

# Jak builds a wharenuui

Child: Jak  
25 June  
Observer: Maya

## Learning Stories

Jak approached me in the back room and asked if I could help him build something. We sat down together and talked about what he would like to build. Jak started to put a base down. "What could this be, Maya?" Jak asked me. "I'm not sure, but maybe it's the floor of a building," I replied. "Look around you, Jak. What could this be?"

Jak carefully looked at the pictures on the wall.

"I know, it can be a Māori house," he said.

"Do you mean a wharenuui?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, pointing to the photos on the wall.

I brought out my book *New Zealand Aotearoa* by Bob McCree.

Jak looked through the book. "My wharenuui has lots of people, like the picture." Jak used the tall rounded blocks as people. "Why does it have a triangle pointy roof?" Jak asked.

I explained to Jak that the wharenuui was like a person and the posts on the roof were its back and spine, with lots of bones so it's strong and can stand.

Jak continued to ask, "So it's like a skeleton?"

Jak did a lot of problem solving during this learning experience as he had to work out how he was going to balance the "ribs" so they could stand up and be pointed. Jak tried all sorts of blocks and decided to build a tall pile in the middle so that the ribs could lean on them.

### Short-term review

While building this, Jak stopped and looked through the book *New Zealand Aotearoa*. He was fascinated by a picture of a snowy mountain: "It doesn't snow where we live. We have to go far away to see snow."

Jak, you are a book full of knowledge. I really enjoyed working with you building your fantastic wharenuui.

Jak has a real sense of belonging in the centre and loves the opportunity to share his play with the teachers. Maybe next we can extend his knowledge about Aotearoa New Zealand.



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

Jak consults the teacher about what he might make with blocks. Inspired by pictures on the wall at the early childhood centre and guided by pictures in a book provided by the teacher, he decides to make a wharenuī.

### **What aspects of children's contribution to assessments does this exemplify?**

Jak is using pictures and imagery as standards or reference points against which to assess his construction for himself. He has been assisted by the teacher to assess his own achievement in building a wharenuī by using pictures on the wall and an illustrated book. The teacher also provides the appropriate imagery to remind Jak of the symmetry of the construction.

### **How might this assessment develop children's capacity to contribute to assessments?**

Revisiting this story, Jak might be reminded that he is able to share the responsibility for assessing his achievement in specific ways. On many occasions, an inner sense of achievement is the touchstone of success (see the quote from Claxton on page 3), but children can learn other strategies for self-assessment as well.

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

The documentation here records for Jak and his family the strategies that he and the teacher are using to share responsibility for both Jak's learning and the assessment of its success. These strategies included consultation, using the pictures on the wall, using the illustrations in the book, and discussing a relevant image (a skeleton).