

Shadow Puppets

Explore light and shadow while creating your own puppets!

Big Idea

Students will explore light and dark, art, and build language skills by using simple materials to create puppets that are able to be recognized in shadow.

Standards

25.A.ECb: Drama: Begin to appreciate and participate in dramatic activities.	Children will be able to act out stories with their shadow puppets.
11.A.ECa: Express wonder and curiosity about their world by asking questions, solving problems, and designing things.	Children will design their own puppet, and test out how to solve making the shadow bigger and smaller.
19.A.ECa: Engage in active play using gross- and fine-motor skills.	Children will use their fine motor skills to create the puppets, and gross motor to move them around.

Materials

- Paper
- Pencils or pen
- Scissors
- Tape
- Craft stick or unsharpened pencil
- Flashlight
- Ruler (optional)
- Hole Puncher (optional)

Setup

To see the projected shadows, children will need to use a blank space on a wall, as well as use a light switch to turn the lights in the room on and off. Maybe set up a table area with supplies near the chosen projection spot so children can go back and make adjustments to their puppets. A darker room is recommended to see the puppets best.

Directions

1. Have children decide what they would like to draw for their puppet. Encourage them to choose shapes and figures that have a recognizable outline. Maybe they want to draw their favorite animal or a member of their family.
2. Use a pencil or pen and draw the chosen shapes for the puppet on the paper. Construction paper or a stronger paper work best for shadow puppets, but any paper can work. Suggest that children draw larger shapes for their puppets.
3. When finished drawing, cut out the puppet.
4. Add any extra details to the puppet, like using a hole puncher or scissors to add eyes.

5. Use tape to stick the puppet to the craft stick. Make sure to leave some craft stick showing to use as a handle to hold the puppet.
6. Turn on the flashlight and turn off the lights.
7. Hold the puppet in front of the beam of light from the flashlight near the wall, not too close to block the light. What do you see on the wall?
8. Allow children to make adjustments to the puppet as needed to make better shadows. Encourage them to tell a story with their puppet.

Investigation Questions:

- Why can you only see the outline (or silhouette) of the puppet on the wall?
- What happens if you move the puppet closer to the wall?
- What happens if you move the puppet further away from the wall?
- What would happen if you added another flashlight?
- Can your family guess what your puppet is just by the outline?
- What other animals or people could you turn into puppets?
- Could you use the puppets to tell a story? What story would you tell with your puppets?