

# WRITING FOR PURPOSE: A TEAM EFFORT

OSCAR AND JACK CREATE SIGNAGE FOR THEIR PIZZA SHOP OCT 2016 BY HELEN



Jack and Oscar are frequent builders and architects at Kindergarten using blocks and other materials on offer. This morning's amazing pizza shop signage was prompted by an earlier conversation at the playdough table with myself and a small group of other children. Waffles and Pizzas were being made, fuelling conversations about making pizza, our favourite topping ingredients, and having pizza delivered to our door.

Sometime later my attention was drawn to Oscar and Jack's play in the block area. The same idea had found itself within their block play as I heard them remark that they had both constructed their own pizza shops. I watched on as Jack asked Linda to write him a sign for it. (Some weeks earlier Jack and Mason had been supported to 'write' signs for their trucks that were for sale). Linda obliged and wrote 'Pizza shop' as requested on a piece of cardboard which Jack then attached to his construction using sellotape. Oscar then decided that he needed a sign too. However instead of asking Linda to write another sign, I observed Oscar and Jack use the existing sign as a prompt for Oscar's own writing. Jack stood to Oscar's right, holding the sign out so Oscar could see the letters, and as shown in the photos, Oscar with full concentration on the task, diligently formed and represented each letter, finishing with a change of pen and a pizza slice drawn in brown for good measure! This sign was then attached to Oscar's pizza shop and he began to describe the various features to me including a factory and a robot which packaged the pizzas – intriguing stuff!

For me, this instance was not just an illustration of Oscar & Jack knowing and using letters and learning to write (as the focus of literacy can so often be) but the very purposeful and meaningful way that literacy and language was interwoven as a tool in their play – to convey meaning and purpose to their role as pizza shop owners. It is clear from this that they understand the role of written words to communicate messages and meaning to others, as well as working theories about factory production. They were both confident to access the materials that they needed (card, pens, sellotape, and even teachers!) and they demonstrated self-responsibility and confidence in their own ideas. Of course, this is also a story of friendship – two mates that have shared interests and enjoyment in creating together. There is always plenty of action, detail and collaboration in Oscar and Jack's joint block play endeavours. How Oscar and Jack related to each other during this task was also impressive to witness - Jack supporting, overseeing Oscar's task (but not interfering), completely happy to wait, and Oscar with a clear focus on the task at hand, stopping to ask Jack at one point to show him how to do a tricky letter, but insistent that it was his own work to do.

We will continue to try and notice and respond to moments like this where literacy (as well as other relevant learning areas) can be supported and extended for Jack and Oscar whilst embedded in their play and interests. Having a range of literacy rich resources at hand certainly helps. Both Jack & Oscar are soon to start school and this type of learning experience and the dispositions of confidence and cooperation that they displayed whilst doing it, make strong connections with *The New Zealand Curriculum* (for school) – in particular the Learning area of *English Language/Literacy progressions* (concepts of print, forming letters) and the *Key Competencies* (Using language, Symbols & text, Relating to others, and Participating & Contributing).