

Diwali Sparkle & Shine Sensory Play for Oliver, Ollie, and Mila

Materials Needed:

- **For Edible Rangoli:**
 - A large, shallow tray or baking sheet with a lip
 - 1 cup of plain flour or plain yogurt
 - Food coloring (bright colors like red, yellow, blue, green)
 - Small bowls for mixing
 - Colorful, non-toxic flower petals (like marigolds or roses, washed) or large, colorful pom-poms
- **For Flameless Diyas:**
 - Non-toxic playdough in various colors
 - Battery-operated LED tea lights (one for each child)
- **Optional:**
 - A soft blanket or play mat
 - Calm, festive Indian music
 - A picture book about Diwali for toddlers

Lesson Plan Details

Subject: Sensory Exploration, Fine Motor Skills, Art, Cultural Awareness

Grade Level: Toddler (1 year old)

Time Allotment: 20-25 minutes (Follow the child's lead; break into smaller segments if needed)

1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Oliver, Ollie, and Mila will:

- Explore different colors and textures through hands-on, taste-safe sensory play.
- Practice fine motor skills by attempting to grasp and place objects like flower petals or pom-poms.
- Engage with the concept of "light" by safely observing and interacting with a flameless candle.

2. Introduction: The Festival of Lights (5 minutes)

Strategy: Gentle Introduction & Music

1. Set up a comfortable space on the floor with a soft blanket. Play some gentle, instrumental Indian music in the background to set a festive mood.
2. Sit with the children and show them an LED tea light. Turn it on and off a few times.
3. Use simple, happy language: "Look, Oliver! A light! Today we are learning about Diwali, the festival of lights. It's so bright and pretty." Allow Mila and Ollie to safely touch the plastic "flame."

3. Main Activity 1: Colorful Rangoli Sensory Tray (10 minutes)

Strategy: Hands-On Sensory Exploration & Fine Motor Practice

1. **Preparation (Parent):** Before the lesson, mix small amounts of flour or yogurt with different

- food colorings in separate bowls to create vibrant, edible "paints."
2. Place the large tray on the floor. Spoon small piles of the colored flour/yogurt onto the tray, keeping the colors separate.
 3. Place a small bowl of flower petals or large pom-poms next to the tray.
 4. **Activity:** Invite the children to the tray. Say, "Look at all the beautiful colors for Diwali! Let's touch them."
 5. Encourage them to pat, squish, and mix the colors with their hands. This is about process, not product. If they try to taste it, that's okay, as the base is edible.
 6. Show them the flower petals. Model picking one up and placing it in the colored flour. "Ollie, let's add a yellow flower." Let them explore dropping, patting, and sticking the petals onto the tray.

4. Main Activity 2: Make a Playdough Diya (5-10 minutes)

Strategy: Creative Play & Fine Motor Development

1. Give each child a ball of non-toxic playdough. Show them how to squish it and flatten it into a small pancake shape. Help them form a little pinch on one side to look like a diya (a traditional oil lamp).
2. Once they have a shape, help them press a battery-operated tea light into the center.
3. Turn on the tea light and dim the lights in the room slightly for a magical effect.
4. Sing a simple song, like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," but change the words to "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Diya" or "Bright Light, Bright Light."
5. Allow the children to hold and look at their glowing creation (with supervision).

5. Closure: A Gentle Wind-Down (2-3 minutes)

Strategy: Positive Reinforcement & Connection

1. Gather together again on the blanket with your glowing diyas.
2. Give lots of praise: "Mila, you made such beautiful colors! Oliver and Ollie, what wonderful lights!"
3. End with a warm cuddle and say, "Happy Diwali!" to connect the fun activities with the name of the celebration. If you have a picture book, this is a great time to look at the bright pictures together.

Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **For Varying Attention Spans:** This lesson is designed in short blocks. If a child loses interest in one activity, move to the next or simply end the lesson. The goal is positive exposure, not completion.
- **For Developing Motor Skills:** If a child has difficulty with the pincer grasp for flower petals, use larger petals or big, fluffy pom-poms that are easier to grab with a whole hand.
- **For Sensory Sensitivity:** If a child is hesitant to touch the wet yogurt, start with the dry colored flour base first. Always allow the child to explore at their own pace without pressure.
- **Inclusivity:** This lesson introduces a cultural festival through its most universal and positive themes—light, color, and family—making it accessible and joyful for a very young learner.

Assessment (Observational)

Observe the children during play to see if the objectives were met. Look for the following:

- Did the child willingly touch or interact with the colored flour/yogurt?

- Did the child show interest in the flower petals or pom-poms, perhaps by touching or trying to pick them up?
- Did the child's eyes follow the LED light? Did they seem engaged by their glowing playdough diya?
- Most importantly: Was the child engaged, curious, and happy during the activities?