

Discover the dark with Éanna and Cork City Council's Night Time Economy



Information piece for Children

Why We Need Darkness in some areas in the city

Have you ever looked out your window at night and noticed how bright the lights can be? Street lights shine, signs glow, and buildings and gardens twinkle—even when the stars are trying to come out. While the city is never going to get really dark as we do light in some areas, we also need darkness in other areas. In fact, darkness is very important in some areas. Not just for people, but for animals and nature too.

Darkness is bedtime for the world

Just like you need to sleep to grow strong and healthy, animals need sleep too. Owls, bats, foxes, and even tiny insects wake up *only* when it's dark. They hunt, explore, and talk to each other with squeaks, hoots, or silent wings. But when the areas that they live in stay too bright at night, these animals can get confused. Some move away, to live in areas that are dark at night.

Wildlife needs shadows to hide

Think about a hedgehog sneaking through the grass or a frog hopping near a pond. They feel safe in the dark because they can hide from danger. If there are too many lights, they have nowhere to go—and that's not fair to them.

Too much light is like a giant flashlight

Imagine someone shining a flashlight in your eyes when you're trying to sleep. Not fun, right? That's how it feels for some animals. Bright lights can stop birds from flying the right way or confuse insects that are important to our eco-system.

We need darkness to protect our wild neighbours

By turning off extra lights and letting parts of the city go dark at night, we help nature rest and nocturnal animals do their thing. Darkness helps the stars shine, lets animals be animals, and keeps the balance of our beautiful world.

So, should you be afraid of the dark?

Not at all. The dark is *magical*. It's when the moon comes out to glow, when animals sing their secret songs, and when your dreams get to play. The dark is a cozy, important blanket for the Earth—and you're helping wildlife just by letting it be.



Why the City Needs Darkness in some spaces



Word	What It Means
Darkness	When there is no light; nighttime when the sky is dark.
Wildlife	Animals and plants that live in nature, not in homes or buildings.
City lights	Bright lights from buildings, streets, and signs in a town or city.
Nocturnal	Animals that sleep during the day and come out at night (like owls and bats!).
Eco-system	Our community of living things that interact with each other and their environment.
Rest	To sleep or take a break, so your body and brain can feel better.
Habitat	The place where an animal or plant lives and feels safe.
Pollution	Something harmful in nature—light pollution means too much light at night.
Explore	To look around and discover new places.
Glow	To shine gently, like the moon or fireflies.
Safe	Being protected from harm or danger—what darkness gives to some wild animals.

Resources for Parents / Guardians / Teachers -

Reading Activity: “Why the City Needs Darkness”



Light, Light Everywhere!

Read aloud:

Have you noticed that your area doesn’t get very dark at night? Streetlights glow, windows shine, and gardens lights glow. But guess what? Too much light isn’t always a good thing. Some animals get lost. Some plants don’t grow right. Even we can get tired when there’s too much light.

Ask:

- Have you ever seen the stars better when you’re far from the city?
- How does it feel when your room is too bright at bedtime?



Nighttime Is Nature's Time

Read aloud:

Many animals love the night. Bats fly, owls hoot, and foxes tiptoe in the dark. But when your area has too many lights, they don't know what to do. They might hide. Or they might leave.

And that means we lose a little bit of wild magic.

Ask:

- Can you name an animal that's awake at night?
- Why might they be scared of bright lights?



Darkness Is a Gift

Read aloud:

Darkness isn't scary—it's helpful. It tells nocturnal animals it's time to explore and others it's time to rest. It helps birds fly the right way. It even helps flowers bloom at the right time. When we turn off extra lights, we help the Earth rest.

Ask:

- How do you feel about the dark now?
- What are some good reasons to keep the city darker at night?

Be a Darkness Hero

Read aloud:

You can be a hero for animals and plants. Ask your family to turn off lights when they're not needed. Draw your curtains at night to block out extra light. And tell others how important darkness is.

Ask:

- What's one small thing you could do to help nature sleep at night?
- How could your class help make your neighbourhood more wildlife-friendly?

Drawing Exercise - Draw the Night

Instructions:

1. Draw your area during the night *with* too many lights. What do you think the animals feel like?
2. Now draw your area, but much darker—with cozy windows, starry skies, and animals feeling safe.
3. Share your pictures with the class and talk about the differences.

