Affairs Committee, 1941-44
8. Student Affairs Committee, 1929-52
9. Merrill-Palmer Course Announcements, 1926-36
10. Merrill-Palmer Course Announcements, 1936-44
11. Merrill-Palmer Course Announcements, 1944-52
12. Merrill-Palmer Course Announcements, 1952-59
13. Merrill-Palmer Institute Announcement of Courses, 1957-65
14. Merrill-Palmer Institute Announcement of Courses, 1965-73

Box 77
1. Merrill-Palmer School Report, 1921-31
3. Merrill-Palmer School Report, 1940-50
5. Merrill-Palmer Summer Sessions, 1940-59
6. Merrill-Palmer Camp Brochures, 1936-55
7. Merrill-Palmer Publications
8. Merrill-Palmer Brochures and Pamphlets
9. Merrill-Palmer Newsletter
13. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly Table of Contents, 1954-73
14-15 Merrill-Palmer Quarterly Materials
16-17 Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, April, 1974
18-19 Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, October, 1974, 2 of 3

Box 78
1. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, October 1974, 3 of 3
2-4 Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, January, 1975
5-8 Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, April 1975
9. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, July-October, 1975
10. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 1979-81
12. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 1956
13. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 1957
15. Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2, 3, 1962

Series IV
Box 79
2. “A Biological Growth Study of Infants,” 1936
3. “A Study of Infants Fed on Evaporated Milk,” 1933-34

Box 80
1. 12 Photographs; Effects of Drugs on Breathing in Infants (from box 32-19)
2. 29 Photographs; Camp Files, 1940s, (34-1-6)
3. 5 Photographs; Detroit Foster Homes Project, 1964 (10, 11, 12)
4. 27 Photographs; Mary Sweeny’s Trip to India, 1940s (39, 40)
5. 56 Photographs; Mary Sweeny’s Trip to China, 1940s (39, 40)
6. 3 Photographs; Hill House, England (47-6)
7. 13 Photographs, Physical Development Department X-Rays
8. Photograph, Florence Beeson (56-3)
9. 43 Photographs; Faculty and Staff
10. 15 Photographs; Marian Breckenridge, How to Feed Children in the Nursery School, 1949 Revision (44-28)
11. Photograph; Programs Building Model (48-10-11)
12. Scrapbook; Merrill-Palmer Camp, 1930

Box 81
1. Register Book, 1925-28
2. 21 Poster Boards; Educational Television Props (5, 6)
Audio-Visual Department Inventory

1. 14 Audio Reels; Observations and Children’s Interviews from Van Dyke School and Greenfield Village School, 1950s (Boxes 5 & 17)
11. Stutsman, Rachel. *What Of Youth Today? The Responses of 500 Young People in Detroit to the Problems of the Depression Years, as Revealed in an Investigation Conducted in Detroit by the Detroit Youth Study Committee, Clair M. Sanders, Chairman.*


17. *The Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*. Vols. 9, 10. 1963-64


