

Growing Trees

Children: Thomas and Isaiah

26 February

Teacher: Margaret

It's our centre's first birthday and distinguished guests have come from afar to help us celebrate. Isaiah and Thomas stand around the birthday cake with other tamariki.

Some of our guests donate trees to the centre. We were so lucky to receive two silk trees, two kauri trees, and an olive tree.

During morning mat times, we discuss the trees we received for our birthday in detail, thinking about the process that they may take to grow and develop. The tamariki take an interest and assist in digging the holes for the trees, planting the trees, and giving small karakia to Tāne Mahuta to help our trees grow.

Watering the trees takes on a new meaning for Thomas as he waters one of the silk trees. Whaea Margaret explains that the trees need to be watered every day to help them to grow. Naming



the trees as they are watered helps the tamariki to recognise the differences between them. Isaiah says, "There's silk trees at the kindy too, aye Whaea?" (referring to his last kindergarten). Whaea agrees and says, "One day our silk trees will be just as big as those ones."

Thomas and Isaiah count and name the trees as they water them. Soon, other tamariki take an interest and ask if they can have a turn at watering the trees.

Short-term review

Thomas and Isaiah take an active part in any discussions that arise about the growth and development of plants and trees.

Tuakana-teina relationships develop as a result of Thomas and Isaiah's interest. (That is, both boys show the younger tamariki how to water and care for our trees and help them to recognise certain trees.)

What learning occurred here?

Science, maths, social skills, co-operative play, tuakana-teina relationships, and communication skills.

What next?

A programme on the theme of autumn and what happens when leaves change colours and fall to the ground.

Discuss and provide hands-on experiences of animals that may use some trees as homes (for example, birds and insects).

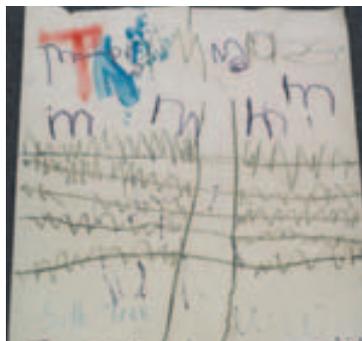
Give the tamariki an awareness of Tāne Mahuta and his role and importance to Māori (for example, through discussions, waiata, and looking at pictures of the ngahere [forest]).

A trip to the ngahere.

Evaluation

Still evaluating. The programme is ongoing.

Thomas was very excited about his painting. "Look, Whaea Aggie, I drew a silk tree."



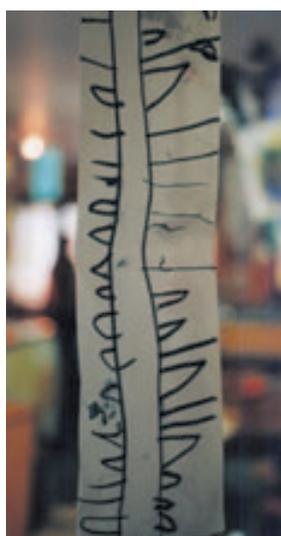
"Ka pai, Thomas, he ōrite tō rākau, ki ngā rākau a waho (your tree looks just like the trees outside)," Whaea Aggie tells him.



Isaiah explains: "I dig a big hole. Isaac and Whaea Helen filled the hole with water."



Isaiah also painted a wonderful silk tree. He knows how to care for our silk trees and can name the other trees that were donated at our first birthday.



Somebody else has made a wonderful effort as well. Ka pai e tamaiti.

Learning story: autumn

To extend the theme in the previous story on the growth of trees, the centre is looking at the theme of autumn, with staff and tamariki making their own tree. We are putting leaves that have fallen from the trees in our environment onto our tree trunk.



Tyscheen does an excellent job of gluing fallen leaves onto the tree that most tamariki helped to paint. Using the glue gun also has its benefits ... it's fun to use!

The leaves on our tree have a new home. There are lots of different-coloured leaves that we picked up off the ground around the centre.



Tyscheen helps Eden to stick leaves onto the tree with the glue gun. Ka rawe korua.

What's happening here?

This exemplar is from a whānau-based early childhood centre. It starts with a group story about celebrating the centre's first birthday and the gift of trees from the visitors. It continues with stories about children caring for the trees, showing the younger children how to water and care for them, and helping them to recognise certain trees. The children draw and paint the trees in recognition of their significance. There is a feeling here that the trees are part of the community.

What aspects of community participation does this assessment exemplify?

The sense of community is expressed in relationships, history, people, place, participation, manaakitanga, karakia, waiata, and te reo Māori.

The birthday celebration includes welcoming "guests ... from afar", and the tree planting includes a karakia to Tāne Mahuta.

The children plant the trees and look after them, and tuakana-teina relationships develop as Thomas and Isaiah show the younger tamariki how to water, care for, and recognise the trees.

How might this assessment encourage community participation?

Photographs and records of significant community events are a regular feature of this centre, reinforcing and encouraging others' involvement in the learning community.

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

Activities at the whānau-based centre have meaning for tamariki, whānau, iwi, and others beyond the immediate learning community.