



# Imaginative Play Every Day

# Imaginative play every day: The power of imaginative play

## How does imaginative play assist children to learn?

Research indicates that children who engage in meaningful and extended periods of pretend play develop better skills in reading, story writing, and language development (Karen Stagnitti 2014).

When children are given time and the opportunity to use a rich variety of open-ended materials and resources, they are able to invent, investigate, discover and imagine.

When young children use their imaginations in play, they are more creative, perform better at school tasks, and develop a problem-solving approach to learning (Fromberg & Bergen, 1998).

Imaginative play allows children to experience others' points of view and feelings and to learn cooperation by working through disagreements about materials, roles and rules or space in a positive way.

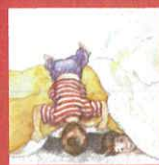
In imaginative play, children can experiment with roles of the people in their home, school, and community.

Broadhead, P 2006, 'Developing an understanding of young children's learning through play: the place of observation, interaction and reflection', *British Educational Research Journal*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 191-207.

Fromberg, D and Bergen, D 1998 *Play from Birth to Twelve: Contexts, Perspectives and Meanings*, 3rd Edition, Routledge, New York.

Stagnitti, K and Jellie, L 2006 *Play to learn: building literacy skills in the early years*, Curriculum Corporation, Australia.

Department of Education and Training 2016 *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)*, State of Victoria, Australia.





**Monday**

*Through imaginative play children learn to make sense of and construct ideas about the world – the people, places, objects and experiences they encounter every day. (VEYLDF p.14)*

## **Help children create their own café or restaurant by:**

- ▶ making menus and using a pad and pencil to take orders
- ▶ making food for a feast using flowers, leaves and seed pods from the garden
- ▶ providing coins or helping them to make their own money to pay

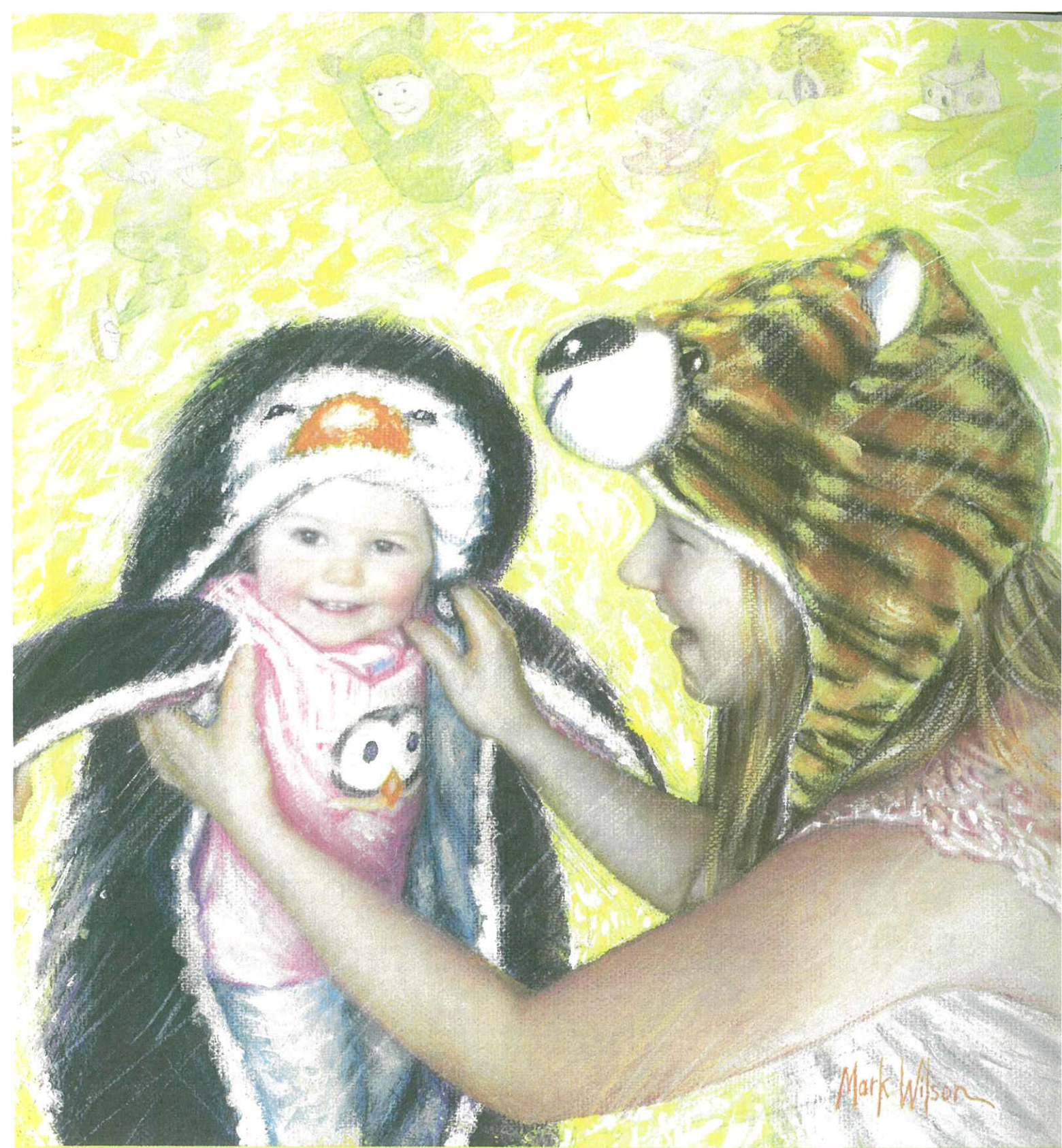


**Tuesday**

*Imaginative play is an important support to children's learning and development, health and wellbeing.*

## **Support children to create their own outdoor adventure:**

- ▶ make a boat from the wash basket or a box and join the pirates on the high seas
- ▶ dig for treasure buried in the sand pit or garden
- ▶ go to the park or the beach in search of 'magical creatures'



**Wednesday**

*Dramatic play is important for exploring different identities and points of view. (VEYLDF p.19)*

## **Set the scene for dramatic play by:**

- ▶ creating a stage out of large wooden blocks or pallets, carpet or linoleum offcuts
- ▶ setting up a pretend doctors surgery using bandages, cotton balls, swabs and band aids
- ▶ listening to what children are curious about and interested in, using this as a basis to help them make up stories, plays and songs





Thursday

*Children use symbols in exploration and play to represent and make meaning.  
(VEYLDF p.23)*

## **Encourage drawing and writing in play by suggesting children:**

- ▶ draw maps to find a hidden treasure
- ▶ make tickets or posters for a show in your lounge room
- ▶ draw pictures and send letters to invite friends to play



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**Friday**

*Imaginative play develops thinking skills and builds attributes such as curiosity and persistence.*

## **Encourage imagination by having everyday and found objects available such as:**

- ▶ baskets with stones, pinecones, leaves and small branches to use as props in play
- ▶ fabric offcuts, old socks, buttons and wool to make puppets
- ▶ blankets, fabrics and cushions to create spaces to hide



# Saturday

*Children build resilience through risk taking and challenge, problem solving, and dealing with new and novel situations in their play.*

## **Create opportunities for children to negotiate, problem solve and compromise through:**

- ▶ creating a scavenger hunt with clues to solve and obstacles to overcome
- ▶ providing props such as tubes, pipes, buckets and set the challenge to make a waterfall in the garden
- ▶ involving children in making decisions and rules to support safe risk taking

Jane Tanner

Illustration: Jane Tanner



# Sunday

*By pretending to be other people, children learn about themselves through experimenting with new ideas and behaviours.*

## **Create opportunities for children to role-play real life and imagined situations through:**

- ▶ providing a dress up box with clothes, hats, bags, shoes, scarves and costume jewellery
- ▶ guided superhero play, allowing children to feel brave and in control of their world, and helping them to learn about limits, mastering impulses and peacefully resolving conflict