

Issy's new role

Teacher: Jo

We have a new primary caregiver within the centre. Welcome to Issy. Issy's new role is taking responsibility for our young friend Jimmy who is five months old. Sitting comfortably in his chair, he had not long had his bottle when he began growling with a windy tummy. Issy heard this and went over to see if he was okay. She lent a hand by rocking his small chair back and forth and he soon smiled at her. She'd noticed he'd had a spill. Issy moved towards the kitchen sink, grabbing a flannel and back to Jimmy. She wiped his face. I saw this and both Jimmy and Issy were smiling at each other.



can happen by allowing children free movement between the environments where they choose to explore either indoors or out.

A key quality indicator is responsive caregiving, which helps to ensure that trust is built and maintained between our infants and their teachers. Our teachers interact with infants in a way that includes them in any decisions that are made.

We do this through attentive listening to children's cues and modelling language. The caregiver takes on a role in which certain responsibilities are practised to ensure that there is responsive caregiving occurring.

We are all interested in "continuity" and it is so very satisfying to review these photos of Eden and Issy just over a year ago. Eden was fascinated with Issy and we watched with awe at the close attention and sustained interaction as these two worked on building a relationship.

The learning that happened

Issy is role-modelling the evidence she has observed whilst being out in our infant room. Jimmy doesn't mind. He confidently shares a smile with everyone so for him Issy is another friendly face. Issy suits this role as she has been using these techniques on her dolls and is now putting this experience into practice with Jimmy.

Teacher's reflection

I observed Issy attending to her "new role" as a primary caregiver at the centre. Issy showed confidence in her responsibility towards young Jimmy, making sure that his emotional well-being was nurtured. She was being sensitive, and in tune with him, open to his needs and able to interpret them correctly. These exchanges are an integral part of interactions that foster secure attachment.

Adults have an important role to play in encouraging, supporting and challenging young children as they construct understandings about their world, the events, the people and objects in it. Children take on teaching roles by role-modelling the practices that they have observed.

Children's learning and development are the result of interactions between children and their environments. This

Excerpt from original learning story

"Eden especially developed a special bond with Issy and Issy is more than happy with Eden's beautiful singing and chatting and ever so gentle tickling. This particular day Eden stayed with Issy for over an hour, talking, singing and tickling and Issy responded with huge smiles and gurgling."

And now ... Issy takes this role with Jimmy. A rhythm, not a timetable, enables our tiny babies and toddlers to have a great deal of choice throughout the day. Rigid time fragmentation stifles investigation. Full attention supports working out what questions babies ask. This day Issy proved this to us.



What's happening here?

Issy is a toddler who takes on a caring role with baby Jimmy and becomes the "new primary caregiver" in the centre. The teachers remember a learning story of a year earlier, when toddler Eden "stayed with (baby) Issy for over an hour, talking, singing and tickling and Issy responded with huge smiles and gurgling". They add the photos from the previous year to this episode to tell a bigger story about continuity.

What does this assessment tell us about the learning (using a Contribution/Mana Tangata lens)?

Issy was ready, willing, and able to take a responsible role with Jimmy, "making sure that his emotional well-being was nurtured. She was being sensitive, and in tune with him, open to his needs and able to interpret them correctly." She is copying the adults here, and it is interesting that a year earlier she was similarly cared for by Eden. Perhaps it could be said that the practice of

caregiving has become a collective disposition at this early childhood centre, where an ethic of care that extends to the toddlers taking care of each other is encouraged.

How might this documented assessment support Contribution/Mana Tangata?

The documented assessment of a year previously has been added to a current episode to build a fascinating story about continuity in relationship building. Perhaps a year later, this documented account will be added to a story about Jimmy.

What other strands of Te Whāriki are exemplified here?

As the teacher has commented, this is also a story about nurturing Jimmy's emotional *well-being*.

Both Issy and Jimmy are developing working theories for making sense of the social world in this early childhood centre – part of goal 4 of the Exploration/Mana Aotūroa strand of *Te Whāriki*.