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Moon Shadows

Select a night with a full moon or a near-full moon to take your child outdoors to play by moonlight. (Check your local newspaper for when the next full moon will occur.) There is only one full moon a month, except for every few years when there are two full moons in one month. When this happens, it is called a *blue moon*.

Sit outside with your child by the light of the moon and allow your eyes to adjust to the dark. Seek out objects. What

can you see? How many objects can you view by moonlight? Can you see trees? Plants? Houses? Each other? Make a verbal list of everything visible. If you live near mountains or tall trees, enjoy watching the moon as it makes its way from behind the objects that block your view. As it rises, you might even see its glow before you see the actual moon. If clouds are present, ask your child to watch what happens each time a cloud passes over the moon. Is there a silver lining? Does the sky go from dark to light? Look for animal shapes in the clouds each time they pass over the moon.

Watch the moon as it travels across the night sky. Relax together, and let your imaginations travel to the moon and back. Make a date to sit outside together again for the next night or two, and note the difference in the time the moon rises and the difference in its shape with each passing day.

Imagine you are a nocturnal animal, just awakening after a daylong sleep. Where will you travel tonight, and what will you do? Share your adventures.

Stand facing each other in plain view. How many steps backward can you take and still see each other? Can you play catch by moonlight? Give it a try.

What objects around you create shadows in the moonlight? Search for shadows of different shapes and sizes. Make your

Help Me Understand

Q: What makes the moon glow so brightly?

A: The moon does not give off its own light like the sun does. The light we see from the moon is actually sunlight reflecting off the moon's surface.

own moon shadows with your body. Allow the moon to be your night-light and play by its illumination.

Gaze at the moon. What details of its surface can you see? Are stars visible around the moon? Why or why not?

A Moon by Another Name

Most of us know the moon by several names—the harvest moon, the full moon, the new moon. But did you know there have been many names given to the moon throughout history? Native American tribes of the northern and eastern United States gave different names to the moon in order to track the seasons and time, such as full wolf moon (January, when wolf packs are known to howl in hunger), full worm moon (March, when the earth is moist from rains and worms surface to feed the birds, inviting spring), full flower moon (May, when flowers are in abundance), and full cold moon (December, when nights are long and cold), among others.

Celebrate your own full moon each month by recognizing something important in your family's life at that time and giving the moon a name that corresponds to that event. It might be birthday moon, in honor of your child's birthday; pumpkin moon, in honor of the pumpkins you harvested in October; or lost-tooth moon, to commemorate the month your child first lost a tooth.

 *Stimulates exploration and curiosity*