

Exploring Interconnectedness with 3-5 year olds (Room 3)

Connections and Belonging was an ongoing area of focus at group times in term 1. This is an important area in each child's life and approaching the different ways we connect/belong, creates understanding in children's minds and fosters further skills in connecting with their peers and friends. As part of our involvement as a focus site for AUSSI SA we looked at the 'Children's Earth Charter'.

The Little Earth Charter consists of eight principles, life, interconnected, family, past, earth, peace, love and future. Interconnectedness was a great addition as a topic to share with the Room 3 children at my group times. I utilised their idea to talk about the different things that are important in our planet.

I approached this by drawing a picture of myself and posing this question: "what do I need to make me happy and healthy?" Children thought for a moment, almost wondering what answer I was looking for. I started the thoughts flowing by talking about clothing.



"I need clothes to keep me warm and safe". The ideas started with many suggestions, shoes, socks, underwear, hats, etc. We then explored the idea of needing peaceful behaviour, food and water. I then drew a pig; I asked the same question and applied it to the pig: "what does the pig need to be happy and healthy?" The items were very similar. I reiterated the fact that the pig and I need

much of the same things in this world. I then said this is called 'Interconnectedness'. I encouraged children to chant after me, to concrete the word in their minds.

The interconnected principle states 'that everything is connected to everything else. Each and every person and living creature has its own special qualities. We all have a place on this earth and we all need each other'. This concluded our first group time about interconnectedness and the model formed was displayed in the room at their height for children to revisit.

By the start of the next week I was approached by a parent keen to share a conversation she had with her son. He had eagerly explained to his family that he had learnt a new, big word at the Childrens Centre. They were very interested and encouraged him to share this word with them. "Interconnectedness" he said proudly. "What does it mean?" they asked. It means "you don't pick the plants when they are small, let them grow big" he replied.

The following week as a follow on I used props to recreate the message about interconnectedness building on from the idea of what I need to be happy and healthy and the relation to the pig. Children found the story and visual presentation inviting to watch and found it had moments of humour and relativity.

Over the next week I began noticing children chanting the word 'Interconnected'. I even noticed a child at sleep time, sit up. As I was going to ask him to lie back down, I noticed he was saying something whilst pointing to the poster on the wall. What he was doing was chanting 'Interconnected' to himself and following the word in time with the syllables.



This then inspired me to use the children as a part of my group time and encourage their participation up the front. The group could discuss ways that they are interconnected in Room 3, becoming a part of the interconnected model. Three children were involved, I choose an interested child, a child who is strengthening her group skills and a child who is a confident and willing to be involved. Through using their photos, the Room 3 group called out different things they need to be happy and healthy. New aspects were brought forward like hygiene (brushing teeth) and having toys. All three children had the same needs and children called out their understanding that they are ALL interconnected.

A further idea was explored on the model. By questioning “where does our food come from?” children explained from the supermarkets and the garden. Further questioning begun, “so where does the supermarkets get the food from?” This continued, following a cycle of how everything is connected to everything else, creating a full circle moment in the learning for the children of the interconnected principle.



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