

Space Explorer Obstacle Course - Levels C & D

PLAY

To celebrate the power of play by engaging students in a Mars-themed obstacle course that combines movement, imagination, and social connection. Inspired by the energy and curiosity of Mars in the Playful Astronauts journey, students explore adventurous movement challenges that promote confidence, creativity, and joyful participation.



Learning Intentions

Students aim to explore creative movement by using their bodies in playful and imaginative ways.

Students aim to work cooperatively with others by taking turns and encouraging peers.

Students aim to use pretend play to imagine they are astronauts exploring planet Mars.



Success Criteria

I can move through the obstacle course safely and follow instructions.

I can use my imagination to pretend I am exploring Mars.

I can take turns and cheer on others kindly.



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Duration: 15 - 20 minutes

Objective

To celebrate the power of play by engaging students in a Mars-themed obstacle course that combines movement, imagination, and social connection. Inspired by the energy and curiosity of Mars in the Playful Astronauts journey, students explore adventurous movement challenges that promote confidence, creativity, and joyful participation.

Players

Whole class or small groups

Suitable for 4 - 26 students

Students rotate through the obstacle course individually or in pairs

What You Need

Cones or markers

Tunnels (play tunnels, large cardboard boxes, or chairs arranged for crawling)

Hoops, soft mats, balance beams, or stepping markers

Optional: space-themed props (astronaut hats, flags, planets, scarves)

Optional: music for atmosphere or countdowns

AAC devices or communication boards as required

Setup

1. Set up an obstacle course indoors or outdoors with clear pathways and safe spacing.
2. Include a variety of movements such as crawling, stepping, balancing, reaching, or weaving.
3. Use imaginative Mars-themed language or simple signs at each station, for example:
 - “Jump over the Mars craters.”
 - “Crawl through the Mars caves.”
 - “Tiptoe past the meteor field.”
 - “Collect a space rock and return to base.”
4. Revisit the Mars page in *The Playful Astronauts* and explain:
 - “Mars reminds us that play helps us grow, connect, and feel joyful.”
5. Clearly explain safety expectations: one explorer at a time where needed, safe bodies, and listening to instructions.



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Gameplay

Step 1: Explain the Mission

Gather students and introduce the adventure:

- "Today we are astronauts exploring Mars."
- "We will move through the course using our bodies and imagination."

Model each obstacle clearly, showing students how to complete it safely.

Step 2: Begin the Exploration

1. Send students through the course one at a time or in pairs, depending on space and needs.
2. Encourage imaginative language during play, for example:
 - "Use your jetpack to hop across the rocks."
 - "Slow steps through the space dust."
 - "Plant your flag on Mars mountain."
3. Encourage peers to cheer and support each explorer:
 - "You've got this."
 - "Great exploring."
4. Rotate students through the course multiple times if desired.

Step 3: Reset and Rotate

- Assist students back to the waiting area.
- Change roles if students are helping with cheering, countdowns, or mission control.

Debrief / Reflection

Gather students together and ask one question at a time:

- "What was your favourite part of exploring Mars?"
- "How did it feel to play and imagine?"
- "Why is it fun to move and pretend together?"

Reinforce the message:

"Play helps us feel strong, connected, and happy."

Winning the Game

There are no winners or losers.

Success is shown through participation, imagination, movement, and kindness toward others.



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Sensory-Specific Learner Variation

Purpose: To support regulation, engagement, and safe participation.

Adjustments include:

- Offer choice-based stations so students can select preferred movements.
- Provide predictable routines and visual station cues.
- Allow students to observe first and join when ready.
- Include sensory stations, such as touching textured “Mars rocks” or waving scarves as space dust.
- Reduce noise or music volume if needed.

AAC-Specific Supports

1. Prepare AAC in Advance

- Pages with: go, stop, my turn, finished, jump, crawl, help, fun

2. Model AAC Use

- The teacher selects symbols while narrating actions: “Jump,” “My turn,” “Finished.”

3. Supported Participation

- Students may indicate turns, choices, or actions using AAC, pointing, or gesture.
- Eye gaze and single-button responses are valid.

4. AAC Reflection

- Ask: “What did you like?”
- Students respond using AAC, gesture, or pointing.

Accessibility and Inclusion Notes

- Ensure all pathways are wide, flat, and free of clutter.
- Adapt obstacles for seated or upper-body movement (reaching, tossing, arm motions).
- Offer alternative roles such as countdown leader, cheer captain, or mission control helper.
- Allow flexible pacing and multiple ways to participate.
- Celebrate effort, creativity, and teamwork equally.

Teacher Notes

“Space Explorer Obstacle Course – Levels C & D” supports physical development, imaginative play, cooperation, and emotional wellbeing. Linked to the Mars theme, it reinforces that play is a powerful life skill that builds confidence, connection, and joy. This activity works well as an energiser, end-of-week celebration, or outdoor learning experience that brings movement and imagination together.

