

# Today in the playroom

## Veins, wonderful veins!

November

This morning in the hospital playroom we talked about veins in our bodies. Jessica dressed up like a doctor and looked to see if she could find Shani's veins ... **DI SCCOVERY!** Jessica found a vein on the back of Shani's hand. "Could medicine go into this vein?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied. "The doctors might think that was a good vein to put medicine into."



"OK, I'll be sick, OK?" suggested Shani as she climbed into bed.

"OK - and I'll put some medicine into your vein," replied Jessica as she placed a pretend syringe on Shani's arm.

"Ouch!" Shani exclaimed.

"Sorry about that," said Jessica, "but I need to put this medicine into your vein so you'll feel better."

"OK, now it's my turn to be the doctor," Shani suggested. She dressed herself in some dress-up clothes and then looked at the back of Jessica's hand. **ANOTHER DI SCCOVERY!**

"Oh - I can see your veins, too. Mmm ... they're very nice," she exclaimed. Both girls laughed!

"I'll be asleep, OK?" suggested Jessica. She shut her eyes as Shani bandaged her arm. "Whoops," Shani exclaimed as she finished her bandaging. "Now I can't see your veins at all!"



**Comment from Sarah (Hospital Play Specialist):**

Shani and Jessica were very interested in finding out about their veins and the insertion of IVs - a procedure that is commonly used when children are hospitalised. They appeared to have a lot of trust in each other (despite only meeting each other a few days earlier), showing this by letting each other find their veins and taking turns to explore the roles of doctor and patient.

**What next?**

During further play sessions, I aim to provide opportunities for Shani and Jessica to re-visit this topic if they choose, and I will be available to answer questions or address concerns that they, or other family members may have in regard to this procedure. Discussion with their parents/caregivers about the impact of hospitalisation and the benefits of supporting their children's interests in healthcare play (for example, at home and in their early childhood centres) may also be useful in easing the transition process from hospital to home.

## Daneka's drip

2 June

Today in the playroom, Daneka asked for the pretend drip-stand to be put out.

She looked at the drip hanging from it and said, "But it's empty."

We found a bag of fluid and attached it.

"Where's the teddy bear bandage? I need a teddy bear bandage to put on me," she said.

So we found a bandage and Daneka said, "Now I can give myself some medicine." She taped on the line and then said, "But I need a towel, it's all running."

Together we looked at the drip and found the clamps to stop the fluid running through. "Now I can do it," she said.

She gave herself a (pretend) finger prick.

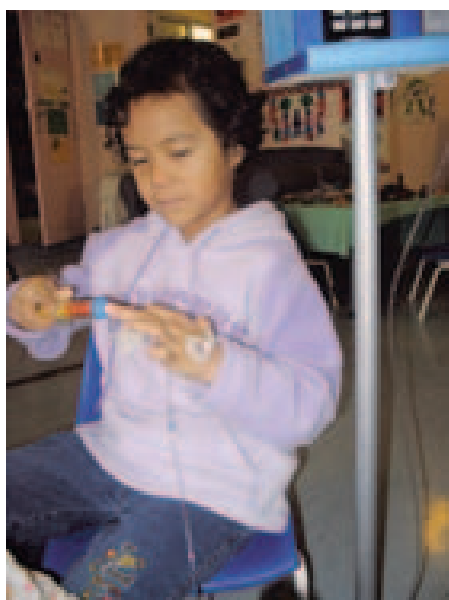
"I need a dolly too."

She played with the medical equipment until her mum came to get her. "Write a note on it," she said.

"What shall we write?" I asked.

We decide to write:

**Please don't touch. This is Daneka's drip.**



Barbara's comment:

*In her play, Daneka has shown familiarity and confidence with the equipment in the medical play area of the playroom. This has developed from her careful observations of the procedures her brother has experienced during his stay in hospital. She has developed this confidence further by exploring what the drip would feel like if it were on her. The opportunity for brothers and sisters of hospitalised children to play with real and pretend medical equipment is valuable in supporting and extending their understanding of what is happening to their siblings.*

## Katy's hospital check-up

**April**

**Children's names: Jake and Matthew**  
**Play Specialist: Sarah**

"What's wrong with Katy?" asked Jake, dressed in his doctor clothes.

"Don't know," replied Matthew.

"I'll do a check-up!" suggested Jake.

Matthew sat Katy on his knee as Jake looked inside his doctor's bag. Jake pulled out a torch.

"OK. I'll check her eyes," encouraged Jake.  
"Look at the light," he instructed.

Matthew put his hand inside the puppet and turned her head towards the torch. He watched carefully as Jake shone the light into Katy's eyes.

"That's good," encouraged Jake, "Now I'll listen to your heart."

Jake searched his bag once more, selected a stethoscope, and put this on. Matthew held Katy still.

"OK, breathe in," Jake instructed as he placed the end of the stethoscope on Katy's chest.

Matthew used his hand inside the puppet, opening and closing her mouth to indicate she was breathing.

"Breathe out," Jake directed, as he moved the stethoscope around Katy's chest. Matthew looked eagerly at Jake for his diagnosis. "Good. She's OK. She can go now!" he informed Matthew.

"Yay!" laughed Matthew as he jumped up with the puppet. "Bye!" he called, as he carried Katy to a new activity.

### **A comment from Sarah**

Jake and Matthew participated in a wonderful co-operative healthcare play session, even though these two boys had only spent a brief amount of time together in hospital. It was very interesting and informative to observe how the boys used the puppet in their play. This is an invaluable resource I utilise regularly in order to gain understanding about the meaning that children take from their hospital experiences.

Jake and Matthew's interest in, and knowledge of, the hospital environment was highlighted in this interaction. Jake demonstrated confidence, control, and a good understanding about how some of the medical equipment was used. Matthew played a valuable role in providing comfort and support to Katy during her check-up (for example, by sitting her on his knee and helping her to keep still), highlighting his thoughtful and caring nature.



### What's happening here?

The three stories of: “Daneka’s drip”; “Veins, wonderful veins!”, and “Katy’s hospital check-up” come from a hospital playroom. The hospital’s play specialists narrate the three play-session stories demonstrating different children’s strategies for dealing with health issues.

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

In all three stories, the children are playing out familiar and potentially anxiety-creating hospital procedures: having a drip put in, finding veins, and “doing a check-up”. In their pretend play, the children are in control: Daneka pretends to give herself some medicine; Jessica and Shani take turns at being the doctor; Jake takes the role of the doctor, while Matthew plays the caring parent, and Katy (the puppet) is pressed into service as the patient needing a check-up.

In “Katy’s hospital check-up”, the boys demonstrate a sense of responsibility for Katy’s well-being, and all three stories describe the children collaboratively exploring roles as they attempt to collectively make sense of a community with special purposes (health and well-being), routines, and technologies.

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

In “Veins, wonderful veins!”, the hospital play specialist comments that she will provide opportunities for Jessica and Shani to revisit this topic, and she will be available to answer questions or address concerns that they, or any other family members, may have about the procedure of injecting into veins. In fact, all three stories provide opportunities for revisiting, further conversations, and enquiry.

### What other strands of Te Whāriki are exemplified here?

The hospital play specialist notes how much the children already know about the procedures they are acting out – *contributing* their understandings to their playmates. Their involvement in the play scenarios also encourages them to *explore* the topics further.