

# Lesson Plan: Ollie's Diwali - A Festival of Lights and Colors

## Materials Needed

- **For Rangoli Sensory Bin:**
  - A shallow bin or baking tray
  - Uncooked rice or salt
  - Food coloring (various bright colors like pink, yellow, blue, green)
  - Vinegar (a splash per color)
  - Ziplock bags
  - Child-safe scoops, spoons, or small cups
- **For Playdough Diya:**
  - Child-safe, non-toxic playdough (store-bought or homemade, yellow or orange is great!)
  - A battery-operated, flameless tealight candle
- **For Dancing Lights:**
  - A string of battery-operated fairy lights or LED lights (ensure battery case is secure)
  - Upbeat, celebratory music (search for "Diwali songs for kids")
- **For Story Time:**
  - A simple, colorful board book about Diwali or lights (e.g., "Shubh Diwali!" by Chitra Soundar or "Diwali" by Hannah Eliot). If you don't have one, you can use picture cards of lights, colors, and families celebrating.
- **Optional:**
  - A dark blanket or pop-up tent to make a cozy, dark space for the lights.
  - A few pieces of colorful fabric or scarves for dancing.

---

## Lesson Plan Details

### Learning Objectives

By the end of this playful session, your little one will have had the opportunity to:

- **Sensory Exploration:** Engage with a variety of textures (smooth rice, soft playdough) and visual stimuli (bright colors, twinkling lights).
- **Fine Motor Skills:** Practice grasping, pinching, scooping, and molding by interacting with the sensory bin and playdough.
- **Language Development:** Be introduced to new vocabulary words like "light," "bright," "color," and "Diwali" through repetition and context.
- **Cause and Effect:** Discover that their actions (shaking a string of lights, pressing playdough) create a result.

### Lesson Flow (Follow your child's lead; total time approx. 20-30 minutes)

#### 1. Warm-Up: A Gentle Welcome to Light (2-3 minutes)

**Goal:** To calmly introduce the theme of light.

1. Find a comfortable spot on the floor. Dim the lights in the room slightly if possible.
2. Show your child the single, battery-operated tealight. Click it on and off a few times, saying "Light on... light off." Use a soft, wondrous tone.
3. Let them hold the flameless candle (with supervision). Encourage them to touch it and see that it's safe and doesn't get hot. Say simple, repetitive phrases like, "Wow, a bright light! This is a special lamp called a diya."

## **2. Activity 1: Colorful Rangoli Sensory Play (5-10 minutes)**

**Goal:** To explore color and texture while practicing fine motor skills.

*(Prep ahead: To color rice, add 1 cup of rice, 1 tsp vinegar, and a few drops of food coloring to a ziplock bag. Shake until coated, then spread on a tray to dry completely.)*

1. Place the shallow bin of colorful, dry rice on the floor on a mat or blanket for easy cleanup.
2. Sit with your child and let them explore freely at first. Let them run their hands through the rice.
3. Model how to use the scoops and cups. Pick up a scoop of rice and let it run through your fingers, saying "Look at all the beautiful colors! Pink! Yellow! Blue!"
4. Encourage them to scoop, pour, and mix the colors. Don't worry about making a pattern; the focus is on the sensory experience of the colors and textures associated with rangoli art.

## **3. Activity 2: Making a Playdough Diya Lamp (5-7 minutes)**

**Goal:** To practice molding with their hands and understand a simple representation.

1. Present a ball of yellow or orange playdough. Let your child squish it and feel its texture.
2. Show them how to roll it into a ball and then gently flatten it into a small pancake or shallow bowl shape. Guide their hands if needed, but let them lead the process.
3. Once they have a shape, say, "Let's make our own diya!" Gently press the flameless tealight into the center of the playdough.
4. Turn the light on. Celebrate your creation! "We made a diya! Look at Ollie's beautiful light." Place it somewhere nearby to admire during the next activity.

## **4. Activity 3: Dancing Lights (3-5 minutes)**

**Goal:** To encourage gross motor movement (dancing!) and visual tracking.

1. Make the room a little darker again for full effect. You can drape a blanket over two chairs to create a small, magical tent.
2. Turn on the string of fairy lights and the celebratory music.
3. Gently wave the string of lights around, letting your child watch them move. Drape them safely in a pile on the floor and let them pat at them.
4. Pick them up and dance with them! If you have scarves, you can dance with those, too. Twirl and move to the music, encouraging your child to wiggle, bounce, or clap along.

## **5. Cool-Down: Story Time Snuggles (3-5 minutes)**

**Goal:** To wind down and reinforce the concepts in a calm, cozy way.

1. Gather your little one for a cuddle. Keep the fairy lights on for a magical atmosphere.
2. Read your Diwali-themed board book. Point to the pictures of lights, families, and colors. Use simple language: "See the lights? So bright! Happy Diwali!"
3. If you don't have a book, simply talk about your fun activities. "We played with colors. We made a

diya. We danced with the lights. What a fun Diwali day."

---

## Differentiation & Safety Notes

- **For a Younger 1-Year-Old (around 12 months):** The focus should be purely sensory. They may be more interested in mouthing items, so ensure all materials are taste-safe (e.g., use a salt-based sensory filler instead of rice, and a taste-safe homemade playdough). Keep actions very simple.
- **For an Older 1-Year-Old (closer to 24 months):** They might be able to help pour the rice into the bin or attempt to make the pinch-pot shape for the diya with more intention. You can introduce more words like "rangoli," "family," and "celebrate."
- **Safety First:** ALWAYS supervise closely, especially with the sensory bin rice/salt to minimize ingestion. Ensure all battery compartments on lights are screwed shut and secure. This entire lesson is a one-on-one, fully supervised activity.

## Assessing Our Learning (Observation Guide for Parents)

This isn't a test! Just watch for signs of engagement and development. Ask yourself:

- **Engagement:** Did my child seem interested in the lights and colors? Did they willingly touch the sensory materials?
- **Fine Motor:** Did they attempt to pick up rice? Did they successfully grasp and squeeze the playdough?
- **Gross Motor:** Did they respond to the music with body movement (bouncing, swaying, smiling)?
- **Curiosity:** Did they track the moving lights with their eyes? Did they seem to notice the effect of turning the tealight on and off?

Any of these observations are a sign of a successful, enriching learning experience!