

Student Well-being: A Collective Responsibility

Rachael Chang

Kindergarten Inquiry

RACHAEL CHANG: We did an inquiry on snails, where the students in the classroom, they go on a daily nature walk. And they go out, and they bring back treasures for us to study in the classroom. So, one of the students had found a snail, and we brought it back to study. And then when we were doing our circle to talk about what we found, a child put his hand up and said, "Well, my mom says we should leave nature in nature." So, in that moment, I definitely felt a lot of pressure to kind of solve that problem. But after doing the pro-pro workshop, I saw it as a great natural source of tension to explore with the students. And as we explored this with the students, I noticed that the students allowed each other to speak and gave each other voice, that they respected each other's ideas. And as we moved through the process, I noticed children really getting on board with each other to help. So, one example of that is, we had a child come up with a cucumber garden, which was an amazing idea that he said, that, you know what? We can study snails outside if we build this cucumber garden, and they'll come, and they can stay in nature and be safe. And so, he was so passionate about his work when talking in the circle that when we then went outside to try and build this cucumber garden, his friends naturally came over to help him. And what was beautiful was seeing children who found it harder to engage previously in the past feeling very welcomed into his work. And so, he had four children painting rainbow rocks to go in, and another child helping to make a sign, and some helping him to carry mud, and to dig, and set up that garden. And I think that the integrative thinking really allows all children an opportunity to get involved with that kind of work on many different levels, and to feel like they're supporting each other. It was a really lovely atmosphere of teamwork as we moved through the problem-solving process.