

“Like something real”

Learning story

18 July

Ezra approached Sarah and asked her to “get the roadworks stuff out of the garage”. Sarah asked him what he needed, and he replied, “The stuff to fix the road”. Sarah asked Ezra what he thought the road workers might use to fix the road, and he said, “A bulldozer.”

Ezra got one of the diggers out of the sandpit area and put it up on the hill. He then organised a cone and a wooden frame on the hill to act as a roadblock. Ezra then went and got wheelbarrows, tape measures, hammers, and a ladder and put them all up on the hill. He put a helmet on his head and set to work fixing the road.

Ezra directed children on their bikes to go around the roadblock. He attracted a large audience of children during his “work” and ended up with seven children observing him. He informed them that he was doing “roadworks”. During his talk to the children, he used lots of language relating to the work he was doing, such as “cones”, “fixing”, “bulldozers”, and “roadworks”. Other children then got involved.

22 August

Ezra has been engaged in roadworks play over several weeks. His play has included tipping sand on the path and rolling it smooth with a toy roller, using the large sandpit diggers on various sites around the hill, and using the orange cones.



One day, he wanted some help in constructing a truck. “I want it to be like something real,” he said. He rolled a tyre to some crates he had set up.

“How many wheels does a truck need?” I asked Ezra. He counted softly, pointing left to right four times. “Four!” He found the wheels and happily got into his “real truck”.



Interpretation

I loved how Ezra quietly figured out how many wheels he needed. I imagine that his knowledge about vehicles comes from cars. His statement “I want it to be like something real” reinforced to me the importance of realism to Ezra in his play.

What next?

It would be great to extend Ezra’s knowledge of trucks by asking Glen (my partner) to visit with his truck and bring in some of the gear he uses on the road.

29 August

Ezra made another truck today with the crates and cones, but this one was quite different from the others he has built. This one had a kitchen in the back! Grace joined him, and together they spent over an hour driving and cooking. As the game progressed,



his truck became a caravan. They added a mattress and blankets and spent time “sleeping”!

30 August

Ezra wanted to build the same truck as yesterday but couldn’t remember what it looked like. I reminded him about how he had constructed it, and he went outside to create it. Today, he added more wheels and a digger on the back.

He walked over to a group of children and approached Daniel. "Hey, want to see my truck?" he asked. "It's just over here," he told him as they walked over the hill.

Daniel helped him bring more tyres to the truck. They worked together to move cones and diggers around the track to various worksites.

Later, Pem and Joey came to play. "Joey, come into the car. It's nice and warm in here," Ezra suggested.



Toby joined in, too. "Toby, you sit in there and drive, and I'll be up here with my babies." Then all the boys "drove away".

Interpretation

Ezra really wanted his truck to look like yesterday's creation. He did well, working from memory and adding the kitchen on again. The trucks are becoming more and more elaborate as Ezra includes new storylines and characters in his play. Ezra is now successfully including other children in his play.

What next?

Perhaps it would be helpful to suggest to Ezra that he draw (or have someone else draw) a plan of his truck so he has a copy to use for next time.

6 September – A real truck comes to visit!

As we had planned, Glen and his workmates visited the centre. Prior to their visit, we talked to the children about what the workers might bring with them and encouraged them to think about the things they might like to ask the workers about.

Ezra had two questions to ask Glen, Dave, and the others. We wrote his questions on cards for him to "read". The questions he asked were very relevant to the play he has been involved in.



Question 1: "What colour is your steering wheel?"

Answer: "Grey."



Ezra had the opportunity to see it for himself as he sat in the cab.

Question 2: "How many wheels does your truck have?"

Answer: "Six."

This is great information for Ezra to have for his future play.

After the visit, Ezra kept asking other children, "Did you ask a question? What was your question?"

Asking questions seems to have been quite an important part of the visit for Ezra.



Ezra had the opportunity to wear some safety gear and hold a real chainsaw. He was fascinated by the fire and chainsaw helmets, both of which had visors. Glen left these with us for the day. We offered Ezra alternative helmets to use (our own play ones) but he only wanted one with a visor. We discussed creating a visor out of cellophane for him as an alternative.



The stop/go sign made a great visual language resource. Ezra spent time directing “traffic” down the hill and, later, we made some signs out of cardboard. However, I would like to obtain a real one to keep at the centre (cut down to child size), because this would support and extend his existing play.

What’s happening here?

After engaging in roadworks play over several weeks, Ezra comments that he wants his construction work to be “like something real”. This episode, which took place over two months, records the extension and increasing complexity of this “real” play.

What aspects of continuity does this assessment exemplify?

The continuity of Ezra’s exploration is reflected in:

- his increasingly elaborate construction of trucks (including a kitchen, for instance);
- his inclusion of other children in his socio-dramatic play with constructed vehicles;
- the connections provided by the teachers when Glen, Glen’s workmates, and a truck arrive at the centre;
- the new turn to the exploration pathway when the children, assisted by the teachers, prepare questions to ask the visiting experts. Ezra finds this new development “an important part of the visit” and checks out the other children’s questions.

How might this assessment contribute to continuity?

Later assessments in Ezra’s folder include him filling two wheelbarrows with carpentry wood, saying “I’m the woodman”, and using a string to measure his height. His family comment to the teachers about the continuity between his interests at the centre and events at home.

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

The teachers here create continuity for Ezra’s interest in a number of ways, including introducing experts to the centre and bringing in a real truck, and providing books for reference. They also encourage the children to think about the things they might like to ask the workers about and to write their questions on cards for the visiting experts.