Essential Oils
Essential oils are wonderful for children! Chamomile and lavender have calming properties, peppermint wakes up the mind and refreshes, eucalyptus can help calm muscle tension, and jasmine is a mood booster. Mix a few drops with water in a spray bottle and use whenever you or your child need a pick-me-up!

Texture tray
Collect different texture materials, like sandpaper, silk, denim, or faux fur to create a texture tray for exploration. This activity can help promote sensory exploration for infants, toddlers, or your sensory-sensitive child.

Shadow puppets
Using a flashlight or a very bright lamp, use your hands, fingers, or make puppets to cast shadows on the walls. Create a story with your puppets! This is a great fine motor activity.

Make your own lite-brite!
Find a large wine rack, one where the holes are not tilted but perfect straight, or, using a large sheet of wood or firm foam board, cut out circles just slightly larger than a normal plastic water bottle. Collect water bottles of the same size and fill them with water and food coloring. Attach your circle board/wine rack to a firm upright area, and let the fun begin!

For your infant and young toddler

Take a sensory walk
Explore your neighborhood with you child and point out the sights, smells, colors, textures, and (if possible) tastes. Offer your child descriptive words. If they are old enough, encourage them to offer their own descriptive words as well. Ask open ended questions and offer them space to give their own thoughts. Set aside a lot of time for this walk and take your time!

Cut outs on the wall
Cut out different animals, tape them to your wall, turn the lights off, and use a flashlight to shine light on each animal. Ask your child what each animal is or provide them with the answer. Give them a turn with the flashlight too!

Light jars
Fill a plastic, snap-lid jar with battery operated twinkle lights and offer to your child for exploration and investigation. If you can find lights that change color or pattern/pace, see which color and pace of twinkle intrigues your child most!

Stargazing box
Find a large cardboard box, and turn the box so the opening can be crawled in and out of. Cut holes in the top of the box’s opening, and poke twinkle lights through the holes. Your non-mobile child can lay inside the box and look up. Your mobile child can crawl in and out for their own stargazing experience.
**Soda bottle lantern**
*(age 3-9)*

**What you’ll need:**
- Recycled 2-liter plastic soda bottle
- Sharp scissors
- Tissue paper
- White glue mixed with water
- Hole punch
- Pipe cleaner
- Beads
- Paint brush
- Flameless tea-light

**What to do:**
1. Draw a line around middle to upper middle of the plastic bottle
2. Cut along this line, save the bottom portion of the bottle
3. Mix the paste—3 parts white school glue and 1-part warm water, mix together, the goal is to have paste that is a little watery. Paint the paste around the entire bottle.
4. Cut your tissue paper into small squares or shapes of your choice, attach the tissue paper pieces to your sticky bottle
5. Go over the tissue paper with your glue mixture, allow to dry
6. After the glue has dried, hole punch the top edge, one punch on each side
7. Optional: decorate your pipe cleaner handle with beads!
8. Loop your pipe cleaner through each hole punch to create a handle for your lantern
9. Add a flameless tea candle at the bottom to use as a night light!

**Tip:** Read *Bear Feels Scared* by Karma Wilson to bring the nightlight/lantern theme together.

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**Lava lamp bags**
*(age 2-6)*

**What you’ll need:**
- Gallon-size freezer bags
- Baby oil or cooking oil
- Homemade neon water colors (material for this are hot water and glow-in-the-dark or fluorescent paint—mix together until paint dissolves into the water)
- Clear packaging tape

**What to do:**
1. Fill each bag with 1/4-1/3 of a cup of baby oil
2. Mix in 1-4 tablespoons of neon water color
3. Seal the bags and let the fun begin!

**Tip:** If you are using glow-in-the-dark paint, the paint will need to charge near a light-source. Flashlights are a fun and safe way to charge the paint. You can also use a light table for further exploration.

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**Creating light patterns with a CD**
*(age 18 months-5)*

**What you’ll need:**
- Old CD
- Paper
- Scissors
- Tape
- Pencil
- Sunny day!

**What to do:**
1. Find an area of your house or outdoors to reflect light upon, you can also use a large white poster board
2. Use the shiny side of the CD and the sunlight to reflect light onto your blank surface—notice the colors! Do you see a rainbow? Can you create other shapes?
3. Use your CD and trace CD-sized circles onto your paper, cut these circles out
4. Cut out different shapes in your circles, like what you’d do when making paper snowflakes
5. Tape the circles to the shiny side of your CD
6. Use the same steps above to reflect light off your CDs now, with the paper taped to them! Do you notice new shapes and circles?

**What it all represents:**
This is a great activity for all ages and stages, offer your children new vocabulary when observing colors and shapes. Extend the activity by predicting what the shapes would look like at night using a flashlight, spin the CDs and notice the shapes around the room.

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**Reading Connections**

*Light: Shadows, Mirrors, and Rainbows* by Natalie M. Rosinsky
*Oscar and the Moth* by Geoff Waring
*The Rainbow Book* by Kate Ohrt