

Training Home

1860s – 1980s

Other Names:

- Training School
- Farm School

Details

Training Homes (also known as Training Schools) were institutions where children and young people could learn habits of hard work and respectability, as well as skills suited to the workforce. In the early twentieth century, the work skills usually involved domestic service for girls and farm labour for boys. Later on the occupations considered suitable for state wards became more wide ranging. Just as the definitions of 'neglected' and 'criminal' children were often blurred, institutions called training schools were sometimes also reformatories, institutions for children who had been charged with offences. To complicate matters further, in Tasmania, the term training schools was used to describe institutions that would be called reformatories in other jurisdictions (see the [Training Schools Act 1867](#)).

Training Homes were similar in many ways to Industrial Schools, which began to be established in the Australian colonies from the 1860s for 'neglected children'. Both types of institutions were based on the notion that poor children needed to be taught to be industrious and be trained, so that they would be able to support themselves in the future. In this way, neglected children would grow up not to be dependent on the state to support them. Some parents put their children in Training Homes as private placements so they could receive training and education to prepare them for adult life.

In New South Wales, many institutions known as Training Schools (such as [Mittagong Training School](#) for boys, or [Parramatta Training School](#) for girls) were for children and young people classed as delinquents or who had been through the justice system.

Farm schools, which mainly were for boys and young men to be trained in agricultural duties, also were often institutions for 'criminal' children (for example, Queensland's [Westbrook Farm Home for Boys](#)). Other institutions were Training Homes for neglected children or child migrants to be trained as farm workers or domestic servants (for example, [Fairbridge Farm School](#), [Molong](#) in New South Wales). Regardless of the purpose, conditions in Training Homes and Training Schools were likely to be harsh and children received little in the way of education.

There were some Training Homes that had no connection to the justice systems for children and young people. For example, the [Training Home for Girls](#) (1883-1823) in East Melbourne was an institution where young women received training to become domestic servants.

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