

Stevie and the pirate ship

Child's name: Stevie

Learning stories

At one point this afternoon Stevie was very upset. I asked "What's wrong Stevie – why are you sad?" He told me he was sad because someone told him he couldn't play on the pirate ship. I took his hand and said, "That's very upsetting – and they told me I'm not allowed either – because girls aren't allowed!"

Victoria piped into the conversation "Me too!" "Wow, how did it make you feel when they said that, Victoria?" I asked. "Sad," she said. "Well that ship needs some more sails – who wants to help me make some sails?" Stevie was very keen to be involved and cheered up. So we found poles and fabric and I stapled the fabric to the poles. A group of children joined Stevie in drawing on the sails then we went together to put the sails up. After we had done this we made a sign with markers and cardboard that said "Everyone is allowed on the pirate ship" and stapled it to the ship.

Next day ...

I noticed today there were fewer episodes of exclusion and I saw none involving Stevie. Stevie played happily on the ship and also got his face painted – which I believe is quite a new thing for him.

Short-term review

Stevie was upset at being excluded (understandably). I validated his feelings and also helped bridge his experience with that of others (i.e., myself and Victoria's) thereby offering him emotional support.

I helped Stevie find a way back into the play, and helped him make a sign that depersonalised the conflict situation.

Question: What learning did I think went on here (i.e., the main point(s) of the learning story)?

What next?

Keep building my relationship with Stevie.

Encourage the development of relationships with children through small-group experiences with Stevie.



What's happening here?

Stevie and Victoria are excluded from playing on the pirate ship. The teacher helps them to see how they can be proactive in changing the situation.

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

This assessment deals with learning about rights and ways of asserting them. One way of establishing rights is to enshrine them in a written rule (or treaty), and once the teacher confirms Stevie's feelings, she encourages the children to create a sign for the pirate ship that states "Everyone is allowed on the pirate ship". Before this, the teacher suggested that the children create some props to contribute to the play; a strategy that Hamish also used successfully in "Becoming part of the group" to introduce himself to a group's play.

How might this documented assessment support Contribution/Mana Tangata?

This exemplar is a reminder of Vivian Gussin Paley's title *You Can't Say You Can't Play*, which is discussed earlier in this book (page 4). If this exemplar was shared with the children, it would undoubtedly engender the kind of discussions that Paley's book describes so eloquently, discussions about justice and exclusion.

In this assessment, the short-term review records the teacher's strategies, so the audience is probably the other staff. It suggests ways of dealing with exclusion and provides an account of what has happened so far for Stevie and Victoria so that the teachers can build on their experiences.

What other strands of Te Whāriki are exemplified here?

Inclusion and recognition of the need for equitable opportunities to participate in activities are also part of the Belonging/Mana Whenua strand. One of the teacher's strategies is to acknowledge the children's feelings, encouraging them to identify their own feelings and those of others, which is a feature of the Well-being/Mana Atua strand. The teacher and the children are also setting the stage for creative and expressive play on the pirate ship, which are features of the Communication/Mana Reo strand.