
Summary: Narratives that capture children’s learning as they go about their day-to-day activities are promoted as a powerful assessment tool within early childhood settings. However, in the New Zealand context, there is increasing concern that learning stories – the preferred form of narrative assessment – currently downplay domain knowledge. In this paper, we draw on data from 13 teacher interviews and samples of 18 children’s learning stories to examine how mathematics is made visible within learning stories. Despite appreciating that mathematics is embedded in a range of everyday activities within the centres, we found that the nature of a particular activity appeared to influence ‘how’ and ‘what’ the teachers chose to document as mathematics learning. Many of the teachers expressed a preference to document and analyse mathematics learning that occurred within explicit mathematics activities rather than within play that involves mathematics. Our concern is that this restricted documentation of mathematical activity could potentially limit opportunities for mathematics learning both in the centre and home settings.

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