

## Sun Prints for Kids

There's no better time than summer for your child to explore the effects of light and shadow! Combine science and art with this entertaining experiment that results in a pretty sun print. Sun prints, which usually employ the sun's rays and chemically-treated paper to create a silhouette of an object, were one of the earliest forms of photography. Help him tap into this classic, awe-inspiring technique and investigate how different household objects react with light—using ordinary, inexpensive construction paper.



### What You Need:

- Construction paper (try buying less expensive paper that is prone to fading)
- Solid objects/shapes (use household items such as a coffee can or cut out shapes from cardboard)
- Sunshine

### What You Do:

1. Start by asking your child to come up with a hypothesis. What does he think will happen when he covers part of a piece of paper with an object, and then leaves it in the sun? Will it stay the same? Will it change? Have him make guesses as you jot them down.
2. Walk outside with your child, and encourage him to observe the outside light and the shadows cast by the sun. Move from a sunny spot to a shaded area, such as under a tree. Ask him to tell you what happened when he moved from the light to shaded place. Try a variety of different shady places, and then talk about the differences he felt in different locations.
3. Place a plain piece of construction paper on a flat surface that's in direct sunlight. If the weather hasn't projected rain, this can be done outside. If there is the possibility of rain, do this project on a windowsill or table near a sunny window.
4. Invite your child to search the house for objects of several different shapes. Household items like a solid coffee mug (make sure that it is not clear or glass) or a coffee can make great circles. For other shapes, you may want to help your child draw and cut templates out of dark construction paper or cardboard.
5. Next, have him place the shapes onto the construction paper, making sure the objects don't fill the entire piece of paper.
6. Set the paper—with the shapes on it—in the sunlight to fade. There is no definite time it takes for this to occur; it will depend on the sun quality, weather conditions, and the paper itself. Periodically have your child lift the corner of a shape to see if it's creating a print.
7. Take the shapes off of the paper to reveal a pretty sun print!

Try this experiment in different seasons to see if it takes more or less time for the paper to fade. Add objects of different shapes to create a fun design!