

Pictures for Reflection



As young children dress-up, they rehearse, they try on different roles. Sometimes, children approximate the familiar roles of a parent, teacher or community helper; in other instances, children assume the super powers of a s/hero, and other times, they try-on the costumes, conversations, and characters from television programs and movies. In all instances, children use clothes and props to assume a different persona. Young children, lacking power and authority, now fly, disappear, and save the world.

Adults, observing children's fantasy role play, gain insight into children's feelings. When children role play together, they reverse roles and practice perspective-taking. Children's fantasy play originates from somewhere - a piece of children's literature, a movie, or the television. Dress up is appropriate for children and allows them safe experimentation of dress, role, and language. Providing children the time, props, and foundations for role play is healthy, fun, and contributes to children's emerging sense of self and other.

And, when a young child is not quite sure of a particular role, they may try on several roles to see what happens.