



### Children of Our Community Cultural Diversity Dolls (EY06755, EY10598)

*In this case study, Beccie Hawes, Head of Service with Cadmus Inclusive shares a heart-warming account of how a young boy felt represented and connected with one of the Community Cultural Diversity dolls.*



#### It's Chico Time!

Now this is going back a bit, but...do you remember Chico Slamani? For those of you who don't or are too young, he was the ex-goat herder who was a quarter finalist in the 2005 series of X-Factor. Give him a Google and look out for his song: 'It's Chico Time!' – a catchy novelty song. I'll be coming back to him at the end.

I have recently been looking at many of the resources that we have in our early years settings. These are some of the questions I have been pondering on:

- Are the resources representative of the children that have access to them?
- Are they meaningful and relevant to the world in which our children live?
- Do they offer the chance for our children to explore, process and make sense of their reality?
- How do the children interact with them?

I often spend a lot of time marvelling at how the children use what appear to be mundane objects imaginatively to become whatever they need to develop their play and to re-enact what is relevant to them. The most common things that I see are:

- Construction blocks that become phones for the purpose of having top level gossip sessions or for delivering important and hard-hitting messages.
- Semi-circular pieces of train track that transform into the steering wheels of fast cars for magical journeys to anywhere you want to go.
- Baby dolls that are dunked in a tuff tray of water and bubble bath for a serious bathing.
- Collections of random items or loose parts that are mixed and oven cooked to become Michelin star meals.

I love leaving things out for children to find and then watching how the child's amazing mind turns them into the most magical play opportunity that helps them to connect with the world through exploring their own lived experiences.

Recently, I left the 'Children of Our Community Cultural Diversity Dolls' out to see what would happen. I was fully expecting them to get a full and thorough bathing. Within seconds of their discovery, a few did! Whilst helping to dry the dolls I spotted one of our quieter, tiny humans walking about with one of them having a good chat. This led to a great conversation and an important pondering and reflection on representation of the children in the setting. It went something like this:

Me: Who is your new friend?

Tiny Human: This is my best friend Chico?

Me: He seems nice.

Tiny Human: He is. He is like me.

Me: How so?

Tiny Human: He has the same hair and skin as me and I've got some clothes like his.

Me: He looks smart.

Tiny Human: He is, like me. I'm going for some Chico time now. We're off.

Exit tiny human and Chico for a ride in a fast car steered by a piece of semi-circular train track. For the next week the tiny human and Chico proved to be inseparable.

This made me think. For this child Chico provided a connection, a representation of the world in which he lives. He was able to see himself and this resonated deeply with him - a sense that he wasn't alone. Perhaps we all need some Chico time! (See what I did there?)



With thanks to Beccie Hawes for sharing this case study with us.