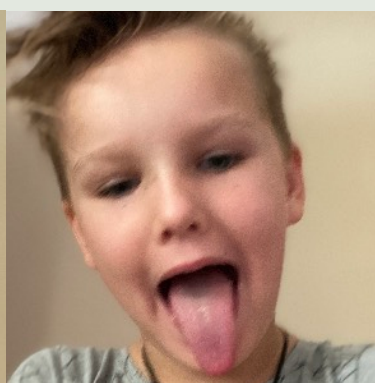


Francesca, What Kind Of Brain Do You Want To Grow For Yourself?



I am fascinated by the idea of play as the vehicle to grow a complex brain, and one day Francesca, as you and I were chatting, I became more intrigued by what you were telling me about your play, this question tumbled forth::

“What kind of brain do you want to grow for yourself Francesca?”

January 28, 2020

Stuart Brown in his book, *Play: how it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul* points out:

“The truth is that play seems to be one of the most advanced methods nature has invented to allow a complex brain to create itself”.

You thought for a moment and a little quizzical smile emerged as you said: “I want to grow a thinking brain”. You paused.

” I want to grow a kind brain”. At this point you tilted her head, thinking further.

“I want to grow a creative brain and a hard working brain”.

Then a final comment:

“They’re all mixed up together.”

My thoughts on your learning...I was stunned! At barely 5 years old, Francesca, you understand all the elements for building a brain that will lead you into a fulfilled, happy life. It struck me, with lightning intensity, that you have heard these things over and over your whole life, from your family, your teachers and from the stories we have written about the tenacity you bring to the learning you choose to pursue. We have written about your creative spirit, your kindness and empathy, and the curious way you explore your world with and alongside your friends. These have been messages that you are very familiar with, and over time, they have become embedded in the way you think about yourself. You were not phased by my question, certainly not confronted by its directness, and I was captivated by the matter of fact way you responded. It was no big deal to you. I think you simply see this for what it is - **YOUR BRAIN AT WORK, BUILDING ITSELF!**



How might we all stretch this learning further?

We talk about building children's learning character for the life they will lead, and hearing you, Francesca this day, I was reminded that learning emerges from your deep seated interest in the people, places and things that are meaningful to you.

Outside of your home, you have been embedded in a culture of learning and teaching, since you were a baby, at Greerton ELC where your teachers design the physical/social environment to strengthen your agency, offering you opportunities for your resilience and resourcefulness to be practised, and for meaning to be at the essence of all you do here. This requires time, space and resources that are full of possibility for you to wonder, to experiment, to test things out, to fail and to try again. We will keep doing this so your curiosity for learning continues to deepen in ways that are full of determination, energy and creativity to name a few of the learning characteristics that you have practised since infancy.



All of these photos are ones you have taken of yourself as you experimented with the iPhone camera. Your interest in technology has been growing of late and you are gaining familiarity as you playfully explore the possibilities, unfettered by fear of making mistakes which you see as a chance to figure it out and learn more having fun as you do!

Arohanui Lorraine