



Discover the magical world of shadow puppetry as you and your child use simple materials to explore the intensity and movement of light. Design and make a shadow puppet to encourage your child’s imagination, creativity, storytelling and play!

What is a shadow? A shadow is a dark area made when something (an obstacle) blocks light. The size and clarity of shadows depend on the position of the light, and the distance of the light source to the object.

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New York Hall of Science

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Visual Guide: Design a Shadow Puppet



FIRST, draw a shape for your shadow puppet using markers.



NEXT, cut the outline of your shadow puppet with scissors.



THEN, using hole punchers or scissors, add holes to your puppet if you would like light to filter through the holes.



TIP: Try covering the holes with colored transparent or translucent materials to add colors to your shadow puppet.



NEXT, Tape cardboard, a chopstick or a popsicle stick to the bottom of your shadow puppet to use as a handle.



LASTLY, test your shadow puppet on a blank wall, using a handheld flashlight, lamp or the flashlight on your cell phone!



Visual Guide: Design a Shadow Puppet

Visual Activity Guides

As part of our Autism Access Initiative, NYSCI offers invaluable opportunities for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to build a solid foundation of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) thinking skills. We are committed to encouraging children with ASD and their families to explore their science process skills, early mathematical thinking, designing and making through hands-on exposure to new materials, tools and experiences.

Many children are strong visual learners and visual thinkers, especially children with autism. Given this strength, NYSCI has created Visual Activity Guides, visual step-by-step instructions to help engage children in STEAM activities when verbal communication and instructions are difficult. Visual Activity Guides encourage the whole family to participate in playful hands-on activities while promoting a positive learning experience that is clear and engaging.

Use these Visual Activity Guides in a way that best makes sense for your child: printed on paper or displayed on a screen. Your child should be able to see the guide before beginning the activity and the guide should continue to be visible throughout. At first, you may need to physically guide your child (for example, gently guide your child by the shoulder and prompt them to point to each step). Try doing the activity more than once and gradually decrease physical prompts as your child begins to use the visual activity guide more independently.

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