



Standards Alignment

The National Center for History in the Schools National Standards for History (1996)

Standard 1A – Students understands family life and in the recent past; family life in various places long ago.

Standard 8A – Students understand technological innovations, the major scientists and inventors associated with them and their social and economic effects.

Standard 8C – Students understand changes in communication and their effects.

National Council for the Social Studies Curriculum for Social Studies (1994)

Standard 2 – Time, Continuity and Change

Standard 3 – People, Places and Environment

Standard 8 -- Science, Technology, and Society

REVIEW OF KINDERGARTEN UNIT -- CHILDREN LONG AGO Reviewed by Dr. M. Gail Hickey

National standards for teaching social studies and history support teaching historical knowledge in early elementary grades. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), for example, in their Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (1994) recommends children in kindergarten explore "their own immediate environment" and "environments far distant in time and space". Ten curricular themes outlined by the NCSS standards include three themes especially suited for developing kindergarten instructional units on personal and/or family history: Individual Development and Identity; People, Places, and Environments; and Time, Continuity, and Change. The National Center for History in the Schools, in their National Standards for History for Grades K-4 (1994), recommends young children explore and understand "family life now and in the recent past; family life in various places long ago".



Similarly, recent research on how children learn social studies-related concepts and acquire the skills used by historians supports teaching historical knowledge in early elementary grades. Levstik and Barton's (1994) research, as well as Downey's (1994) study, concluded that even early elementary grades children are capable of more historical understanding than educators originally thought. Further, this body of research showed young students' historical knowledge is limited primarily to information about popular culture and everyday life -- a conclusion providing additional support for teaching about personal and family history at the kindergarten level.

As the author of *Bringing History Home: Local and Family History Projects for Grades K-6* (1999), I strongly support school experiences which facilitate children's exploration of and learning about the lives of children from times past. As a social studies teacher educator, and as one involved in the development of National Council for the Social Studies curriculum standards, I endorse the use of such instructional units as presented by "Children Long Ago". This instructional unit, intended for use at the kindergarten level, is well structured and thoughtfully articulated.