

Emotional well-being

Making a card for Great-grandad

Child: Zachary

Date: February

Teacher: Mary

| A learning story | |
|---|---|
| Taking an interest | <p>“I’m making a card for my great-grandad,” Zachary told me.</p> <p>“He’s really sad!” I asked him why.</p> |
| Being Involved | <p>“Because Great-grandma died. We go and see him and cheer him up.”</p> <p>“My great-grandma died before I was born.”</p> |
| Persisting with Difficulty | <p>“My daddy said when I’m a daddy, I might die, so I don’t want to be a daddy because I don’t want to die.</p> |
| Expressing an Idea or a Feeling | <p>I don’t want to grow up ...”</p> <p>(Monique was sitting listening to this wonderful chatting. She told him that everyone has to grow up!)</p> |
| Taking Responsibility | |
| Short-term review | |
| <p>This was a wonderful way of expressing a feeling that he has picked up. His great-grandad is obviously very important to him and he wants to make him feel happy. He was able to talk in a very relaxed manner with little prompting from myself or Monique – very grown up! How important families are.</p> | |

Parent comment

When I dropped Zachary off in the morning I mentioned to one of the teachers that it was Zach’s great-grandad’s birthday and we were going to visit him after crèche. I suggested to Zach that if he felt like doing a picture, he could make one for Great-grandad. The teacher suggested they make him a birthday card.

When I arrived back at crèche to collect Zachary, I was told about the conversation he had had with Mary and Monique while making the birthday card. It was really nice to hear that he had been talking about Great-grandma, who died last year, and that he was talking about looking after Great-grandad. We talked about Great-grandma dying a lot after she died – what it meant for us and for Great-grandad. I was pleased to see that he seemed to have understood it and was comfortable talking about it.

I was unable to catch up with Mary for a few days and then his learning story appeared in the portfolio with more details in it, which was very helpful. When I spoke with Mary it was also good to follow up with her about him not wanting to be a daddy because he would have to die. In a way the learning story has acted as a catalyst for discussion with the teachers about what is going on in Zachary’s life and his reactions to it.

Because I was not able to catch up with Mary straight away, it was good to have the learning story there. It let me know what was said and it also served as a reminder to me to discuss it further with her. Having the story in Zachary’s portfolio really illustrates to me that the teachers are picking up on who Zachary is.

What's happening here?

Zachary's parent suggests that Zachary draw a picture for his great-grandfather's birthday while he is at crèche. The teacher encourages Zachary to make it into a birthday card, and the teacher records the learning story conversation they have with Zachary about Zachary's great-grandfather and death, including the point of view added by another child, Monique.

What does this assessment tell us about the learning (using a Well-being/Mana Atua lens)?

Sustained conversations between children and between adults and children are valuable on a number of levels. In this case, the conversation enables Zachary to explore, with the teacher and another child, two aspects of Well-being/Mana Atua: human development (growing up and dying) and emotion (being sad when someone dies). Zachary thinks about the connection between growing up (and therefore becoming a father) and dying. His logic is impeccable: his father has told him that when you become a "daddy", you could die, "so I don't want to be a daddy because I don't want to die."

Zachary also appears to be recognising that he can help make a sad person happier.

How might this documented assessment contribute to Well-being/Mana Atua?

The Parent comment makes it clear that the parent values this story being written down. "It was good to have the learning story there. It let me know what was said and it also served as a reminder to me to discuss it further with [the teacher]."

Earlier in the comment, the parent expresses satisfaction that Zachary had understood what the great-grandmother's dying meant for the family and "was comfortable talking about it". She also feels that "Having the story in Zachary's portfolio really illustrates to me that the teachers are picking up on who Zachary is." The parent describes the learning story as acting "as a catalyst for discussion with the teachers about what is going on in Zachary's life".

What other strands of Te Whāriki are exemplified here?

This learning story conversation is an example of the interconnections between Well-being/Mana Atua, Communication/Mana Reo, and Exploration/Mana Aotūroa.