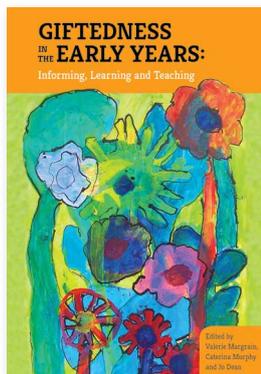


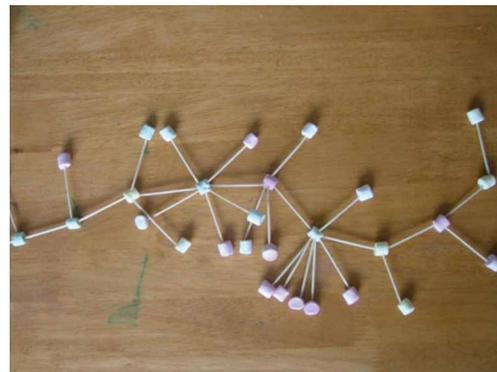
Identification of Giftedness in the Early Years

Early years education with gifted children - Quality practices series



Sue Breen, Caterina Murphy & Valerie Margrain

This brochure connects to chapter 2 of Margrain, V., Murphy, C., & Dean, J. (2015). *Giftedness in the early years: Informing, learning & teaching*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press.



Curriculum Connections

"*Te Whāriki* is designed to be inclusive and appropriate for all children and anticipates that special needs will be met as children learn together in all kinds of early childhood education settings" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 11).

"Adults should take time to listen seriously to the views parents and caregivers have of their children's learning and development and share decision making with them. For parents and caregivers of children with special needs, adults should share information on available specialist services and support" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 55).

Effective assessment

- Benefits students
- Involves students
- Supports teaching and learning goals
- Is planned and communicated
- Is suited to purpose
- Is valid and fair

(Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 40)

References

- Margrain, V. (2011). Assessment for learning with young gifted children. *Apex, The New Zealand Journal of Gifted Education*, 16(1). Retrieved from <http://www.giftedchildren.org.nz/apex/v16art04.php>
- Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early childhood curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (2000). *Gifted and talented students: Meeting their needs in New Zealand schools*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
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Case study (Margrain, 2011)

Children at an extension playgroup were given toothpicks and marshmallows, and a small demonstration on how to create multisided 3-dimensional shapes. Children created pyramids, prisms, cubes, pentagons and octagons, then attempted dodecahedrons and other shapes. On the way home in the car, Xavier (4 years and 8 months old) dismantled his shapes and produced a replica of the solar system with his toothpicks and marshmallows, including (correctly) the major moons for each planet. A few weeks later he announced that he was going to build the solar system again, but with the space probes/man-made satellites that belonged to the planets, as he'd already done the moons before. Xavier dictated the following text to accompany the photograph of his second model, shown at the top of this brochure.

"This is a picture of the planets with man-made satellites and some moons. If you start on the right hand side and work your way over to the left, we start with the sun, then Mercury, then Venus – the marshmallow out of those represents Mariner 10, the first space probe to do flybys of the planets. Next the one with heaps out of it is earth, but there wasn't room to put any more although there are heaps of satellites flying around the earth, but the white one on its own is the moon. Next is Mars and Phobos and Demios and Space Probe Pathfinder, then Jupiter with its four main moons and Voyager, then Saturn with the Saturn Cassini and Voyager 2, then Uranus and Neptune with Voyager 2, and Pluto with Charon."

Xavier later added a final comment: "When the model was made Voyager 2 hadn't reached Pluto yet, but it has now." (dictated by Xavier, 4 years, 8 months)

Core principles of identification

(Ministry of Education, 2000)

- Identification should begin early
- There should be open communication
- Identification should be a continuous and dynamic process
- Identification should be a means to an end, not an end in itself
- Identification should be unobtrusive
- A team approach is required
- Be alert to all children
- Use a multi-method approach

Methods of identification

- Parent/whānau nomination
- Teacher nomination
- Narrative assessment, including anecdotes and learning stories
- Observation scales
- Standardised curriculum-related testing
- Psychometric testing, including IQ (conducted by psychologists)
- Portfolio entries including samples of art, writing, and language.

“Poppy peek” teacher observations (Breen)

- Commitment to the task
- Concentration span
- Language usage – listening to discussion with parents
- Language usage – in discussions with teacher
- Fine motor skills
- Independence
- Language
- Logical thinking
- Mathematical ability
- Measuring and estimating
- Ability to predict
- Sorting
- Spatial awareness
- Creative thinking
- Creativity in action (e.g. in drawing or when using “building” materials)

Parent reflection prompts (Breen)

- To bring out the best in my child ...
- The ways my child shows values and emotions are ...
- My child struggles with ...
- Evidence of my child’s abilities ...
- Something amazing my child did was ...
- If only ...
- People don’t realise ... about my child
- The balancing act in parenting my child is ...
- Something I don’t understand about my child is ...
- Other people have told me my child is absolutely passionate about ...
- I worry about my child because ...
- My child combines ...
- My child “comes alive” when ...

Peer nomination form for use with three and four year old children (Murphy)

- Who would be the best organiser if the teacher was away? ...
- Who has the most unusual ideas? ...
- Who is best at making things? ...
- Who is a good leader in the group? ...
- Who is the funniest person in the group? ...
- Who is best at doing difficult things?
- Who is the first person to suggest new games to play? ...
- If you needed help, who would you ask? ...

Teacher observation scale

Allan (1999) developed a New Zealand diagnostic tool called the *Giftedness in Early Childhood Scale*, subsequently published as part of *Identifying and Providing for Giftedness in the Early Years* (Allan, 2002). These scales focus on indicators grouped into four key areas: a child’s approach to learning, cognition and language, creativity and social competence. The scales for children 3-5 years, can be freely downloaded for personal use by parents or teachers from the gifted and talented online community within the Ministry of Education TKI website – see <http://gifted.tki.org.nz/Early-Childhood-Education-ECE/Identification>

Iti noa ana, he pito mata.

“With care, a small kumara will produce a harvest.”

Acknowledgements:



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