

Messy obstacle course!

Create a messy obstacle course to encourage children to understand the 'feel good factor' of being active.

Learning aims

- Gain an awareness of the effects of physical exercise on the body
- Gain an understanding of how to keep healthy
- Learn how to negotiate a course
- Learn how to move their body in different ways
- Walk, run, crawl, climb
- Gain control of fine and gross motor muscles and skills
- Develop social skills
- Follow instructions
- Learn how to be safe and keep themselves safe
- Learn how to be aware of what they can do
- Work together with others
- Learn how to be physically active.



Resources

For example:

You'll need a variety of resources to create an obstacle course. You can have this indoors or outdoors according to your own children, space, weather etc.

A range of large equipment:

- Climbing structure/frame
- Slide
- Tyres
- Plastic sheet
- Large net (to crawl under/through)
- Tunnel
- Paddling pool
- Balance beams/logs
- Water tray/sand tray/Tuff Spot tray
- Stepping stones
- Foam/ball pit.

A range of small equipment:

- Hoops
- Bean bags
- Skipping ropes
- Buckets/small containers.

'Messy' resources:

- Water
- Shaving foam
- Bubble bath
- Mud
- Clay
- Sand.



Activity outline

- Organise an event and invite families to join in the fun, or include this activity in your weekly plans for children
- Create an obstacle course using a range of different resources that provide opportunities and activities to use all the major muscle groups e.g. for arms and legs, a trunk for climbing, balancing and crawling
- Encourage children to help plan the course
 - Support them to consider how to use the equipment safely
- Use descriptive language to explain to the children about the actions they will perform to complete the course e.g. run, walk, slide, crawl
- Allow the children as much space and freedom as possible to move their bodies in different ways
- Encourage energetic activities such as running and skipping
- Encourage children to think about and work out how they will negotiate the course
- Enhance the course to make it 'messy'! For example:
 - Water or mud on the slide
 - Shaving foam on a plastic sheet to crawl through
 - Bubble bath in a paddling pool/Tuff Spot tray
 - Muddy area
 - Catch water in a bucket
- Set rules to help the children learn how to follow instructions and to use the course safely
- Give the children lots of praise and encouragement and help them to recognise the 'feel good factor' of being active. You could even organise some prizes, all healthy ones of course!

Extending the activity

- Provide healthy snacks and drinks such as slices of melon, fruit smoothies and plenty of water!
- Hold a 'healthy food' raffle or 'being active' raffle. Prizes could include fruit and vegetable hampers, a pair of skipping ropes, balls etc
- Create a 'keeping healthy' stand to promote the benefits of an active lifestyle and healthy diet
- Hold a family fun day and invite parents along to join in with the fun and to work in partnership with parents to promote the benefits of risky play.



Babies and younger children

Support babies to be physically active by:

- Giving plenty of opportunity for 'tummy time'
- Encouraging them to reach out towards/grab objects that capture their attention
- Reducing the time spent in bouncers, walking aids, highchairs and buggies which can restrict movement.

Health and safety

- Remember to consider each child's age/stage of development when planning the course
- Create different courses according to age/stage and ability so all children can join in while keeping safe
- Ensure the activity is well supervised as water, mud and foam can become very slippery!
- Ensure children are wearing sun cream and are kept well hydrated on warm sunny days
- Avoid the hottest part of the day.