

# Zahra and the donkey

Date: June		<b>A LEARNING STORY</b>	
Inclusion mana whānau	<b>TAKING AN INTEREST</b>	First donkey day: Zahra is two years old. One morning during her second week in the country, she arrived at the Centre with her mother and 3 year old brother. She suddenly spotted the rocking horse and climbed on - rocking it herself. It was wonderful to observe her enthusiasm and excitement	
Well-being mana āhau	<b>BEING INVOLVED</b>		when she saw the donkey.
Exploration mana aronui	<b>PERSISTING WITH DIFFICULTY</b>		Next day: Today Zahra raced into the centre exclaiming loudly. A staff member who spoke her
Communication mana kōwhiri	<b>EXPRESSING AN IDEA OR A FEELING</b>		language told me she was looking for her donkey. "My donkey," she exclaimed.
Contribution mana tangata	<b>TAKING RESPONSIBILITY</b>	I brought the donkey out from the sleep room. She jumped on - rocking back and forth. The donkey ride became a daily ritual for Zahra!!	

<b>Short-term review</b>	
Zahra has found something of interest, a link to her past in actual fact. She wanted to return to the centre to ensure the rocking horse was still there. When she discovered it was not in the same place she confidently expressed herself in order to solve her problem. Zahra played this ritual out every day.	
<b>What next?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff will build on her donkey interest. Songs, stories, pictures, games and discussions.</li> <li>• Staff will ensure the donkey is prominently available daily for Zahra.</li> </ul>	
<i>Zahra and her brother - settled, relaxed and enjoying a story</i>	
	

Child's name: Zahra		<h2>Parent's Voice</h2>
Date: June 2001		
<b>A LEARNING STORY</b>		
<b>TAKING AN INTEREST</b>	Zahra's mother tells us Zahra asks each night:	
<b>BEING INVOLVED</b>	"Is the donkey warm?"	
<b>PERSISTING WITH DIFFICULTY</b>	"Is the donkey sleeping?"	
<b>EXPRESSING AN IDEA OR A FEELING</b>	"Will donkey be there in the morning?"	
<b>TAKING RESPONSIBILITY</b>	Zahra's brother Zachana (3 years old) explained that they had many donkeys in the Refugee camp. His family were the "Donkey Traders". The children were very much involved in their care.	

### **What's happening here?**

Two-year-old Zahra is in an early childhood centre for refugee children and their families. Families spend six weeks in the centre before they are resettled elsewhere. The teacher writes learning stories about the children, and they are translated for the families. This story is about a rocking horse at the centre and incorporates different family perspectives on Zahra's response to it: hers, her mother's, and her brother's.

### **What aspects of family and community involvement does this assessment exemplify?**

Zahra's family participates in this assessment. Her mother reports that Zahra asks each evening if the "donkey" at the centre is warm and asleep. Her brother explains that there were many donkeys at the refugee camp. Her grandmother spends considerable time at the centre and explains that the family have been donkey traders for two generations.

The assessments are translated for the family, making them accessible.

### **How might this documented assessment contribute to participation by family and community?**

The family's contributions are also translated for the record, making them accessible to the teachers. Zahra's story, and its retelling, will go with her to her next early childhood centre to form the basis for conversations, understandings, and curriculum.

One of the teachers wrote this series of contributions with the help of a translator. Learning the meaning that the rocking horse has for Zahra contributes to the teachers' understanding of her background and to their ability to recognise opportunities for communicating with Zahra and her family. It also helps their teaching: they find songs and stories about donkeys and pictures of them.

The photographs make the record in English partly accessible for the family. (In many of the centre's records, there is a written version in the home language.)

### **What might this tell us about informal noticing, recognising, and responding in this place?**

In spite of the fact that children are in this centre for only six weeks, the basis of the pedagogy is to find something of interest or significance to the child and the family. This forms a foundation for the development of appropriate resources and opportunities to communicate with non-English speakers in a range of ways.