

THE BEST OF ME

**Building & empowering self-respect in the early years:
Ways of valuing the self**



**Presented by: Kelly Lewins & Metta Susanto
Gumnut Cottage, Campus Life, Macquarie University**

GUMNUT COTTAGE



UNWRAPPING OUR THOUGHTS

- Early Years Learning Framework
 - Respect to others and respect to self ?
- Self Respect: A two fold process
 - Respect ourselves
 - Celebrate our achievements
 - Respect our environment



- Building and empowering children's self respect





“ One must relate to oneself in a certain way before one is able to relate to others in a same way.”

(Aristotle)

BREAKING DOWN BIG CONCEPTS

Self esteem

“Convincing yourself that you are better than you are”

VS

Self respect

“Building your character so you become as good as you should be”



HOW DID WE START?

- **Turning the big concept into tangible projects**
- **Questions we had:**

How to deliver such a big concept to the children?

How to document the process of teaching something that doesn't have physical results?

How to grab children's attention to engage in this type of project?



Empowering younger generation to understand themselves, their feelings, and to own their actions.





*“TREAT A CHILD AS THOUGH HE IS ALREADY THE PERSON
HE IS CAPABLE OF BECOMING”*

GINNOTT, 1950

THE GOOD CHOICE INITIATIVE

Assisting children in conflict resolution, expressing emotion in appropriate ways, and understanding the importance of negotiating fair vs unfair behavior.

**“Responsibility”
and
“Choosing the right choice”**



THINGS WE REFLECTED UPON...

- What can motivate you in making good choices?
- What good choices do you think you can make at home?
- What do you feel after you have done good choices to others?
- How do you feel about yourself after you made good choices?
- How can we help ourselves feel better when, for example, someone hurts our feelings?



OUR GOOD CHOICE BOOK

Celebrating positive individual and group actions/behavior that we experienced each day.

- Remember Olivia, when you invited your friend, Lucia, to play? That was very lovely and made Lucia feels happy. That was such a good choice!
- Oscar, it was very nice of you to let your friends help you build your creation.
- JonJon, you told me (Kelly) that Jono has been very nice to you.

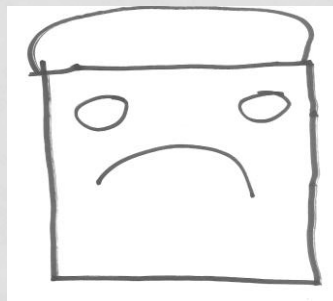
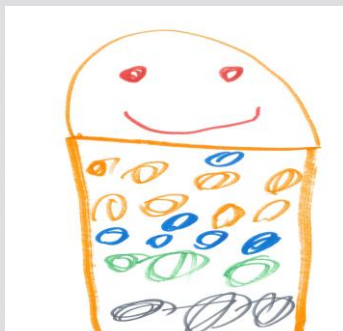
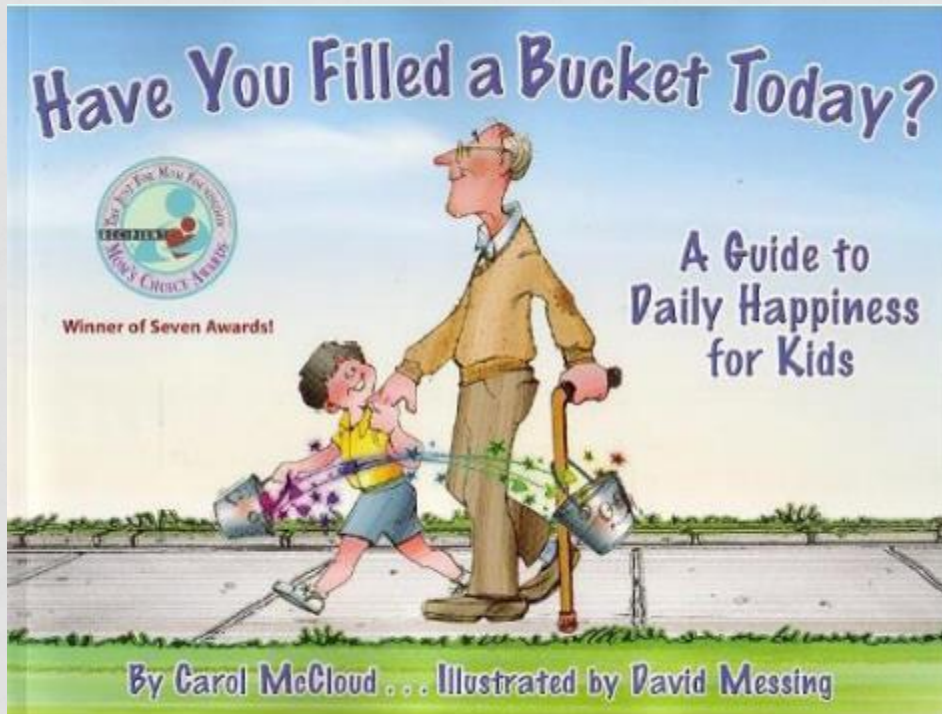


HOW DO WE FEEL TODAY?

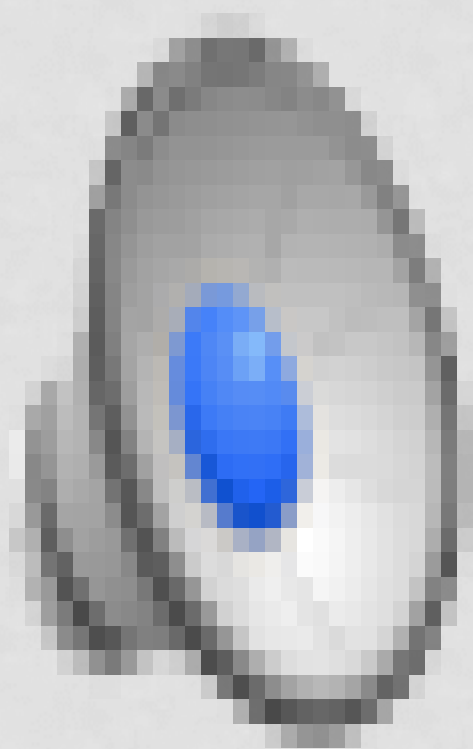
- **Feelings?**
- **A deeper understanding of self; an important part of self-respect.**
- **Supporting the expressions of emotions.**
- **Picture book as one of our strategies**



HAVE YOU FILLED A BUCKET TODAY?



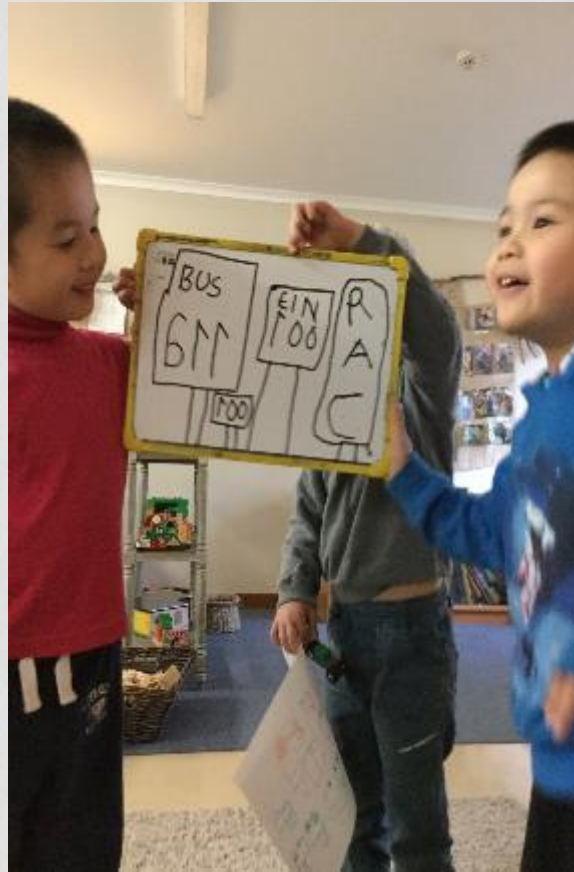
- I fill some water in other people's cups. It makes them happy and I fill their bucket. (Kimberly)
- When I go to the park, I will be fair to other children. I make good choices and fill my bucket, my mum and dad's bucket, and the other children's bucket too." (Piper)
- When my mum cooks dinner, I eat it all up. It makes her happy when my dad and I eat what she cooks." (Elvia)
- I listen to the teacher to fill their bucket and so they don't get cranky." (Jonathan)



*Do you have the patience to wait
until your glitter sinks and the water is clear?*

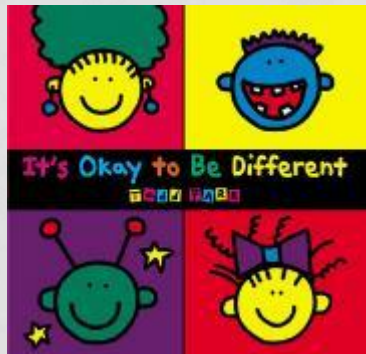


ACKNOWLEDGING EXTERNAL & INTERNAL ATTRIBUTES



THE BEST OF ME

- Encouraging self-appreciation.
- Acknowledging internal attributes : building a greater love of self.
- “It’s okay to be different” – Todd Parr



The Best of Me

My Eyes

My eyes have the same colour as my hair.

It is brown.

I am proud with my eyes.

I love my eyes because I have some friends with the same eye colour.

I use my eyes to see. I like to see Gumnut.

(Yaeli)



Sleeping

I love sleeping.

When I sleep, I dream.

I dream about castle.

I think I dream about lemons too.

One day, I really want to sleep in Sydney tower.

(Imogen)



I am Heidi's Friend

I love Heidi. She is my best friend.

That is the best part of me.

I like to play *Frozen* together.

When she is Elsa, I am Anna.

(Kali)

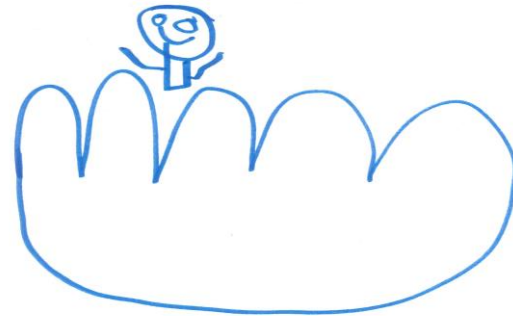


The Best of Me

Hide and Seek

I am good in hide and seek,
I like playing hide and seek with friends.
I like to hide somewhere; like under the bush and
scare my friends, BOOO!

(Nika)



My Bottom

I can fall over with my bottom and wobble like a penguin.
My bottom is the best part of me.
I can do a lot of things with it, like sitting down or wriggling.

(Heidi)



WAYS TO SELF-SOOTHE



TEAM-RESPECT/ SPORTSMANSHIP

- Follow up on last year's projects.
- Increased tendency on working in groups.
- Self respect → Team respect
- Having respect for everyone involved.
- Questions we pondered...

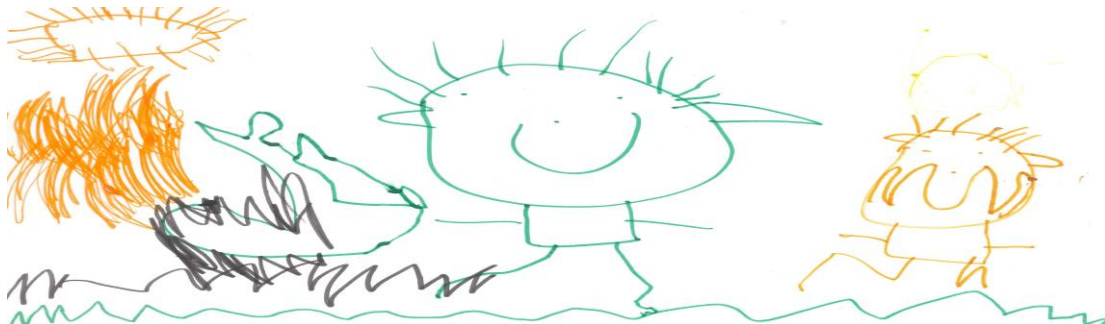


Reflections from the children

- If you don't win in a game, you will not get money. You can get a pretend gold coins but you don't get real money if you don't win it. (Chanelle)
- When I don't win I will be very sad. But maybe you can find a different teacher and try again to win it. (JonJon)
- When I don't win a game, I feel sad, my face will go like this... I will scream it out so my sadness go away. Then I'll try again. (Logan)



- When I play games it means I can play with my friends. That's enough for me. (Kali)





FOCUSING ON OUR PERSONAL BEST

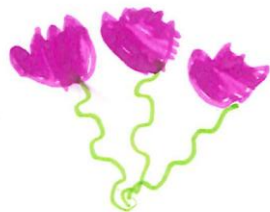




Sometimes we win, sometimes we learn!

Follow Up Possibilities

- Short term / Ongoing learning experiences / Larger research project / Home environment
- Can this project be implemented in the younger age group or higher level of education such as in primary school? – What would it look like? What strategies could be used to implement this project in different age groups?
- What impact would cultural diversity bring to this project? – For example, making the connections between families' perception of self-respect and their expectation of a child.



“Me”

by the Yellow room children 2016

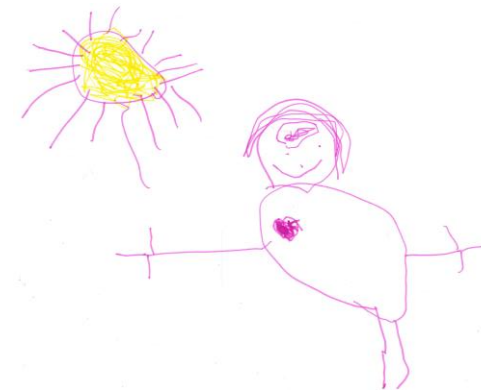
I look beautiful to myself and that's how you have
to think
When people say you aren't pretty, you stand really
tall
But be careful, don't fall on the big rock
You have to be happy to feel beautiful

Happy is called *Gao Xing* in Chinese

When you are happy, happiness stays in your heart.
It dances in your heart forever and helps the heart
works nicely.

Being nice can fill you up with good feelings
Good feelings stay in your body
It stays in your arms, head, belly button, bottom,
and everywhere
It makes your body does good things like cuddles
and kisses

I'll tell you a secret
There is an exit and an entrance in your body
When I am angry, it exits my mouth
Then I say, "Stop it, I don't like it!"
When I am ready to feel happy,
I call it back with my mouth like this,
"Come back happiness!"
The entrance is also in your mouth
Happiness comes through your mouth and it goes
to the brain
Brain is the most important thing in your body
You use your brain to say good words



Contact details:

Metta Susanto:

metta.susanto@mq.edu.au

Kelly Lewins:

kelly.lewins@mq.edu.au

Gumnut Cottage
17 University Avenue
Macquarie University, NSW, 2113.