



## 5.2 Zoe Exercises

This story was co-constructed by Kayla Sawchuk and Lee Makovichuk





Zoe exercises after getting her head band on. She explains her intentions to Kayla, her early learning and child care educator, "I'm tired, so I need to exercise before I go outside."

Kayla acknowledges, "You're exercising your muscles." When Everleigh stops her dressing to briefly engage with Zoe, Kayla does not intervene with the children's interaction.

Zoe explains to her friend, "I am exercising."



Everleigh watches for a few minutes and then returns to her outdoor dressing.

Kayla does not stop Zoe or redirect her from her idea. Kayla, in a skilful manner, supports the group of children as they dress for outside while being aware of Zoe.

# Curriculum Meaning Making

*The following is a question—answer recap of a professional dialogue between educators about this story.*

## **What do you know about who Zoe is as a learner and a citizen of this community?**

Kayla explains that she recognizes Zoe's uniqueness. It is common for Zoe to come up with ideas and want to play them out.

Allowing her the time and space to “exercise” helps Zoe to understand that she is honoured as an individual and her ideas are honoured even at a time when the group is getting organized in a transition from inside time to outside time.

## **What do you know about the group of children?**

Allowing others to interact with Zoe, as she plays out her idea, communicates that Zoe has important ideas. Kayla expressed that she doesn't worry that this activity will interfere with routines. She explains that routines are flexible for children to contribute and play out ideas.

Had Kayla approached Zoe using a developmental perspective for learning, she might have redirected Zoe to get dressed for outside time along with all the other children.

Instead Kayla approaches Zoe's ideas using a sociocultural perspective for learning where individual ideas have a place in the space of a day.

As well, Kayla was accepting of Zoe's activity as well as accepting that other children were interested in what Zoe was doing regardless of the adult planned transition time.

Aware, but not redirecting Everleigh when she stops to watch Zoe, Kayla supports Zoe with her ideas and also her social connections with peers. Kayla's response communicates that the playroom is a safe place for ideas.

The invisible supports that enable children's unique expression occur in fluid and flexible routines. In this playroom, once a small group gathers at the door ready for outside play, they leave with one of the educators. The children who remain dressing are accompanied outside with the other educator.

There is no long wait for children who are bundled in winter clothing and there is opportunity for individual expression in routines that shape each day. The atmosphere remains positive as children dress at individual paces and levels of independence.

This supports developing self-help skills without being hurried and herded as a whole group. It takes trust and understanding from the educator that what is taking place is important for children's sense of belonging and positive self-identities.

# Curriculum Connections

*Making links to holistic goals*

## Well-Being

### Emotional Health and Positive Self-Identities

*Children develop a sense of self through*

- ☆ developing recognition of self
- ☆ co-constructing their identities
- ☆ experiencing a growing sense of self-confidence, self-respect, and ability to take initiative
- ☆ growing in their capacity to express feelings, concerns, and needs
- ☆ pursuing interests, passions, and strengths

### Belonging

*Children develop a sense of place through*

- ☆ making connections between centre, home, and broader communities

*Children build respectful and responsive relationships through*

- ☆ forming close relationships with a range of adults

### Physical Health

*Children learn to take responsibility for personal care through*

- ☆ growing in their independence in self-care routines
- ☆ learning about individual differences in self-care routines

*Children explore body and movement through*

- ☆ learning about their body in space
- ☆ increasing bodily awareness, control, strength, agility, and large motor coordination

# Curriculum Connections

*Making links to holistic goals*

## Play and Playfulness

### Imagination and Creativity

*Children develop dispositions for flexible and fluid thinking through*

- ☆ expressing unique and imaginative ideas

*Children invent symbols and develop systems of representation through*

- ☆ making up their own movements
- ☆ negotiating the meaning of symbols with others
- ☆ developing awareness of the imagined and ordinary worlds they move between as they play

*Children create imaginary scenarios in which they explore new possibilities and take possession of their worlds through*

- ☆ creating alternative systems of power
- ☆ creating social spaces and shared narratives

## Communication and Literacies

### Communication Practices

*Children extend ideas and take actions using language*

- ☆ to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas
- ☆ to ask for help or information, argue, persuade, clarify, celebrate, or instruct.



# Curriculum Reflections

*Considering implications for further learning and practice*

How does your conception of childhood and what it means to be a child influence your responses to the different identities children take on?

How do people and policies at your centre honour children's initiatives through thoughtful planning, documentation, and/or responses?

How does your site's scheduling promote or interfere with time to play and create? **Think about** flexible scheduling. **Think about** time allotted to play, routines, and adult-directed activities.

How do you support and value the worlds and fantasies that children create? **Think about** ways in which fantasy and imagination can be extended for children and documented to illustrate their value.

How do you make use of and reflect the community around you to engage, model, and develop children's creativity, imagination, and play interests? **Think about** family expertise and community connections to expand Zoe's ideas about physical fitness.