

Caretaking in the Kitchen

The play kitchen in our classroom is home to lots of different games. Most are lighthearted, like putting mustard on a pretend cookie, and others are just plain silly—like when Si'Naiya kept offering the teachers super spicy foods! However, the kitchen is also the place where some of our most gentle play happens, often in the form of feeding and caring for a few of our classroom's baby dolls.



"I need this for my baby," Ka'tori said as she picked up a play carton of milk. "Here you go!" she said as she held it up to his mouth, then continued to feed him using a small spoon.

Si'Naiya will often set up two babies at the kitchen table and feed them some of their favorite snacks. "He's eating chicken nuggets!" she said.



A key moment occurred when Si'Naiya made a connection between the concepts of eating together and taking care of the family. "Wah! Wah!" she said, pretending it was coming from the baby. "The baby's crying! Give him milk!"

With two young siblings at home, it's likely a scene she's witnessed countless times, but she also seems to have made a clear connection between the acts of providing things to eat and drink and the idea of providing comfort and safety. Teachers hope to build on this idea through continued pretend family and cooking play, along with books and art explorations on the subject, as well.