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| Fieldnote Note | 16 | Date | 1/7/21 |
| Locations | Bungalow 1Campus | Weather | Warm and sunny |
| Child interactions | Dennis, Daniel, Brian, Graham, Red, James and [one of the children] | Staff Interactions | Mary, Thelma, Christopher, Ronnie, Quin, Phillipa, Monty and Kris |
| Times | 2pm – 6.30pm | Total Time in field | 4.5 hours |

Arrived on campus today and Bungalow 1 was pretty chill with Thelma, Mary and Ronnie in the lounge on the sofa and a previous student who was on placement there visiting. Over the course of the first 30 minutes and until the children started arriving back, there were various permutations of staff in the lounge as some were ‘grabbed for a second’ to get a discussion about something in the office. I spent a bit of time discussing the research with the student and various other small talk with staff. It is very clear that all of the staff that work in this bungalow get on well with each other and get on well with other staff members who visit their bungalow – lots of banter and care goes on between the staff.

Once the children arrived back, I was quickly draw into a water pistol fight with Daniel, although the water pistols were very small. I declined the offer to get involved with the hose and the huge ‘super soakers’ on the basis that I didn’t have a change of clothes and was wearing denims that would take ages to dry out.

Bungalow 3 had a sprinkler system set up and some of the children from that bungalow were playing around it for most of the afternoon, although a couple did come down and join some of the boys from bungalow one in a water fight, with [one of the children] promptly soaking me with a super soaker in clear breach of the rules! [They were] denied one of the Magnum ice creams dished out until [they] toed the line with the water fight rules (only soak those who are playing the game and willing to be soaked).

Mary and Thelma were a wee bit nervous about the water fights in case they escalated but it seemed to go ok, which Thelma thought was because Bungalow 2 were out and 2 of the kids from bungalow 3 were out and Brian was away with Christopher to view his new place (he’s leaving to go home on Tuesday but with respite every weekend in another residential placement).

Graham avoided the water fights completely and stayed most of the time in the playroom watching TV during all of this. I went out and played football/kick about with Dennis for a while before the water fights picked back up again and I had to head in to avoid being soaked.

Some interesting conversations with staff today. I was reflecting on some of my experiences with Thelma and we were discussing how resilient the children actually are when you consider the experiences they’ve had – while there are difficult times and behaviours, they are capable of lots. Monty made an interesting remark about difficult behaviour and the comparison to foster care: “we’ve got a staff team that are refreshed each day and are, therefore, able to cope with that [sustained behavioural issues]” – is that one of the benefits of residential – to be able to hold and care for these children in ways that would be difficult for a parent?

Dinner was similar to the other week with all of the children, including Brian who had returned, around the table as well as James from Bungalow 3 who had been invited over for his tea as he had been playing with Dennis. There was a smooth period of about 15 minutes this time before things started to come apart a bit. My attempted question about the organisation and what advice they’d give to a new child was patted away into a discussion about Brian leaving.

After dinner, it was a bit messy in the sense that different needs were clashing and the needle between Dennis and Daniel (that had been around all afternoon) was hitting flash points and Brian being back in the mix seemed to worsen this. The staff are good at reorganising activities and get the children apart from each other and, as part of this, I ended up out the front cleaning one of the cars with Brian. I asked him about how he was feeling about leaving and he said ‘fine’ and that he wouldn’t really miss anything and that he was quite happy to go. However, when Daniel had said to Mary (who was nearby) something negative about not liking her or something (I couldn’t hear and I’m sure it was a joke thing) Brian was quick to say that he didn’t agree and that he did like Mary and Mary seemed pleased about this. I mentioned that maybe he would miss Mary when he moved on but he didn’t respond to this, so I dropped it.

Shortly after this, baths and settling down time started and so I made arrangements with Thelma to return on Tuesday and made my goodbyes.