



# Obstacle Course, of Course



## Intended Ages

one year and older

## Brain Connections

problem solving, creative thinking

## Materials Needed

- physical items to create an obstacle course, such as chairs, tumble mat, sheet over chairs to create tunnel, hoops to crawl/jump through, ladder, step stool, etc.

Never underestimate the value of creating challenging obstacle courses for children of all ages. Demonstrating concepts like over and under, around and through, up and down, inside and outside can be experienced through climbing courses.

Create an obstacle course for children of diverse skills and abilities to navigate. The ages of the children should determine how complex you make the course. While children navigate the course, they work on problem solving, motor skills, and team building, depending on the complexity of the course. The more cognitively challenging, the more chances there are for rehearsal of these skills. Making the course physically challenging can also provide exercise and gross-motor development.

## Extension Activities

You could have schoolagers create their own course that requires teamwork: they all successfully complete the course, or they all have to start over.

## Multisensory Explorations

Try to add novelty to the experience by having children go through the course silently or use blindfolds. Once finished, have the group debrief to talk about the parts they liked best or what the hardest challenges were.

## Diversity Adaptations

Not all children have the same physical abilities as other children the same age, whether they have physical challenges or not. Some children will have more defined upper body strength or fine-motor skills—obstacle courses can help children build on their existing skills and develop new strengths as well. If you have a child who is differently-abled, be mindful about creating an obstacle course that could be adapted for a child in a wheelchair or other adaptive device. You could also create a course that demonstrates a different geographical location, such as a desert or a jungle. Depending on how messy you want to get, you could use a baby pool to hold a layer of sand to create a sand pit, and you could have ropes or ribbons suspended (from the ceiling, taped to the bottom of a table or chair, etc.) that children walk or crawl through to create a feeling of a jungle or rain forest. Add music to help create the sensory feeling of another place. You could use sounds like wind blowing in the desert or tropical animals chattering in the rain forest.