

Animal Adventure Obstacle Course!

Focus: Gross Motor Skills & Creative Arts

Designed for: T (2.5 years old)

Materials Needed:

- Soft items for obstacles: pillows, couch cushions, blankets
- Hula hoop (optional, for jumping in/out of a "pond")
- Painter's tape or a low, stable plank/beam (e.g., a sturdy piece of wood, a rolled-up yoga mat secured) for the balance beam
- Optional: Pictures or stuffed animals of frogs, ducks, bears, or other animals T likes
- Construction paper
- Crayons, washable markers, or large paint sticks
- Optional: Animal stickers

Lesson Plan Details:

1. Warm-up: Animal Chat & Stretches (5-7 minutes)

- **Activity:** Sit with T and look at pictures of animals or play with some animal toys. Talk about how different animals move. "What does a frog do? It hops! Ribbit! Can you show me a hop?" "How does a duck walk? It waddles!"
- **Stretches:**
 - Reach up high like a giraffe trying to eat leaves.
 - Touch your toes like an elephant dipping its trunk in water.
 - Wiggle your body like a playful puppy.
- **Purpose:** To introduce the theme, get T excited, and prepare muscles for activity.

2. Main Activity: The Great Animal Obstacle Course (15-20 minutes)

Set-up: Before the lesson, create a simple obstacle course in a safe, open space.

- **Start:** A designated starting line.
- **Frog Hops:** Place a few pillows or cushions spaced apart for T to hop over like a frog ("Hop onto the lily pads!").
- **Duck Waddle:** Create a short path (e.g., between two lines of toys or more cushions) for T to waddle like a duck. A hula hoop can be a "pond" to waddle around or into.
- **Bear Crawl:** Create a "tunnel" to crawl through (e.g., under a small table with a blanket draped over it, or just a designated space to crawl on all fours like a bear).
- **Balance Beam Path:** Lay down painter's tape on the floor in a straight line (or slightly zigzag for a challenge later) or use a very low, stable beam.
- **Finish:** A designated finish line.

Instructions for T:

1. **Demonstrate first:** Show T how to do each animal walk through each part of the course. Exaggerate the movements and make animal sounds to make it fun! "Watch me, T! I'm a frog hopping: Ribbit, ribbit!"

2. Guided Practice:

- **Frog Hops:** "Okay, T, your turn to be a frog! Can you hop over these lily pads (pillows)?" Encourage big jumps if T is able, or smaller hops.
- **Duck Waddle:** "Now let's waddle like a duck! Quack, quack! Waddle, waddle through here." Show how to sway side to side.
- **Bear Crawl:** "Time to be a strong bear! Let's crawl through the forest (under the table/designated space)."
- **Balance Beam Walk:** "This is our special path! Let's try to walk on it like a careful cat. You can hold my hand."
 - **Progression:** Start with holding both hands, then one hand, then encourage T to try with arms out for balance. Praise all attempts! Ensure the beam is extremely low and stable.

3. **Repeat:** Let T go through the course a few times. T might want to choose which animal to be for certain sections. Offer lots of praise and encouragement.

Developmental Focus: Hopping (bilateral coordination), waddling (balance, gait), crawling (coordination, strength), balancing (proprioception, core strength).

3. Transition: Calming Down (2-3 minutes)

- **Activity:** After the energy of the obstacle course, suggest a calming animal movement. "Wow, you were such a great animal adventurer! Let's pretend to be a slow turtle, moving very slowly to our art table."

4. Creative Arts Extension: Animal Art (10-15 minutes)

- **Activity:**
 - Provide construction paper and drawing tools (crayons, markers, paint sticks).
 - "Let's make a picture of your favorite animal from our obstacle course! Or any animal you like!"
 - Talk about the animal as T creates. "What color is your frog?" "Is your duck swimming?"
 - Offer animal stickers if you have them.
 - This can be very open-ended: scribbling is perfectly fine and expressive for this age.
- **Purpose:** To cool down, encourage creative expression, reinforce the animal theme, and practice fine motor skills.

5. Wrap-up: Show and Tell (2-3 minutes)

- **Activity:** Admire T's artwork. "Tell me about your wonderful animal picture!" Display the artwork proudly. Briefly talk about the fun animal movements again.
- **Review:** "We hopped like frogs and waddled like ducks today! That was so much fun!"

Tips for Success:

- **Be Flexible:** If T isn't interested in one animal, suggest another or modify the activity. The goal is joyful movement and exploration.
- **Safety First:** Ensure the obstacle course area is clear of hazards and that any materials used (like a balance beam) are very low and stable. Supervise closely.
- **Participate!:** T will be much more engaged if you do the animal walks and act silly too!
- **Praise Effort:** Focus on T's participation and attempts, not perfection.