Prompts for reflection: Dough and sticks

Anne: Hello, I'm Anne Stonehouse. Curriculum includes the interactions, conversations, and the provisions in the physical environment that occur as children play and learn. Learning about your own and others' rights and obligations, and how to be in a group, is one of the most important and complex areas for learning for children under three years. This vignette shows two children playing with dough, and negotiating the use of materials with an educator's help. As you watch and listen, consider how her knowledge of the children might affect Mel's interventions, and the quality of the experience. How does she demonstrate respect? What do you think she was trying to achieve?

Mel: Some sticks. Do you know what? Can I put them here, and then you can choose the one you want? Yeah? Would you like one of these?

Mel: Ah, you do. Do you want to give one to Rad?

Mel: Aw, thank you.

Rad: Stick!

Mel: Do you want that bit?

Van: That's mine!

Van: Two pieces!

Mel: He's got two pieces, does he? How many pieces have you got? There's more here, Van, if you need.

Van: No!

Mel: Oh, maybe give one to Rad. I think because if you do that, then Van can choose some as well, because I think he thinks that if you take all of them at once, he'll have nothing left.

Mel: Let me see.

Mel: Oh, there's a lot in there, but there's also still a lot over here.

Rad: Ta-da!

Mel: Wowie! There's a lot going on there! Did you want these ones?

Mel: Well let's see if Van wants to use some too.

Van: There's two.

Mel: Yes, there's two. Three. Four.

Rad: Ah!

Mel: Can he use one? He's just wanting to try and make it to five. Can you give him one? He's giving you one. Van, he was gonna give you one just then. Did you see? He took that out for you. But do you know what? Which one are you giving Van? Were you gonna give Van one?

Mel: Do you know what? Van, I've got some more sticks. Can you give that one back to Rad, and I'll get you some more from the cupboard? I think I've got lots more.

Mel: I know. I'll go and see. I've got some in the other … using that many! But I have some more. You can come and play with the play dough, too.

Van: There!

Mel: There's lot's more. I just didn't think you would be using that many. Ta-da! Would you like some too?

Mel: No or yes? I'll bring you some. Hold on, Rad. Hold on, Rad. You've got a lot there. Have a look at what you've got first. And then decide afterwards, okay? Because there's a few other children that would like to play with these as well.

Van: Ah!

Mel: Now I'm gonna get every last one of them. I didn't realise they'd be so popular.

Mel: I've got some gumnuts, too. Not that many though.

Mel: Do you want to carefully put them down? Because they can hurt someone if they fly in the sky. Aw, thanks Van. Oh, wow!