

'The Secret Life of Mothers and Teachers'

"I think he's gone to the bathroom", said my teaching partner as she held on to baby Jake. A bit of laughter in the room followed, as well as stories of how this always happens at the most opportune time (we all had stories of putting babies into their car seats only to hear and smell the next job to be done as we cared for our babies). Grandma laughed and offered to change the diaper, baby's mom looked relieved, and Aiden, baby Jake's cousin showed us his latest Lego creation oblivious to what was going on.

It felt like a visit in somebody's living room, with babies held, and children playing and mothers and aunties and grandmas visiting. Except that it wasn't a living room. It was my little counseling office in our little country school. And we were not there just visiting and telling stories. We were there to go over the Psycho-Educational assessment that had been done on Aiden in an attempt to come to a better understanding of how he was processing information.

The school psychologist had refused to come to the meeting to report, because she didn't want so many people there. She only wanted to meet with Aiden's mom. Aiden's mom, who is vulnerable and needing a village of attachment herself had asked (after much nurturing from us in the recent past) that we be there with her. She invited grandma. She invited her sister and baby Jake. She invited the classroom teacher. She invited the Special Education teacher. She invited me, the area counselor. She wanted all of us there, because in her heart she sensed that we were her son's village of attachment. Without the school psychologist, I was left to do the reporting.

Between burps, and diaper changes and Lego figures and stories from the sandbox, I slowly went over the report. I drew, I sketched, I explained. How do you break the news of an ability profile that is severely compromised? How do you inject hope into a story of a child who scores desperately low in areas so vital to survive in our society?

We talked, and we wondered, and we thought of ideas. We held on to the belief that in the context of a safe village of attachment we could compensate for what Aiden couldn't do just now, so that he could come to a place of rest. We talked about what wasn't there for him in regards to integrative and adaptive functioning. We talked about what we could offer him as his adults. We laughed, we cried.

The meeting took longer than the usual reporting meetings that I have attended. We left full of hope, talking about how we believed that we could see emergence in this child, encouraging each other to observe Aiden from the inside out. No, it was not a clinical meeting where numbers and verdicts of the future were presented. It was a meeting that brought together the village in order to tighten the attachments and supports for this child. It was a meeting where we not only supported Aiden, but Aiden's mom as well. It was a beautiful picture of a community coming together to support the development of one of its children.