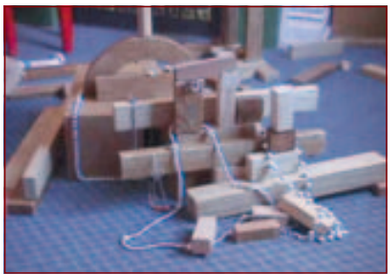
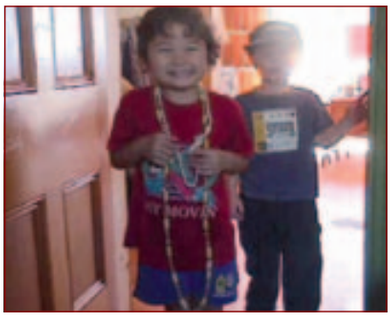
Blocks and beads

Micah and Jak had built a construction with blocks and then added treasure. Suddenly Micah left, followed by Jak, who then returned and with great delight slid into the construction and it collapsed. Micah came in and was very disappointed. Jak said to him, "It's okay – we will build another one," and they did.





This time they began with the beads and the blocks together from the beginning and they included the beads as they built it in a very clever way. Micah had a beautiful golden buckle and puzzled as to how he could stand it up on the block. It took him a while to figure it out. Suddenly he told Jak that he wanted to place it under a certain block so that it would stick out. Jak disagreed and carried on building and then he stopped, looked at Micah, lifted up the exact block that Micah had indicated and said "There you are, Micah!" (I just love it when they listen to each other and change their ideas to accommodate their friend's ideas.)

David came along and he watched them for a while and I could see that he wanted to join in and wasn't sure how to. With a little bit of encouragement David asked Micah which necklace he could have. Micah looked at them all and handed him one. Well, David just beamed and went off to look in the mirror. Then Jak ran to the doorway asking where David was and called to him and gave him a beautiful necklace too. How wonderful to see this generosity and willingness to share. I loved the way Jak took the lead from Micah and gave David a necklace too.

Short-term review

This is a long story and quite a complex one. I recorded it because it tells so much about Jak and Micah's friendship and their developing empathy and inclusion of other people in their play. I was so impressed to see that they were able to keep the focus of the building project despite the other things going on. Their block building skills continue. Jak practises and practises balancing the blocks and changing the style of his buildings. He loves to introduce new material into his building.

What's happening here?

Micah and Jak are building a block construction together, but they're also building on their friendship and their skills in negotiation and empathy.

What does this assessment tell us about the learning (using a Contribution/Mana Tangata lens)?

These two children negotiate with each other as they work together at constructing a block building. In particular, Jak listens to Micah's viewpoint and although he initially disagrees with Micah's vision, he later changes the construction to accommodate Micah's design. Then Micah demonstrates a willingness to share the building treasures with David, and Jak takes in Micah's actions and follows his example.

How might this documented assessment support Contribution/Mana Tangata?

It may well be that these developing abilities and dispositions (to accommodate another's design ideas in genuinely collaborative construction and to share desirable resources) are rather fragile. Revisiting documentation like this can strengthen the idea that "this is what we do here".

What other strands of *Te Whāriki* are exemplified here?

The act of collaborative play, with the children choosing their own materials, setting their own problems, and making decisions, is also an aspect of the Exploration/Mana Aotūroa strand.