

For the past few weeks the ECC children have been discovering essential questions enduring the understanding around Chanukkah.

In art we have been exploring light and darkness

What is light? What is a shadow? How can light be explored? What does it mean to “Be the light?” or to “Be the shamash”? How can we make it known to children and to our teachers that we “see their light”?

We spent a day outside finding our shadows, tracing shadows and noticing that shadows aren’t always dark they can also be colorful. We found that sometimes our shadows are tall and sometimes they can be quite small and noticed that whenever there are shadows, there is also light.

This past week the ECC children explored with dreidels, darkness and clay. Chanukkah is a holiday that we celebrate when the sun goes down and I wanted to give the children a sense of the season where little bits of light were shining on our space creating a cozy mood with festive music playing. I started the lesson by reading the book “The Ball of Clay that Rolled Away” a story about a ball of clay that did not want to become a dreidel or mezuzah or kiddish cup, it just wanted to be itself. We sang I have a little dreidel, I made it out of clay.... and then I gave each child a ball of clay and I asked them to give it a grin- just like the little girl in the story, and see what comes out of their clay. We had dreidels, craft sticks and jewels out to inspire. The children were enamored by the materials and worked with focus and joy until it was time to move on.

Natural clay is such a soothing material for children to work with. When using clay, children are building skills in language development, problem-solving, fine and gross motor development, social skills, mathematical concepts (i.e. size and weight), and the ability to practice and process theories.

During the week of Chanukkah we will have many more opportunities to explore the big ideas of the holiday. We will be rededicating some of our spaces for this exploration and focusing on the concept of bravery and miracles. How can we be helpers like the shamash and share our light with our entire community. You can do this at home too!

**Wishing you all light and joy this Chanukkah,
Malka Wolman**

















