Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0947

Atkins, Margaret Edith

(1928 - 2014)

Born	19280101, Rose Park South Australia Australia
Died	20140928
Occupation	Education reformer, Special needs teacher, Teacher

Summary

Margaret Edith Atkins grew up at Kensington Park where she attended kindergarten and small private schools despite the cerebral palsy and received regular physiotherapy and speech pathology. After leaving school she enrolled in a playgroup course at the Kindergarten Training College and commenced voluntary work in kindergartens. She later worked as an equipment maker for the Kindergarten Union and designed and made toys. Atkins decided to return to study social work at university but was initially refused entry to the course at Adelaide University. She completed a Bachelor of Arts with Honours majoring in psychology. Atkins gained a full-time teaching position with the Education Department as a teacher of intellectually handicapped children and was also supervised by the Department's psychologist to allow her to gain membership of the Australian Psychological Society. She was employed at the Woodville Special School where she developed innovative teaching methods and designed equipment. During her career Atkins held positions as Deputy Head at Strathmont Centre for Intellectually Retarded Children, Head of Barton Terrace and Kings Park special schools, and then in 1975 the Ashford Special School. She retired on the grounds of invalidity in 1977 and become a resident at the Julia Farr Centre. Here she was funded by the Centre to undertake research into leisure activities for the residents and was able to travel overseas. After her health improved Atkins felt that she needed to return to a more home-like environment and was able to move to an aged care facility. She then became very active in community activities and events, WEA and University of the Third Age. Margaret Atkins was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for her service to education in special education on 26 January 1982.

Published resources

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

State Library of South Australia
Interview with Margaret Edith Atkins OAM [sound recording] Interviewer: June Donovan

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Margaret Atkins, kindergarten teacher, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

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