



Night Activities

Early Childhood, Resources for Educators, Resources for Families, Resources in English for Families

Winter days are short, which means there is more time when children can see the night sky. This is particularly exciting for preschoolers, whose early bedtimes often mean that in the summer, they go to bed and wake up in the sunlight.

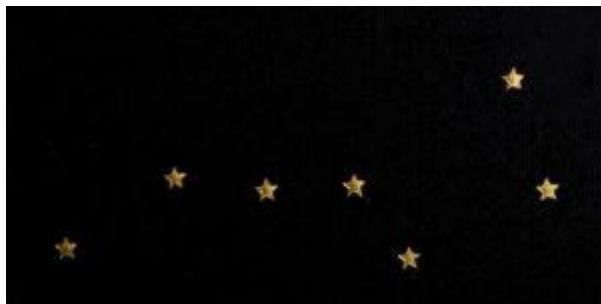
Here are some ideas for taking advantage of the early darkness and getting children curious about the night.

Make Nocturnal Animals

Nocturnal animals are active at night and sleep during the day. They often have special features that help them survive at night, including coloring that helps them camouflage in the darkness, large eyes to help their night vision, or heightened senses of hearing or smell to get around the lack of visibility.

Use construction paper, googly eyes, scraps of fabric, and other craft materials to make your own nocturnal animals. The creatures can be real or imaginary, but if they are imaginary, make sure that they have the adaptations they need to survive at night!

To find out more, read [Nighttime](#), by Jill Esbaum.



Make Constellations

Look out at the night sky. What pictures do you see? Ask children to draw their own night sky and make their own constellations.

For added fun, provide children with star stickers or glittery pens to make stars. Encourage them to connect the stars with lines to show the pictures they imagine.

Children can make up their own pictures, or can look at the night sky and try to copy what they see.

This activity not only encourages observation and creativity, but also fosters fine motor skills. To find out more about constellations, pair this activity with [Zoo in the Sky](#) by Jacqueline Mitton.



CFCE Program

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It is managed by Community Teamwork



From the MA State-Wide Family Engagement Center



Make a Moon

Look out at the moon. What colors do you see? Explain to children that the dark patches on the moon are craters, or large holes made by flying debris.

Go on a hunt around your yard or park and pick up pebbles or stones. Then, back at home, roll out play dough or salt dough – which can be made using 2 cups of flour, 1 cup of salt, and 1 cup of water – and ask children to make craters using the different kinds of rocks and pebbles they found. Notice how different rocks make craters that are different

shapes, sizes, and textures. Try and use other materials – like leaves, pine cones, and sticks – and see how they affect the surface of the moon as well.

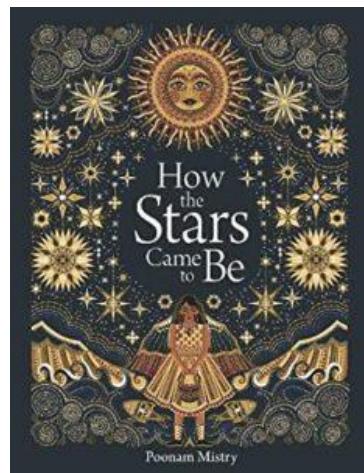
To find out more about the moon, pair this activity with [Moon: A Peek-Through Picture Book](#), by Britta Teckentrup.

Make a Rocket Ship

Talk to your child about all of the manmade objects in space, like satellites, and the Mars Rover. Talk about astronauts and how they traveled to the moon. In some areas, it might be possible to see satellites in the sky: try and spot them if you can.

Together, make a rocket ship out of materials like empty cardboard boxes, paper towel rolls, straws, pipe cleaners, paper, tape, and scissors. It can be a toy rocket or a box that your child can actually sit in as an astronaut. Ask your child to let their imagination go wild.

To find out more about space travel, pair this activity with [Mae Among the Stars](#) by Roda Ahmed.



Make Up a Nighttime Origin Story

Lots of cultures tell stories about the moon, the stars, and the animals, and how they came to be. What stories have you heard in your family? What stories have you heard about outside your family? Together, come up with your own story about how the moon, stars, and nighttime came to be. Write the story down and ask your child to illustrate it.

To find out more, pair this activity with [How the Stars Came to Be](#), by Poonam Mistry.



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Mathangi Subramanian, Ed.D., believes stories have the power to change the world. Her middle grades book, Dear Mrs. Naidu, won the South Asia Book Award, and her picture book A Butterfly Smile was inducted into the Nobel Museum by Laureate Dr. Esther Duflo. Her novel A People's History of Heaven was longlisted for the PEN/Faulkner award, a finalist for the LAMBDA literary award, and named a Skipping Stones Honors Book. A former public school teacher, senior policy analyst at the New York City Council, and Fulbright Scholar, she currently consults for Sesame Workshop. She holds a doctorate in education from Columbia Teachers College.



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