

Plunket Society formed

14 May 1907

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Dr Frederic Truby King helped form the Society for the Promotion of the Health of Women and Children at a meeting in Dunedin Town Hall.

The society, later known as the Plunket Society after Lady Victoria Plunket, the wife of the governor and an ardent supporter, spread rapidly. Later that year, Plunket opened the first Karitane Home for Babies in Dunedin. A further six Karitane Hospitals were established to supplement home and clinic visits. These operated both as training bases for nurses and as care units for babies.

By 1909 there were Plunket Society branches all four main centres. Sixty more branches opened following a lecture tour by King in 1912.

Mothers were educated in 'domestic hygiene' and 'mothercraft' practices based on King's ideology of regular feeding, sleeping and bowel habits. The Plunket philosophy became parenting lore in New Zealand, and within three decades it was credited with giving this country the lowest infant mortality rate in the world.

Following his death in 1938, King became New Zealand's first private citizen to be honoured with a state funeral.

See *A Baby on the Way*, a 1971 documentary produced for the Plunket Society (Archives New Zealand YouTube):

A Baby on the Way (1971)



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External links

[History of Plunket \(Plunket Society\)](#)

[Frederic Truby King biography \(DNZB\)](#)

[Lord Plunket \(1966 encyclopaedia\)](#)

[Humane societies \(1966 encyclopaedia\)](#)

[The Plunket clock \(Te Ara\)](#)

[Born in New Zealand, 1958 \(YouTube\)](#)

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