

Gross Motor Skills - Obstacle Course

An obstacle course will provide a variety of activities to promote motor skills, moving, crawling, jumping, etc.

Children with a physical disability may require any aid to support mobility, e.g. crutches, sticks, walking frame or wheelchair. It would be advisable to liaise with the child's physiotherapist for specific advice about the child's abilities.

Resources:

Outside or indoors using a large play space
Variety of floor surfaces i.e. bubble wrap, cardboard, cobbles, concrete playground, cushions, grass, paper, pavement, soil, stones.
Large apparatus appropriate to the children's level of development, e.g. bean bag, ball, tunnel.



What to do:

Set up an obstacle course in a large circle, use a mixture of equipment to provide opportunities to crawl, walk, hop or jump.

Demonstrate how you would like the child to use the equipment and how to move over a variety of surfaces e.g. cobbles, grass, paper, pavement.

Ask a child to copy you. When the child has completed the circuit, ask a second child to go through the obstacle course.

Whilst the child is moving describe the actions that they are doing e.g. crawling, jumping, rolling, stepping, walking. Talk about the equipment and the surfaces as the child moves.

Extension activities:

The adult encourages the child to try out different movements with specific aims e.g. jump in the hoop or in a painted square on pavement.

Encourage the children to describe what they're doing e.g. "go down the slide", "throw the ball".

Encourage the children to run between two objects.

For older children, the adult could set up a more challenging obstacle course.

Encourage the child to complete an action, e.g. "catch a ball" (varying sizes) thrown by an adult. Make sure this activity is completed before giving the next instruction, e.g. "run to the treasure chest", followed by "go through the tunnel".

Top Tips:

Circuits could include 4 to 6 activities; these could be numbered from 1 to 6.

Encourage the children to go around in a clockwise direction.

Instructions should be simple, relevant and language consistent.

Observe how the child moves - judge when to provide or reduce support.

Provide opportunities for repetition as this will help develop skills.

Try changing only one element of the obstacle course at a time, this will help to consolidate skills and give the child's confidence to try new things.