

“Some boys are nice, and some girls are nice”

Narrative record for Abigail

6 July

Abigail and the baby's gender

Abigail has been quite definite that her new baby will be a girl, to the point where she says that if it's a boy, she will take him back to the baby warehouse and swap him! Today we had a bit of a breakthrough. We were discussing that the baby could be a boy or a girl and you couldn't tell, just had to wait. (I had talked to Liz previously – they don't know the sex of the baby.) Abigail was not convinced. I tried to say that boy and girl babies are both nice. Abigail's comment was along the lines of a boy would be OK if he wasn't "rough". This seems to lie at the heart of the matter. We had a lengthy discussion that not all boys were rough and some girls were rough, and Abigail began to accept this, particularly when I told stories about my big brother (who was rough) and Kate added stories about her sister (who sat on her brother). Abigail found these tales very amusing. As a conclusion, Abigail said: "Some boys are nice, and some girls are nice, and fairies are nice because they don't have guns. They have nice dresses!" M. B.

Planning (links to *Te Whāriki*)

Outings with mainly boys. (Contribution)

Encourage developing friendship with Leo. (Contribution)

Books about babies. (Exploration)

Educators to keep discussing the fact that "roughness" is not a boy-only thing, and boys can be gentle etc. (Contribution)

Mitchell's baby brother came in and had a bath at the centre.

Follow up on gender – excerpts from incidental notes

26 August

Abigail threaded a beautiful necklace for her mum. As she was threading, she commented that the beads were "girl beads", and I then asked her to explain this. "Because my mum bought them in for us," was her reply. We had a discussion about beads being objects and that they didn't have a gender, male or female. J. S.

19 September

Abigail's ideas about gender are becoming more complex. M. B.

23 September

We read some books that challenged gender stereotypes today. *Princess Smartypants* was much enjoyed by all. M. B.

27 September

Abigail told a parent that some kids are "made" as boys and some as girls. Todd came as a boy, and she came as a girl.

October

Liz came in and said that Abigail had been sharing the complexities of the baby's gender with anyone who cares to listen, informing people in the supermarket that you have to wait until the baby comes out. She's using detailed descriptions and accurate terms! M. B.

November

Abigail's baby has been born. Abigail was delighted to get a phone call at the centre from her dad that she had a little sister!

What's happening here?

Abigail is considering the possibility that her family's new baby will be a boy. Her initial reaction is to "take him back to the baby warehouse and swap him". The teachers and the other children help her to explore alternative ideas about boys.

What aspects of competence does this assessment exemplify?

Abigail is constructing a working theory about gender: "Some boys are nice, and some girls are nice." This is a theory of some importance to her since her mother is having a baby and the baby may be a boy.

How might this documented assessment contribute to developing competence?

It is often helpful for families to read about their children's developing ideas on topics that are of importance in the family. The centre staff document Abigail's progress as her ideas about gender become more complex. They also document the planning they do to encourage Abigail to be more flexible in her attitude towards the gender of her new sibling (for example, by reading books, such as *Princess Smartypants* by Babette Cole, that challenge gender stereotypes). These records will help Abigail's family and the teachers to understand and support her developing working theories.

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

The teachers explore the children's ideas, including any stereotypes they may have accepted, often by telling or reading stories that challenge simple theories.