Overview of Diwali learning experiences

Diwali delights

Diwali delights invites children to explore the sights, smells, textures and tastes of foods inspired by Diwali.

Through hands on experiences such as tasting, creating colourful fruit plates and designing rangoli crackers, children can join together to celebrate Diwali.

Magical storytimes

Tap into the power of books and storytelling to introduce children to Diwali, the Festival of Lights.

Through shared reading experiences, children can explore Diwali traditions, symbols and celebrations while developing their language and communication skills and their understanding of the world around them.

Diwali glow

Explore the magic of Diwali through colour and light.

Babies can explore colourful sensory bags filled with bright paints, toddlers can discover the magic of light and colour using sensory scarves and torches, and preschool children can create their very own diya lamps from clay.

Colourful creations

Tap into children's creativity as they explore the traditions, symbols and celebrations of Diwali.

Through a range of creative experiences, children can express their ideas while learning about this special festival.

Happy hearts & helping hands

Happy hearts and helping hands encourages children to think about kindness, working together and celebrating with others while learning about the traditions of Diwali.

If families in your setting celebrate Diwali, invite them to share photographs or to come in and talk about their celebrations at home.

Diwali delights

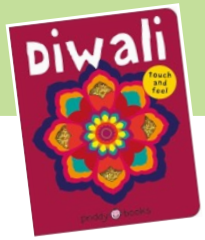
Food plays an important role in Diwali celebrations. Families and communities often come together to prepare, share and enjoy special foods as part of the festival.
Safety first: Before exploring foods as part of Diwali celebrations, remember to risk assess any potential allergies and ensure foods are prepared and presented safely, with appropriate cutting, sizing and textures to suit children's age and stage of development.

	Babies (0-2 Years)	Toddlers (2-3 years)	Preschoolers (3-5 years)
EYFS focus area of learning	• Physical development • Personal, social and emotional development CoETL – Playing and exploring	• Physical development • Expressive arts & design • Communication and language CoETL – Active learning	• Physical development • Understanding the world • Expressive arts and design CoETL- Creating & thinking critically
Learning experience	Little ones can join in the celebration by exploring a variety of flavours and textures inspired by Diwali. Offer foods such as soft fruits and natural yoghurt, allowing babies to look, smell, touch and taste the different foods. As you explore together, talk about the colours, textures and flavours of the foods.	Create bright and colourful fruit plates together as part of your Diwali celebrations. Invite children to choose their favourite fruits and explore the different colours, shapes, textures and flavours they can see, touch and taste. As they create their plates, encourage the children to arrange the fruits into colourful patterns or simple Diwali inspired designs.	Explore the beautiful patterns of rangoli by creating your own rangoli cracker designs to enjoy at snack time. Look at examples of colourful rangoli patterns together, noticing the different colours, shapes, lines and repeating patterns you can see. Invite the children to create their own designs. Encourage them to experiment with symmetry, shape and repeating patterns as they decorate their yummy cracker.
You will need:	A selection of baby safe foods such as- • Mango lassi: whole fat natural yoghurt mixed with mango puree. • Chapatti and mint dip: cut soft chapatti into finger sized strips and serve with a mint yoghurt dip. • Banana mashed with coconut. • Small bowls or tasting spoons	• A selection of colourful fruits • Child-safe knife • Chopping board • Plates • Small cutters for shapes - optional	• A selection of colourful fruits and vegetables, cut into a variety of shapes • Unsalted crackers • Plates

Magical storytime

Books and stories are a great way for children to learn about Diwali and develop an appreciation of different cultures and communities.

	Babies (0-2 Years)	Toddlers (2-3 years)	Preschoolers (3-5 years)
EYFS focus area of learning	• Communication & language • Literacy • Understanding the world CoETL – Playing & exploring	• Communication & language • Literacy • Understanding the world CoETL – Playing & exploring	• Communication & language • Literacy • Understanding the world CoETL – Playing & exploring
Learning experience	Share the Diwali touch-and-feel book. The book explores rangoli patterns traditionally created during Diwali. Babies can use their hands and fingers to explore the different textures and patterns, supporting their sensory development, curiosity and early exploration. As you enjoy the book together, talk about the bright colours, shapes and patterns associated with Diwali.	Join in a small group to share First Festivals, a lift-the-flap book all about Diwali. Together, explore the illustrations, lifting the flaps and talking about the celebrations, lights and traditions you can see. The story provides a lovely opportunity to introduce toddlers to the Festival of Lights while encouraging curiosity, communication and an early understanding of different cultures and celebrations.	Invite the children to join you for a joyful Diwali story. Through the colourful storytelling, children will discover the magic of Diwali and learn about friendship, kindness, sharing and the importance of celebrating together. After reading the story, invite the children to talk about their favourite part and discuss how they celebrate special occasions with their families and friends.
You will need:	• Diwali – touch-and-feel baby book	• First Festivals: Diwali: A Lift and Flap Book	• The Best Diwali Ever Book



Diwali glow

Let's explore the magic of Diwali, through colour and light.

	Babies (0-2 Years)	Toddlers (2-3 years)	Preschoolers (3-5 years)
EYFS focus area of learning	• Physical development CoETL- Creating and thinking critically	• Physical development • Expressive arts and design • Understating the world CoETL- Playing & exploring	• Physical development • Expressive arts and design CoETL- Active learning
Learning experience	Explore colourful Diwali sensory bags together. Provide sensory bags filled with brightly coloured paint, sequins, flower shapes and rangoli inspired patterns. Model and encourage babies to use their hands to squish, squeeze and move the colours and shapes inside. As babies explore, talk about the bright colours, sparkling lights and beautiful patterns associated with Diwali.	Explore Diwali with colourful sensory scarves and torches. Invite the children to discover the Festival of Lights by shining torches through, under and behind brightly coloured sensory scarves. Watch together as the light creates different colours, shadows and patterns. Encourage children to wave the scarves, move the lights and explore what happens when colours overlap. As they play, talk about the bright lights, colours and celebrations associated with Diwali.	Invite the children to create their very own diya lamps. Show the children how to mould and shape clay to make a diya. Provide examples of what traditional diyas look like and demonstrate simple techniques to help the children create their own. Once the clay has dried, invite the children to decorate their diyas using colourful paints and patterns inspired by those used during Diwali. At the end of the day, create a beautiful Diwali display showcasing the children's handmade diyas.
You will need:	• Strong zip lock sensory bags • Paints in bright Diwali inspired colours (yellow, orange, pink, purple, blue and green) • Foam or felt flower shapes • Rangoli inspired shapes (foam, card or felt circles, petals and geometric shapes)	• Colourful sensory scarves • Torches	• Child friendly air drying clay or modelling clay • Clay tools, lolly sticks or child safe modelling tools • Pictures of traditional diya lamps for inspiration • Brightly coloured paints

Happy hearts & helping hands

Shining a light on kindness, community and celebration this Diwali

	Babies (0-2 Years)	Toddlers (2-3 years)	Preschoolers (3-5 years)
EYFS focus area of learning	• Personal, social and emotional development • Physical development CoETL- Playing and exploring	• Personal, social and emotional development • Understanding the world CoETL- Creating and thinking critically	• Personal, social and emotional development • Understanding the world CoETL- Creating and thinking critically
Learning experience	Provide opportunities for babies and toddlers to explore movement and dance while listening to traditional Diwali music. Children can sway, clap, bounce and move freely, enjoying the sounds and rhythms alongside their peers and key person. Through shared experiences of music, movement and togetherness, children can begin to experience some of the joyful traditions associated with Diwali	Create a kindness paper chain together, encouraging children to add pictures, marks or simple words (the Key Person acting as their scribe) to show ways we can be kind to others. As the paper chain grows, talk about helping our friends, taking turns and using kind words. Encourage children to think about how kindness makes themselves and others feel. Celebrate how everyone has worked together to create the paper chain and discuss how Diwali is a special time when families and communities come together to celebrate. Once completed, you can use the kindness paper chains to decorate your room as part of your Diwali celebrations.	Talk with the children about kindness and the different ways we can show kindness to others. Encourage them to think about kind actions they do at home, in nursery and with their friends. Support children to create positive affirmations, with the Key Person acting as a scribe where needed and write these onto strips of paper. Children can place their affirmations inside their diya lamp (refer to Diwali glow) filling it with positive thoughts and kind words such as “I help my friends”, “I am creative”, “I am kind.” Discuss how Diwali is known as the Festival of Lights and how the light can represent kindness, positivity and goodness.
You will need:	• Traditional Diwali music • Scarves, ribbons or lightweight fabrics in bright Diwali colours - optional	• Strips of coloured paper • Glue sticks or tape • Pens, crayons or pencils	• Strips of paper • Mark making tools • Examples of positive affirmations • Diya lamps (refer to Diwali glow) – optional

Colourful creations

The crescent moon signals the start of the Eid celebrations – let's get creative and make something beautiful.

	Babies (0-2 Years)	Toddlers (2-3 years)	Preschoolers (3-5 years)
EYFS focus area of learning	• Physical development • Expressive arts and design CoETL- Playing & exploring	• Physical development • Expressive arts and design CoETL – Active learning	• Communication & language • Understanding the world • Physical development • Expressive art & design CoETL- Active learning
Learning experience	Invite babies to explore a colourful sticky-back sensory experience inspired by the vibrant colours of Diwali. Offer a large sheet of sticky-back paper alongside a selection of bright, tactile materials for babies to touch, press and investigate. Add shiny and sparkly materials, along with Diwali inspired shapes such as diyas, stars and rangoli patterns for the babies to explore as they play.	Explore Diwali colours and patterns using powder paints, you could do this in a tuff tray if you have one. Provide a selection of bright, Diwali inspired colours and invite the children to experiment with making dots, lines, swirls and simple patterns. Encourage toddlers to explore what happens when colours are mixed together and talk about the marks they create. Look at pictures of rangoli designs together, pointing out the different colours, shapes and patterns. As children create, talk about the vibrant colours and beautiful patterns often seen during Diwali celebrations.	Henna is a beautiful form of body art often used during Diwali celebrations. Provide children with images of henna designs to explore together, encouraging them to notice the different lines, dots, swirls and repeating patterns they can see. Invite children to create their own henna inspired designs using pens, pencils or crayons, encouraging them to experiment with repeating and symmetrical patterns. As they create, talk about the shapes and patterns they have chosen.
You will need:	• Sticky-back paper • Colourful paper and fabric pieces • Sparkly materials • Diwali inspired shapes, such as diyas, stars and rangoli patterns	 • Child safe powder paints • Paint mixing trays or shallow tuff tray • Paintbrushes and paint dabbers • Spoons, scoops and small containers for mixing • Pictures of colourful rangoli patterns	• Images of traditional henna designs • Paper or card • Variety of pens, pencils and crayons