

DODGEMS

WHAT IT DOES

THIS IS JUST A FUN NAME FOR AN OBSTACLE COURSE BUT IT REALLY HELPS KIDS TO IMPROVE THEIR AGILITY AND MOVEMENT SKILLS AS WELL AS UNDERSTANDING HOW TO NEGOTIATE THEIR BODIES OVER, UNDER, THROUGH AND AROUND DIFFERENT PIECES OF EQUIPMENT USING FORWARDS, BACKWARDS AND SIDEWAYS MOVEMENTS.

WHAT YOU NEED

PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING YOU HAVE IN THE HOUSE OR GARDEN BUT HERE'S A FEW OBVIOUS ONES... CHAIRS, TABLE, CUSHIONS, BOXES, BUCKETS, WASHING LINE POLES, STICKS, SQUARES OF PAPER, ROPE, CANS OF FOOD, PLASTIC BOTTLES, HOOPS, RUGS.

HOW TO PLAY

Dream up your own obstacle course! It can be as simple or as tricky as you like and any shape or size. Encourage the kids to make it with you or even on their own! Make sure you have a start point and an end point so that this can become a race against the clock, against you or simply that the end point has a target to aim for or to run through. Imagine dodging the obstacles and then scoring a goal or throwing over a hoop or the washing line. Think rugby, football, netball, hockey, basketball...

It's way more fun to run through an obstacle course if you are doing it with or against someone else. Jamie and Andy were both very competitive so a stop watch was a must for us.



TRY THIS

Start slowly by walking the course forwards, then sidestepping and then backwards. Put a marker or line to signal where the start and end point is.

Gradually build up the speed. You can encourage kids to run faster by giving them a start through the course. So count to 5, then you start. You are in effect chasing them! Encourage them to look forwards at all times. They will be tempted to look behind to see where you are and that's when you might get a crash landing.

Add a ball. Just to hold on to through the course. For younger kids, this is just about familiarisation – learning to run with a ball. And add a target at the end so they can throw or kick the ball through or at something.

Put a chair at the start and end of the course. You can use the chair in lots of different ways. Sit on it to start and at the end to show you have finished. Crawl through the legs. Roll a ball through the legs at the start, chase after the ball, pick it up and at the end of the course, roll it through the legs of the end chair to score a goal.

As kids become more skilled, start to use different pieces of equipment and varying sizes and shapes of balls. Look at dribbling the ball with feet, hockey stick or tennis racket or bouncing the ball over, under, through and around the obstacles.

Tip: Using toys as obstacles usually went down well with the boys... upturned books for mini hurdles and tunnels made with chairs and rugs.

