

THE MOSAIC PROJECT



The mosaic project began in term 2, with a group of children working together on mosaicking the concrete pavers for the outdoor environment. To continue and extend this interest, an ongoing project was planned for term 3. Sarah's parents, Anne and Ian, provided their support and ongoing expertise – mosaic work is a real interest for their family.

The children could choose to make a pot, a tile, or a picture frame. They were encouraged to sketch their design first to focus their thinking. The children had a range of coloured pre-cut tiles to choose from as well as old china, which they broke into pieces using a hammer. They used tile adhesive to attach the tiles to their objects. The process took some time as the children worked on the project at their leisure. When each child had finished the tiling process, they left their object to dry for twenty-four hours.

Grout was mixed to a thick paste and applied over the entire object. The grout filled in the gaps between the tiles. A clean cloth was used to clean the excess grout off.

The mosaic constructions have enabled children to work at their own pace, developing and creating an original piece of work.

The interest from parents has also been immense, so we have planned a mosaic workshop for parents in week 9.





What's happening here?

This is a story about a group of children working together on mosaicking concrete pavers for the outdoor environment at their early childhood centre. Some of them went on to mosaic a pot, tile, or picture frame to take home. The teachers described this project, including the process and the resources accessed within the community, in documentation that they displayed on the walls for the children, families, and whānau to view. This activity has continued for more than two years. The latest project is a mosaic table.

What aspects of holistic development does this assessment exemplify?

This exemplar illustrates learning that is multidimensional. The children learned about and were actively involved in the process of using tile adhesive and grouting, and an adult expert taught them about the need to wear gloves to

stay safe when working with chemicals. The task integrated well-being (considering safety when being a mosaic-tile maker), belonging (making tiles for the environment), contribution (working together on a common enterprise), communication (sketching designs and translating them into mosaics), and exploration (learning about the properties of a range of materials and gaining spatial understandings).

The tiles they made were added to a new playground construction, so this documentation was about learning in the context of a purposeful activity. The value of the activity was extended to the wider community as the families took an interest and the early childhood centre staff planned a workshop for parents.

How might this documented assessment contribute to holistic development?

This record of a group enterprise and of learning the process of mosaicking went into every participating child's portfolio. Frequently these were accompanied by additional photographs of the child who owned the portfolio. In some cases, the child's parents had also participated in the workshop and could contribute their own experience to discussions about the process and the product (and the playground design) that this documentation invited.

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

At least two aspects of pedagogy for noticing, recognising, and responding are apparent here. The teachers involved the children in contributing to the new playground environment, recognising an opportunity to learn. They also responded to the interest of the parents, organising a workshop for them and extending participation in the curriculum into the wider world of family and community.

An important aspect of pedagogy is the revisiting of previous documentation around these projects. The teachers took the rich documentation from earlier mosaic projects down from the wall displays and placed it in folders that were easy for everyone to access.