



WHAT JUMA TAUGHT ME

What I learned from a child and about myself.

Using the Keys to Reflection and Inquiry with the ECE Competencies

MEET JUMA



A STORY UNFOLDS



JUMA WANTS THE CARPET
SQUARE (OR DOES HE?)



WONDER WHAT WILL
HAPPEN



HE GOES FOR HER NECK



HE GOT IT!



EXPRESSING STRONG FEELINGS



WHAT IS JUMA TEACHING US?

- ❖ **Know Yourself:** How do I feel about Juma's activity? What does it stimulate in me? The assistant teacher? The lead teacher? As for me, I hate it when group time is interrupted. But Juma is part of our community and his needs are important. All of us are here to learn. Many types of lessons. The other children are watching, I also wonder about the message that all of them get when a boy of color is acting out. I'd rather it was the girl over there in the corner, you know?
- ❖ **Look at the environments:** It's a State Preschool with new teacher for Juma, new children and a new school year, with many new routines, expectations and transitions. I wonder if these are sources of stress? He has been asked if he'd rather play in the sand, but chooses to stay at group. The teachers are very skilled at meeting emotional needs.. I wonder what Juma's getting out of this?
- ❖ **Child's Point of View:** *Maybe, I want you to notice that I have some unmet needs that confuse me. Check my family file. Group times are when I feel invisible, not known or valued. I get excited in a group and can't sit still. I want you to hold me and love me up. When my message is heard by everyone in the circle, I delight in the attention.*

JUMA TEACHES US

❖ **Seek Multiple Perspectives-** I am so interested in the child's point of view and make guesses about that based on what I understand about development and children's needs. I will do some research and find other well-evidenced points of view and also teachers' perspectives. I generate questions to research: Does he find himself here in our program? Who is Juma closest to? Does his family feel connected? Has he established one adult to connect with here? How might he do this? I look into the ECE Competencies and find a reference to the California Preschool Curriculum Framework. I will look at Volume I, Social Emotional Development to deepen my understanding in this domain as related to Juma and this developmental domain.

❖ **Pause for Inspiration-** I observe Juma for a week and record his play interests, attempts at friendship, sensory play, transition behaviors and routines. I notice the adults he seeks, those he avoids. I notice evidence of stress in many interactions. He teaches me how to support him. I also fall in love with this child.



MORE TO LEARN

❖ **Turn Questions into Action-** The questions and curiosity that resulted from studying Juma have led me to suggest changes in our classroom routines and to consider starting out the year with fewer transitions. We are adding stress unnecessarily. But also I want to better understand this little boy. Juma showed me how he learns to know the adults in the program. He experiments to gain information and skills- during group time and during transitions he calls for help in his own way. He offers the other children some lessons about the teaching assistant, the lead teacher and about one another. Who can best support your needs? What can you do to help me deal with my stress? How do you effectively communicate needs? And how we show trust for one another and hold each other precious just as we are.



REFLECT TO SURPRISE YOURSELF

I reviewed Margaret Carr's work on Reflective Practice and self assessment:

Reflection-in-action: Thinking “on your feet” and responding “on the spot”. (This is what the circle-time teachers were doing)

Reflection-on-action: Examining what happened by asking others, questioning ourselves, and reading different theories about it. At this point, we begin to critically examine ourselves. (I was part of this process with the teachers and myself.) Margaret Carr (2004) suggests that, in reflection, we are “expecting to be surprised, and prepared to change our minds” (page 45). I grew confident that Juma is experiencing some stress here in the program and possibly outside it.

Reflection-for-action: Developing new theories and consolidating, adapting, or changing practice as a result.(My questions that turned into action.)



THE ECE COMPETENCIES

I reviewed the ECE Competencies document to search for how my exploration and discoveries might align. I noted in *Preschool Curriculum Frameworks*, in the chapter on Social Emotional Development, Children and Stress, pg. 4 “Teachers are often the first persons outside the family to become aware that a child may be experiencing overwhelming stress. Young children convey their stress in individualized ways...” (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005).

“

A decorative white floral border with intricate scrollwork and leaf patterns surrounds the text on a dark background.

SUPPORT GROWTH WITH INTENTIONALITY

A Guiding Principle:

“Social-emotional development is supported in an early childhood classroom only when the adults are mindful of the many ways they influence preschool children’s self awareness, social skills, emotional understanding, personality and other qualities.” Pg. 39, California Preschool Curriculum Foundations Framework, Vol. I, 2010