

# Shadow Play

All Ages



Shadows maybe ordinary to some people, but they can be mysterious to children. Use a flashlight or lamp to cast shadows of toys and household objects onto a blank surface or wall. Notice how a shadow changes size as the object moves toward or from the light. Our shadow play activities will help shed some light on the ways of shadows. (parents— explore the concepts of transparency, translucence, and opacity.)

## Shadow Puppets

For good old fashioned fun, use your hands to make the silhouette or shadow of different animals and things. See page 2 for examples of hand shadow birds to try. Once you have mastered forming a few animals with your hands, create a fun story to perform with your shadow hand puppets. Make shadow puppets from toys or cut out silhouettes of characters in your play. Learn more about shadow puppets in our [Bird Song Puppet Show](#) activity. Use shadow play to create a [Stop Time Video](#).

## Shadow Tag

Shadow tag is all about stepping on another player's shadow. Play with one person who is "It" (like playing tag) or for even more fun, let everyone play at being "It" at the same time. Shadow tag is best played outdoors on a sunny day or on a moonlit night. A single source of light close by, such as a street lamp or a yard light, offers a great opportunity to discover how to make your shadow smaller or longer. Change the angle of the shadow to light or disappear altogether. Consider using a playground field with many sources of light for a challenging twist.

## Dance with Your Shadow

Again, best done outdoors. You can dance to different types of music and dance — a moonlit waltz, a streetlamp polka, the ballpark ballet.



## Tea Party or Picnic

Invite your shadow for tea, take it on a picnic, share a hot cocoa on a winter hike. Try playing games together, Pat-A-Cake is fun, Rock/Paper/Scissors is predictable.

## Shadow Art

Tracing shadows is one way to make art. Another creative form of shadow art is making sculptures that cast realistic shadows. These shadow sculptures can be made with random objects, just about any objects! Try using snow or sand as a base for your sculpture. Here are some [shadow art](#) creations for inspiration!

**Tip:** Watch for shadows to 'play on'. Perhaps a fence shadow where you can appear to 'balance' on the top rail, perform a tightrope walk on the shadow of a powerline on the ground or 'climb' to the very top of a shadow tree. Change the rhyme "Step on crack" and sing "Step on shadow, oh so sad-o", or "Step on the light, jump to the right."



# Bird-Shaped Hand Shadows



Flying bird



Screech Owl



Owl



Parrot



Turkey



Flying bird



Hen



Peacock



Rooster



Cockatoo



Secretary Bird

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