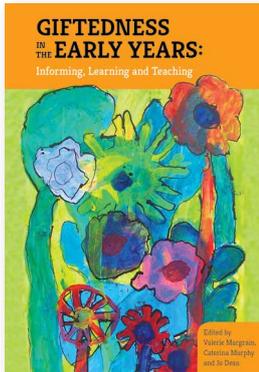


Social and Emotional Issues: Young Children who are Gifted

Early years education with gifted children - Quality practices series



Carola Sampson & Valerie Margrain

This brochure connects to chapter 7 of Margrain, V., Murphy, C., & Dean, J. (2015). *Giftedness in the early years: Informing, learning & teaching*. Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press.



Curriculum Connections

Children develop ...

- An ability to identify their own emotional responses and those of others
- Confidence and ability to express emotional needs
- Trust that their emotional needs will be responded to (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 50).

"This competency [Relating to Others] is associated with self-motivation, a "can-do" attitude, and with students seeing themselves as capable learners, It is integral to self-assessment.

Students who manage themselves are enterprising, resourceful, reliable and resilient. They establish personal goals, make plans, manage projects, and set high standards. They know when to lead, when to follow, and when and how to act independently" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 12).

References

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. (2007). *The New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.

Case Study One: Simon

Simon had been playing with a rope, tied the outdoor gym structure. The rope was a 'snake' and he had been absorbed in his play around jungles and adventures, when he realized he needed to go to the bathroom. On returning back, he found the 'snake' gone. Other children found the rope, tied to the post, and used it for their purposes, not knowing of Simon's play. He was furious and enraged, but was told he had to learn to share things with others. Simon became desperate and was found wailing at the gate, wanting to go home. The teacher sat with him for a while, acknowledged his loss – the snake – and Simon calmed visibly. They talked about what had happened and that the others couldn't have known about his play. Simon had a few good suggestions when asked what he could do differently in a situation like this. After that he asked to withdraw behind a bush and grieve a little for his 'snake'. He was happy shortly after.

Simon's teachers teach empathy, respect and tolerance amongst the children and for other people's property. However, they also have worked closely with Simon to manage "tragedies", cope with his distress, and communicate his feelings in diverse ways.

References:

Daniels, S., & Meckstroth, E. (2009). Nurturing the sensitivity, intensity, and developmental potential of gifted young children. In S. Daniels & M. Piechowski (Eds.), *Living with intensity* (pp. 33-56). Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

Probst, B., & Piechowski, M. (2011). Handbook for counsellors serving students with gifts and talents. In T. Cross & J. Cross (Eds.), *Development, relationships, school issues, and counseling needs/ interventions* (pp. 53-71). Waco, TX: Prufrock Press Inc.

Five areas of excitability:

Area	Area Behaviours	Quality Practices
<i>Psychomotor intensity</i> – oversupply of energy	Busy, restless, moving while thinking, difficulty sitting still on the mat, chatting, talking out of turn, nail biting, picking, etc.	Give children something to hold, eg a bean bag or soft toy. Fill a balloon with rice or cornflour. Include outside and physical learning. Limit the time for sitting still.
<i>Sensual intensity</i> – heightened sensory and sensual expression of emotional tension	Intense seeing, hearing, smelling, touching & tasting: either beautiful, soothing & pleasing or offensive, disturbing, hurting & distasteful. Dislikes clothing labels and tight clothing.	Support self-help skills and strategies. Create aesthetically pleasing environments and positive sensory experiences, provide comfort, discussion, help children identify likes & dislikes, remove clothing labels & scratchy fabric.
<i>Intellectual intensity</i> - Superior activity of the mind	Passion for problem-solving, hunger for knowledge, avid reading, voracious curiosity, keen observation, high concentration, perfectionism, fear of failure, avoidance, anxiety, frustration.	Give children time and space to complete projects, discuss mistakes, share own experiences of mistake-making, meeting with like-minded peers, extra-curricula activities such as chess, join gifted support groups.
<i>Imaginational intensity</i> – spontaneous imagery as an expression of emotional tension	Immense ability to be immersed in imaginary worlds, create imaginary friends and pets. Differentiates between imagination and reality. Able to involve others in play and amuse self.	Talk through stories the child has created. Record learning stories. Document examples of creativity. Use imaginative skills to problem-solve real-life situations. Involve other children in play activities.
<i>Emotional intensity</i> – strongly intensified feelings and emotions.	Aware of own and others' feelings. Rollercoaster emotions (extreme). Anguish, despair, anger, compassion, misery. Deep relationships, though not necessarily with age peers. Strong attachments, rituals. Change is challenging. Blushing, sweating, heart racing, "knot" in stomach.	Accept that adults can be friends. Help children recognise and understand feelings and physical reactions. Help children learn self-control and manage anger and behaviour. Respond to behaviour calmly. Teach empathy.

(Daniels & Meckstroth, 1999; Probst & Piechowski, 2011).

Iti noa ana, he pito mata.

"With care, a small kumara will produce a harvest."

Acknowledgements:



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