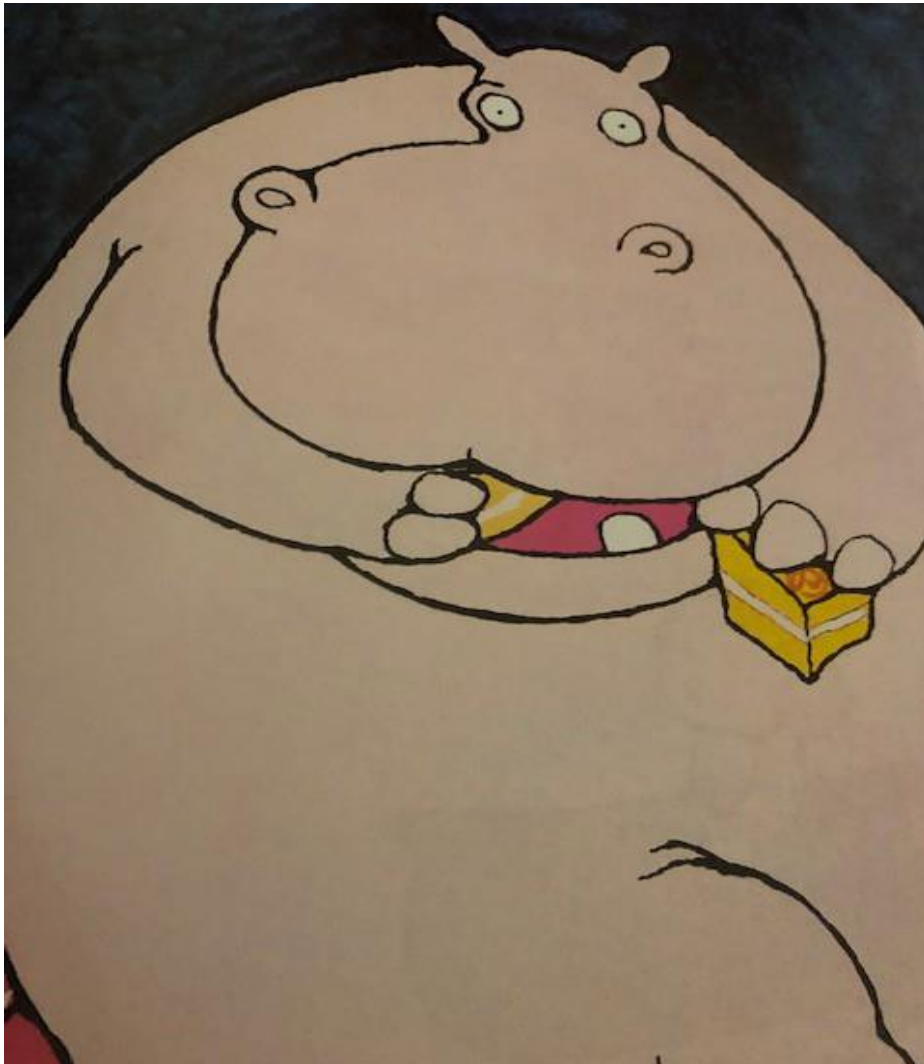


The Five Characteristics of a *Conceptual Playworld* (Fleer, 2018)



*My daddy/mummy says there's a hole in our roof.
I know why there's a hole.
There's a hippopotamus on our roof eating cake.*

Pedagogical characteristics	Pedagogical practices that are planned
Selecting a story for the <i>Conceptual Playworld</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Working with understandings of the context of children's development and their interests (Imaginary friend – children experiencing everyday life events) ■ Selecting a story that is enjoyable to children and adults (<i>There's a hippopotamus on our roof eating cake</i>, by Hazel Edwards) ■ Building empathy for the characters in the story (Children experiencing the drama of child as she uses her imaginary)

Pedagogical characteristics	Pedagogical practices that are planned
	<p>friend the Hippopotamus to co-experience everyday and emotionally charged events, such as getting into trouble)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A plot that lends itself to introducing a problem situation to the children (There is a hole in the roof that needs to be fixed) ■ Being clear about the concept and its relation to the story and play plot to be developed (What is an engineer? Different kinds of engineers – manufacturing, chemical, mining/geological, materials, mechanical, industrial, civil, aerospace, electrical, electronic, computer)
Designing a <i>Conceptual Playworld</i> space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Creating different spaces that give opportunities for exploring both concepts (What is an engineer?) and social and emotional development (empathy for the child) ■ Designing different opportunities for child initiated play in ways that develop the play plot further or explore concepts and make them more personally meaningful (Meeting different engineers; Role-playing being different kinds of engineers; Exploring different tool boxes of engineers) ■ Planning different opportunities for representing children's ideas and expressing their understandings (Mind map of what they know about being an engineer; What should be in the tool kit for each different kind of engineer)
Entering and exiting the <i>Conceptual Playworld</i> space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Whole group enters the <i>Conceptual Playworld</i> (Going on the roof to investigate the hole; visiting the zoo) ■ All the children are in the same imaginary situation (On the roof; Being on different worksites; going to the Zoo) ■ Children choose characters as they enter into the imaginary situation (be the hippopotamus, being the child; being the mum, being the dad; being the big brother; being animals in the zoo; being the doctor) ■ Teacher is always a character in the story or acting as a human prop (e.g., such as being an engineer, being the zoo keeper, etc)
Planning the play inquiry or problem scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children have enough knowledge to be able to solve the problem – introduced inside or out of the imaginary situation (Visiting different workplaces – building site; road works site; office building; ship yard; factory) ■ The problem scenario is dramatic and engaging (There is a problem – there is a hole in the roof; How to fix it? What type of engineer could help?)



Pedagogical characteristics	Pedagogical practices that are planned
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Problem scenario is not scripted, but a general idea of the problem is planned (How did the hole get in the roof? How can it be fixed?) ■ Being clear about the concepts that will be learned from solving the problem situation (Understanding what is an engineer; learning about the different kinds of engineers and the work they do) ■ Concepts are in service of the play (Need to know which engineer to invite to the house to fix the hole in the roof; visiting different engineers and asking: Can you help me fix the roof?)
<p>Planning teacher interactions to build conceptual learning in role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Teachers working in interactional pairs:</i> Teachers are not always the same character. Roles are not scripted Teacher A identifies the problem – hole in the roof; Teacher B is an engineer and can fix it ■ <i>There are different roles teachers can take:</i> Teachers plan their role for the playworld to be equally present with the children, or to model practices in role, or to be needing help from the children. Their role can also be as together with the child leading (primordial we), where they literally cradle the child or hold their hand and together act out the role or solution ■ <i>Conceptual intentions are planned:</i> Planning of who will have more knowledge and who will be present with the children to model solving the problem ■ Can an aerospace engineer help? Would a mining/geological engineer solve the problem? Perhaps a marine engineer could? What about a mechanical engineer? A civic engineer could help? The structural engineer can help.

Fleer, M. (2018). *Conceptual Playworlds*: Foregrounding imagination and creativity as foundational for children’s learning, Monash University Working Paper: <https://www.monash.edu/conceptual-playworld>