

Micah and his grandfather

This is a story about Micah and his grandfather, told by his mum.

On Saturday mornings, Micah likes to come into our bed. It's the only day we are able to lie in and have a cuddle with Micah because I leave for work at 6 a.m. during the week.

One Saturday, a few weeks ago, Micah was absorbed in telling me the story about Tama and the God of the forest, Tāne (the legend the children were acting for the centre's Christmas performance). He said, "Do you know that you have to ask the God of the forest for permission to cut down the trees? That's what Tama did." He went on to tell me in detail about the story of the waka. He said, "He didn't ask for permission from the God of the forest, and the fairies made the trees stand up again (when Tama chopped them down) because Tama did not ask for permission."

I was so taken with the detail that I suggested we phone our poppa and tell him the story. He did, and the first thing Micah said to his poppa was, "Do you know that Tāne is the God of the forest, Poppa?" Poppa said, "I think he is the God of McDonald's, Micah!" and they laughed together. "No, Poppa. He is God of the forest."

Micah told his poppa that you have to ask Tāne for permission to cut down the trees. He then went on and told the story again in great detail. At one point, Micah forgot the name of the God of the forest and he asked his Poppa what his name was. Poppa asked, "Is it Tāne?" Surprised, Micah replied, "How did you know that? You haven't been to our day-care centre!"

Halfway through, Micah asked, "How many times, Poppa, did the fairies put the trees up again?" Poppa said, "I think, two times." "No, Poppa. Three times, not two!"

What was really lovely was the fact that my father was not expecting it at all. It was a surprise to have this phone call from Micah.

I think what made this story special was the detail and the pronunciation of the words and the fact that it had an impact on Micah. Best of all, my father was able to enjoy his grandson telling him something that he himself would have been told as a child.

Tania

What's happening here?

In August, during a late afternoon storytelling session at the childcare centre, Helen told the children the story of the rātā and tōtara trees. She told them that she needed some blocks to use as props for the trees. One of the children jumped up and bounced around, holding herself tall and straight, and said, "I can be a tree. I can be a tree. See!" The children acted out the story, taking on different roles as Helen told it.

In December, the children retold the story to Helen. They decided to act it out at the centre for the Christmas performance. Micah's mother writes this exemplar, recounting how he told her and his grandfather about the story.

What aspects of bicultural assessment does this exemplify?

Whānau contribute to this assessment: Micah's mother (Tania) and his grandfather. Tania makes the assessment: "I think what made this story special was the detail and the pronunciation of the words and the fact that it had an impact on Micah. Best of all, my father was able to enjoy his grandson telling him something that he himself would have been told as a child."

How might this assessment contribute to bicultural practice here?

Micah's assessment portfolio is a collaborative enterprise shared by whānau and teachers. Both whānau and teachers notice, recognise, respond to, and document the learning, and the documentation encourages revisiting.

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

Teachers value and respect whānau viewpoints and stories. They build their curriculum around the history, geography, and stories of Aotearoa New Zealand.