

Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom Topic of Study: Shadows

Guess Whose Shadow? By Stephen R. Swinburne
Moonbeam's Shadow by Frank Asch

Introduction

In this guide, children are engaged in activities that primarily support two Domains in the *Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards*: **Emergent Literacy** and **Science and Technology**. The **Learning Goals** with **Strands** which precede each activity relate to specific areas of development and learning that are the focus of the activities.

Shadows are a part of children's everyday experiences. However, shadows can be mysterious because they come and go, sometimes they are in front of us and sometimes behind us, they can be tall or short, and sometimes they are not there at all. Calling children's attention to shadows in the environment is one way to capture their interest in shadows.

In the informational book, *Guess Whose Shadow?* by Stephen R. Swinburne, children are introduced to concepts about shadows. For example, when the sun shines, shadows are everywhere. People, dogs and horses have shadows. Bicycles, trees and airplanes have shadows. Shadows can be big and shadows can be small. And when the day is cloudy, shadows disappear.

As a companion to *Guess Whose Shadow?*, children will enjoy Bear's efforts to outwit his shadow in the charming reissue of the story book, *Moonbear's Shadow*, by author and illustrator, Frank Asch.

Connection to Adventures in Learning

The curriculum guide can stand alone or be used as a supplement to the following topic of study in **Adventures In Learning**:

- Focus Area: Physical and Earth Science - Topic of Study: Color and Light
- Focus Area: Animals – Topic of Study: Bears

The curriculum guide can also be used with similar topics of study from any curriculum.

Materials to Collect and Make

- Collect pictures that show shadows of people and objects and post them in a group on the classroom wall a couple of days before beginning this topic of study. Label the grouping **Shadows**.
- Create a *Shadow Search* booklet
- Create a *Whose Shadow Is This?* booklet
- Make shadow puppets (See Attachment: [Shadow Puppets](#))
- Flashlight or lamp
- White poster board or large piece of white paper

Introducing and Concluding the Topic

Introduction: Finding Out What Children Know about Shadows

Learning Goals:

CD2.4 Holds and manipulates information in memory (*short-term and working memory, long-term memory*)

CD3.2 Engages in symbolic and abstract thinking (*abstract thinking*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*print knowledge*)

To introduce the topic of “Shadows” you need to find out what children already know about the topic and what they want to know. This allows you to build on children’s experiences and helps create an interest in the topic. Here’s how to begin.

- Gather the children in a group. Show them a picture of shadows and say, “For the next few days we’re going to be learning about shadows.”
- Write on chart paper, chalk board or marker board the word “Shadows.”
- Divide the chart sheet into three sections as shown in the illustration that follows.
- Invite children to tell you things they know about shadows. You may have to ask prompt questions such as “Have you ever seen your own shadow? Where did you see it?” “What other shadows have you seen?”
- Make a list of things children know about shadows.
- Invite children to tell you things they would like to know about shadows.
- Make a list of things children would like to know about shadows.

Teacher Note: *Have three headings on the chart sheet. The first heading will be “What We Know about Shadow”, the second heading will be “What We Would Like to Know about Shadows” the third heading will be “What We Have Learned about Shadows.”*

What We Know about Shadows	What We Would Like to Know about Shadows	What We Learned about Shadows

Conclusion: Finding Out What Children Have Learned about Shadows

- Gather the children in a group at the conclusion of the topic of study about shadows.
- Write in the third column on the chart paper, chalk board or marker board “What We Learned about Shadows.”
- Invite children to tell you some things they have learned about shadows. You may have to ask prompt questions such as “How did shadows change?” “What happens to shadows on a cloudy day?”
- Make a list of the things children learned about shadows.
- Read the first two lists you made with the children. Then say, “Here are some new things you learned about shadows” and read today’s list with the children.

Teacher Note: *This method of introducing and concluding the topic is known as KWL. What do children know, what do they want to know, and what did they learn.*

Story Presentation

Learning Goals:

CD2.4 Holds and manipulates information in memory (*short-term and working memory*)

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

LD2.1 Uses increasingly complex vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure (in child's home language) (*expressive vocabulary*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences, variety of interests*)

EL1.2 Engages in read-alouds and conversations about books and stories (*story comprehension*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*book knowledge*)

ST1.1 Engages in the scientific process to collect, analyze, and communicate information (*observations, questions and predictions*)

ST2.1 Demonstrates knowledge of core science ideas and concepts (*stability and change*)

Book: *Moonbear's Shadow* by Frank Ash

First Reading

- Be familiar with the book, *Moonbear's Shadow*.
- Show the cover, and before giving the title, invite children to look at the cover and discuss what they see. If children do not mention the shadows, call attention to Bear's shadow and ask children what they think it is.
- Ask children if they see any other shadows on the cover.
- Invite children to discuss why they think there are shadows of Bear and the butterfly and the flower. Accept all answers.
- Give the title, author and illustrator of the book. (Explain that the author is the person who writes the words and the illustrator is the person who draws the pictures. Frank Ash is both the author and illustrator).
- Say, "Let's read and find out about Bear's shadow."
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Involve children during the reading by asking questions about what is happening in the story. For example, ask "Why do you think Bear couldn't see his shadow when he hid behind a tree?" "Why do you think Bear could see his shadow when he stepped out from behind the tree?"
- Continue reading the story, allowing children to make comments and observations about what they see and hear
- Pause at the end of the book and allow for children's honest reaction.
- Follow up the reading with questions such as, "What caused Bear's fish to go away?" "What were some ways Bear tried to get rid of his shadow?" Show pictures in the book as visual cues for the children.

Second Reading of *Moonbear's Shadow*

- Show the cover and invite children to recall the title, then give author/illustrator.
- Explain to children that as you read the story, they are to notice where the shadows are on each page.
- Read the story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Read the page where Bear fills the hole with dirt and his shadow is nowhere to be seen.
- Invite children to discuss why they think Bear has no more shadow.
- Read the next few pages, pausing after reading the pages that show the shadows of the shovel lengthening. Invite children to comment about what they see.
- Continue by reading the text to the end of the story.
- Follow up the reading by showing the second page of the book and invite children to notice where the sun is and where Bear's shadow is. Then show the next to last page and invite children to say where they now see the sun and where they see Bear's shadow.
- Invite them to discuss why Bear's shadow is in a different place at the beginning of the story and at the end. (The sun is in a different place.)
- Conclude the reading by asking children this question: "Why do you think Bear was able to catch a fish this time?" (His shadow was beside him and didn't scare the fish away.)

Book: *Guess Whose Shadow?* By Stephen R. Swinburne (4 to 6 children)

- Prepare to read the book *Guess Whose Shadow?* to the small group of children.
- Take the book *Moonbear's Shadow* and *Guess Whose Shadow?* to the reading area.
- Show both covers to the children and invite them to discuss things they see on both covers that are alike. (Bear and the girl are jumping and both are making a shadow.)
- Put away *Moonbear's Shadow* and give the title, author and illustrator of the second book, *Guess Whose Shadow?*
- Read the story so all children can see the photos in the book.
- Allow children time to look at each picture and make comments, especially about the shadows they see.
- Read the page with the text "You can play a game with shadows." Then say to the children that they will now help you read part of the story by guessing whose shadow they see.
- Continue by showing the page with a shadow, read the text, and invite children to guess whose shadow.
- Read the next page and ask children if they guessed correctly.
- Continue reading until the end.
- Pause and allow children's honest reaction to the story.
- Invite children to recall some of the things they saw in the book that made a shadow.

Teacher Note: *Make sure all children have an opportunity to participate in the reading of Guess Whose Shadow?*

Additional Learning Goal:

EL1.2 Engages in read-louds and conversations about books and stories (*informational texts*)

Second Reading of *Guess Whose Shadow?*

- Prepare to use the shadow puppets with children at the conclusion of the second reading of *Guess Whose Shadow?* You will need a light source (flashlight or lamp), shadow puppets, and a white wall, poster board or large piece of white paper on which to reflect the shapes.
- Show the book, *Guess Whose Shadow?*, and give the title and author.
- Read the story so all children can see the photos in the book.
- Allow children to make comments about what they hear and see.
- Follow up the reading by explaining to children that there are three things that make a shadow; light source such as the sun or a flashlight or lamp, an object, a person or an animal, and a surface.
- Show some of the pictures to support your previous statement. For example, show the second page with the clowns and riders on horses.
- Involve children in identifying the people and animals and say where they see the shadows.
- Explain that the sun is the light source and the street is the surface.
- Show other photos where shadows appear on grass, on sand, on the side of a building, and on water. Stress that all of these are surfaces.
- Explain to children that they will now see a shadow puppet show.
- Use the light source to project the shapes on the selected surface and invite children to name the objects. If the room is too light, you might consider turning off the main light source.
- Conclude by involving children in naming the three sources used to make the shadows: light source, objects (the puppets) and the surface (wall, poster board or piece of white paper.)

Additional Language and Literacy Activities

Learning Goals:

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in literacy experiences*)

EL2.1 Notices and manipulates the sounds of language (*rhyme*)

My Disappearing Shadow

*Me and my shadow
We go places together
Then he disappears
When it's cloudy weather.
Then my shadow hides
And I don't know why.
Then he comes back
When the sun is in the sky.*

Learning Goals:

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*print knowledge*)

ST1.1 Engages in the scientific process to collect, analyze, and communicate information (*observations, questions, and predictions*)

Activity: Shadow Search

- Choose a sunny day for this activity; a day where the sun will reach the playground and create lots of shadows.
- Prepare one sheet of paper for each child as follows:
Benton saw the shadow of _____.
He saw the shadow on the _____.
- Explain to the children that when they go outdoors they are to look for shadows. When they come back indoors each of them will have a turn helping you write a book about the shadows he or she saw on the playground.
- Remind them to remember where they saw the shadow.
Was it on the grass, on the sidewalk, on the side of a building?
- Spend a couple of minutes with each child recording the shadow they saw and the surface on which they saw it. If a child wants to tell you about lots of shadows he saw, ask him to choose his very favorite.
- Read the page back with the child.
- Invite the child to draw a picture at the top of the page of the shadow he or she saw.
- Create a book, *Our Shadow Search* By Mrs. Taylor's Class by stapling the pages together.
- Read the book with all of the children.
- Explain to children that the book will be placed in the Library Center.

Our Shadow Search



By Mrs. Taylor's
Class



Benton saw the shadow of **a tree**.
He saw the shadow on the **grass**.

Activity: Whose Shadow Is This?

- Choose a sunny day for this activity.
- Take a photo of each child's shadow (full length)
- Print a copy of each child's shadow and attach each one to a separate sheet of paper on which is written the following:
This is my shadow.
Who am I?
- Create a book *Whose Shadow Is This?* by Miss Lucy's Class by binding the pages together with staples or in page protectors in a 3-ring binder.
- Read the book with all of the children.
- Show the cover and read the title.
- Recall with children the photos you took of their shadows.
- Explain that you have printed the photos and used them to make the book.
- State that you will need their help in guessing whose shadow.
- Show the first page and read "This is my shadow. Who am I?"
- Give children clues if they are unable to identify a child's shadow.
- Explain to children that the book will be placed in the Library Center or in the Discovery Center.

Whose Shadow Is This?

By Miss Lucy's Class



This is my shadow.
Who am I?

Teacher Note: Encourage children to share the book with their families.

Learning Environment

Library Center

- Add the following books: *Moonbeam's Shadow* and *Guess Whose Shadow?* to the center.
- Add the teacher-made booklet *Our Shadow Search*.
- Add the teacher-made booklet *Whose Shadow Is This?*

Discovery Center

- Place a flashlight and shadow puppets in the center.
- Provide a white wall, poster board or large piece of white paper on which to reflect the shadow puppets.

Outdoor Area

Shadow Dancing

- Take CD player and CDs outdoors on a sunny day.
- Invite children to listen to the music and dance with their shadow.
- Play music that suggests different kinds of movements: slow and swaying, then jazzy and fast, for example.
- Invite children to discuss how they liked dancing with their shadows. What were some things they noticed about their shadow as they danced together?

Learning Goal:

CA1.1 Explores through listening, singing, creating, and moving to music (*exploration of music and movement*)

Transition Activities

Learning Goal:

CD2.2 Shows flexibility in adjusting thinking and behavior to different contexts (*adjusting behavior to match context*)

My Favorite Shadow

- Use the teacher-made book, *Our Shadow Search*, to move children from one area to another.
- Show the first page and read the first part of the sentence as follows: "Benton saw the shadow of _____" and allow the child to name the shadow he saw, then transition to the next activity.
- Continue this activity until all children have transitioned.

Whose Shadow Is This?

- Use the teacher-made book, *Whose Shadow Is This?*, to move children from one area to another.
- Show each page and invite children to guess whose shadow. That child transitions to the next activity.

Family Connection and Engagement

- Send home a note to families explaining that children have been learning about shadows.
- Suggest that families take their children outdoors on a sunny day and involve them in looking for shadows.
- Invite families to look at the *Whose Shadow Is This?* booklet with their child.

Additional Books and Resources

Shadows and Reflections by Tana Hoban

What Makes a Shadow? by Clyde Robert Bulla, illustrated by June Otani