

Environmental Education: Active Transportation

Backyard Adventure Course



Background Information

Data from a 2016 survey revealed that almost half (47%) of the students in our region are being driven to/from school. Active transportation (walking, cycling, etc.) is a great way to develop physical literacy in children of all ages. Active transportation helps build a child's physical competencies by incorporating fundamental movement skills --such as running, wheeling, and balancing – while also building their confidence through being able to move independently while connecting with their neighbourhood. Active transportation also provides many mental health benefits and creates opportunities for children to take breaks and socialize with others away from screens.

Everyday can be a new adventure when you choose to use active transportation. Even if your daily route stays the same – the world around is constantly changing! Making the choice to walk and wheel is beneficial for our physical and mental health, as well as the environment. Each trip completed using active travel reduces traffic emissions and congestion, creating cleaner air and safer streets.

Focus of this lesson

Playing outside is a fun way to keep our minds and bodies healthy, while we maintain a safe distance. In this activity, we're challenging kids and their families to make their own obstacle course using everyday materials.

The lesson will ask children to think of different body movements such as running, balancing, and jumping to create different obstacles that will use these actions. Kids will also practice route planning and mapping skillsets by drawing their obstacle course and labeling the route they have to take to complete it.

Activity Types in this lesson

1. Warm-Up
 - Body Movement Brainstorming
 - Gathering Materials
2. Hands-On
 - Planning your Obstacle Course Route
 - Building and testing out your course
3. Expand and Connect
 - Guess and Test

Warm-Up

Body Movement Brainstorm

Start this exercise by brainstorming at least 3 different ways you can move your body to practice the following physical skills.

To help you, we've included some examples below:

Balancing	Hopping	Jumping	Running
1. <i>Walking on a tight-rope</i>	1. <i>Hopping on one foot</i>	1. <i>Jumping over a hurdle</i>	1. <i>Relay Running</i>
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
Throwing	Catching	Dodging	Skipping
1. <i>Throwing a ball at a target</i>	1. <i>Catching a ball bare handed</i>	1. <i>Weaving through a swing set</i>	1. <i>Double side swing and jump</i>
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.

Hands On

Gathering Materials

Collect objects to assemble your own obstacle course in your backyard, driveway, or even your living room. Be sure to ask an adult for permission when needed. Some ideas for materials include:

- Skipping Ropes
- Chalk
- Hula Hoops
- Bean Bags/Socks/Balls
- Cones/Cans of food
- Baskets and Containers
- Bike, rollerblades, scooter

Planning your Route and Building your Obstacle Course

Now, it's time to get creative! Look back to your brainstorming table and think of different obstacles you can create using your materials. Try to find a way to have each skill (throwing, catching, balancing etc.) in your obstacle course.

Below are some examples of different obstacles to help you create your own obstacle course:

- *Hopping* – Draw a hopscotch with chalk
- *Running* – Run a lap around your obstacle course
- *Balancing* - Make an S-shape with a skipping rope and walk the line
- *Throwing* - Score a basket
- *Catching* – Catch a ball with your opposite hand
- *Dodging* – Draw two parallel lines and zig-zag jump from side to side
- *Skipping* – Skip 10 times in a row
- *Jumping* – Frog-jump to the finish line

Draw a map of your obstacle course and label the different obstacles. Plan your route through the course and label it on the map using an arrow.



Now... test out your obstacle course!

Expand and Connect

Route planning is an important part of any journey and can make active travel much easier, safer, and more fun! Figuring out the safest route will make your trip more comfortable and can help you discover new trails and paths in your community.

An important part of route planning is understanding how long it will take to make the trip. For example, knowing how long you expect to travel can allow you to make safe choices by bringing along appropriate clothing and lights to be seen in the dark. Using the quick “Guess and Test” method will help children gain independence and better time management skills. Consider having your child participate in route planning “Guess and Test” checks when using active travel to school and any other destination.

Try your own “Guess and Test” using the obstacle course you just created.

Guess how long it will take for you to complete the course and then have a partner time you.

1. My guess for how long it will take me to travel through my course is: _____ minutes. To travel through my obstacle course, I am going to use:



2. It actually took me _____ minutes, which compared to my first guess is:

MORE TIME

LESS TIME

ABOUT THE SAME TIME