

Lightness and Darkness

Winter weather is in full effect here in Colorado. We have days of heavy snow, followed by milder days where the skies are clear, sunny, and blue. Thinking back to teaching Pre-K, it was always interesting how the sun, or the lack of it, could have an impact on the children's overall demeanor and activity for the day.

Light is an abstract and whimsical subject. It can be explored in ~~an infinite number of~~ ways. Winter is the perfect time to invite children to experiment with lightness and darkness. No other season shows us such a stark contrast between the two. Between holiday lights around town, the early sunsets, and gloomy days, there are plenty of opportunities to explore the juxtaposition of the two. Lightness and darkness are often explored through shadow and light play. Other ways to explore it are through color, shade, tone, and tint. Paint mixing is an open-ended and engaging way for children to experiment with the varied ways color can be changed. Invite them to name the colors they produce with vivid descriptive words.

Color Mixing with Hues, Tones, Tints, and Shades

Materials:

- jars or containers
- tempera paint
- paint brushes
- spoons

Vocabulary: Paint mixing opens up the opportunity to talk about colors with “expert” vocabulary. Here are some terms to incorporate into paint mixing:

Hue- color. Includes Yellow, Orange, Red, Violet, Blue and Green. Never includes Black, White, or Grey.

Tint- any hue with White added to it.

Tone- any color plus Grey (or both Black and White).

Shade- any hue with Black added to it.

Supporting Children's Literature

- The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
- Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak
- Run Wild by David Covell
- The Day the Crayons Quit by Drew Daywalt and Oliver Jeffers