Learning Experience: Making shadows

Setting: Bansha Pre-school, Bansha, Co. Tipperary

Setting type: Sessional

Age group: Young children

Theme: Well-being

Aim 3: Children will be creative and spiritual.

Learning goal 3: In partnership with the adult, children will develop and nurture their sense of wonder and awe.

One unexpectedly sunny morning in winter, we went outside and the children discovered that they were able to make shadows. This immediately fascinated them and sparked a deep interest in exploring and experimenting with shadows. They moved their bodies to create different shapes. We took photos and checked to see if we could see the shadows in the camera. The children were delighted to see that we could.

After a few minutes a couple of children went in search of sticks to create monster shadows with thin legs and long arms. Another boy created a dinosaur with his hand. He is very interested in dinosaurs and when I went over to look at his creation he explained that his T-Rex had a very long neck.

Getting ready to go out

This learning experience is an example of how one service supports one of the learning goals in Aistear’s theme of Well-being.
Another girl held two sticks out by her sides and created a bird. Her coat created wings and her shadow flapped its wings as she moved her coat. We also had a bee with two antennae sticking out of his head who buzzed around the playground.

When we went inside we searched the internet to discover how shadows are made. We also drew some images of our shadow creations and we studied the shadow images on the camera. We discussed and compared the shapes and sizes of the different creations. We spoke about the bee’s antennae and learned some facts about T-Rexs. Excited by our creative shadow-making and our discoveries about shadows the children planned to make more the following morning. Unfortunately, the sun just wasn’t in the right position for us!
Ideas to extend the children’s learning

- Make a light-box.
- Make shadow puppets using a sheet and light and retell a familiar story.
- Continue to nurture children’s sense of wonder and awe, for example by playing relaxing classical music, blowing bubbles or flying a kite.
- Provide lots of natural items like stones, shells, twigs, plants, fresh flowers and make time to learn about nature.

This experience also links to:

- **Well-being**, Aim 3, Learning goal 1
- **Exploring and Thinking**, Aim 1, Learning goal 1; Aim 2, Learning goal 3

This resource was developed through the *Aistear in Action* initiative.
The play leader’s reflections

This was a totally unplanned experience. We never thought that when we went out that morning we would have such fun making shadows. We realized just how important it is to make time for children to explore things that capture their interest and imagination.

It was interesting to watch the different shadows children made. They loved making shadow figures and getting others to guess what they were.

The children continue to be fascinated by the sun and each day they check its position in the sky.