

# Philosophical Conversation

## In the early years

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### Quiet Fuss

Children were playing quietly, or this is what I thought, during their free play in the morning. There was no whining or fuss. They got together very quickly and sat in the circle when I noticed some children had long faces. Also, children were sitting separately, girls with girls and boys with boys when normally they sit mixed. I didn't pay attention and I told them that I was very glad there was no quarrel between each other. This is the dialogue that took place:

**Emily:** Oh ... yes, we did! We did quarrel.

**Teacher:** When did this happen?

**Michael:** Before ... you didn't see us.

**Teacher:** I didn't?

**Michael:** Emily was throwing kitchenware at us when we were playing family at the library corner.

**Teacher:** Emily? (She is one of the quietest girls in the class)

**Michael:** Yes ... She was pushing the kitchenware from below!

**George:** So you wouldn't see her!

**Teacher:** Then she was not throwing it to you. Well ... I didn't hear any strange noise!

**George:** Yeah ... we were making quiet fuss.

**Teacher:** Quiet fuss! How do you make quiet fuss?

**Michael:** Well ... we didn't yell, we didn't run around, we didn't talk loud and you didn't realize!

**Teacher:** You fooled me? (Children laugh)

*(Nikolidaki research log, 2018)*

### Teacher's food for thinking

Can a fuss be quiet? Children explain how it is to fight quietly! They didn't run all over the classroom shouting so the teacher didn't perceive their fuss. Was it a children's victory? Was it the teacher's fault who didn't pay attention to what was going on? Can something be a fuss when it is not perceived as fuss? Fuss to

whom? Can a quiet fuss be pleasant or unpleasant? What makes a fuss pleasant or unpleasant?

Adults can disagree or fuss without showing it loudly. Is quiet disagreement (or fuss) better than loud disagreement (or fuss). Loud is greater than quiet in the sense of volume but is a loud fuss always greater than a quiet fuss in the sense of seriousness or impact? What are the motives of quiet fuss?

Breaking the rules is also an interesting subject to consider. Having quiet fuss seem to be a way of breaking the rules without breaking them! Children broke the rule without having to face any consequences.

The term “quiet fuss” sounds like an oxymoron. Are the two words contradictory? Are there some senses of the word “fuss” that can be quiet?

Children were proud because they managed to “cheat” on teacher without the teacher noticing it! Is it a rule that was broken without really being broken? If so, what was the rule?

### **Concept: Fuss**

- What’s the trouble with the fuss?
- What makes a fuss to be proper fuss?
- Can you describe different types of fuss?
- Can you measure fuss and rate it from the least fuss to the biggest fuss?
- Can you find words that have similar meaning with fuss? How are these words connected? How are these different from each other?

### **Further activities**

- **Varieties of quiet fuss:** Children are allowed to make fuss as long as it is not perceived. Children can inform their teacher that they were quietly making fuss and describe what kind of fuss this had been.
- **The best quiet fuss:** Children vote for the best quiet fuss of the week. They pick the best camouflaged quiet fuss. They can justify the criteria of their choice. Children decide whether it is worth repeating the same fuss next week.
- **Listing the different types of fuss:** Children make a list of all the types of fuss they have practiced so far. In case they run out of reasons to make trouble, they have a deposit of already tested and verified types of fuss to repeat!
- **Draw a fuss and describe it to us.**

## Contradictions – or not?

Are these terms contradictory in some senses or in all senses?

For example: A pianist must **work** hard to **play** the piano well but children sometimes prefer to **play** than **work** at doing chores like washing up. Does play mean the same thing in these examples?

	Yes	No	?
Can a brave person be scared?			
Can a scared person be brave?			
Can you play when you work?			
Can you work when you play?			
Can you be clean and dirty at the same time?			
Can you be tall and short at the same time?			
Can you be old and young simultaneously?			
Can you be happily sad or sadly happy?			