Obstacle Course

Age
18 months and up

Materials
Pillows, cushions, and other low items such as cardboard boxes, hula hoops, tunnels, etc.

Setting
Open area indoors or outdoors.

Description
Create an obstacle course for toddlers to explore gross motor movements. Set up a path using pillows, cushions, cardboard boxes, play hoops, tunnels, etc. The course should encourage children to climb over, under, through, around, in and out of obstacles. Get creative! For example, several pool noodles laid across chairs facing each other can create a tunnel.

Learning Outcomes

Large Motor Skills
The toddler actively explores a safe and supportive environment, both indoors and outdoors to expand motor skills. He or she demonstrates increasingly complex gross motor tasks involving coordination, balance and body awareness.

Movement
The toddler demonstrates initiative and curiosity, exploring using movement, space and materials.

Did You Know?
SHAPE America advocates the practice of sports casting: narrating play in real time to reinforce children’s movement vocabulary. While sports casting, the caregiver gives play-by-play commentary, describing the toddlers’ actions using movement vocabulary. An obstacle is perfect opportunity for narrating children’s play. It provides the context for children to experience spatial concepts such as in, on over, under and through and hear the language associated with these. Adults can also narrate movement in terms of what the body does, how and where it moves, and its relation to other objects.