

Friedrich wilhelm august froebel

Philosophy



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel (1782-1852) was a German educator born in Oberweisbach. He is known as the founder of “ Kindergarten” and was one of the most influential educational reformers of the 19th century. Froebel had a difficult childhood. His mother died when he was still young, and his father, a pastor, and stepmother neglected to care for him. Finally, an uncle took over his care and ensured that he receive a high schooleducation. It was there that young Froebel grew up with a love for nature and strong Christian faith, which led him to seek happiness and unity in all things. Froebel’s faith also led him to think as an educationalist.

Froebel studied at the University of Jena for a short time. In 1805, while studying architecture in Frankfurt, he was persuaded to become a teacher by the model school at Frankfurt. He then studied with Pestalozzi at Yverdon, before returning to the University of Gottigen and Berlin in Germany. Froebel believed that there was something missing in Pestalozzi’s theory- the ‘ spiritual mechanism’. According to Froebel, this was the basis of early childhood education. “ Pestalozzi takes man existing only in appearance on earth,” he said, “ but I take man in his eternal being, in his eternal existence.” (Shapiro, 1983, p. 20.)

Froebel took a break from studying to join the army for a year from 1813-1814. Afterwards, he received a position at the mineralogical museum in the University of Berlin. Two years later, he founded a school at Greisheim (which later moved to Keilau) which he called the Universal German Educational Institute. It was there that he taught his methods to other teachers.

Froebel opened the first Kindergarten in the year of 1837 in Bad Blankenburg. Later, he also founded a Kindergarten training school at Liebenstein. Froebel felt that children, like plants in a garden, need to be cared for and shielded from outside influences. Froebel believed that children need to imitate a teacher's values and morals. Therefore, teachers need to be respected, receptive, and easily approachable.

Among Froebel's subordinates, however, there were constant disputes, which he was unable to control. He encountered more problems when the Prussian government did not approve of his ideas. In 1851, an edict was issued, which forbade the establishment of Kindergartens. This decree was repealed almost 10 years later- in 1860. Froebel was not alive at that time and had no idea of the impact he left on the school system worldwide, and especially in the United States.

The philosophers of his times, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) and Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling (1775-1854), also influenced Froebel's educational ideas. He placed an emphasis on self-activity, physical training, and pleasant surroundings in the development of children. His most important work was the book he wrote in 1826 called *Menschenerziehung* (tr. *The Education of Man*, 1877).