

EXPLORING SHADOWS

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INTRODUCTION

My commitments as an educator are to allow children to learn and play in whichever ways they feel fit them best and to consider the outdoor environments as an extraordinary way of learning in the room.

In my Infant toddler practicum I found that shadows were a reoccurring interest among the children in the seedlings room. I had decided to explore shadows further with the children to see how far we could work with them. In the process of working with the children I found that what I wanted to foster was the relationships with the natural lighting from the sun and the shadows, as well as the relationships we could create throughout.

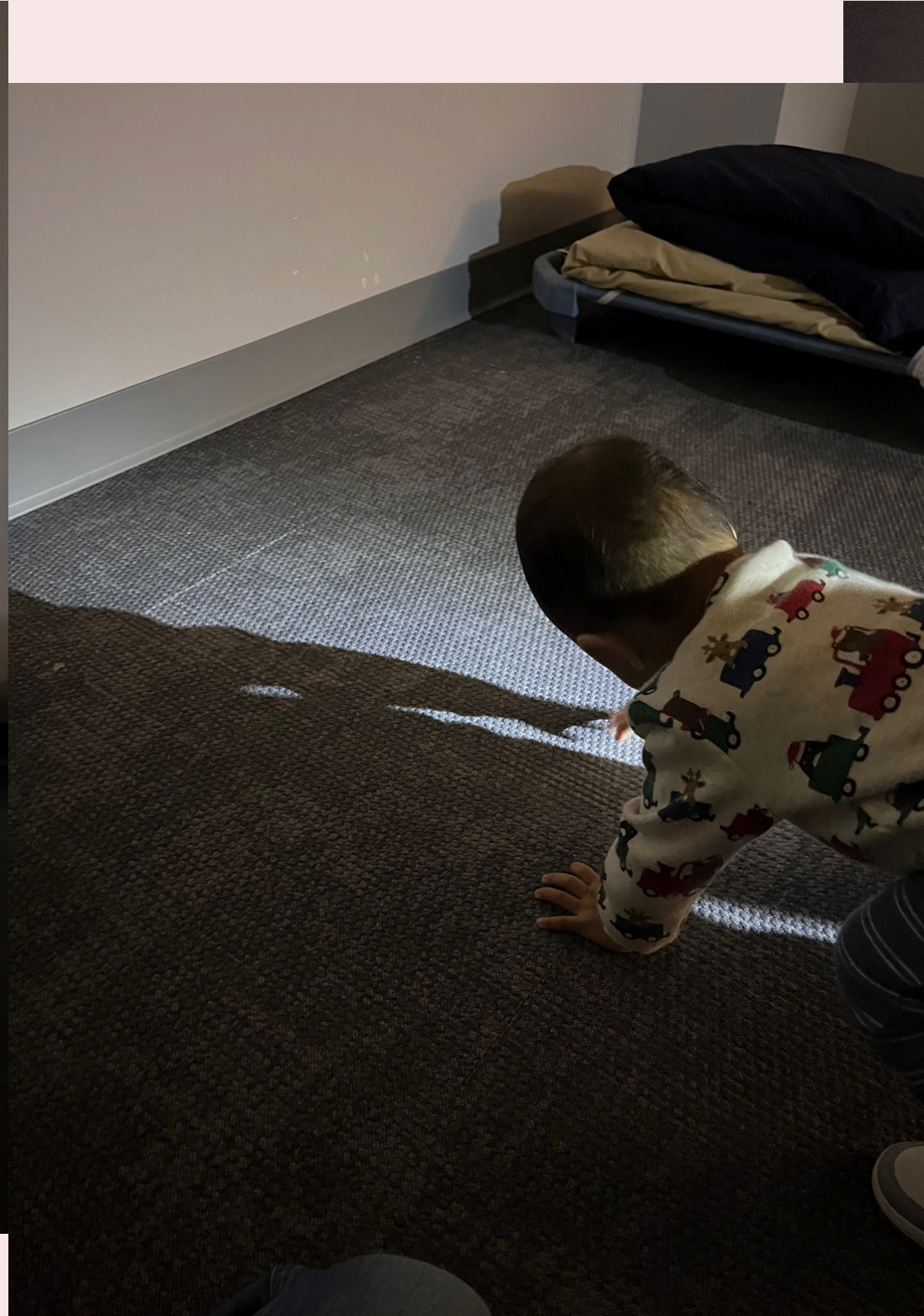
STARTING IT OFF

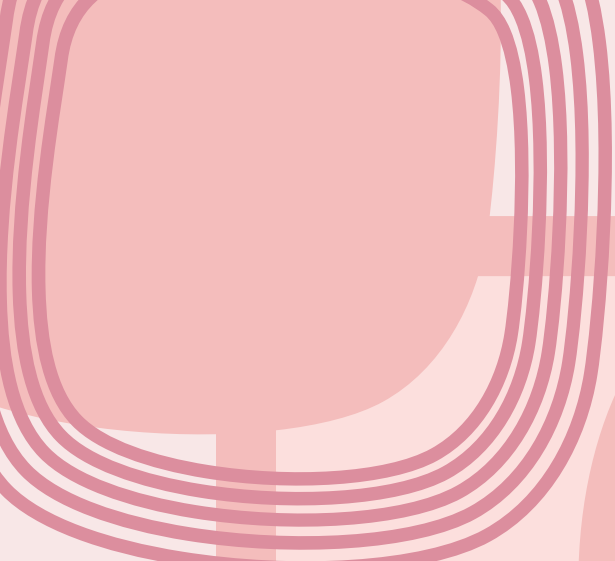
As I began my work with the children, the shadows became an interest in the room when the sunlight would come in and hit our couch, floors, and walls, the children would walk past their shadows and notice them following their actions, they would wave and get very close to their shadows, trying to see how closely they can get, possibly even trying to give their shadows a kiss. There were also children that seemed to have already met with their shadows and would dance while watching their actions be reciprocated, giggling and babbling as if they were in conversation with their shadows.



UNNATURAL LIGHTING

As this was a time, there was not much sun in our yard or room, I had decided to bring in some flashlights for the children to see what they would do with their shadows from unnatural lighting, the children that I worked with in the process had began running towards and away from the walls where the shadows were, in what looked like to be attempts to scare or surprise the shadows. I also noticed that the children became more interested in where the light was coming, and starring into the light of the flashlight. After this experiment with the flashlight I had decided that what I wanted to foster was the relationship with natural elements, using the sunlight as much as we could when it became available to us.





After noticing the shadows I had decided to bring in some paper cut outs to resemble some of the children favourite songs as well as some spiders for the itsy bitsy spider, when presenting these to the children it became a part of the routine for us, the children knew that I had the shapes for the shadows when we were outside in the sun and would come to me saying words like “spider” or “bus”. We would use the shadows to sing songs with each other.

On days when we had no sun to bring shadows, I continued the routines of having the paper cut outs with me and we would sing or play but a few of the children had created relationships with their shadows and knew the specific places where we regularly met with them, so the shadows would appear near the fence in which the some of children brought the shapes towards the fence to invite their shadows back. Jordan had created a very special relationship with his shadow, while one day when the sun was not around he put the spider through the fence, and from what it looked like his theory was to invite his shadow back to play that day, unfortunately it did not come but I knew that he would look for it again later.

NEXT...





The final item I have brought in for the children was felt spiders as the children found the most interest in the shadows of the spiders. One of the spiders had wire inside of the legs to allow the children to manipulate the fabric to create more shadows with the same material. I also decided to leave the felt in the room on the wall to bring it into our everyday play and learning. Throughout the time that the spiders were out the children would play with them, bringing them to the sunlight when the sun was in the room and dancing along with the spiders and the song. I found that the children started to notice the different areas of the room that the shadows were being created, showing their shadows that they knew the rituals they held together, bringing the spider and an educator over when they noticed the sunlight was in. In the process of having the spiders in the room, the song Itsy Bitsy Spider became very known amount the children, we learned the actions together with ourselves and the shadows. Some of our older children even began attempting some of the words of the song with the actions.

THE ITSY BITSY SPIDER



THEORIES

Over the time that we worked with shadows I enjoyed working alongside the children and their relationships with place, material, and shadows. Almost every child in the room created different relationships with the children as we went along. Our older children in the group would try to share the spiders with their shadows creating theories of where the shadows show up and when they appear. Our younger children enjoyed watching their shadows as we did the actions of our songs, creating theories large movements with their bodies and sharing the moments of each big body movement.



DISCUSSION

Working with the materials, shadows, and natural lighting, the children and I learned a lot about how shadows are created and the relationships with shadows that can be created, each child had different relationships with the shadows as we humans each have a different relationship with each other. I found that the most prominent theories from the children were connecting the material with places where we had seen shadows before and bringing the spiders to those places when noticed that sunlight was in, to share the moments we were creating with the shadows. Enjoying the big body movements of the song and watching our shadow dance with as we sang together. Finally getting very close to our shadows in attempts to touch it and trying to give the shadows our spiders. Each of these theories are important to the learning of the children, the children created special relationships with our natural worlds and created relationships with themselves in the process even though they may not yet know that the shadows are representations of themselves, each child enjoying playing alongside the shadows in their own different ways.

As I am staying in my practicum room in my work place, I want to continue my work with shadows, to further the relationships the children have created and bring in new materials to foster more curiosities they may have with the sun and shadows. As we head into the spring and summer months I expect to see more sunlight available for the children to experiment with as well as more time outdoors with less gear to wear for the children.

CONCLUSION

The background is a light pink color. A darker pink rounded rectangle is centered on the page. In the top right corner, there are several concentric, curved lines in a medium pink shade. In the bottom left corner, there are several concentric, curved lines in a medium pink shade, along with a solid light pink shape. The text "THANK YOU" is centered within the rounded rectangle in a black, serif font.

THANK YOU