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# Outdoor Structured PA Activities

Activity
1. Winter Nature Walk
2. Icy Treasure Hunt
3. Reindeer Trot
4. Scarf Tag
5. Nature Scavenger Hunt
6. Alphabet Hopscotch
7. Outdoor Obstacle Course
8. Counting Our Moves



# Winter Nature Walk

## Outdoor Structured PA Activity 1

**Setting:** Outside, large group

**Purpose:** To increase the children's curiosity and excitement about playing outdoors during winter.

### Objectives:

- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will explore the outdoors during the winter season.
- Children show curiosity and express interest in the world around them. (Approaches to Play and Learning)
  - Children will discover things that interest them from the outdoors and seek to share them with others.
- Children use their senses to construct knowledge about the world around them. (Cognitive Development)
  - Children will use their senses to explore nature and the properties of things they discover.

### Materials:

- None needed

### Preparation:

- Plan a safe path for the nature walk and note certain places or things you'll want to point out along the way.

### Procedure:

1. Explain to children that they will be going on a nature walk. Say, *"Today, we are going on a nature walk! We are currently in the season of winter. During the nature walk, I want you to look for things that are special to winter. We will use all of our senses, except taste, to learn about the things around us during winter. Who remembers what our 5 senses are? Why don't we want to taste things on our nature walk?"*
2. Instruct the students on how to walk during the nature walk (small group, single file line, double line, etc.) Explain that they will have to be quiet during the first part of the walk so they can see and hear. Encourage students to use all of their senses except for taste during the exploration (touch, smell, hearing, and sight.)

3. As you are walking, allow students to ask questions and share their thinking with the group. Also, stop and point out characteristics of winter and any opportunities for teachable moments. Some examples could include:
  - Stop and ask students to listen. What do they hear?
  - Discuss how some trees don't have any leaves because they fell to the ground during autumn. Have students look up at the limbs and touch the leaves that have fallen to the ground. If available, discuss evergreen trees and allow the children to touch the needles. Compare the two types of trees.
  - Stop and ask students to smell. What do they smell?
  - Stop and look up at the sky. How does the sky look today? If there are clouds, describe how they appear.
  - Discuss the air temperature and how it feels to them. Compare the temperature to summer and fall.
  - Stop and watch a bird or squirrel. Discuss how finding food for the birds and squirrels is different during winter compared to other seasons.
4. After completing the nature walk and discussing many elements of nature and winter, instruct the students that you're now going to play a follow the leader game on the way back. As the leader, you will change the way the group is moving periodically. Options for movement: March, run, tiptoe walk, skip, gallop, jump with two feet, hop on one foot, etc. (Students should have an elevated heart rate after finishing this game.)

**Variation:**

- A short, quick version of the nature walk can be used as an energizer.
- In the future, the follow the leader game can be used as an energizer both indoors and outdoors.
- Allow students to take turns being the leader during the follow the leader game.
- As an extension of the winter nature hike, students can make pinecone bird feeders to hang up outside of the classroom. First, have students collect pinecones from the ground. Second, tie a piece of string to the top of the pinecone. Then, cover the pinecone with peanut butter. Next, roll the pinecone in birdseed. Finally, hang the pinecone outside. As part of the activity, discuss with the children how it's important to feed animals healthy food just like we feed our bodies healthy foods.

# Icy Treasure Hunt

## Outdoor Structured PA Activity 2

**Setting:** Outside, large group

**Purpose:** To engage children in active play in colder weather and learn about water in different physical states.

### Objective:

- Children actively seek to understand the world around them. (Approaches to Play and Learning)
  - Children will use all available senses, tools, and a variety of strategies to explore the environment, including exploring properties of water at freezing and room temperatures.
- Children recall information and use it for new situations and problems. (Cognitive Development)
  - Children will ask questions about why things happen, such as water changing physical states, and try to understand cause and effect.
- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors. (Health and Physical Development)
  - When playing vigorously to find frozen object outdoors, children develop strength and stamina.

### Materials:

- Ice cube trays or 3-ounce paper cups
- Small items placed inside water to freeze: toy dinosaurs, blocks, buttons, grass, rocks, flowers, etc.
- Food coloring (optional)
- Large bowl

### Preparation:

- Explain to children they will be having a frozen scavenger hunt outdoors! Tell them that you will freeze some small items in ice trays and children will hunt for them on the playground. If time allows, let children help decide what items will be frozen in ice to search for the day before.
- Freeze small items in ice cube trays or 3-ounce paper cups for 24-hours. Use food coloring in the water to create different colors.
- Hide the icy treasures around the playground for children to find.

### Procedure:

1. Outside, let children know it is time to search for the frozen treasures! Encourage them to be as active as they can. They may want to run across the playground, crawl under a structure to search, or skip back to the teacher with the ice they found.
2. When an ice cube is found, children bring it to a big bowl and drop it in. Give children an action associated with the color ice cube: i.e., red ice cubes= four jumping jacks, green ice cubes= spin twice and jump, or blue ice cubes= a rocket blast-off.
3. After going back inside, tell children you will be doing an experiment. Show them the bowl of ice cubes, and a pitcher of warm or room-temperature water. Ask what will happen when you place the ice cube in the water and chart children's responses.
  - Ask, *What do you think will happen to the ice when we pour the water in? (Ice will melt) Do you think the ice will float or sink when we pour water into the bowl?*
4. Have children guess what items are frozen inside each ice cube. After the ice cubes have floated and melted, have children observe the items to see if they guessed correctly.
5. Teachers can discuss with children the concept of water in different forms based on temperature, identify objects inside the ice, and observe which items melt first.

### Variation:

- Assign teams or student pairs responsible for finding certain color ice cubes (team red, team blue etc.)
  - Have each team conduct their own investigation after finding the ice cubes and share their objects with the other teams after the ice melts.
- If you don't want to or can't freeze items, you could just hide them around the playground and do the ice cube experiment to show what happens to things that we leave out in the winter.



# Reindeer Trot

## Outdoor Structured PA Activity 3

**Setting:** Large group, indoors or outdoors

**Purpose:** To facilitate gross motor development by participating in a relay race.

### Objectives:

- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will refine movements and show generally good coordination as they act out different turkey movements.
- Children form relationships and interact positively with other children. (Emotional and Social Development)
  - Children will interact positively with others as they act out reindeer movements.

### Materials:

- Some object to make lines to show where children should start and turn around (i.e. polypots, beanbags or floor tape).

### Preparation:

- Prepare a space outdoors with a start line and another line about 20–30 feet away, with enough room for the children to move in between the lines one by one. This can also be inside, just make sure you have plenty of space.

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining that they will be doing a relay where they will act like reindeer. Say, *“Around this time of year, we see and hear a lot about reindeer! In this game everyone is going to pretend to be a reindeer! Each team will start at the start line in a single file line. Each player will run from the start line to the other line and back doing different actions that a reindeer would do. The other players waiting in line should be active too by jumping and cheering for their team! When the player gets back to the start line, he/she must tag the next player on the team, so he/she can start. Get ready to show me your best reindeer moves!”*
2. Split the children into two or more teams, depending on how many children are in your classroom and how much space is available for playing this game. Smaller team sizes are preferred so that children do not spend too much time waiting in line.

3. Explain to children what movements they are going to be doing for each round of the relay. Demonstrate each movement to allow children to become familiar with the different movements.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> round: Run up and back galloping like a reindeer
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> round: Run up and back flying like reindeer (arms out and move like an airplane)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> round: Run up and back trotting like a reindeer
  - 4<sup>th</sup> and more rounds: Repeat rounds 1–3 as desired
4. The first team to complete all of the tasks twice and have the final player get back to the start line first is the winner of the reindeer trot relay!
5. Before you end the activity, be sure to praise the children for good sportsmanship and the positive words you heard students saying to each other. Tell the children they could play this at home with their parents and/or siblings to show them all of their reindeer moves!

**Variation:**

- Additional movements: Add other movements or tasks for the teams to complete, possibly based on other winter/holiday animals, such as scurrying like a squirrel, shake your tail like a fox, or another movement you can think of!

# Scarf Tag

## Outdoor Structured PA Activity 4

**Setting:** Large group, Outdoors

**Purpose:** To facilitate gross motor development by participating in a tag game.

### Objectives:

- Children form relationships and interact positively with other children. (Emotional and Social Development)
  - Children will interact positively with others as they help each other throughout the game.
- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will move quickly through their environment and be able to stop when it is required of them.

### Materials:

- Two scarves for every child
- Items to create boundaries (polyspots or beanbags)

### Preparation:

- Prepare a space outdoors with specific boundaries for the children. Mark these boundaries to bring them to the children's attention. There must be enough room for the whole class to run around at the same time, comfortably.

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining that they will be doing a tag game where they will be working together. Say, *"We are going to play a fun game of tag! You are all going to spread out and get two scarves. When you get them, tuck them into your waistband or any other clothing item so that they are sticking out. When I say go, run around trying to get scarves from other players. Once you get a scarf, run back to me and place it in a pile. Once a player has no scarves they must stop where they are and begin jumping up and down in place."*
2. Have the children spread out in your outdoor space and stand still as you hand out the scarves.
3. Say, "go" to signal to the children that the game has begun and they can run around and try to grab each other's scarves.

4. There is no winner in this game; the game is over when most of the scarves are in the pile. Then, reset and play another round!
5. Before you end the activity, be sure to praise the children for good sportsmanship and the positive words you heard students saying to each other.

**Variation:**

- **No Scarves:** Instead of playing with scarves you can have one to four children, depending on your class size, be “it”. And if they tag the child they must jump up and down in place with their legs apart. In order to become unfrozen from that spot another child must crawl through their legs.

# Nature Scavenger Hunt

## Outdoor Structured PA Activity 5

**Setting:** Large group, outdoors

**Purpose:** Using a scavenger hunt to facilitate language development.

### Objectives:

- Children ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood in relation to the items they are finding for the scavenger hunt. **(Language Development and Communication)**
  - Use sentences or questions to ask for things (people, actions, objects, pets) or gain information about the objects they are trying to find.
- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. **(Health and Physical Development)**
  - Children perform actions smoothly with balance, strength, and coordination by bending over to pick up the items in the scavenger hunt and walking around their environment.

### Materials:

- Scavenger hunt materials list

### Preparation:

- Write down the scavenger hunt materials list for yourself, as you will be verbally telling the children the next item they should find.
- Have a list of team names once the children choose them.

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining that they will be doing a scavenger hunt where they will try and find items in their environment.
2. Say to the children, *Today we are going to explore our environment! In your groups, you will be given an item to find and once you do bring it back to me and I will give you another item to find. The team that finds the most items in x minutes wins!*
3. Split the children into teams of two or three, depending on how many children are in your classroom and ask them to come up with a team name. Write these down.
4. Give each team one item on the list given below. You can give each team all the same item to start out with or different items. Instruct them to come show you their item and describe it to you once they find it.

- Something round
  - Something Smooth
  - Something rough
  - Two different types of leaves
  - Something green
  - Something you think is beautiful
  - A stick
  - Something that makes noise
5. Give each team a tally mark when they bring you an item.
  6. End the activity after x minutes have passed.
  7. Before you end the activity, be sure to praise the children for good creativity and the positive words you heard students saying to each other. Tell the children they could play this at home with their parents and/or siblings to explore the environment there.

**Variation:**

- **Additional items:** Add other items to the scavenger hunt list that would be plausible for them to find in your environment.

# Alphabet Hopscotch

## Outdoor Structured PA Activity 6

**Setting:** Any size group, indoors or outdoors

**Purpose:** To facilitate language development and communication and gross motor development by incorporating the alphabet into hopscotch.

### Objectives:

- Children develop knowledge of the alphabet and the alphabetic principle by coming up with words starting with a specific letter. (Language Development and Communication)
  - Children will associate a letter with the beginning of a word that they come up with.
- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through the hopscotch course. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children move their bodies with good coordination.

### Materials:

- Some object to make lines for the hopscotch course. This could be created by using floor tape (indoors) or chalk (outdoors).
- Beanbag to throw into the course

### Preparation:

- Prepare a space for the course outdoors or indoors using tape or chalk. There can be as many blocks in the course as you like. Make the hopscotch course so that there are two blocks side by side (to put one foot in each square), and one by itself (to hop in with one foot). Write a letter in each block.

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining that they will be doing a hopscotch course. Say, *“We are going to be hopping our way through this fun alphabet course! You are going to throw this rock and when it lands in a square you must say a word that starts with that letter. Then you hop through the course putting only one foot in each box.”*
2. Demonstrate the hopping if you feel that the children don't fully understand and then have them line up behind the course.
3. Give the first child the beanbag and begin the game! Play for as long as you feel appropriate.

4. Before you end the activity, be sure to praise the children for good word usage and the positive words you heard students saying to each other.

**Variation:**

- **Symbols:** Use shapes instead of letters and have the children name an object that is that shape.
- **Alternate Movements:** Younger children may not be able to hop; instead they may need to step or jump from square to square.



# Outdoor Obstacle Course

## Outdoor Structured PA Activity 7

**Setting:** Outside, large group

**Purpose:** To encourage children to go outdoors for active play in colder weather.

### Objectives:

- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will show awareness of their own body in relation to objects while skipping, balancing, and hopping through the obstacle course.
- Children identify and use common shapes and concepts about position during play and other activities. (Cognitive Development)
  - Children will demonstrate understanding of positions in space by using position words during play and following directions.

### Materials:

- Various portable play equipment (beanbags, polyspots, scarves, etc.)

### Preparation:

- Create a series of obstacles for children to move through. Use the directions below or adapt to your outdoor space. Incorporate natural elements such as trees or bushes and take advantage of the grass for a crab walk. Ask children for input when designing the obstacle course.
- Be cautious about slippery outdoor areas when setting up. Check the ground, slide, and other surfaces to avoid injuries. Adults can model the course before children try it or lead the group through the course together. Consider offering sections of the obstacle course in smaller groups to avoid waiting and collisions. In order to prevent children from being sedentary while waiting in line, have them practice leg lifts, stretching their arms up and down, jumping, and running in place.

### Procedure:

1. Instruct the children to go through the obstacle course. Demonstrate it for them if necessary. Here are two sample obstacles; the first iteration is for “pretending” there is snow on the ground and the second is with real snow

#### With no snow:

1. First, run a full circle around a tree.
2. Next, zigzag run around cones and leap over a group of polyspots.
3. Then, get down on hands and feet and crab walk to the fence.
4. Run to the slide, climb the ladder, and slide down.

5. Grab a beanbag; throw it at a target (The target can be made of paper, a rope in a circle, or hula hoop lying flat).
6. Finally, skip around the sandbox to the finish line.

With snow:

1. First, run a full circle around a tree.
  2. Next, zigzag run around cones and leap over a mound of snow.
  3. Then, get down and make a snow angel
  4. Run to the slide, climb the ladder, and slide down.
  5. Make a snowball and throw it at a target.
  6. Finally, skip around the sandbox to the finish line.
2. Along the way, discuss with children the muscles they are using to go through the course.
- *Say, Use your legs to jump and run! Use your arm to throw! Your muscles are getting stronger!*

**Variation:**

- **Practice Round:** To familiarize children with the activity, have one child be the line leader and take them through the obstacle course once as a group before letting children go on their own.
- **Course Markers:** To help children remember the parts of the course, you can mark each area with a polypot or other piece of equipment to remind children where to go around the playground.

# Counting Our Moves

## Outdoor Structured PA Activity 8

**Setting:** Small groups

**Purpose:** To give children the opportunity to review counting and be physically active.

### Objectives:

- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. **(Health and Physical Development)**
  - Children will perform complex movements smoothly by demonstrating their ability to hop from number to number.
  - Children will work on refined movements that show good coordination while they are tossing the beanbag onto a number.
- Children show understanding of numbers and quantities during play and other activities. **(Cognitive Development)**
  - Children will learn/recognize the numerals as they hop to the numeral the beanbag lands on.

### Materials:

- Asphalt or area to write on with chalk
- Chalk
- Beanbag



### Preparation:

- Note: This activity needs space where sidewalk chalk can be used to make a large circle. If your center does not have that type of space, use a jump rope or other flexible rope in the playground for the circle and balls or polypots for the dots.
- Use the chalk to write out the numerals (1–5 or 1–10, depending on the developmental level of the children) as shown

### Procedure:

1. Explain the game to children and remind them about the benefits of playing outside.
2. Show the children where to stand around the edge of the circle. Then, demonstrate for them how to play. Pick the beanbag up and toss it onto a space in the circle. Once the beanbag lands on the numeral, say the numeral, 2 for example, and ask everyone to hop 2 times. The children can hop on both feet or challenge themselves to hop on one foot! Have kids count with you!
3. Repeat this with a few different moves (giant steps, jumping jacks, etc.). Once you are sure that children have the idea of the game, allow children to take turns

throwing the beanbag and selecting the move. Additional moves include jumping on both feet, leaping forward or backward from one foot to another, jumping jacks, or squatting like a frog.

4. Assist the children in recognizing the numerals throughout the game. If needed, count the dots together as a group to determine what number on which the beanbag landed.

**Variations:**

- Have children find items from nature that could represent the numbers in the circle in place of the dots. For example, three pine cones, two sticks, etc.
- Have the child use his or her finger to trace over the numeral to help become familiar with the shape of the numeral. All of the children can write the shape of the numeral in the air.
- Do this activity in a smaller circle (or square) inside, with class spread out across classroom.
- For younger children, you can throw the bean bag yourself and encourage children to mimic throwing the bean bag along with you.

# Circle Time PA Activities

Activity
1. Copy the Creative Classmate
2. Animal Action
3. Active Alphabet
4. Beach Ball Questions
5. Potter the Otter
6. Snowy Day
7. Heartbeat Beat
8. Card Matching



# Copy the Creative Classmate

## Circle Time PA Activity 1

**Setting:** Large group, circle time

**Purpose:** To facilitate play and imagination by participating in a follow the leader game.

### Objectives:

- Children demonstrate creativity, imagination, and inventiveness through the motions they create in the circle. ([Approaches to Play and Learning](#))
  - Children Offer new ideas about how to do things when they are tapped and must create their own movement.
- Children demonstrate the social and behavioral skills needed to successfully participate in groups. ([Emotional and Social Development](#))
  - Follow social rules, transitions, and routines that have been explained to them.
- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors ([Health and Physical Development](#))
  - Children will participate in a simple structured motor activity that enhances physical fitness.

### Materials:

- No materials needed

### Preparation:

- Prepare the area by having the children get into a circle for the game

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining that they will be doing a follow the leader movement game where they will be making up the movements.
2. Say to the children, *“Today we are all going to stand in a circle and make up some fun new movements! We are all going to stand in our circle and when I tap you, make up a movement so that the whole class can do it with you. When I tap the next person we will all start on their new movement.”*
3. Have the children arrange themselves standing in a circle and have them start on an action that you, the teacher, create.

4. Once the children get used to your action tap a child in the circle and encourage them to come up with their own action. Encourage the class to copy this action.
5. Continue this until every child in the class has had one or two chances to create their own action.
6. Before you end the activity, be sure to praise the children for good sportsmanship and the creative movements that they all came up with.

**Variation:**

- Instead of having the children create their own movements have them act out what they did that weekend or put the movements to music.



# Animal Action

## Circle Time PA Activity 2

**Setting:** Large group, circle time

**Purpose:** To facilitate play and imagination by creating movements representing animals.

### Objectives:

- Children demonstrate creativity, imagination, and inventiveness through movement. ([Approaches to Play and Learning](#))
  - Children experiment with sounds and movements as well as adding new actions for pretend play.
- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. ([Health and Physical Development](#))
  - Children will refine movements and show generally good coordination as they act out different animal movements.

### Materials:

- A CD with animal like music, optional
- A list of animals such as: elephant, cat, bunny, frog, horse, spider, snake, and bird

### Preparation:

- Prepare a small space inside for the children to play in

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining that they will be acting out different kinds of animals.
2. Say to the children, *“Today we will be acting out different kinds of animals. When I yell out an animal do your best to move like that animal. Don’t forget to use your whole body!”*
3. Have the children spread out in the space and start the music if using.
4. Call out the first animal and watch the children move. After about 30 seconds call out a different animal. Repeat until the song is over.
5. Before you end the activity, be sure to praise the children for good creativity and the positive movements you saw children making. Tell the children they could play this at home with their parents and/or siblings to show them all of their animal moves!



# Active Alphabet

## Circle Time PA Activity 3

**Setting:** Large group

**Purpose:** To practice the alphabet using movement

### Objectives:

- Children begin to develop knowledge of the alphabet and the alphabetic principle. (Language Development and Communication)
  - Children will make sound-to-letter matches, using letter name knowledge.
- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will participate in a simple structured motor activity that enhances physical fitness.

### Materials:

- List of movements for each letter of the alphabet.

### Preparation:

- Review the movements before the activity

### Procedure:

1. Start by singing the alphabet song as a class.
2. Then, say you are going to sing the alphabet song again, but you are going to add a special movement for each letter.
3. Starting at the beginning of the alphabet and practice the movement for each letter (shown below). Announce the letter, tell the children what that letter represents, and demonstrate the action. For example, “A. A is for act like a dog. This is how you act like a dog”. You can also ask the children to demonstrate the movements.
4. Once you finish practicing all the movements, sing the alphabet song the whole way through while doing the actions.

**A** – Act like a dog

**B** – Bend your knees

**C** – Climb a ladder

**D** – Dance

**E** – Eat your lunch

**F** – Fly like a bird

**G** – Gallop like a horse

**H** – Hop like a bunny

**I** – Ice skate

**J** – Jumping jacks

**K** – Kick a soccer ball

**L** – Leap in the air

**M** – March like a soldier  
**N** – Nod your head  
**O** – Open your arms  
**P** – Pop like popcorn  
**Q** – Quietly tip toe  
**R** – Run in place  
**S** – Swim like a fish

**T** – Touch your toes  
**U** – Unlock a door  
**V** – Vacuum the floor  
**W** – Wiggle your body  
**X** – Make an “X” with your body  
**Y** – Yo-yo up and down  
**Z** – Zigzag across the floor

**Variation:**

- Come up with movements for each letter as a class.
- Try breaking this activity up throughout the week, doing a few letters at a time. Then, at the end of a week, try to put all of the movements together!

# Beach Ball Questions

## Circle Time PA Activity 4

**Setting:** Large group, circle time, Indoors or outdoors

**Purpose:** To facilitate emotional and social development by catching the beach ball and answering questions.

### Objectives:

- Children form relationships and interact positively with other children. (Emotional and Social Development)
  - Children will interact positively with others as they throw and catch the ball and answer questions.
- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will refine movements and show generally good coordination as they throw and catch the beach ball.

### Materials:

- A beach ball
- A marker to write questions on the beach ball, optional

### Preparation:

- Prepare a space indoors for the children to gather in a circle to play the game.
- Prepare the Beach Ball by writing questions (if writing) on it such as:
  - What is your favorite color?
  - What is your favorite food?
  - Movies or TV shows?
  - Describe your dream house.
  - What's your favorite holiday?
  - What instrument would you like to play?
  - What do you want to be when you grow up?
  - What is the best gift you've ever gotten?
  - What's your favorite animal?
  - Do you have any pets?

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining that they will be playing a game with the beach ball.
2. Say to the children, *"Today we will be playing a game with this fun beach ball! When you get thrown the ball catch it and whatever question your right thumb lands on, that is the question you have to answer."*

3. Have the children stand in a circle and throw the ball to the first child. Help them read the question or read it for them. Encourage them to answer and then encourage them to throw the ball to another classmate.

**Variation:**

- Instead of writing the questions on the ball, you can have a mental list of questions ready to go, throw the ball to a child, and ask a question. Just as fun!

# Potter the Otter

## Circle Time PA Activity 5

**Setting:** Large group

**Purpose:** To use the “Potter the Healthy Otter” book to teach children that active play is healthier than screen time.

### Objectives:

- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will participate in physical activities alongside the characters in the book.
- Children develop interest in books and motivation to read. (Language Development and Communication)
  - Children will listen to and discuss the book "Potter, Potter the Healthy Otter."

### Materials:

- A copy of "Potter, Potter the Healthy Otter" (available free for print at: <http://first5sandiego.org/newsletter-march-april-2014-new-potter-the-otter-book/>)

### Preparation:

- Pre-read the book and note the places for questions, discussion, or movement

### Procedure:

1. Introduce the book and explain the activity. Say, “*Today we are going to read a book entitled “Potter, Potter the Healthy Otter.” Throughout the book Potter and his friends will suggest some activities and we will all join in the story and do the activities together!*”
2. Read "Potter, Potter the Healthy Otter." Stop throughout the story for questions, discussions, and movement. Suggested stop points are listed below.

*Page 8:* “Get up and get on your feet!” Have the children stand.

*Page 8:* “And on the way, we’ll skip and hop.” Have the children skip and hop around a designated space.

*Page 12:* “Turn off that TV. Don’t just sit and stare.” Ask, “What does ‘sit and stare’ mean?”

*Page 12:* “Let’s go move and play out in the air.” Ask, “What do moose and goose gain when they leave and go to the park? (Fresh air) Fresh air is good for us. They also get to move their bodies instead of sitting down.”

*Page 20:* Discuss with the children. What did the kangaroos do when they put down their phones? They exercised their bodies and built up strong bones. Did you know that the more you walk, run, and jump, the stronger your bones become? This happens when we put weight on our bones, it helps them get stronger. Did you know your bones got stronger with exercise, just like muscles?

*Page 24:* “C’mon! Let’s play ball!” Have children pretend to toss and catch ball like book characters do.

*Page 26:* “Goose found some water and started to swim.” Have children pretend to swim. Encourage them to swim in different directions. (Forward (freestyle), backward (back stroke), to the side)

*Page 26:* “Skunks in a bunch played on jungle gyms.” Have children pretend to climb.

*Page 26:* “As for the two jumping kangaroos,” Have the children jump up and down.

*Page 28:* Ask, “How many friends does Potter have with him at the park now?” Point to each animal and count aloud together.

3. In conclusion, reiterate the main points that playing outside, with friends is more fun than doing screen time activities alone.
  - *Do the friends have more fun playing together outside or having screen time by themselves? Why is playing outside better?* [Potential answers: More fun, you can play with friends, fresh air, exercise our heart and muscles, and build strong bones and muscles.]
4. Encourage children to choose outside play over screen time at home. Say, “*Do you have a park close enough to walk to from your house? Who could you ask to go play with you at the park just like Potter the Otter?*”

### **Variation:**

- If a park is within walking distance from the school, walk to a park with the children and enjoy outdoor playtime in a different location.
- Re-read the book a second time. Encourage children to say with you, “Exercise is fun, and you should know, exercise is healthy and helps you grow!” each time it is repeated in the text.
- Have the Potter puppet used in Unit 1 help tell the story.
- Ask children to think about what other types of movements the animals can do.



# Snowy Day

## Circle Time PA Activity 6

**Setting:** Large group

**Purpose:** To get children up and moving while using thought to create a story.

### Objectives:

- Children demonstrate appreciation for different forms of artistic expression. (Cognitive Development)
  - Children will use drama and dance to describe activities they do during the snow.
- Children describe familiar people, places, things, and events. (Language Development and Communication)
  - Children will use drama to act out a familiar scene of playing in the snow and children describe their experience of playing in the snow.
- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will participate in a simple structured motor activity that enhances physical fitness.

### Materials:

- Open space in room large enough to comfortably fit the children

### Preparation:

- Before beginning the activity read over the plan and familiarize yourself with the storyline or make up your own story about a snow day.

### Procedure:

1. Begin by telling children you need their help acting out a fun winter story! Say, *“I am going to tell you a story, but I need your help acting it out. When I say a part of the story with words, you act it out with motions! We will act out all our motions in place. Let’s do one practice before we start.”*
2. Practice one saying one phrase and having children act out the movement before you begin the story. [Examples: I was running for the bus this morning; I was so sleepy when I woke up; I was so hungry for dinner; etc.]
3. Start the story: (Read the story with enthusiasm and place emphasis where needed)

*“This morning I woke up (raise your arms as if you are stretching and yawn) and when I looked out my window (hand over forehead as if you are looking) I saw snow falling*

*from the sky (start with your hands up and move then down using spirit fingers). I got excited! I ran (run in place) to my closet and grabbed some pants (put pants on), a shirt (put shirt on), socks (put socks on), snow boots (put your snow boots on), a scarf (wrap scarf around your neck), a big snow jacket (put jacket on), gloves (put gloves on), and a hat (put hat on). Whew (wipe sweat off forehead), that sure was a lot of clothes but I am going to be warm (hug yourself). Then, I took off running out my front door (run in place and open door). When I got outside I thought to myself (make a thinking face) “hmmm what can I do?”*

- At this point in the story, allow the children to give ideas of things to do in the snow, such as have a snowball fight, make snowman, make snow angels, take giant steps into the snow, catch snowflakes on your tongues, etc. Follow the children’s lead and do actions that match the children’s suggestions.
4. Thank the children for all their help in acting out and finishing your winter story. Encourage children to act out a winter story with their families at home.

# Heartbeat Beat

## Circle Time PA Activity 7

**Setting:** Large group

**Purpose:** To learn the importance of exercising your heart and to practice listening to your heartbeat and increasing heart rate when being active.

### Objectives:

- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will increase their heart rate through physical activities like dancing, jumping, and running.
- Children express positive feelings about themselves and confidence in what they can do. (Emotional and Social Development)
  - Children will try to increase their heart rate and express their ability to do so.
- Children demonstrate self-expression and creativity in a variety of forms and contexts, including play, visual arts, music, drama, and dance. (Cognitive Development)
  - Children will recall and imitate the musical tones, rhythm, beat and movement as they dance and sing.

### Materials:

#### Song lyrics

When I walk around (beat beat)  
My heart makes this sound (beat beat)  
I walk faster, it beats faster  
I can feel my heartbeat beat

When I dance around (beat beat)  
My heart makes this sound (beat beat)  
I dance faster, it beats faster  
I can feel my heartbeat beat

When I jump around (beat beat)  
My heart makes this sound (beat beat)  
I jump faster, it beats faster  
I can feel my heartbeat beat

When I run around (beat beat)  
My heart makes this sound (beat beat)  
I run faster, it beats faster  
I can feel my heartbeat beat

## Preparation:

- Review the heartbeat song lyrics and song (<http://colormehealthy.com/songs-and-lyrics/>)

## Procedure:

1. Ask children about muscles. Have children make a muscle pose and find their biceps.
2. Discuss how you can make muscles stronger (i.e. work it out, move it, exercise, etc.) Explain that the purpose of this activity is to learn about a very important muscle- the heart. Place your hand over your heart and have the children do the same. Say, *“the heart muscle is always moving and working, and that is called “beating.” If you move faster, your heart will beat faster.”*
3. Have all the children stand up and copy you, increasing the rate of hand tapping on chest at each phase to mimic increasing heart beats:
  - Stand still
  - Walk in place
  - March in place
  - Run in place
4. Sing “Heartbeat Beat.” Each stanza increases in speed.
5. Ask review questions: How can we speed up our heartbeat? Why is it important to be active for our heart?

## Variation:

- During the initial discussion about the heart, show a picture of a heart muscle. Explain the difference between the way we draw the heart shape and the way the actual heart muscle looks.
- Write the lyrics to “Heartbeat Beat” on chart paper. Depending on the current literacy skills students are learning or reviewing, incorporate a literacy lesson with the song lyrics.
  - Model reading from left to right, top to bottom. Point to the words as they sing.
  - Students come to the chart paper, point, and say high frequency words they have memorized. (I, can, my, it)
  - Find and highlight one particular letter. For example, the letter “T”.
  - Focus on one sound. For example, “H” like in the word heart.
- After the students have memorized the song, “Heartbeat Beat” can be used as an energizer.

# Card Matching

## Circle Time PA Activity 8

**Setting:** Large group, Circle time

**Purpose:** To facilitate cognitive development through a matching card game.

### Objectives:

- Children use their senses to construct knowledge about the world around them. (Cognitive Development)
  - Children organize and use information through matching, grouping, and sequencing. (CD-1n)
- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will participate in a simple structured motor activity that enhances physical fitness.

### Materials:

- Cards (<http://buggyandbuddy.com/winter-christmas-charades-free-printable-game-kids/>)
- Scissors to cut out the cards

### Preparation:

- Make sure that every card you have cut out has a match as to avoid any child feeling left out.

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining that they will be playing a card matching game as a whole class.
2. Say to the children, *"Today we are going to play a matching game! I am going to give you each a card from this deck. When all of you have a card I am going to say go and you are going to try and find the person with the matching picture on your card. We are going to time it each time and hopefully we will get faster and faster!"*
3. Hand out the cards to the children and then take a look at the time. Say go to let them know to start finding their partner and then when they have all found one note the time again and tell them how fast they were.

4. Go through all of the groups and note what picture each group is and who is in that group to reiterate the grouping.
5. Repeat this process again, re-handing out the cards, and encourage the children to be faster this time!
6. Before you end the activity, be sure to praise the children for good thinking skills.

**Variation:**

- **Additional matching:** You can use differently themed cards for each season such as pictures of different flowers for spring, beach activities for summer, and pictures of leaves for fall.

# Indoor Structured PA Activities

Activity
1. Spot the Dot
2. Snowflake Shake
3. Simon Says
4. Winter Olympics
5. Hot, Warm and Cold
6. Indoor Obstacle Race
7. Slide and Glide
8. Freeze Dance





# Spot the Dot

## Indoor Structured PA Activity 1

**Setting:** Small group

**Purpose:** To facilitate physical activity while practicing colors, counting, and body part identification.

### Objectives:

- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will play structured, physically active games with the polypots.
- Children develop awareness of basic safety rules and begin to follow them. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will follow basic safety rules while playing the games in order to avoid injury to self or others.
- Children engage in increasingly complex play. (Approaches to Play and Learning)
  - Children play with others with a common purpose.

### Materials:

- Polypots
- A safe indoor space with room for children to run and move around.

### Preparation:

- Lay the polypots flat on the ground with plenty of room to run between.

### Procedure:

1. Explain the activity to the children. Say, “*Today, we are going to play fun games with the polypots! Please listen carefully to the directions so everyone will know how to play safely.*”
2. **Color Polypots:** The teacher calls out a color. All children run to a polypot of that color and put *one* foot on the circle. (Note: Based on the number of students in the class, give the class a “maximum” for each polypot. For example, “Once four people are on a polypot, it is full and you’ll have to run to another polypot.”) After everyone has placed a foot on the appropriate color, call out a new color. Continue to call out different colors until it’s time to end the game.
3. Bring the class back together for the next game’s instructions.
4. **Body Part Polypots:** Similar to the first game, the students will run between polypots. Instead of calling out colors, the teacher will call out a body part. Students

will have to place that body part on *any* color of polyspot. Tell the students the maximum number of students allowed at one polyspot before it is “full.” Potential body parts to call out: elbow, hand, finger (pinky, thumb, etc.), toes, and knee. The students must run to a new polyspot every time the teacher calls out a body part.

# Snowflake Shake

## Indoor Structured PA Activity 2

**Setting:** Large group

**Purpose:** To give children a chance to be creative while also being active.

### Objectives:

- Children demonstrate creativity, imagination, and inventiveness. ([Approaches to Play and Learning](#))
  - Children will experiment with musical sounds and movement and make up dances for fun
- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors ([Health and Physical Development](#))
  - Children will participate in a simple structured motor activity that enhances physical fitness.

### Materials:

- Music

### Preparation:

- Find a large space with enough room for children to move around.

### Procedure:

1. Ask the class what happens when it snows. Tell them that when it snows, each snowflake is different and that they are going to get a chance to pretend to be a dancing snowflake.
2. Have the children pick a CD/song to listen to and then start dancing!
3. After about 30 seconds, pause the music and ask for a volunteer to teach the class his/her “special snowflake move”. Here are some suggestions if you need help getting started:
  - The Two-Step Hopping Snowflake: just take one step left, then one step right, followed by a hop.
  - The Little Slide Flake: Side step right & drag your left foot toward your right. Side step left & drag your right foot toward your left.
  - The Swimming Snowflake: Use your arms to pretend to swim (crawl stroke). Add a dive as well (hold nose, and squat down).
  - The Friends Snowflake: Motion to the right with your right thumb and motion to the left with your left thumb. Wiggle the hips at the same time.

4. Once the class has had a chance to practice the new move, restart the music so everyone can dance!
5. Then, pause the music again and ask for a new dance move. Repeat until each child has had a chance to create a dance move.

# Simon Says

## Indoor Structured PA Activity 3

**Setting:** Small groups

**Purpose:** To give children a chance to interact with one another during physical activity

### Objectives:

- Children form relationships and interact positively with other children. (Emotional and Social Development)
  - Children will demonstrate social skills when interacting with other children and play cooperatively with other children
- Children demonstrate the social and behavioral skills needed to successfully participate in groups. (Emotional and Social Development)
  - Children will follow social rules, transitions, and routines that have been explained to them
- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will participate in a simple structured motor activity that enhances physical fitness.

### Materials:

- None needed

### Preparation:

- Find a large space with enough room for children to move around.
- Review some movements, so you can suggest ideas in case the child playing Simon needs assistance

### Procedure:

1. Introduce the game you are going to be playing. Say, “*Today, we’re going to play Simon Says!*”
2. Explain the rules of the game. Each child will get a chance to be Simon. Simon will start by saying, “Simon says, ‘<insert action here>.’” Everyone must then do the action. But be careful because if Simon makes an action request without saying, “Simon says” first, you aren’t supposed to do that action. If Simon catches anyone, restart the game, but switch the person who gets to be Simon.
3. Be creative with your actions! Here are some action ideas to help you get started:
  - Jumping jacks or jumping up and down
  - Running in place

- Wave your arms
- Spin around
- Act like an animal (e.g. flap your arms like a bird)
- Touch your toes

**Variation:**

- For younger children who may not be developmentally ready to follow the “rules” of Simon Says, try this game where you as the teacher act out the motions and children have to follow you. You can take the movements that you see your children doing as inspiration!

# Winter Olympics

## Indoor Structured PA Activity 4

**Setting:** Large group, indoors or outdoors

**Purpose:** To facilitate gross motor development by practicing movements that mimic those seen in the winter Olympics.

### Objectives:

- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will refine movements and show generally good coordination as they act out different Olympic event movements.
- Children form relationships and interact positively with other children. (Emotional and Social Development)
  - Children will interact positively with others as they act out different Olympic event movements.

### Materials:

- None required, but see the variations below or use your own creativity to liven up this activity!
- Optional: Polyspots to group kids into countries

### Preparation:

- Prepare a space, indoors or outdoors, with enough room for the students to run around
- Review the list of Olympic events, making sure you are familiar with the movements for each event.

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining what the Olympics are and explain to the children that they will be participating in their own Winter Olympics today. Say, *“The Olympics are games that countries from around the world participate in every 4 years, either in the winter or the summer. The Winter Olympics have different events that people from all the different countries compete in for medals. The events they participate in are sports that let us enjoy the winter weather, even when it’s cold outside. Today we are going to have our own Winter Olympic games!”*
2. Split the children into small groups, of no more than 4 and assign them a country. You can have children gather around a polyspot if you would like to organize them that way.

3. Instruct children to begin to act out one of the Olympic events, demonstrating each for the children before you begin that “event.”
4. For example, say to the children *“First, we have the alpine skiing event! Skiing goes like this, you have each of your feet attached to a ski which is like a long, skinny board that lets you get through the snow down a mountain. You hold a pole in each of your hands to help you push off to get going.”*
5. Then, demonstrate a ski move, where you slide your feet forwards and backwards and pretend to use the poles to help you go down. You can even move your upper body left to right to mimic going around a corner.
6. Allow the children to do the movements for each activity until they get a good practice with each. Encourage them to be active and remind them to play hard as if this was a competition!
7. Go through as many of the events as you would like. The events that would suit this activity include alpine and cross-country skiing, curling, figure skating, ice hockey, speed skating, ski jumping, snowboarding.
8. Before you end the activity, be sure to praise the children for good sportsmanship and the positive words you heard students saying to each other.

### Variations:

- **Pass the torch and sing the national anthem:** Start off the game by passing the Olympic torch around to each child. You can create a torch out of construction paper, or just pass an imaginary torch! Then, sing the national anthem to kick off the Olympics.
- **Create your own event:** Allow the children to make up their own event that they would like to add to the list of Winter Olympics events.
- **Medal ceremony:** Create medals out of construction paper or foil yogurt tops strung with yarn to give to each child at the end of the game.
- **For younger children** who may not be able to do this in as organized of a fashion, try simplifying this activity into one where you act out the movements and have children follow along. Or, make this into a story about the Olympics and incorporate movements that your children are capable of doing.



# Hot, Warm, and Cold

## Indoor Structured PA Activity 5

**Setting:** Any size group

**Purpose:** To facilitate emotional and social development through problem solving.

### Objectives:

- Children form relationships and interact positively with other children. (Emotional and Social Development)
  - Children will interact positively with others as they help a child find the hidden object.
- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will participate in a simple structured motor activity that enhances physical fitness.

### Materials:

- Open space for the activity
- An object to hide

### Preparation:

- Prepare a space indoors big enough for the whole group to be in

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining that they will be doing a group activity where they will use their problem solving skills. Say, *“Today we are going to put your problem solving skills to the test! One person is going to close their eyes and we are all going to decide where to hide something that they have to find. Then when we have the person open their eyes, and we must tell them whether they are a hot, warm, or cold from the object. Hot means really close, warm means sort of close, and cold means not close at all.”*
2. Have the children spread out into a circle standing and pick one child to send to a different part of the room for a short period of time with their eyes closed.
3. While the child has their eyes closed, have the rest of the class find a place to hide the object the child will find. Then, invite the child with their eyes closed back to join the group.

4. Encourage the children to tell the person who had their eyes closed if they are a hot, warm, or cold distance from the hidden object as they move around the classroom. Encourage the children to do active movements as they guide the child finding the object.
5. Repeat as many times as you feel appropriate for your time frame.
  - Before you end the activity, be sure to praise the children for good sportsmanship and the positive words you heard students saying to each other.

**Variation:**

- **For younger children**, have them direct children saying “closer” and “farther” rather than hot, warm, and cold.

# Indoor Obstacle Race

## Indoor Structured PA Activity 6

**Setting:** Small group

**Purpose:** To expose children to an activity they can do indoors.

### Objectives:

- Children speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly. (Language Development and Communication)
  - Children will communicate their ideas and thoughts about what should be added to the obstacle course and how they should maneuver through the course.
- Children understand communication from others. (Language Development and Communication)
  - Children will demonstrate their ability to understand communication from others by responding with an action when another child or teacher tells them where to put a component of the course. They will also follow multistep directions while going through the obstacle course.
- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. (Physical Health and Growth)
  - Children will show awareness of their own body in relation to objects while skipping, balancing, and hopping through the obstacle course.

### Materials:

- Various portable play equipment (bean bags, polypots, scarves, floor tape, etc)
- Any other materials that would provide the children an opportunity to balance, skip around, or hop on.

### Preparation:

- Gather the materials and set up the beginning of the obstacle course to get the children thinking and interested in the activity. This could include beanbags in the shape of an S that children could zigzag run through or polypots scattered out that children could hop to and from, etc.

### Procedure:

1. With a small group of children, show them the beginning obstacle course that you created. Say, *“I was trying to make an obstacle course for you but I got stuck and couldn’t figure out what else to do. I really need your help. Let me show you what I have so far.”*
2. Then, demonstrate how to complete the part already set up. Encourage children to

try it too.

3. Next, introduce children to more materials for the obstacle course and let them explore the materials and come up with other obstacles for the course. You can help them if needed.
4. Once the obstacle course is finished, encourage the children to talk about each part of the course and demonstrate for everyone what they have to do.
5. While the children are going through the course, be there to remind them of what to do. Reinforce or teach the concepts of fast/slow, stop/go, in/out, over/under, around/through, beside, and between.
6. Once the children have gone through the course several times, encourage them to change the course and make new obstacles!

**Variation:**

- Take the same pieces of equipment and try this outside! Include fixed playground equipment in the obstacle course.
- If space is an issue inside, break the activity down into smaller parts. You don't need a whole open room to do this activity; try doing it with 1 or 2 obstacles only!

# Slide and Glide

## Indoor Structured PA Activity 7

**Setting:** Large or small groups

**Purpose:** To provide children with a simple, structured motor activity that allows them to get up and move around.

### Objectives:

- Children demonstrate self-expression and creativity in a variety of forms and contexts, including play, visual arts, music, drama, and dance. (Cognitive Development)
  - Children will show creativity and imagination when pretending they are ice-skating.
- Children identify and use common shapes and concepts about position during play and other activities. (Cognitive Development)
  - Children will show awareness of positions in space by following directions using spatial words.
- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will participate in a simple structured motor activity that enhances physical fitness.

### Materials:

- Open space indoors
- Polyspots or beanbags

### Preparation:

- Use the polyspots or beanbags to outline a “rink” for children to “skate” around

### Procedure:

1. Explain that in this activity, children will pretend to go ice-skating!
2. Discuss with children how to be safe while doing this activity. Remind them to maintain their own space, and only skate within the rink.
3. Show the children how to glide on their feet like they are ice-skating. Encourage the children to practice ice-skating with you.
4. Then, have children make different moves like real-life ice-skaters inside the ice rink! [Go forwards, backwards, twirl, etc.]

5. Once children have practiced some moves, use the beanbags or polypots to set up some small obstacles for them to skate through. For example, they can zigzag through the markers or skate in a circle.

**Variation:**

- Play a game of Freeze-skate! Turn on music and allow the children to skate around the rink at least once or twice. Then, turn the music off and that is the cue to freeze.

# Freeze Dance

## Indoor Structured PA Activity 8

**Setting:** Large group

**Purpose:** To engage children in an activity they can do while learning holiday/seasonal songs. This activity helps with inhibitory control of action and attention as children need to pay attention to stimuli and rules.

### Objectives:

- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors. **(Physical Health and Growth)**
  - Children will brainstorm ways to exercise and use games and structured activities to stay healthy.
  - Children will participate in structured and unstructured activities to enhance coordination and will need limited support to transition from one activity to another.
- Children develop large muscle control and the ability to move and explore their environment. **(Physical Health and Growth)**
  - Children will be able to perform actions smoothly, demonstrate coordination, and stop quickly.
- Children demonstrate appreciation for different forms of artistic expression. **(Cognitive Development)**
  - Children will participate in and ask questions about dance and music.
- Children demonstrate self-expression and creativity in a variety of forms and contexts, including play, visual arts, music, drama, and dance. **(Cognitive Development)**
  - Children will be able to express themselves through music and movement and be able to use different musical instruments as they participate in music activities.

### Materials:

- Music of your choice

### Preparation:

- Select music for the activity. Make a list of “Freeze poses” that can be used during the game. Some sample poses include:
  - Body ball: kneel down with fingers on the floor to make a ball with your body
  - Balance: Balance on one foot (switch between right and left legs)
  - T: Have children hold their arms out to each side to make the letter “T”
  - Frog: crouch down with knees out and arms down to the ground in front
  - Cat: Get on hands and knees
  - Hug: wrap your arms around yourself and squeeze

- Tree: Stand up straight with palms touching overhead.
- Touch toes: Bend down over your feet and touch your toes, or try to!
- Star: Jump out into a star shape with feet apart and arms lifted to create a star or “X” shape

**Procedure:**

1. Discuss the rules of Freeze dance and model expected behavior. When the music stops, children stop dancing and do pose that the teacher is modeling. Show the children examples of poses so they can practice before the game begins.
2. Start the music. Encourage the children and adults in the room to move and dance.
3. After several moments, stop the music. Say and model a pose. Everyone should freeze and hold that pose.
4. Restart the music, then freeze and strike a new pose! Repeat several times.



# Active Transition Activities

Activity
1. Active Animals
2. Lava Rocks
3. Snowman Shuffle
4. Acting Out Emotions
5. Ready, Set, Action
6. Follow the Leader
7. Mother May I?
8. Making Patterns with Moves



# Active Animals

## Active Transition Activity 1

**Setting:** Large group

**Purpose:** To inspire students to move all parts of their body to mimic animal movements and to take an active break.

### Objectives:

- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors ([Health and Physical Development](#))
  - Children use animal movements to enhance their physical fitness.
- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. ([Health and Physical Development](#))
  - The children move their bodies with good coordination to act like animals by running, hopping, galloping, etc.
- Children develop awareness of basic safety rules and begin to follow them. ([Health and Physical Development](#))
  - The children know what their bodies can do and move like an animal within their abilities to avoid injury to self or others.
- Children demonstrate creativity, imagination, and inventiveness ([Approaches to Play and Learning](#))
  - Use actions and movement to represent different animals.

### Materials:

- A safe space for children to move (indoors or outdoors)

### Preparation:

- Ensure the safe space is clear of tripping hazards

### Procedure:

1. Explain the quick activity by saying *“Today, we are going to take a break so you can use your body parts to move like an animal. When I say an animal name, I want you to think about how you can use your arms, legs, ears, nose, mouth, and whole body to move as much like that animal is possible. Also, think about the animal’s speed (fast or slow) and the sounds the animal makes.”*
2. Call out an animal name. After students have demonstrated how that animal moves, call out another animal without pausing the game. The children will move from one animal to another without stopping.

3. Animal examples: lion, dog, horse, kangaroo, fish, bird, tiger, elephant, giraffe, frog, chicken, alligator, snake

**Variation:**

- Select a student each time to call out an animal instead of the teacher selecting the animal each time.

# Lava Rocks

## Active Transition Activity 2

**Setting:** Large group, indoors or outdoors

**Purpose:** To engage children in active movement between activities.

### Objectives:

- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will step and jump from polyspot to polyspot.
- Children are willing to try new and challenging experiences. (Approaches to Play and Learning)
  - Children will accept the lava rock challenge and attempt the task independently.

### Materials:

- Polyspots
- A safe space for the activity with an even surface

### Preparation:

- Place the polyspots on the ground so that the children can step, jump, or leap from polyspot to polyspot without touching the floor on their way to the next activity (i.e. coming in from outside, going to center time).

### Procedure:

1. Introduce the activity to the children. Say, “*We are going to move to our next activity, but on the way there, we’re going to pretend the floor (carpet, tile, sidewalk, etc.) is lava from a volcano and the polyspots are rocks. You’re going to try to move from rock to rock without touching the lava. You can move by stepping, jumping, hopping, or leaping.*”
2. Show the students where to begin and how to step on each polyspot.
3. Allow the children to continue through the lava rocks until everyone has reached their destination.



# Snowman Shuffle

## Active Transition Activity 3

**Setting:** Large group, outdoors or indoors

**Purpose:** To give children an active break where they can pretend to be winter characters.

### Objectives:

- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will refine movements and show generally good coordination as they act out different winter character and animal movements.
- Children demonstrate the social and behavioral skills needed to successfully participate in groups. (Emotional and Social Development)
  - Child will follow social rules that have been explained to them while doing the activity.

### Materials:

- Open space to allow children to move around. If you do not have a large enough space for the whole class to participate at once, play the game in small groups.

### Preparation:

- Review the list of movements.

### Procedure:

1. Instruct students on how to do the activity. *“Today we are going to act like the things we might see outside during winter. I’ll tell you what movements to make, and then we’ll all make them together, moving from one part of our space to another part.”*
2. Start with the snowman shuffle. Encourage children to shuffle around like snowmen would move if they were gliding through the snow. Continue with the other movements: reindeer trot, moose mega-steps (large steps on all fours), penguin waddle, fox scurry, polar bear walk (big steps with arms above the children’s head), wind (breathing)

### Variations:

- You could integrate counting into this activity by telling children that they have to complete a specific number of movements for each character or animal. Children could come up with their own movements if they would like to contribute to the activity themselves.





# Acting Out Emotions

## Active Transition Activity 4

**Setting:** Large group, outdoors or indoors

**Purpose:** To give children an active break where they can act out emotions

### Objectives:

- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will refine movements and show generally good coordination as they act out different emotions.
- Children identify, manage, and express their feelings. (Emotional and Social Development)
  - Children will express a range of emotions using their bodies.

### Materials:

- Open space to allow children to move around.

### Preparation:

- Review the list of emotions and movements that go with them.

### Procedure:

1. Instruct students on how to do the activity. *“Before our next activity, we are going to take a break a break and practice acting out emotions that we feel sometimes. I’ll name an emotion and your job is to act it out!”*
2. Here are some emotions and movements that you could use:
  - Happy/excited – jump up and down and cheer
  - Sad – sag shoulders and walk around slowly
  - Fear/scared – run away and act scared
  - Angry/frustrated – stomp your feet and cross your arms
  - Love – give yourself a hug

### Variation:

- If you want to extend this activity beyond an active transition, talk with the children about some of the emotions that they experience. Explain that we all feel a range of emotions and that it is good to experience many different emotions.



# Ready, Set, Action

## Active Transition Activity 5

**Setting:** Large group

**Purpose:** To provide the children an active break

### Objectives:

- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will move their bodies in space with good coordination.
- Children understand communications from others. (Language Development and Communication)
  - Children follow directions given by teacher and respond to a request for action.
- Children will show understanding of numbers and quantities during play and other activities. (Cognitive Development)
  - Children show their ability to count when given a number of times to do a movement.

### Materials:

- Open space in classroom (generally circle time rug)

### Preparation:

- Think about the actions you are going to ask the children to complete. Some examples include a big side step, hop, giant steps forward or backward, twist, or jumping jacks.

### Procedure:

1. Before beginning the transition to another activity, have the children all stand up and say to them, “Friends, let’s stand up and move our bodies around!”
2. Then say, “Listen and watch me”, “Take one big step to the side (As you side step). Jump and twist two times (Count as you twist and jump; 1 twist 2 twists).”
3. Have the children repeat this, saying “side step, twist, twist”.
4. Then say “Take one big step to the side, jump and twist two times, and do a jumping jack. Invite the children to join in by saying, “Join in with me this time.” “Side step, twist, twist, jumping jack.” Repeat this again.
5. Add more movements to the set or start a new set of movements.

**Variation:**

- You can also have children add movements to the routine. Call on one child to add a movement. Once that child states the movement to add go through all the movements again. For example if the child says frog jump say “Side step, twist, twist, jumping jack, frog jump.”

# Follow the Leader

## Active Transition Activity 6

**Setting:** Large group, indoors or outdoors

**Purpose:** To facilitate gross motor development by listening to others and mimicking their movements when transitioning to a new activity.

### Objectives:

- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will participate in simple games and other structured motor activities that enhance physical fitness (songs with movement, throwing and catching).
- Children develop the large muscle control and abilities needed to move through and explore their environment. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will coordinate movement of upper and lower body.
- Children understand communications from others. (Language Development and Communication)
  - Children will respond to requests for action.

### Materials:

- None required.

### Preparation:

- Make sure there is a space, indoors or outdoors, with enough room for the students to move around

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining the rules of this short activity to the children. Say *“We’re going to do a quick game on our way to where we are going to do our next activity. We are all going to stand in a line and someone is the leader. The leader has to come up with a movement that all of the rest of us will do.”*
2. Have everyone line up and choose a child to be the leader. Have that child pick a movement, and instruct everyone to follow the leader, doing that movement.
  - Some examples of movements are: marching, jumping up and down, running in place, leaping, tip toeing, or arm circles.
  - You can also choose pairs of children to be the leader at the same time.
3. After children have had a chance to do the movement, have the leader pick another movement. Aim for having 2-3 movements during the transition.

4. To make sure all the children have a chance to be the leader, play this game throughout the entire day!

# Mother May I?

## Active Transition Activity 7

**Setting:** Large group, indoors or outdoors

**Purpose:** To incorporate an active transition between activities and give children a chance to practice their counting skills.

### Objectives:

- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will participate in simple games and other structured motor activities that enhance physical fitness.
- Children show understanding of numbers and quantities during play and other activities. (Cognitive Development)
  - Given a number 0-5, children will be able to count out that many movements.

### Materials:

- None required.

### Preparation:

- Make sure there is a space, indoors or outdoors, with enough room for the students to move around

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining the rules of this short activity to the children. Say, *“We’re going to play a quick game on our way to where we are going to do our next activity. We are all going to stand in a line and I’m going to be the Mother. You will take turns asking me if you can move by telling me how many steps and what kind you want to take. Here is an example, “Mother May I take 3 tiny steps?”*
2. Practice one round to make sure the children understand.
3. Then, choose a child to ask if the group can take a certain number of steps. The mother can say yes to the child’s request or suggest another movement they can do. Remember not to say “no!” explicitly to children. If the mother says “no”, she must make a suggested modification. For instance, “You cannot take 3 giant steps, but you can take 1 giant step.”
4. When the children take their steps, have them count each step out loud.





# Making Patterns with Moves

## Active Transition Activity 8

**Setting:** Large group, indoors or outdoors

**Purpose:** To take an active break by making patterns with movement

### Objectives:

- Children engage in active physical play indoors and outdoors. (Health and Physical Development)
  - Children will participate in simple games and other structured motor activities that enhance physical fitness (songs with movement).
- Children compare, sort, group, organize, and measure objects and create patterns in their everyday environment. (Cognitive Development)
  - Children will recognize simple repeating patterns and create them during play.

### Materials:

- Music (optional)

### Preparation:

- Make sure there is a space, indoors or outdoors, with enough room for the students to move around

### Procedure:

1. Start off by explaining the activity to the children. Say, “*We’re going to do a quick activity to move around before we start our next activity. We are going to make a pattern with our movements.*”
2. Have the children start off by doing 1, one-legged hop. Then, children will do 2 frog jumps, followed by 1, one-legged hop (similar to the 12 Days of Christmas song).
3. Continue with the rest of the movements (3 jumping jacks, 4 skips, and 5 backwards steps) so that the pattern will be 1; 2-1; 3-2-1; 4-3-2-1; 5-4-3-2-1.
4. You can also come up with your own fun movements!