

Lesson Plan: The Great Pillow & Cushion Expedition

Materials Needed:

- Large couch cushions and pillows of various sizes
 - Blankets (at least one large enough to be a tunnel)
 - A few stuffed animals
 - Colorful scarves or small, soft toys (for a color hunt)
 - A small, sturdy box or laundry basket (the "boat" or "pit")
 - Optional: A portable speaker for music
 - A short, calming picture book
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Lesson Details

Subject: Creative Movement & Gross Motor Skills

Topic: Soft Play Adventure

Target Age Group: 2-Year-Olds (Oliver, Mila, Reggie)

Duration: 30-45 minutes (flexible)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, Oliver, Mila, and Reggie will be able to:

- **(Gross Motor)** Demonstrate basic gross motor skills including crawling, balancing on an uneven surface, and stepping over low objects.
 - **(Cognitive & Language)** Follow simple, two-part instructions using action and positional words (e.g., "Crawl *through* the tunnel," "Jump *over* the pillow").
 - **(Social-Emotional)** Practice sharing space and materials with peers and taking turns during an activity.
 - **(Creativity)** Use their imagination to pretend the soft play items are different things (mountains, rivers, caves).
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Lesson Activities & Procedure

1. Warm-Up: The Body Wake-Up Song (5 minutes)

- **Goal:** To get bodies ready for movement and introduce the theme of using our bodies.
 - **Instructions:**
 1. Gather the children in an open space. Play a fun, upbeat song like "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" or "The Wiggle Song."
 2. Lead the children in simple stretches. Say, "Let's reach for the sky! So high! Now let's touch our toes! Wiggle your fingers and wiggle your nose!"
 3. Finish by saying, "Our bodies are all warmed up and ready for a big adventure!"
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2. Main Activity Part 1: Building Our Adventure Land (10 minutes)

- **Goal:** To encourage teamwork, problem-solving, and ownership of the play space.
- **Instructions:**
 1. Tell the children: "We are going on a great expedition! But first, we need to build our adventure land. Can you help me?"
 2. Work together to create the soft play area. Narrate what you are doing with creative language:
 - "Let's pile these pillows up to make a giant, squishy mountain!"
 - "This blanket can be a long, dark tunnel. Who can crawl through a tunnel?" (Drape a blanket over two chairs or the couch).
 - "Let's line up these small cushions to make stepping stones across the lava river."
 - Place the laundry basket at the end and call it the "Color Pit" or the "Treasure Box."
 3. Encourage Oliver, Mila, and Reggie to carry the lighter pillows and suggest where things should go.

3. Main Activity Part 2: The Animal Obstacle Course (15 minutes)

- **Goal:** To apply gross motor skills, follow directions, and use imagination.
- **Instructions:**
 1. Announce, "Welcome to the Animal Adventure! First, let's be little bears. Can you crawl like a bear through the dark tunnel?" Demonstrate the action and make bear sounds. Encourage the children to follow one at a time to practice turn-taking.
 2. Next, say: "Oh no, a river! Let's be frogs! Can you hop from one stepping stone to the next? Boing, boing!" Guide them as they step or hop over the low cushions.
 3. Then, say: "Look at that huge mountain! Let's be brave mountain climbers and climb carefully up and slide down the other side!" Help them navigate the large pillow pile.
 4. Finally, say: "We made it! Now, let's find some color treasure. Can you find something RED and put it in our treasure box?" Scatter the colorful scarves/toys around the area for a mini-scavenger hunt. Repeat with 2-3 different colors.

4. Cool-Down & Closure: Cozy Cloud Story Time (5-10 minutes)

- **Goal:** To transition from high-energy play to a state of calm and reinforce positive feelings about the activity.
- **Instructions:**
 1. Say, "What a wonderful adventure! Our bodies worked so hard. Let's make a cozy cloud to rest on."
 2. Gather some of the softest pillows and blankets into a comfortable pile.
 3. Invite Oliver, Mila, and Reggie to lie down on the "cozy cloud" with you.
 4. Read a short, calming picture book. A story about animals, colors, or bedtime is perfect.
 5. End by saying, "You were all amazing adventurers today! You climbed, crawled, and helped each other."

Assessment (Informal Observation)

During the lesson, observe and make mental notes on the following:

- **Gross Motor:** Does the child willingly attempt to climb, crawl, and balance? Do they show increasing confidence?
 - **Following Directions:** Can the child follow a simple one-step command ("Crawl through the tunnel")? Can they attempt a two-step command ("Find the blue scarf and put it in the box")?
 - **Social Skills:** Does the child acknowledge their peers? Are they able to wait for a turn with
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gentle reminders?

- **Engagement:** Is the child interested and participating? What parts of the activity did they enjoy most?
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Differentiation and Inclusivity

- **For a Hesitant Child:** If a child is nervous about climbing, turn the "mountain" into a smaller "hill." Offer a hand for support and give lots of praise for any attempt. Let them be the "leader" of an activity they are comfortable with, like finding the colors.
- **For a High-Energy Child:** Add more challenging motor tasks, like "Can you walk backward over the stepping stones?" or "Can you hop like a kangaroo three times?" Let them help with the heavy lifting during setup (with guidance).
- **Adapting for Interests:** If the children are more interested in building than the animal theme, lean into it. Ask, "What can we build next? A castle? A car?" Let their creativity guide the play. The learning objectives can still be met in a child-led scenario.