Shadow Play
for Ages 2–5

Observing shadows is a great way for children to begin to understand that the sun determines the shadow's position. This is one of the first steps to grasping concepts like the earth’s rotation, light, and cloud formation.

ITEMS YOU WILL NEED:
An outdoor space, a sunny day, and some chalk

OPTIONAL EXTRAS:
A compass

1. On a sunny day, set aside some time in the morning and afternoon to head outside with some chalk.

2. Find an area that you can draw on with your chalk. This can be a sidewalk, a driveway, or a nearby park. Different bumpy or smooth textures to draw on can add to the fun too!

3. Head outside in the morning to your spot and observe your shadows. Then you can have the child trace your shadow or the shadow of an object like a light post or tree. You can also draw the child's shadow, and they can color it in!

4. Ask the child to point in the direction of the sun. They can draw an arrow pointing to the sun or, for older children, even a compass to figure out which direction the sun is.

5. In the afternoon, maybe after nap time, head back outside and return to the tracings of shadows. Have the shadows moved? Trace them again and spend some time decorating your tracings.

6. To keep the child's interest, you can have them find your shadow and jump on it. Children love this fun, gross motor skills activity that helps them develop self-awareness.

TO FURTHER EXTEND THIS ACTIVITY:
To hear a story about shadows, listen to The Day I Met My Shadow or learn a bit more about directions by listening to a reading of Henry’s Map.