

Shadow Play



Exploring shadows with your child can be done outside and indoors. You can become Shadow Investigators and learn about light and dark and about switches, batteries, and light bulbs.

You will need:

A sunny day

AND/OR

A torch or lamp

A dark space

White paper/pale sheet

You and your child

Outside:

1. Go outside on a sunny day and look at your shadows together.
2. Can your child see their shadow? Can they see yours? Move around. Make different shapes with your bodies. What does their shadow do? What do they notice?
3. Can you run away from your shadow?
4. Play 'shadow tag' and run around trying to catch each other's shadows.
5. What else has a shadow? Do they notice the shadows of trees or buildings? Pots or walls? Perhaps you have a pet and you can see their shadow?
6. Find a bit of shade and step into it. What happens to your shadow?
7. Use lots of language: light, dark, sunny, bright, shade.

Inside:

1. Find a torch or a lamp and a dark space in your home. You might want to use some white paper or a pale sheet as a backdrop to make your shadows clearer.
2. Explore the switches on the torch/lamp. What happens when you click on the switch? Use some technology language: switch, on, off, click, press. Talk to your child about being safe around switches and plugs.
3. Experiment together – can you make shadows with your hands? Other parts of your body? With different objects – toys are good fun to use. Use lots of talk.

Earlier Stages of Development

When you're out and about, point out shadows to your child – perhaps of their feet hanging over the buggy. Or talk about looking for some shade under a tree, or how a cloud has covered the sun and made it darker. Inside, talk about switching on the lights as it gets darker. Use a lamp/torch yourself and make some shadows for your child with your hands or a toy. Does your child copy your movements or have a go at holding the toy themselves?

Extension ideas

Your child may begin to notice that shadows happen when an object blocks the light. Investigate this together, using objects and toys. What happens to the shadow when you switch the light/torch off? What about when you move the light/torch nearer the object or further away. Or from one side to the other? Give your child lots of time to think and talk about what they notice.