

Michael: A helper, friend, and brother

Learning story

17 September

Teacher: Gae

Michael's mum says he really likes helping at home. He closes all the doors and enjoys helping adults to do tasks.

Michael helps me to get his bottle ready. He opens the fridge, gets his milk and gives it to me, shuts the microwave door, and pushes the buttons.

Short-term review

Belonging, Goal 1: Children and their families experience an environment where connecting links with the family and the wider world are affirmed and extended.

Te Whāriki, page 56

Learning story

20 September

Teacher: Gae

Michael offered to help Matthew's mum with Matthew's lunchbox. He carried it over to the bench. Later, he wanted to help Sue get the nappy bucket, so off they went.

Short-term review

Contribution, Goal 2:
Children experience an environment where they are affirmed as individuals.

Children develop:

- awareness of their own special strengths [willingness to help], and confidence that these are recognised and valued.

Te Whāriki, page 68

Learning story

19 November

Teachers: Sue and Petra

Sue's story

I was giving Michael a cuddle as he was having his bottle. As it was my lunch break, I talked to him, telling him that I was going to have my lunch and Petra would come and give him a cuddle while he finished his bottle.

He stayed relaxed as he went to Petra, and I told him I would see him when I got back from my lunch.

Petra's story

I walked up to Sue and Michael and said, "I will give you a cuddle, Michael, because Sue is going to have some kai. She is hungry. You will see her when you wake up."

Michael was very relaxed. He snuggled into my arms and was asleep within a minute.

Interpretation/analysis

Michael has found staffing changes during the day upsetting. However, he has formed strong relationships with two caregivers and is becoming more comfortable with staff transitions.

What next?

To continue to help Michael anticipate what will happen next during the day with verbal reassurance and cuddles.

To respect Michael's choice of caregivers.

Sister's voice

MICHAEL 2nd/12
Michael's bin talking heaps lately.
He calls me Dobbie. He can say hi, bye, moore, mine, cold, star, sky, oh no! Ta, Er, eye, stuck, cat & heaps moore. We can hold a conversation with him almost.
Today Michael and I dressed up in our formal wear. Me in my big pink skirt and Michael in a shiny mint shirt & tiara. We danced around the lounge.
Michael is a water baby now. We can't get him out of the pool even when he's chattering with cold. It's kept him entertained all weekend.
He's 18 months now and so much easier to handle. He sits at the table to eat and doesn't fuss to get his nappy changed.

The present

16 May

Teacher: Gae

Skye gave Michael a car from home. She had waited a few days to give it to him as he was away sick. Sue gave him the car wrapped up and told him it was a present from Skye. He opened it out of the crinkly paper and really smiled, and he looked a bit shyly at Skye, who grinned back. They had lots of eye contact with each other. Michael started to play with the car up and down Sue's arms and legs, and then he moved off by himself and played intently. He took the car home at the end of the day. He asked Sue if he could take the crinkly wrapping paper as well and went off happily.

Interpretation/analysis

A lovely social interaction, supported by Skye's nanny, who brought the present in from home.

What next?

Michael and Skye's relationship has been building over a period of time. We will continue to acknowledge and support this. Michael will soon be moving through to the pre-school. We will take Skye over for visits to see Michael and invite him into the nursery to spend time with Skye.

Michael making friends

5 June



When Michael arrived this morning, he came over to Gemma and said, "Hello, Gemma." Gemma smiled. Michael held both her hands and said, "Ringa, ringa, rosie." Gae sang the song, and Gemma then climbed off her knee and went off to play.

7 June



After kai, Skye sat in the middle of the mirror behind the pot plant. Michael looked at Skye before going over to join her. They sat there for a while, looking at the plant. Michael said, "Sue, I'm in the garden." He said this several times. Michael and Skye laughed and smiled as they enjoyed each other and their situation.

11 June

Teacher: Gae

I took Gemma and Skye through to the pre-school to visit Michael as these three had strong relationships in the nursery. Michael was sitting at the table. "Hi, Michael. I've brought Gemma and Skye to visit you." He smiled broadly and opened his arms wide. We went over to him. Michael and Skye put their arms around each other, and Michael kissed Skye very gently on the cheek. We sat for a short while. Skye went outside. "Let's go and play with the hammers with Skye, Michael." "Yes!" So off we went. They hammered together, and then they played

on the obstacle course together. Next, they played with the blocks. Michael suggested the blocks were sushi. “Yum!” After twenty minutes, we all went in to the pre-school whānau time. It was time for us to go back to the nursery for lunch. “Bye, Michael.”

Interpretation/analysis

Michael and Skye were obviously delighted to see each other. They played with and responded to each other in a positive way.

What next?

We will continue to support this relationship with regular visits to the pre-school and encourage and acknowledge their friendship.

What’s happening here?

Through a variety of relationships, Michael is developing a number of identities within and beyond the centre walls. A number of assessments are made over time, including one documented by Michael’s twelve-year-old sister.

What aspects of assessment for infants and toddlers does this exemplify?

The teachers recognise the infants’ and toddlers’ established and developing reciprocal and responsive relationships with each other, their siblings, and the adults in the environment, and they site assessments within these relationships.

The teachers recognise Michael as a competent social partner with the other children and with adults. In the assessments, they are sensitive to occasions where Michael demonstrates his competencies and are respectful in their responses to the interactions he initiates.

Whānau are included in these assessments. The teachers quote Michael’s mother’s observations at home, and his sister writes about his progress and his enthusiasms.

How might this assessment contribute to infants’ and toddlers’ learning?

The teachers gather a number of assessments over time. These inform their understandings of the children’s developing relationships and help them to scaffold relationships between the toddlers, their peers, and adults.

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

The teachers recognise the ways toddlers develop identities and give value to this learning in assessments.

Relationships are the foundation of the children’s experiences at the centre, and the teachers do what they can to acknowledge and foster these with all members of the setting’s community. Information from home is valued and included.

By using language to sensitively facilitate interactions between toddlers, the teachers support shared meaning for those involved. For example, Gae records an occasion when she takes Skye and Gemma to visit Michael after he has moved to the “over-tuos”. Gae uses language to support this interaction: “Hi, Michael. I’ve brought Gemma and Skye to visit you.”