Assessment – Learning stories of Giftedness
Early years education with gifted children - Quality practices series

Jo Dean & Valerie Margrain


Curriculum Connections
“Te Whāriki places emphasis on planning based on individual characteristics strength, interests and needs. All children have the right “to reach their potential” (Ministry of Education, 1996).

“The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students’ learning and teachers’ teaching as both student and teacher respond to the information that it provides. … Assessment for the purpose of improving student learning is best understood as an ongoing process that arises out of the interaction between teaching and learning” (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 39).

References:


Emma’s Learning Story
(age – just turned 4 years)
Emma, today you brought a book that you had created at home. It was called ‘Cinderella’. You have demonstrated your artistic skills in the past, particularly through your sewing interest. I was just amazed at your illustrations in your book, clearly showing the difference between the dirty dress and the clean dress that Cinderella was wearing. You could articulate your drawings, identifying the different parts on the dresses such as the ‘puff sleeves’ and the ‘overlay on the skirt’. Your Mum and I also talked about your perception of distance. You have shown your understanding this through your drawings; one page shows Cinderella close up. “You can’t see her shoes here” you said, “because it’s close up”. On the next page you told me that “you can see the ceiling and the floor because Cinderella is far away”. What an enjoyable book this was to read.

Thank you so much for sharing it with me Emma! Mahi pai! Great work!

Emma’s learning story demonstrates some of the gifted characteristics that this young girl has, including advanced language and knowledge, and conceptual thinking. This narrative also documents valued connection between home and centre.
Why use Learning Stories?
Learning Stories are a narrative approach to describe and highlight children’s learning and our understanding of it. Learning Stories have become a popular tool for assessment in early childhood education (Ministry of Education, 2004/2007/2009). Having storied accounts of children’s progress — from children’s, families’ and teachers’ perspectives is hugely valued and provides a strong thread of continuity to the child’s learning. Including many perspectives creates a bigger picture of the child’s learning and their learning context; multiple voices strengthens validity.

Emma’s learning story illustrates the opportunity that learning story portfolios provide to document continuity of learning across settings, and connections to previous stories and experiences. Partnership between home, community, ECE and school can not only be captured within learning stories, but also fostered by them.

References:

Documenting Dispositions for Learning

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Iti noa ana, he pito mata. “With care, a small kumara will produce a harvest.”

Acknowledgements:

giftEDnz early years special interest group
www.giftednz.org.nz