

Today Gudrun suggested to Luca and Kaylan to play in the block corner and build a construction together. They both do not often play together and Gudrun thought that both would benefit from the interaction. Both took out some blocks and started with the side walls. When being asked what they had decided to build they looked at each other seeming becoming aware of the fact that they had not discussed the matter. 'Hmm, a house for our cars?' Kaylan suggested. 'Yeah! A large garage.' Luca agreed. Gudrun: 'Das hoert sich gut an. Eine Garage fuer eure Autos.'

When they had finished building the first floor they pushed some cars into the hollow space underneath. Luca added more and more blocks to the construction and insisted that they needed lots of space for all of their cars. They communicated their intentions and ideas and respected each other's contributions.

'We need a street to drive in and out.' Kaylan suggested. He placed some flat pieces of blocks around the construction. 'This is the street the cars have to drive on to get into the house.' After playing with the garage for a while, Luca noticed the racing track lying next to their garage. He moved over and with the help of Kaylan they assembled the pieces.

Leo, Solomon and Ray showed an interest in the racing track and each of them collected a car. Due to the instability of the track (some are broken and can't be attached properly anymore) they had to take care not to put too much pressure on the track.

Considering the instability, the children pushed the pieces together after every run without complaining and still had a lot of fun playing together.

After a while Luca suggested to Kaylan to go and play outside in the garden. Luckily Gudrun reminded both to pack the blocks away first.



Here the children worked together, communicating their ideas as their play developed. They worked with shape and spatial concepts when building the road and garage, noting the properties of the blocks as they worked in order to make the construction stable. When using the racing track more children joined in to create a collective play experience. Here too they experimented with concepts associated with physics, such as forces and pressure as they had to work out how much pressure to apply in order for the cars to race successfully on the track, without it collapsing. The children were reminded of their responsibility in maintaining and looking after the environment when they were encouraged to pack the materials away.



In a supportive active learning environment, children who are confident and involved learners are increasingly able to take responsibility for their own learning, personal regulation and contribution to the social environment. Connections and continuity between learning experiences in different settings make learning more meaningful and increase children's feelings of belonging.

A supportive active learning environment encourages children's engagement in learning which can be recognised as deep concentration and complete focus on what captures their interests. Children bring their being to their learning.

Active involvement in learning builds children's understandings of concepts and the creative thinking and inquiry processes that are necessary for lifelong learning. They can challenge and extend their own thinking, and that of others, and create new knowledge in collaborative interactions and negotiations. Children's active involvement changes what they know, can do, value and transforms their learning.

Educators' knowledge of individual children is crucial to providing an environment and experiences that will optimise children's learning.

#### **EYLF Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners**

Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity

This is evident, for example, when children:

- use play to investigate, imagine and explore ideas
- initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas
- persevere and experience the satisfaction of achievement

Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:

- recognise and value children's involvement in learning
- provide learning environments that are flexible and open-ended
- encourage children to engage in both individual and collaborative explorative learning processes
- promote in children a strong sense of who they are and their connectedness to others – a shared identity as Australians



Yesterday G. and Tristan were using the blocks. 'We need a wall to keep the animals inside', G. pointed out. I asked further about this plan. 'It's a zoo...and there's animals', he explained pointing to some animals he had set up on the mats. Tristan assisted with the idea of creating the wall and after helping G. get some long blocks he helped to stack them. This took some time, as the newer unit blocks are shiny and swivel around, making it quite difficult to stack, but both children persisted with their plan. After stacking the newer blocks G. took some older ones and placed them on top.



'There!', he said before knocking the wall over. 'Ohhh!', said Tristan disappointed that it had collapsed. The construction work resumed again with G. balancing the longer blocks.



Tristan went to the shelf to get more blocks for the wall and this time used the half sizes. Here he noted that the smaller ones were half of a longer block.. 'It's two', he explained as he fit two blocks together underneath and the longer blocks. G. then assisted with laying more long blocks on top and both seemed very happy that it was now stable.

Tristan then tested the stability by placing a car inside one of the gaps. 'I don't want it...it will fall down', said G.. Tristan persevered and used gestures to show G. that the car could stay in place without the wall falling over. 'There', said Tristan.

Not long after this they went to play elsewhere and were reminded to put the blocks back on the shelf, which is a sorting task in itself, and requires knowledge of the different lengths.

Here again the children played with mathematical concepts involved in learning about shape and spatial relationships. The children worked together towards a common goal, shared their ideas and tested out ideas and theories. They persisted with their construction work and came up with ideas for making their wall more stable.