



Obstacle Course



An obstacle course is a fun and easy way to help children stay active and promote their development of gross motor skills. It can be created both indoors or outdoors, with as little or as many obstacles as you would like.

What you will need:

- Rope or string to hop over and back
- Table with a blanket over it to create a tunnel
- A laundry basket/ box to toss balls or small items into
- A row of chairs to crawl under or over
- A ball to bounce
- Old clothes/shoes to dress-up in and then take them off
- Egg/potato to balance on a spoon and weave your way through obstacles
- Cushions place in a row and jump from one to another
- Yourself - Tumble/somersault in an open area, jumping jack on the spot



What is my child learning?

When you make a physical activity fun, children are more likely to engage fully and participate. Obstacle courses help children stay physical active without them necessarily seeing it as a physical activity.

Obstacle courses support children's strength and balance and motor skills (fine and gross motor) through running, jumping and throwing. As well as supporting physical development obstacle courses can help children with memory and problem solving by taking in and processing sequencing information and actions.

Obstacle courses can be a way to introduce new language and understanding of concepts by including questions such as:

- *Let's make one thing that you can go over and one thing you can go under?*
- *I wonder what would happen if we went backwards?*
- *What if we hopped?*

How do I keep this interesting?

- Ask the children to come up with a list of rules, for example, when they crawl through a tunnel they need to sing their ABCs or when they walk along the cushions they need to clap their hands every time. Adding rules and being open to adjusting and changing them adds a mental challenge to the physical activity.
- Add a timer to the obstacle course, this will increase your child's focus, and they can work to better their time each try.

Set up an obstacle course together using any variety or combination of the obstacle course ideas and use as many or as little as you like. Once assembled either the adult or an older child should demonstrate what to do.

Children can also create the obstacle course by themselves, allow them to use their imagination with objects, toys or household items to create new challenges.

Take into consideration mixed ages and think about an item can be used in an easier way for younger children and in a more challenging way for older children.

