**Vignette: Finger painting**

*Note:* Use these notes in conjunction with the *General guidelines* for Connecting with practice

**Overview:**
This vignette shows two four-year-olds doing finger painting with an educator.

**Possible focus points:**
- the possibilities and potential of small groups
- the power of unhurried time
- sustained interaction between two children and with an educator
- friendships.

**Key Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) concepts:**
- respectful relationships and responsiveness to children
- intentional teaching
- learning through play
- learning environments
- belonging and being
- all five Learning Outcomes.

**Key links to National Quality Standard (NQS) standards:**

**Quality area 1: Educational program and practice.**

*Standard 1.1:* An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child’s learning and development.

*Element 1.1.5:* Every child is supported to participate in the program.

*Element 1.1.6:* Each child’s agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and influence events and their world.

*Element 1.2.2:* Educators respond to children’s ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child’s learning.

**Quality area 3: Physical environment.**

*Element 3.2.1:* Outdoor and indoor spaces are designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.

*Element 3.2.2:* Resources, materials and equipment are sufficient in number, organised in ways that ensure appropriate and effective implementation of the program and allow for multiple uses.

**Quality area 5: Relationships with children.**

*Element 5.1.1:* Interactions with each child are warm, responsive and build trusting relationships.

*Element 5.1.2:* Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition of skills for life and learning.

*Element 5.1.3:* Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.

*Standard 5.2:* Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.

*Element 5.2.1:* Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.
First viewing: What did you notice?
Ask participants to watch and listen to the vignette. Then use questions to start the discussion.

- What did you notice?
- What were the children doing?
- What was the educator doing?
- What did you notice about the environment and the overall context?

If participants notice different things and have different perspectives on what was happening, highlight that there are always different ways of seeing the same practice or event. Each perspective enriches what we can learn from the vignette.

Note: Participants from centre-based services may comment on the fact that there are only two children and assert that this is not realistic for centre-based services. This could prompt discussion after the third viewing about how to achieve similar situations—that is, opportunities to interact and engage with one or two children—in all types of settings.

Second viewing: Looking more deeply at learning and teaching and links to the NQS
You will notice from the list of links to the NQS above that this fairly simple and typical experience is rich with learning opportunities. You may want to ask participants to choose one or few of the Quality Areas, Standards and Elements that are illustrated in this vignette.

- What are the children learning?
- What were the children learning from each other?
- To what extent does the setting/context support their learning and the educator’s responsiveness to them?
- What did you notice about the features of the interactions between the educator and the children and between the children?
- What evidence was there that these two children share a real friendship?
- Which Learning Outcomes does the children’s learning link to?
- What did you notice about the balance between the educator standing back and engaging with the children’s learning—the dance between leading and responding?
- How does sharing humour contribute to the quality of this experience?
- What kinds of intentional teaching does the educator demonstrate?
- What do you think the educator’s aims might have been for this experience?

Third viewing: What have we learned? What next?
Note: As mentioned above, you may want to have a discussion here about the value of one-to-one, sustained interactions between educators and individual children or a couple of children. How can educators in centre-based settings plan for this and make it happen?

- There is a naturalness and informality in this vignette. Is that because it is family day care or does it have more to do with the educator’s philosophy and practice? What does it contribute to children’s learning? How can it be achieved in larger groups of children?
- The vignette also has an unhurried feel about it. What gets in the way of educators ‘slowing down’, taking time and giving children time to belong, be and become? What can be done to minimise the obstacles to slowing down?
- What have you learned that you can apply to your practice?
- What actions might you take as a result of the discussion about the vignette?

References

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