

Piecing it all Together

An outdoor project exploring the connections between creativity and multimodal learning in the early years.



Multimodality is an important element of teaching and learning in early years settings. It provides opportunities for young children to communicate using different resources they feel comfortable with.



Our journey began earlier in the year where the children discovered a new form of multimodal learning - piecing together small pieces of paper to create mosaic art. They displayed an enriched sense of creativity as they worked together in groups of practice to engage and design their mosaic art.



The children's interest and learning continued. They displayed a strong interest in this form of design, without the clear vision of what they wanted to create. We believe that this form of learning stems from the children's interest in engaging with different modes of learning; whereby children create the foundation of knowledge and develop their own understanding of new concepts by interacting with new resources and objects. To support this learning, educators encouraged the children to work in their groups of practice to design their ideas for a mural through different mediums.



It became apparent that our conflicted feelings of not having a 'set purpose' or 'storyline' for the emerging mosaic mural was insignificant. In fact, it was the children, as authors of their own learning, that had clearly identified and communicated their intentions through their languages expression of what they wanted to create; and it was us as educators who had to catch up. This was the beginning of our experimental learning in an educational environment where the children were at the centre of their own learning journey.



After a week of discussing and unpacking the risks of breaking tiles with a hammer, the children felt prepared and were eager to begin this new mode of working.

"I can do it and it will make a big loud noise" Maggie stated.

When learning to handle and work with new tools, the children felt empowered and capable. This mode of learning also offered opportunities for children to develop their own knowledge on the assessment of taking risks and taking safety measures to protect their body.

"This is a bit like a puzzle" Olive shared.

Our emphasis of the children, the environment, participation, family, and our community involvement was at the forefront of this project. The wooden ply was donated by the Smyth family, tiles were generously sourced and discounted by a local tile warehouse, the Ayton family, Sands family, and Bufi family, and our Elder Street ECHC community eagerly checked-in on the progress of this mural each morning and evening in the outdoor atelier.



The outdoor environment as the third teacher invites, inspires, provokes, and enriches children with opportunities. In this context, the children are experts and have the ability to collaborate, to see, to manipulate, and to explore the findings themselves by using diverse modes (Clark, 2005).

