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# Story Time

PlayWorld

## Ideas for Educators

In this episode of Play School Story Time, Dave Hughes shares 'A Human for Kingsley' by Gabriel Evans.



### Pedagogical characteristics

Selecting a story for the *Conceptual PlayWorld*

#### Story: A Human for Kingsley

Written and illustrated by Gabriel Evans

Publisher: Hardie Grant Children's Publishing, 2021

### Pedagogical practices

- Select a story that is enjoyable for children and adults.
- Build drama for the characters in the story.
- Build empathy for the characters in the story.
- Choose a plot that lends itself to introducing a problem situation.
- Be clear about the concept(s) and its relation to the story and play plot to be developed.
- Choose adventures or journeys that spring from the plot.

### Conceptual PlayWorld in action

- **Story summary:** A funny story about a friendship between a dog named Kingsley and a young girl. It brings forward the concept of design and technologies.
- Develop the drama in the story e.g. Kingsley does not have a human or a home. Kingsley doesn't have anywhere to sit, sleep or play.
- Develop empathy with the character Kingsley because he doesn't seem to fit it e.g. he's not fast enough, he's not still enough etc... Kingsley finally finds a friend, but he doesn't fit into her world either.
- **Problem situation:** Kingsley needs the children's help to design suitable furniture/equipment so that he can fit into his new home.
- **Concepts:** Design and technologies (designerly thinking) e.g. generate and produce solutions to a problem that children are interested in.
- **Possible plot extension:** What furniture would Kingsley like?

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### Pedagogical characteristics

Designing a *Conceptual PlayWorld* space

### Pedagogical practices

- Find a space in the classroom or outdoor area suitable for an imaginary *Conceptual PlayWorld* of the story.
- Design opportunities for child-initiated play in ways that develop the play plot further or explore concepts and make them more meaningful.
- Plan ways for children to represent their ideas and express their understandings.

### Conceptual PlayWorld in action

- Turn the outdoor space into Kingsley's new home or playground, where children can meet the characters Kingsley and the young girl. Or they might like to be a dog. Does Kingsley have a family?
- Pretend to be designers in a studio where children can learn about design principles and how to apply them to Kingsley's problem. What innovative solutions can the children come up with?
- Children can mind map their design ideas for new equipment, draw and model new furniture for Kingsley or describe their ideas to their design team.

Entering and exiting the *Conceptual PlayWorld* space

- Plan a routine for the whole group to enter and exit the *Conceptual PlayWorld* of the story where all the children are in the same imaginary situation.
- Children choose characters as they enter into the imaginary situation.
- Educator is always a character in the story.

- To signify entering and exiting the imaginary situation (e.g. Kingsley's new world) educators can pretend to be a dog experiencing the human world.
- Children and educators can pretend to be dogs, e.g. How do dogs walk? How do they sit? Do you have paws? How many? How many dogs can fit on your chair?
- Or they could pretend to be the young girl. Does she have a family? Who else lives in the house? What furniture do they use?
- Or they could pretend to be designers. Do you have a team? What roles does everyone have? What will you investigate?
- Or meet [Mary Featherston](#) an Australian interior designer, who has designed furniture. You could ask her about how she creates design solutions by - investigating, generating, producing, evaluating, collaborating and managing.

Planning the play inquiry or problem scenario

- Problem scenario is not scripted, but a general idea of the problem is planned.
- Problem scenario is dramatic and engaging.

- Kingsley sends the children a letter, such as "Hi Children, I love my new home but I don't fit in properly. The chair isn't big enough for me and my new friend and I keep falling off the seesaw. I want to be with my new friend. Please help me by designing some new furniture/equipment. Love from Kingsley".





### Pedagogical characteristics

Planning the play inquiry or problem scenario

(continued)

Planning educator interactions to build conceptual learning in role

### Pedagogical practices

- The problem invites children to investigate solutions to help the play in the *Conceptual PlayWorld*.
- Be clear about the concepts that will be learned from solving the problem situation, through children's play.

- Educators are not always the same character. Roles are not scripted.
- Plan who will have more knowledge and who will be present with the children to model solving the problem. Educators can take on different roles for the *Conceptual PlayWorld*. Plan your role to be either **equally present** with the children, or to **model practices** in a role, or to be **needing help** from the children. Your role can also be **together with** the child leading, where educators support children to act out the role or solution together.

### Conceptual PlayWorld in action

- Kingsley really wants to be part of the family. He wants to fit in. The young girl wants him to feel at home. She wants him to fit in.
  - Visit Kingsley and interview him to explore his needs. Does he need a bigger chair so that he can sit with his new friend? What about the bed? Does he need a special seat for the seesaw so that he can play with his new friend on the playground equipment? What other playground equipment could he want or use? You could also interview the young girl, and ask what she needs now that she has a new friend.
  - Take turns to be Kingsley and the designer who interviews him.
- Plan for your role in the *PlayWorld* by choosing one of the following:
    1. **Be equally present with older children** - e.g. "Let's be designers and find out what Kingsley needs" and brainstorm solutions.
    2. **Model practices in a role** - e.g. "I'm a furniture designer. I'm going to close close my eyes and imagine having four legs and a tail".
    3. **Seek help from the children** - e.g. "I'm Kingsley. Please help me. I really want to sit on a chair with my new friend".
    4. **Act out the role together with the child leading** - e.g. "Let's pretend to be dogs together and walk on our four paws".

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