

This nearly wordless book shows the new world a child creates using only shadows. The story lends itself to supporting symbolic thought and imitation through imaginary play.

### CORE SKILL OBJECTIVES

### INTENTIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES

#### THINK



#### Children will:

- Observe objects and imaginary play that stands for something else

#### Teachers will:

- Narrate imitation and representation

### TEACHING TIP

Infants and toddlers are just beginning to understand the idea of imitation, and engaging in pretend play is a way to further their understanding of the world. The early stages of engaging in imitation and symbolic thought can be as simple as using gestures and sounds to mean something and are followed by simple pretend play. You can support this development by modeling and narrating your own representation (e.g., “I’m using this block as my steering wheel. Beep beep!”) and joining in children’s ideas when they take on roles or use props.

### 1. INTRODUCE

- “(Hold up hands together like a butterfly) Can you see my hands flying like a butterfly? I bet there are other animals I could pretend to be too. Today we’re going to read *Shadows*, and we’ll see other ways to make animal shapes.”

### 2. READ THE BOOK

- Pause occasionally to narrate the imitation and representation the character imagines.
- Label the specific props that stand in for something else in the illustrations.

### Narrate Imitation and Representation

**Show:** The child holding their hands up like a bird.

**Narrate:** “The child’s hands look like a bird when they’re put together. These fingers are the wings, and the thumbs are the head (*point*).”

**Label:** “The child is pretending that the lamp and the ladder are flowers.”

**Show:** The child holding up the vacuum cleaner.

**Narrate:** “The child is imagining a whole world. They’re pretending to be in a jungle with lots of animals.”

**Label:** “The apple on their head is being used as a crown, and the vacuum cleaner is the elephant and its trunk.”

**Show:** The child holding a boot.

**Narrate:** “The child stopped pretending, and now we can see all the real things they were using while they were playing.”

**Label:** “The boot they’re holding was the wolf, and all the animals they were dancing with were the bike, boxes, and ladder. They’re so creative!”

### 3. REVIEW

- “The child in this story used different materials to be animals and plants in their imaginary forest. I wonder what you might use the next time you’re playing pretend.”

### 4. KEEP IT GOING

- Encourage children to use props during pretend play. Model suggestions, particularly if they’re not exact replicas (e.g., a block as a phone), but also follow children’s lead and support their ideas for imitation. Be sure to provide both exact replicas and open-ended materials for young children and older toddlers to represent their ideas.