

Language and Literacy

Bianca I am always thrilled when I see someone so in love with books! I guess that is because I am a reader too, and I really appreciate the pleasures of reading and absorbing the images and ideas that are to be found in books. In the early years children are learning to 'read' and understand many different written, visual and oral signs and symbols. An important part of this is learning that books, and the words in them, can be fun, amusing, comforting and full of excitement and information. Reading – and being read to – is like unlocking a door to learning. It provides access to all kinds of other knowledge.

As you become familiar with particular stories you are able to indicate through facial expressions, language and gesture what stories/songs you prefer and you know exactly where to find the books you want. Your distress was obvious the day I took them home to repair them and forgot to bring them back!

"Walking Through the Jungle" and the "Animal Boogie Woggie" are clearly your favourites, I think you enjoy the combination of reading, waiata and dramatic play these books offer, qualities that cross over from your passion for music and movement.



You have become enthralled with the characters that appear in the stories and your enthusiasm is contagious as you set about bringing the characters to life with your voice, facial expressions and body movements; snapping with the crocodile, stomping with the elephant and shake, shake, shake along with the bear. This is you applying your distinctive personality to a situation to make the experience your own. I would willingly read these stories a dozen times in one session, and I do. (Meranie and Sharron do their share too) just to get an encore performance.

You are always adding new stories to your reading list, those that present repetition and rhythm seemingly the most attractive... "Baa baa Black Sheep", "Row your boat" "Humpty Dumpty" rhymes we can sing anytime, but always you are happiest with book in hand. You love to turn the pages and connect with the illustrations as we sing or say the words, and you think it's really cool when I change the words to include children's names... "One for Bianca, and one for Delilah and one for Paxton who lives down the lane."

I love hearing from Mum that you take your passion for books home too and I know exactly how she feels when she talks about you chasing her around, book in hand, demanding to be read too.





The learning I see happening...

The connections between reading and language are powerful and you learn these skills by actively participating in them in lots of different places-within your whānau and in other settings such as pre-school (Ministry of Education 2009). Becoming competent with language and literacy is in part, about 'access and apprenticeship'. This means that to become competent you need to be around people and places that give you opportunities to learn about language and literacy (this is the 'access'), and are surrounded by positive role models for language and literacy (which makes you an 'apprentice' learning a new set of skills).

This has been a story about you investigating literacy Bianca, you are;

- Beginning to learn about books, that they have pages to turn, a beginning an end and a right way up.
- As I read the words you are reading the pictures and making links between the illustrations and the words you see and hear as you experiment with sound and language.
- You are re telling the story in a way that is meaningful to you, using your body, face and voice.

These are skills and practices you will use over and over again in different and more complex ways as you grow and develop. What a great start you are making!!



Opportunities and possibilities...

There are endless opportunities for you to explore literacy and language Bianca and we are happy to follow your lead in this respect by ensuring you have access to a range of books, board stories and the like.

Nona and Jason we have had lots of conversations about Bianca's interest in books, I wonder if you have any updates you would like to share with us. What books are her current favourites at home?

