



Babies Project

Owl - St. Brigid: Toddler 2

Background

This project is the work of the Toddler 2 room children at Owl - St. Brigid. Children between the ages of 16 months to 2.5 years participated in this project, with 15 children participating at any given time. This project started in April 2019 and lasted until August 2019. The educators in the room who lead the project were: Steph Simpson, RECE, Emily Haack, RECE and Melody Kneisel, RECE.

Phase 1: Beginning the Project

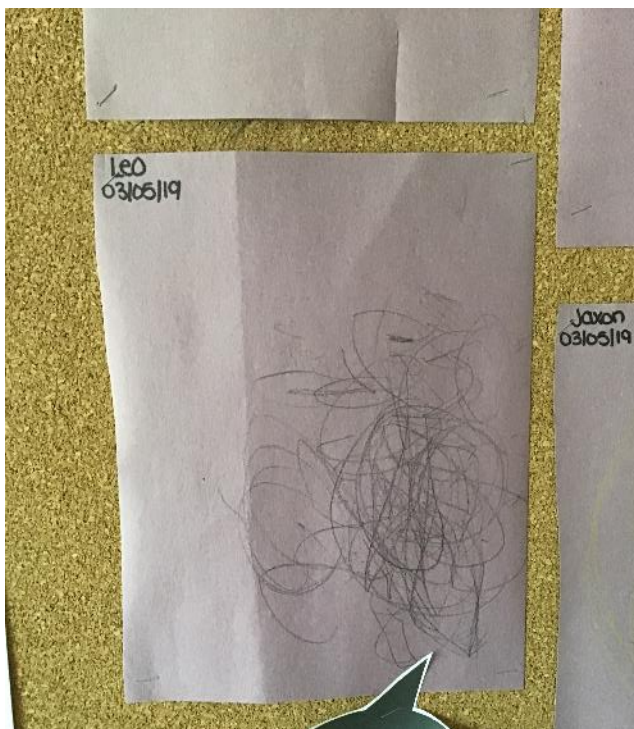
This baby project started when some of our families mentioned they have been talking about babies at home, due to their expanding families. We noticed the children who were helping with babies at home already or who were patiently waiting to become older siblings were talking a lot more about babies and what babies need. Some were even demonstrating things they have observed their parents doing such as wrapping babies in blankets.

We started our investigation by asking the children what they knew about babies.

What do we know?	What do we want to know?	Who can we ask?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Baby sleep” (Lily 2 years)• “Baby likes coffee” (Autumn 1 year)• “Babies eat pancakes” (Autumn 1 year)• “Babies like blueberries, lamb” (Lily 2 years)• “Coffee” (Joseph 1.5 years)• “Baby sad” (Kennedi 2 years)• “Cry” (Ivy 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do babies eat?• Do all babies use soothers?• Do all babies cry?• Who was the biggest baby in our classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mommies• Daddies• Books

Phase 2: Developing the Project

We decided to create our first drawings of babies, Steph, one of the educators, placed one of the toy babies from our home area on the table for everyone to observe while they drew their pictures. “The baby has eyes” Kennedy (2 years) said as she touched the baby’s eyes, then her own. She picked up the crayon and started colouring.



First drawing of a baby by Leo (1.5 yrs)

To further our investigation, we added some more baby items to our home area. We reached out to our families and asked for donations of baby items they were no longer using. We received a variety of items including bibs, blankets, bottles, clothing, towels and wash cloths. We decided to add some babies to our water table along with soap and wash cloths. We talked about how caregivers need to be careful not to get any soap in the baby’s eyes and have to be very gentle while washing them in the tub.



Marshall (2.5 years) washes a baby doll using soap and water with a washcloth.



Kennedi (2 years) points to the soap on the baby's body and says, 'I wash, I wash the baby'.

We even decided to take it one step further and add some towels to a nearby table and practice drying off the babies, swaddling them and putting on diapers.



Lily (2 years) uses a receiving blanket to dry off the baby after washing



Violet (2.5 years) changes a baby's diaper

Continuing with their interest in caring for the babies' needs, some children were putting the babies to sleep. Ivy and Kennedy put their babies in the cradle and rocked it as they sang "rock-a-bye baby". Kenzie sat down on the floor with babies on either side of her. She covered them with blankets and patted their backs.



Ivy (2 years) and Kennedy (2 years) sing "rock-a-bye baby" while rocking their babies in the crib.



Mackenzie (2 years) pats her babies' backs.

To further everyone's interest in washing babies we decided to try and hand wash some of the baby clothes in our room. Steph supplied a big bucket of soapy water and we added some baby clothes to it. We talked about using our hands to scrub the clothes clean, squeezing as much excess water out as we could, before hanging them on the clothesline to dry!





Lily demonstrated her learnings as she used a chair as a baby stroller. "Baby going for a walk" she said, as she pushed the chair around the classroom, stopping occasionally to adjust the baby's blankets and diaper.

Lily (2 years) using a chair as a stroller

Sara, an educator from the Toddler 1 room told everyone that she also was going to have a baby, and she brought in a few pictures from her ultrasound to show us.



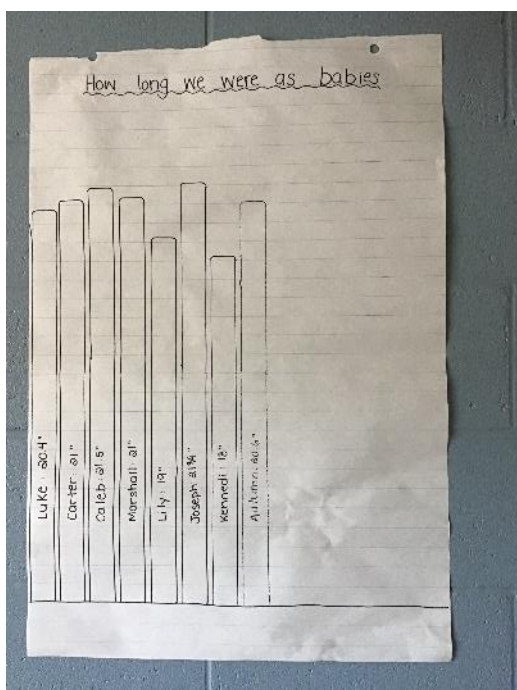
Sara's ultrasound pictures.

Sara also brought in a 'Doppler'. We learned this was a small machine doctors use to listen to the baby's heartbeat. Sara first showed us the Doppler then placed it on her tummy and let us listen to her baby's heartbeat!

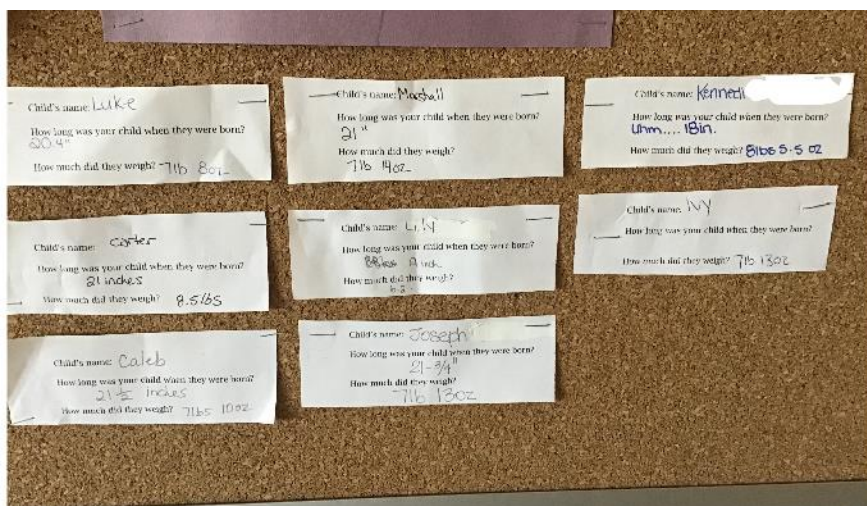


Sara using the Doppler to hear the baby's heartbeat.

After hearing the heartbeat, this made us wonder what the children looked like when they were first born. We sent out an email to the parents asking for pictures of the children when they were first born, how long they were and how much they weighed so we could compare different sizes of babies. We decided to make a graph and measure out how big everyone was. We discovered Joseph was our longest baby at 21 $\frac{3}{4}$ " at birth and Kennedy was our smallest 18". This showed us that not all babies are the same size when they are born.



Our Growth Chart



Our parent survey providing children's stats when born.

We also looked at the surveys the parents filled out and compared the children's weight at birth. Kennedy and Carter weighed the most at 8.5lbs and Lily weighed the least at 6.2lbs.

When Sara had her baby we asked her to come back to be our special visitor and help us answer a few remaining questions we had in regards to babies. Sara brought her baby Amelia to show us, she even let us help her feed Amelia. Sara told us that Amelia can only drink milk right now because that will help her grow big and strong. We asked Sara if Amelia cries, Sara told us that she does cry, she explained that babies don't have the ability to communicate with words what they want/need and the way they can communicate their needs is through crying!



Lily (2 years) helping to feed Amelia her bottle.



Leonardo (2 years) watching Sara getting ready to swaddle Amelia.

Next Sara placed Amelia on the carpet and taught us how to ‘swaddle’ her, which we learned means wrapping her up tightly in a blanket. This make the baby feel safe and secure. We also asked Sara if Amelia uses a soother, Sara said she does use a soother. We learned so much from Sara and Amelia visiting! We still wondered if all babies used a soother or not, through our research we discovered that not all babies use a soother, some prefer to suck on their thumbs to calm their bodies while others choose not to use anything! We also learned that some babies have a security item that they are given at birth that they continue to use during their entire childhood.

Phase 3: Concluding the Project

We decided to try and make some baby food for our large group project. We used our iPad and looked up a recipe using bananas, blueberries, apples and water. We fostered our fine motor skills as the educators assisted cutting the fruit hand-over-hand with the children and added them together into a blender and blended it up! The baby food was a big hit, everyone loved how it tasted! “It’s so good” Leonardo (2 years) said.



Landon (2.5 years) is helping to cut the fruit to add to make our baby food



Kennedi (2 years) is enjoying the baby food!

Teacher Reflections

The collaborative learning that took place was invaluable to both the educators and children alike. I feel this is what made our project so successful. I loved how eager the parents were to jump on board and share pictures and stats of the children when they were born! The children demonstrated their learning through their everyday play, this was evident when we would see them creating strollers out of chairs and pretending to feed the babies in the home area. It was a great experience having Sara share her ultrasound pictures and then being able to follow through with her bringing Amelia in to help us wrap up our project! – Steph Simpson, RECE

As an educator who has watched some of these children come from the infant room to the toddler room, it was great to work with them and see what they looked like before they entered our care. It was fun to listen to parents tell us of their personalities from birth until now. My favourite activity was making the baby food and the children talking about what we should put into the baby food! We have wrapped up the project, however it is still evident that the children are taking what they have learned and adding it into their daily play. Some have also transferred their learning into their home life as many of the parents have had their babies and we have been told what a big help their child has been at home with rocking and feeding! A great big thanks goes out to Sara for bringing in her baby!
- Melody Kneisel RECE

This project was one of the most successful projects we did with this group of children. From the beginning, all of the children were engaged in one aspect or another. Some children really enjoyed engaging in dramatic play; dressing, feeding and changing the babies, while others enjoyed the sensory aspect of washing them in the water table, or washing their clothes and hanging them up outside. Every child fostered their sense of belonging and caring. As an educator, getting to watch their care taking skills grow and their knowledge of babies' expand was a wonderful experience. When Sara brought baby Amelia in, it felt like the whole project came together and we saw the children able to gently care for Amelia the way they did with the dolls we first introduced. I know all the children will be able to take what they learned during our baby project with them as many of them become big brothers or sisters.
-Emily Haack, RECE