

## Happy Trails Obstacle Course

Let's take a hike through the forest and end up at our favorite meadow!

Ages: 3 and up

### Before You Start:

1. Make a wavy path on the ground using one Rope. Place 3 to 4 Hop-Around Steps on sides of Rope.
2. Thread one Pole horizontally through medium or high level holes in two Cones to make a crossbar for stepping over.
3. Place two Ropes across the path in a "V-shape."
4. Place 6 Spot Markers 6 to 12 inches apart from each other in zigzag pattern.
5. Make a pathway by threading one Pole vertically in two Cones and spacing another one just like it (one Pole vertically in two Cones) parallel to it and 2 to 3 feet apart.
6. Use remaining Hop-Around Steps to make one large circle.

### Let's Get Started!

1. Trail Walking. Children walk heel-toe or side step across the wavy rope. ("Be careful of those slippery rocks!")
2. Mountain Climbing. Children step over the high bar.
3. Leap the Creek. Children jump or leap across the width of the two ropes.
4. Stone Stepping. Children leap from one spot to the next. ("Steady now, keep your balance and don't fall!")
5. Swimming Upstream. Children swim in the lake (area between two poles) and move arms like swimming.
6. Meadow. Congratulations, you made it! Kick back in the meadow (inside of the circle created by the hop around steps) and do some cloud watching!

## Circus Obstacle Course

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, welcome to the greatest show on earth! See amazing animals, watch circus performers attempt daring feats, and laugh with the silly clowns!

Ages: 3 and up

### Before You Start:

1. Place one Rope straight ahead and lengthwise on the ground. Place a Pole at the "start" end of the rope.
2. Make a tunnel with 2 Cones and 1 large Hoop (lay 2 Cones on side and across from each other. Insert Hoop into top notch).
3. Place 6 to 8 Hop-Around Steps in a row four feet apart from each other to make a pathway for children to travel around and through in a zigzag pattern. Place 1 Jump Rope at the "start" of the path.
4. Place two Poles vertically on ground 6 to 8 feet apart and parallel to each other.
5. Place 6 Spot Markers 6 to 12 inches apart from each other in zigzag pattern.
6. Place 1 large Hoop in front of a cone. Inside the large hoop, place 1 to 3 small Hoops.

### Let's Get Started!

1. Tightrope Walker. Children pick up pole, hold it horizontally in both hands, and walk heel-toe on top of the rope, pretending to be a tightrope walker.
2. Lion Creep Through Hoop of Fire. Children creep on hands and knees through the hoop of fire. ("Let me hear your ferocious roars!")
3. Pony Riders. One child puts rope around waist (horse), while another child holds the ends of the rope in each hand (rider). On signal from rider, the horse gallops around and through the cones.
4. Performing Bears. Children bend forward and touch floor with both hands. Children will walk forward by moving hand and foot on the same side of the body together. Then, the hand and foot from the other side of the body move forward and together. Children bear walk between the two poles.
5. Silly Tricky Clowns. Children jump with two feet or hop on one foot from one spot to the next.
6. When they come to the large hoop, children step inside and toss the small hoops one at a time around the cone.

# OBSTACLE COURSE ACTIVITY GUIDE

Obstacle courses are like carnivals of movement to children. They invite, they challenge and they satisfy while always leaving children begging, "Can we do it again? Can we do it again?" In this guide you'll find some fun "set up" ideas to get you started. As you'll discover, anything and everything can be a part of an obstacle course—you're only limited by your own imagination and creativity!

## Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

Playing and participating in the activities and with the equipment promotes and develops...

1. Overall physical fitness. Obstacle courses promote cardiovascular endurance, flexibility, muscular strength and endurance.
2. Gross motor development. Obstacle courses promote using the large muscles of the arms, legs and trunk.
3. Bilateral coordination. Obstacle courses promote using both sides of the body at the same time in unison as in jumping.
4. Perceptual motor development. Obstacle courses promote the ability to receive, interpret, and respond successfully to sensory information.
5. Social development. Obstacle courses promote acquisition of skills that enable children to react and interact with others as they mature and begin to understand the point of view of others.
6. Agility. Obstacle courses promote quick, easy, lively movements.
7. Coordination. Obstacle courses promote parts of the body moving smoothly together.
8. Sequencing. Obstacle courses promote the ability to arrange and follow a series of steps to be followed.
9. Eye-hand coordination. Obstacle courses promote eyes and hands working together smoothly to meet a challenge.
10. Eye-foot coordination. Obstacle courses promote eyes and feet working together smoothly to meet a challenge.
11. Spatial awareness. Obstacle courses promote coordinated movement in relationship to other objects in the environment.
12. Directionality. Obstacle courses promote the inner sense and knowledge of where things are in relation to the body.
13. Laterality. Obstacle courses promote the ability to understand the differences between right and left and being able to control the two sides of the body independently and together.
14. Balance. Obstacle courses promote being able to hold the position of the body through the interaction of muscles working together (maintaining body equilibrium) whether the body is stationary (static balance) or moving (dynamic balance).
15. Cooperation and teamwork. Obstacle courses promote 2 or more people working and playing together rather than against one another, just for the fun of it.
16. Fun. Obstacle courses promote playful actions providing amusement and enjoyment.
17. Listening skills. Obstacle courses promote the ability to follow verbal directions.
18. Self-Esteem. Obstacle courses promote confidence and satisfaction or pride in oneself.

## Familiarizing Yourself With The Equipment

Before starting play with any pieces of the equipment included, become familiar with what's in this set.

The Obstacle Course Activity Kit includes

6 Traffic Signs

4 48" Poles

15 Hoops (5 each size: 14", 18", 25")

30 Hop-Around Steps

6 9-inch Spot Markers

3 Jump Ropes

6 Cones (with holes)

**Traffic Signs:** 10-inch plastic traffic signs with 10-inch pole handles.

**Hop Around Steps:** Colorful polyethylene round domes stacked on a stand.

**Cones:** 12-inch durable plastic cones, with slots at the top for holding hoops and 12 holes for holding poles.

**Poles:** 48-inch hollow plastic poles with capped ends.

**Spot Markers:** 9-inch vinyl discs.

**Hoops:** Super durable plastic hoops that bend but never kink.

**Ropes:** 7-inch braided nylon ropes that are knotted on each end.

An obstacle course is an arrangement of physical challenges or tasks, using simple equipment, laid out in a circle or circuit (a line or route around an area). This kit includes a variety of equipment that can be set up by the teacher or the children inside or outside. Spread the obstacle course out as much as possible. Moving around, over, under and through an obstacle course promotes motor planning abilities, physical skills, and movement concepts. Depending on the age of the children, start with 4 to 6 tasks or events that make a simple, yet challenging, course. Adapt, add and change the course to fit your location and the abilities of the children.

Before children attempt any obstacle course, ask them to stand shoulder-to-shoulder on the edge of the course and watch as you or a child demonstrate the “how-to’s” of the course (verbally describe directions for each task or event, i.e. “Jump over the pole and into the hoop,” etc.). Next, line up everybody behind each other at the start of the course and tell them to follow the leader through the course while you motivate them and describe the physical challenges they are performing. Emphasize that the obstacle course is not a race and they should not speed through the activities. Stress to the children to keep some space between them. If a traffic jam does occur, tell the children to please wait patiently and not to rush the performers.

## COURSES

### Adventure Obstacle Course

*Refer to the handy, reproducible course diagrams for each course!*

This obstacle course is an adventure because of the number of obstacles in the way and the “perilous dangers” children need to avoid (which you make up and tell with great fanfare) as they go through the course. The more interesting and exciting the story, the more the children will love it!

Ages: 3 and up

#### Before You Start:

1. Thread one Pole horizontally through lower level holes in two Cones to make a crossbar for jumping over. Place one medium size Hoop on the ground on the other side of the pole for children to jump into.
2. Place 4 Hoops in a hopscotch pattern (one large Hoop, then two medium-sized Hoops side by side, then one large Hoop).
3. Place one rope lengthwise on the ground.
4. Place 4 to 6 Spot Markers in a row 6 to 12 inches apart from each other.
5. Make a tunnel with 4 Cones and 2 large Hoops (lay 2 Cones on their sides and across from each other, insert Hoop into top notch. Duplicate with the other 2 Cones and the Hoop).
6. Place 4 to 6 Hop-Around Steps in a row, four feet apart from each other to make a pathway for children to travel around and through in a zigzag pattern.
7. Place stand of remaining Hop-Around steps several feet away from the zigzag path. Children are to run to it and then run back to the start.

#### Let’s Get Started!

1. Start. Children jump over the bar and land with two feet in the hoop. (“Don’t touch the bar; it’s on fire and hot!”)
2. Jumping Pattern. Jump with two feet into the first hoop; straddle jump into the hoops placed side by side; end with two feet together again in the last hoop.
3. Bridge Walk. Walk heel-toe from one end of the rope to the other. (“Be careful not to fall into the bottomless swamp!”)
4. Helpful Turtles. Children leap from one spot marker (shells of turtles) to the next as they travel on their adventure. (“Don’t miss and land in the quicksand!”)
5. Tunnel Of No Return. Creep through the hoop tunnel on hands and knees. (“Keep moving forward and don’t get lost!”)
6. Perilous Path. Walk in a zigzag pattern around and through the hop around steps. (“Sh-h-h, don’t wake the hungry alligators.”)
7. Finish. Run to the finish marker (the pole stacked with hop around steps) and touch it. “Hooray, you’re a survivor!”

### Animals On the Move Obstacle Course

Children have a great affinity with animals and enjoy moving and imitating them. This obstacle course provides children with opportunities to learn and practice animal walks.

Ages: 3 and up

#### Before You Start:

1. Make a tunnel with 4 Cones and 2 large Hoops (lay 2 Cones on side and insert Hoop into top notch across from each other. Duplicate with the other 2 Cones and Hoop). Space “hoop tunnels” 3 to 4 feet apart from each other.
2. Place 6 Spot Markers in a vertical row.
3. Make a wavy path using 20-30 Hop-Around steps. Place half of them in an S-shaped line and the other half four to six feet across and parallel in an S-shaped line.
4. Thread one Pole horizontally through top or middle holes in two Cones to make a crossbar to go under.
5. Place 5 small Hoops in a zigzag pattern, touching each other.
6. Place one Rope lengthwise on the ground.

#### Let’s Get Started!

1. Rabbit Jump into the rabbit hole. Children squat down, knees apart, with hands on floor between knees. To move forward, reach with both hands through hoop, then bring both feet through hoop to outside of hands.
2. Frog Jump from lily pad to lily pad. Children squat down, knees apart, with hands on floor between knees. Child “springs” forward with hands and feet leaving the floor at the same time to the next spot marker or lily pad.
3. Dog Walk. Hands on floor; arms and legs bent slightly. Move like a puppy on all fours along the path.
4. Crab Walk. Children sit on floor, reach hands back and behind hips. Raise bottom off ground by bridging with feet and hands. Try to keep your back straight; don’t let your hips sag. Crab walk under the bar.
5. Kangaroo Jump. Arms close to chest, hands facing forward, palms down. Jump on 2 feet with knees together. Jump from hoop to hoop.
6. Elephant Walk. Bend forward, clasp hands together to make a trunk. Put one foot on each side of the rope. Walk slowly keeping legs straight, and swinging your trunk side to side as you walk the length of the rope.

### Go Car Go Obstacle Course

Be a good driver and follow the rules of the road. If you are in an “accident,” apologize to the other driver, then leave the course to make a “pit stop,” and return to the roadway when you’ve become a better driver!

Ages: 3 and up

#### Before You Start:

1. Put GO Traffic Sign in hole on top of a Cone. Set out all hoops in a row, on the ground, next to the GO Traffic Sign.
2. Place two ropes across the path, parallel to each other, 3 to 4 feet apart. Put the yellow SCHOOL CROSSING Sign in hole on top of a cone. Set it in front of the ropes.
3. Place 6 spot markers in a row 6-12 inches apart from each other. Put the yellow SLOW Sign in hole in top of a Cone. Place it near the front of the spot markers.
4. Stack hop around steps ten domes high, making a wall with the 30 domes. Put the DO NOT ENTER Sign in hole in top of Cone. Set it in front of the wall.
5. Since drivers cannot proceed forward, set up this next part to the left or right of the dome wall. Place two Poles end to end on ground horizontally and 6 - 8 feet apart and parallel to another set of two Poles placed end to end. Put the ONEWAY Sign in hole of top of a Cone and place at front of poles with arrow facing forward.
6. Put STOP Traffic Sign in hole on top of a cone.

#### Let’s Get Started!

1. GO. Children stand in hoop and pull it up, holding it at waist level or they can hold in with two hands in front of their body. (“Pretend that the hoop is your car and you are the driver. Start your engines!”)
2. SCHOOL CROSSING. Other children or adults can walk in the “crosswalk” delineated by the two ropes. Drivers must stop to let people walk to the other side. If no one is in the crosswalk, drivers can proceed forward.
3. SLOW. Children are to jump from one spot to the next without letting go of their hoop. (“Roadwork in progress. It’s a bumpy road.”)
4. DO NOT ENTER. Drivers must turn as there is only one way to go. (“The road is blocked! It looks like there was a rock slide!”)
5. ONEWAY. Drivers travel fast or slow along this stretch of the road (walk, jog, run, jump, hop, gallop, skip, etc.)
6. STOP. “We’ve come to the end of our journey. Let’s do it again!”