

Winter Obstacle Course!

Active outdoors



Play is a means of deep learning for young children. In Gaffield Children's Garden, we provide rich, open-ended Nature Play experiences. We are committed to it, knowing that these experiences will become an essential part of the child, will be transformed into intellectual pursuits, imaginative pursuits, support physical and emotional health, and promote positive regard for the Earth now and into adulthood. We encourage families to participate and replicate what we do here, in their own homes, apartments, and parks. Here is a recipe for **Nature Play at Home: Winter Obstacle Course!**

SUPPLIES

- Can be played in a yard or at a park
- Sticks, branches, stumps
- leaves
- stones
- hula hoops? buckets?
- snow boulders, snow balls, drifts of snow
- rope or twine
- natural features: trees, hills, berms

WAYS TO PLAY

- Introduce idea of an obstacle course as an adventure: "I wonder if we can slide over that big snow ball and then run to that tree and then jump..."
- Forage items to add elements of challenge: line up sticks to be jumped over, upturned buckets to be stepped on, rope or twine to make a zig-zag jog, etc.

EXTEND THE PLAY

- In a yard or balcony, add elements foraged from the area or use some of the suggestions above.
- In a park, use the natural features such as hills, trees, rocks, boulders without moving them.
- Make it a mini obstacle course for toy vehicles, balls, or toy people and animals.
- Older children may enjoy the challenge of creating a snowball run or snowball obstacle course.

CONSIDER

- There is no wrong way to play.
- After introducing the concept, let the children lead the play.
- Outdoor play is a natural way to foster children's burgeoning understanding of themselves in relationship to the world.
- Spending time outdoors as a family fosters family identity, and a relationship with Nature.
- Introduce older children to concepts of perpetual motion attempts or view the 'squirrel ninja obstacle course' youtube to spur imaginative invention.

