

# Chalk Obstacle Course



The endless energy and love for outdoor play that the children demonstrate on a daily basis had me wondering how I could introduce our Pre-kindergarten children to outdoor activities that utilise and develop gross motor skills. I also wanted to introduce the children to activities that require them to follow multi-step instructions and recognise that symbols and signs can represent instructions. I introduced this concept by having the chalk shapes on the ground each represent a different movement.

Children from birth to 5 years old are rapidly developing gross motor skills. Between the ages of 2 - 4 years old, children are routinely walking on balancing beams, jumping (single and consecutively), standing on one foot, and hopping are all movements that can be practiced and developed.

Children learn best through play and by allowing the children to explore and develop these movements through a play based activity such as an obstacle course, we not only helped them develop gross motor skills, but also encouraged them to follow instructions and develop social skills through interaction with other children and their mentor.



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*"If you trust play, you will not have to control your child's development as much. Play will raise the child in ways you can never imagine." - Vince Gowmon*



While the children were having their post-lunch sleep and I was playing outside with the non-sleepers, I used different coloured chalk to draw an 'obstacle' course that included a range of different shapes that represented different types of movement.

The course began with a winding single line that the children had to walk along, they then reached a set of four rectangles with approx. 30cm between each rectangle - these were for jumping over (with their feet together). The next set of shapes were four footprints spaced the distance of a child's long stride apart, I asked the children to focus on putting their feet right inside the footprints.

After the footprints there was a square to jump into, followed by some 'stepping stones' where the children could either step or jump (with feet together) across.

The next obstacle was a zig-zagged line that the children once again walked along - following it to each point before turning onto the next part of the line.

After the zig-zag there was a 1-2-1-2 hopscotch - I was aware that hopping one footed may be a movement that exceeds the motor skills of this age group but I explained the movements to the children anyway and they loved practising standing on one foot and then jumping into the 2 feet squares - Lily mastered the hopscotch exceptionally well.

Finally, the last shape was a large line that spiralled all the way in on itself until the children spun round and round on the spot and 'finished' the course.

Each child had multiple turns, often waiting for another to finish and explaining to each other the 'rules' when a new child joined in. I really enjoyed how this activity allowed me to be so involved, walking the children through each step, holding hands if a child was a little unsure or unbalanced, and cheering the children on as they mastered each movement.

*"The work of education is divided between the teacher and the environment." - Maria Montessori*



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The Children verbally expressed themselves with enthusiasm during the activity, they were eager to share their accomplishments with each other and myself and showed pride in their ability to learn and repeat the various movements.

During the encounter Dudley exclaimed, "This is fun!" as he ran from the finish line back to the start to have another turn.

Bertie jumped up and down at the finish and said, "I did it!"

Lily was so excited when she mastered the one foot, two feet pattern of the hopscotch. She said - "Look! I can do one foot!"

Ivy said, "Watch this! Watch this!" as she demonstrated jumping over the rectangles with her feet together.

After seeing the engagement and joy that this activity created, I would love to utilise this on as many days as I can - creating new courses with different movements, extended courses and changing the location of the course to keep children engaged and developing new gross motor skills.

*"You cannot make people learn. You can only provide the right conditions for learning to happen." -  
Vince Gowmon*



# EYLF- Outcomes

## **1-Children Have A Strong Sense of Identity relates to Emotional Development.**

Children feel safe, secure, and supported.

Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.

Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

## **2- Children Are Connected With & Contribute To Their World relates to Social Development**

Children become aware of fairness.

## **3-Children Have A Strong Sense of Wellbeing relates to Physical Development**

Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

## **5.Children Are Effective Communicators relates to Language Development**

Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.

Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work.

## **4.Children Are Confident and Involved learners relates to Cognitive Development**

Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.

Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.

Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.