

# BEING A LEARNER

## Physical play is learning.

James has spent a busy term exploring play in many different ways. He has been problem solving many challenging situations, gaining an understanding of the rules of group play. This has meant developing negotiation skills to join the play of others. At times the teachers have stood back to enable James and the boys to find their own solutions and this has supported James in his journey to “manage self”, which is a very important life skill. The teachers sometimes call a hui with the boys to revisit the rules that they helped to write up, and notice they signed them too, an official contract for play. You might call it “The Treaty of Nayland”. Although James was not part of the group that made up the treaty he sees it in action every day in both the inside and outside play areas. James likes to play by the rules.



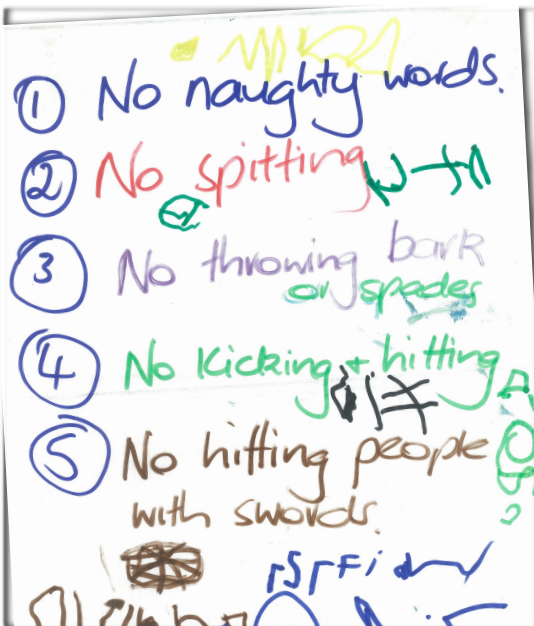
Being able to watch the other boys in physical play helps James to understand the rules of play and the boundaries of rough and tumble play with peers.



## Working it out

Children develop theories about social relationships and social concepts, such as friendship, authority, social rules and understandings.

Te Whāriki (1996)



The teachers continue to reflect on the opportunities and possibilities to bike inside and outside the kindergarten gate, and James asked to be involved.

The biking culture at Nayland Kindergarten motivates teachers and children to continually look at the opportunities for biking, as James and the boys are keen to ride. Often James would ask for the bikes and everyday we try to challenge him to assess risk, challenge and his role in the group. James now has the knowledge and skills he needs to be more involved in group play and to take responsible risks. This is exactly what happened when the sandpit became a cross country track, adding physical challenge where James and his biking mates had to practice new skills to manage the sand, rocks, planks and obstacles in the way.

James quickly established himself in the group and he relished every minute. This is where we first noticed his perseverance to practice the skills he needed. He also found different roles for himself, setting up the petrol station when he needed to give his body a rest.

## BIKING MANIA



Working as a team adds complexity to the biking, socially, physically and emotionally.

**BOYS MAKE IT FUN!**

When we went riding on the courts behind Kindergarten James was adamant he was coming to watch. Many ramps, planks, and obstacles were designed to provide access from and to the concrete, bark and decks.

**REAL WORK, REAL TOOLS!**



## OTHER



Although the biking adventures took up a good part of the morning, there was always time to engage in other interests as well. James was very engaged in glue gun construction earlier in the term and he was very innovative in making tall structures

which were quite challenging to stabilise. James is naturally curious and he notices things of interest, just as he did with the science experiment with milk and dye. He got himself involved.





## THE LEARNING CONTINUES.....

The next step was a visit to the BMX track and James has been waiting to go but the weather had made the track too wet to bike on. So we started to think about what BMX riders wear, what is on their bikes, and if our bikes were safe. James had some ideas about checking the brakes. The checklist went home for James's family to check off.



It was decided that we could practice up on the school courts to get fit for our trip while we waited.



We could make numbers for our bikes like real riders do.



You are a true explorer James, after all our biking adventures you found a way to add more fun and challenge. You showed the others how to master new skills. James continued to practice and practice while he waited.

James set up the fuel station stop and the group responded to his idea. There is so much incidental literacy, maths, and scientific exploration, as they ask for fuel, paid for their petrol and measured the distance to be travelled. Valuable learning is in the context of the play, initiated by James.





While James was practicing his riding and as he waited to go to the BMX track, he noticed the amazing pipework in the sandpit and he decided to join in.

James's time biking through the sandpit had made him notice what others were doing with the pipes. James was really curious about Fintan and Oli pipework designs, he noticed how they were digging holes to fit pipes into the sand. He decided he wanted to join in. He watched on as they set up the underground pipe maze, and he watched carefully as Oli made several holes strategically around the sandpit. It is great when you can see THINKING HAPPENING and you could almost see James's ideas on emerging as he watched.

Again it reinforces our thinking about

peers as role models, and also that boys need time, space, and complex challenges and physical work to move and think. James came up with his own idea

about finding treasure and digging holes that would hold people. One magic moment was when he found treasure and Oli responded by helping him to dig it up. Take notice of the hole Oli is digging in parallel to James's hole. MATHS IN ACTION! The boys retrieved the treasure!



## PIPE CONSTRUCTION



## OBSERVING



## CONSTRUCTING



## TESTING



## FINALLY OFF TO THE BMX TRACK..



### A PROUD MOMENT

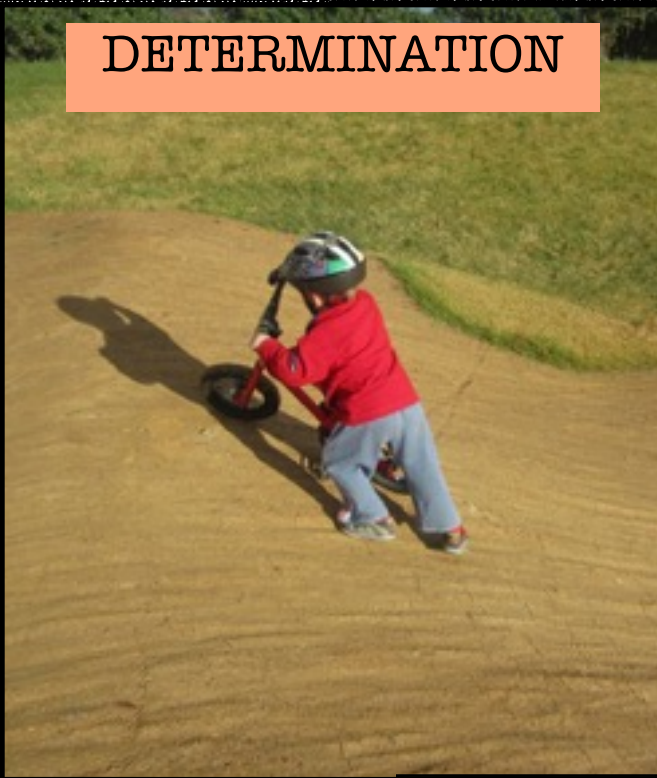
James is self motivated to ride, it has been one of his passion at kindergarten this term and it has been a way for him to be part of the group. Going to the BMX track was a highlight for us all, and James certainly showed great perserverance and determination to ride for 1 hour. It was great to watch you James, concentrating so hard on cycling the challenging track. He had clearly worked out a strategy for success. He chose a part of the track and rode it both ways until he was satisfied he had mastered it, then he moved onto another part of the track. Tino pai tenēi he akonga mea ora - This is being a good learner James. We all had a great morning out!

JAMES HAD THE MUDDIEST BIKE AND HE WAS PROUD OF IT !!!!!





DETERMINATION



PERSEVERANCE



JOB WELL DONE!



## JAMES IS LEARNING PHYSICAL.....

James's learning has been in the context of being social in a bigger group, following instructions, being creative and playful and developing further physical

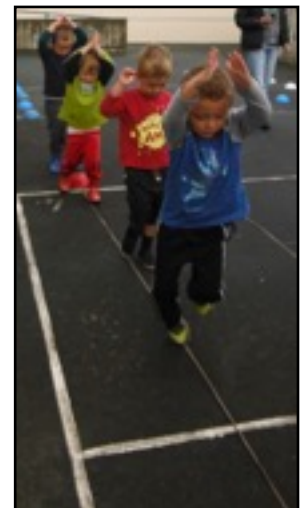
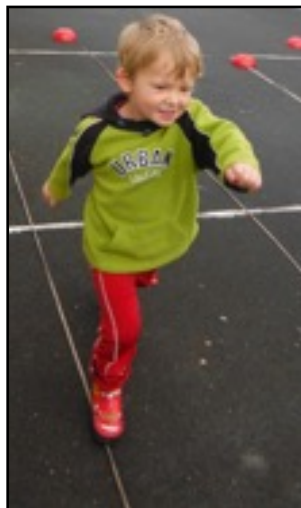
knowledge and skills to further his own learning.

Lee's sessions provide James with the core physical strength he needs to ride the bikes, dig in the sandpit, and learn to write his name.

Physical movement is key to wiring the brain.



**THIS IS SO MUCH  
FUN!**



During this session James was practicing all the skills he needs for heavy work and the challenges of biking.

- Directionality
- Core strength
- Working as part of a team
- Moving to think
- Spatial awareness
- Having fun and being playful
- Confidence to try new experiences
- Being self confident

Ka pai tō mahi. Great work James.

## **What learning is happening? E aha te mātauranga i te ako?**

In terms of settling in James, I had a little WOW moment when I remembered that you have only been at Nayland for 1 term. You have embraced so much new learning, you have become intrinsically motivated to engage in so many new things of interest. You see yourself as a learner, willing to practice and practice to master difficulty and consolidate new learning.

The learning language that best describes you is resilient, you are ready to lock onto learning and able to be fully engrossed in learning, you keep going in the face of difficulty and now you think more interdependently, which is a new skill you are developing as you engage with many new children. This was very evident in your play this term James as the play areas that you chose to engage in were diverse. You seem to know what you needed to do to be involved James, often watching first then finding the confidence and courage at times to voice yourself or to simply persevere until you had got there. What a great role model you are James.

You are not only resilient James but resourceful as well, you are curious and enjoy puzzling about things, you notice the environment around you which supports you to engage in a wide range of experiences, you watch others and then capitalise on elements of their play to create new meaning for your play. You are exploring an increasingly complex array of valued meaning-making practices that make up your world with evident connections, prior connections and forward thinking.

The teachers really value and often reflect on the biking and sand play, because we know that boys communicate, plan and problem solve on the move, and moving is a great way for you and your friends to explore feelings, emotions and work out ways to work together as a team. The teachers thinking is reinforced In Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum, it states that children develop an understanding that they can take responsibility for their own learning and that trying things out, exploration and curiosity are valued ways of learning.

## **Opportunities and Possibilities - Ngā hua pea-ngā taumata.**

We know that James has a strong interest in technology and he enjoys using the ipads, computers and cameras at kindergarten. These also offer him different challenges in terms of problem solving, construction and design. There will be further opportunities and challenges for James to work independently and in groups through physical play, glue construction and technology, plus any other experiences he chooses to join in with. I wonder if James would be interested in extending his biking adventures and his physical adventures on the railway reserve alongside his peers, as there is a challenging track not too far away?

Written by Kaiako Lynne - May, June, July 2013