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| **Dark and Light** | |
| Winter is an ideal time of the year to learn about dark and light. Some children are afraid of the dark so talking about and playing in the dark with friends, familiar staff or family helps them to overcome their fears. Other children enjoy the excitement of playing in dark secret spaces and will delight in any opportunities provided to play in and learn about the dark.  There are lots of lovely stories about the dark (some are listed below) which may generate questions and other interests, such as shadows or nocturnal animals. Please choose from any of the following ideas and adapt them to suit the children and families in your setting. | |
| **What I need to grow and develop** | **What will children learn from this play and how you can take it further** |
| **Wellbeing (including self, social, emotional and communication),**  Stories  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmHSdJ-qA_M> The Owl Who Was Afraid Of The Dark  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOf7FJW4QR0> Bear Shadow  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XrPyF4Mpl4> The Very Lonely Firefly (Story about sources of light)  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPQRiSTYFHo> Owl Babies  <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zvyc7nb/articles/zkhp47h> Little Owl’s First Day (Story)  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mAlhgU7QGw> What’s Next? (Story)  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDV9EPlfLjw> A Fox in the Dark (Story)  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sivCIldsmY> “Wow” said the Owl (Story)  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m824rcGp_GI> The Shark in the Dark (Story)  Songs  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNd2un7nDq0> The Shape of Me and Other Stuff (Song about shadows)  <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1r9mt8> My shadow  Rhymes  <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUuGV-JvHXw> My shadow (Rhyme) | * Finding out about the dark and talking about how it makes us feel * Discovering why we don’t need to be afraid of the dark   Extend by talking about other emotions and support children to identify and express their feelings   * Learning new vocabulary and what the words mean – e.g. dusk, twilight, dim, nocturnal, bright, glow, luminous * Finding out about Animals and birds that come out when it’s dark – badgers, foxes and owls   Extend by learning about other creatures that live in the dark, such as fish that live in very deep oceans.   * Rhyme awareness through songs and repetition of rhymes |
| **Movement and Co-ordination**   * Night walk – Go for a walk in the dark. Discover different sources of light on the way. Talk about what it feels like to be out in the dark. * Hide and Seek in the dark – This game can be played indoors or outdoors. Children hide and the ‘seeker’ uses a torch to find them. Everyone playing can take a turn to be the ‘seeker’. * Treasure Hunt – This game can be played in the dark. Take turns to hide a chosen item, perhaps a familiar toy, in the house or garden. Everyone searching for the hidden object uses a torch to find it. * ‘Follow the light’ game – An adult moves the light of a torch around on the floor/ground and children follow the light as it moves. Encourage different ways of moving - walking, running, jumping. * **Torch Tag** - Choose someone to be ‘it’ and give them a torch. While everyone else hides, ‘it’ stays at the base and counts or sings a familiar song. Once the allotted time is up, ‘it’ has to find people and ‘tag’ them with the torch. The first person tagged becomes the next ‘it” after everyone else is found or has reached the base. | * How to risk assess while moving in the dark * How to move their bodies in different ways * How to control their bodies while moving * Developing gross motor skills as they run, jump, hop and balance * Developing body awareness and control |
| **Confidence, creativity and curiosity**   * Look for different light sources in and around the setting – light bulbs, car lights, torches, mobile phones, street lights etc. * Make a dark den – Either indoors or outdoors using different materials, such as blankets, sheets or cardboard to cover chairs, tables or bushes. Investigate what can be used to make the den darker. What can be used to create light in the den? * <https://alittlepinchofperfect.com/shadow-science-sensory-play-for-kids/> - Exploring shadows and the sense of light using toys and everyday items. * Draw round shadows of friends and different objects * Explore how light shines through different objects – By holding different objects/materials up to the light or by shining a torch through them, discover which objects/materials light can shine through. * Make contrasting ‘dark and light’ collage pictures using black and white paper. | * Discovering different sources of light. * Comparing levels of dark and light – darker, darkest, lighter, lightest. * Problem solving * Developing gross motor control * Investigating the properties of materials * Finding out about Shadows – what they are and how they are made * Discovering that shadows can show an object’s shape, but they can’t show colours or details * Learning how to create shadows   Extend by exploring how the size of a shadow can change by moving our bodies or an object closer to/ further from the light and how a shadow’s shape, size, and position change over the course of the day as the sun’s position changes.   * Developing fine motor skills and creativity |