

Explorers Preschool Curriculum

Let's Explore Pathways



Developed by
Marcy White
Program Coordinator
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Arkansas State University Childhood Services
JoAnn Nalley, Director



Thank you to the following colleagues who supported the development of Explorers Preschool Curriculum.

Reviewers

Janice Carter
Program Coordinator
A-State Childhood Services

Mandi Edmonds
Program Specialist
A-State Childhood Services

Sandra Withers, APRN
Healthy Child Care Arkansas
UAMS

Editor

Diana Courson
Associate Director
A-State Childhood Services

Let's Explore Pathways

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Let's Explore: Pathways

Pathways can be roads, sidewalks, or trails. They help us travel from place to place and invite us to wonder about what is around the next corner. An investigation of pathways can also support children's parallel interests in maps and signs. It can be an excellent pick for any time of year when your group will be able to go outdoors to explore.

This topic might be a fit for you if...

- Children seem interested in understanding where sidewalks or trails begin and end.
- Children build paths or roads with blocks or other materials or often go on pretend play journeys.
- You'll have the resources and opportunities you need to invite children to follow and build pathways.

Let's Talk About Pathways

Use words like these during everyday conversations with children.

concrete
corner
crosswalk
curve
gravel
hill
intersection
lane
map
pedestrian
route
sign
switchback
trail
trailhead

Specific types of paths: sidewalk, natural trail, bike path, boardwalk, roadway, and so on.

Words to describe settings: urban, wooded, garden, courtyard, and so on.



Pathways Collectibles

Collect some of these interesting objects to investigate with children. Families can help!

compass
concrete frame and tools
hiker's backpack
hiking boots and walking stick
mountain bike and road bike tires
path-making materials
atlas, road maps
state park/nature area brochures

Preparing to Explore Pathways

1. With your teaching team, think about and discuss the following questions.
 - What experiences have our children had with pathways? What background knowledge do they most likely have?
 - What resources could be helpful as we explore this topic with children? Are there any special places we might go to or special people who might visit our classroom as we learn about pathways?
 - What are some things that children might learn and do as we explore pathways? What new words or concepts could they begin to understand?
2. Let families know that the group is interested in pathways. What can they tell you about their family's experiences? Think together about ways that families can be involved. For example, a parent might be eager to talk about their work building or repairing roads. Or, families might be interested in joining their children for a walk on a local nature trail.
3. Gather books and materials to add to learning centers and to use during small group experiences. You'll find suggestions on the pages that follow.



Learning Center Extensions – Pathways

Here are some examples of materials that could be added over time for daily free play.

For more information on incorporating materials into your classroom, see the *Learning Everywhere* section in the Getting Started packet.

Table Toy/Fine Motor Area

- Miniature brick blocks
- Interlocking ball or marble tracks
- Interlocking wooden train tracks
- Puzzles and games with roads, such as Ravensburger *Snail's Pace Race* or *Rivers, Roads, and Rails*

Science Area

- Photos of pathways, such as those included in this curriculum
- Pieces of concrete, paving bricks, and/or other building materials, with magnifying glasses
- Collection of natural objects gathered along a nature trail or a photo album that documents children's nature walks
- Factual books about pathways, such as:

Roadwork, Sally Sutton and Brian Lovelock, Candlewick, 2017

The Arkansas Nature Lover's Guidebook, Tim Ernst, Cloudland, 2010

Music and Movement Area

- Hopscotch mat
- Stepping stone toys
- Blue painter's tape to make paths for walking and balancing on

Sand and Water Play Areas

- Aquarium gravel and small pebbles with toy construction trucks
- Damp sand with brick-making molds

Learning Center Extensions – Pathways

Block Area

- Loose parts such as tree branch slices, round game chips, wooden tiles, and smooth river rocks that children can use to build paths around and through block structures
- Road signs
- Toy vehicles
- Wooden or plastic North American wildlife toys
- Large hollow blocks and planks that children can walk on

Dramatic Play Area

- Road trip play props
 - suitcase
 - maps
 - travel brochures
 - car keys
 - steering wheel
 - car seat for children or dolls
 - chairs that children can arrange for large-scale pretend play
- Or, hiking play props
 - backpacks
 - compass
 - trail maps
 - hats
 - field guides
 - picnic/trail food
 - sunglasses
 - camera

Art Area

- Blank paper roll for adding machine (or other long strips of paper)
- Cars with textured wheels for making tracks in paint, clay, or playdough

Book Area

Add some of these books and/or your favorite books with roads, trails, or other pathways.

Along a Long Road, Frank Viva, Little Brown Books for Young Readers, 2011

A New Kind of Wild, Zara Gonzalez Hoang, Dial Books, 2020 *for older preschoolers

Goat's Coat, Tom Percival and Christine Pym, Bloomsbury, 2018*

Henry Hikes to Fitchburg, D.B. Johnson, HMH Books for Young Readers, 2006*

Henry's Map, David Elliot, Philomel Books, 2013

Hike, Pete Oswald, Candlewick, 2020

Hiking Day, Anne Rockwell and Lizzy Rockwell, Aladdin, 2018

I Love the Mountains, Haily Meyers and Kevin Meyers, Gibbs Smith, 2020*

Mapping Sam, Joyce Hesselberth, Greenwillow Books, 2021

Me on the Map, Joan Sweeney and Qin Ling, Dragonfly Books, 2018

Mister Postmouse's Rounds, Marianne Dubuc, Kids Can Press, 2015

Mrs. Peanuckle's Hiking Alphabet, Mrs. Peanuckle and Jesse Ford, Rodale Kids, 2021

Out the Door, Christy Hale, Neal Porter Books, 2020*

Sheep Take a Hike, Nancy E. Shaw and Margot Apple, HMH Books, 1996*

Sidewalk Flowers, JonArno Lawson and Sydney Smith, Groundwood Books, 2015

The Gruffalo, Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler, Puffin Books, 2006*

Up the Mountain Path, Marianne Dubuc, Princeton Architectural Press, 2018

***Denotes a recommended read-aloud to share with groups of children.**

Talking About Books

As you share books with individuals, small groups, or larger groups of children, ask questions like these:

- **Beginning:** I wonder what this book is about. Do you see any clues on the cover?
- **Middle:** How would you feel if that happened to you?
- **End:** Help me remember: Who were the characters in our story?

Talking together about books is an important part of every preschool day!

Conversations about Pathways

Use prompts such as those suggested here as you talk with children throughout the day. For more information on incorporating planned conversations into your daily schedule, see the *Learning Every Day* section at the beginning of this book.

Pathways Conversations

daily - during meals, play times, transitions, or group times

Try asking one or two questions like these when you have opportunities to talk with individuals, small groups, or the larger group of children.

- What are some things that you know about roads/sidewalks/trails?
- If we wanted to build a path, what could we use?
- What do you think we might see/hear on our walk today?
- How would we get to (familiar place) from here?
- What are some ways that we stay safe when we go for walks?
- How do you think roads/trails are made? Who makes them?
- What is the name of the street where you live? Why do you think it is called that?
- I wonder - why do some streets have sidewalks?
- Have you ever been hiking? Tell me about that...
- Do you think animals use paths, too?
- Do airplanes use roads? Why or why not?

At least once a week, make a chart to write down children's answers to a question. Talk with children one, two, or a few at a time to collect responses.

Later, read the written responses back to the group. Post the chart where it can be viewed by children and families.

What did you notice on
our walk?

There were numbers on mailboxes
- Bella

A cat in the window - Kaylin

A sign that said "welcome" - Ava C.

Some yucky litter trash - Mason

A lawnmower in a yard - Xander

The stop sign - S-T-O-P - Eli

Berries and bird poop all over,
under a tree -Sofia

The dog that barked at us - Ava W.

A big truck zoomed by - Sam

A part where the sidewalk was
broken - Grace

Tiny yellow flowers - Ben

The round part (manhole cover)- Ajay

A guy mowing grass - Donovan

Some birds in a tree - Jervae

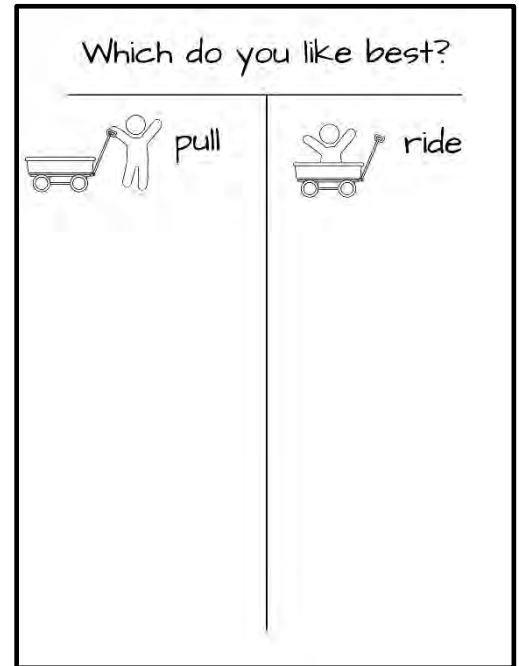
Conversations About Pathways

Pathway Polls

1-3 times per week – at arrival or group time

Choose a question from the list below or think of one of your own. Make a chart with the question and two possible responses, using picture cues when possible. Invite children to write their names or place name cards to respond.

- Do you live on a paved road or a dirt road?
- Do you like to go for walks?
- Would you rather - Walk? Ride a bicycle?
- Have you ever gone hiking?
- Would you rather – Walk on a flat trail?
Walk on a hilly trail?
- Would you rather - Pull a wagon? Ride in a wagon?
- Would you rather – Walk through a city?
Walk through a forest?



Sharing Our Experiences So Far

several times a week - during meals or play times

As you talk with individuals and small groups of children, tell about your own positive experiences with pathways. For example, you might talk about a walk on a favorite nature trail or taking a baby for a stroller ride around the block.

Listen attentively as children tell about their experiences, too. Help children make connections between shared experiences. (“You live on Oak Avenue, and Jayden lives on Maple Lane. Both of your streets are named after... trees!”)

Songs, Rhymes, and Games about Pathways

These playful songs, rhymes, and games can be incorporated into group times and transition times.

The Wheels on the Bike - *to the tune of Wheels on the Bus*

The wheels on the bike go 'round and round,
'Round and round, 'round and round.
The wheels on the bike go 'round and round,
All through the town. (Or, along the trail.)

Additional verses:

The handles on the bike steer back and forth.
The bell on the bike goes, ding, ding, ding.
The pedals on the bike go up and down.
The brakes on the bike go squeak, squeak, squeak.
The rider on the bike says, "On your left!"

Did you know that many cyclists call, "On your left!" to prevent collisions when passing? Children can learn that when a biker gives this warning, they can help by staying on one side of the trail to make room for the bicycle to pass safely.

Twinkle, Twinkle Traffic Light - *to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*

Twinkle, twinkle, traffic light,
On the corner, shining bright.
Red means stop, do not go.
We wait for green to go, you know.
Twinkle, twinkle, traffic light,
On the corner, shining bright.

More Traditional Songs About Roads, Paths, Trails, and Travel

Bumping Up and Down in My Little Red Wagon

Going on a Bear Hunt

She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain

The Bear Went Over the Mountain

The Grand Old Duke of York

This Land is Your Land

Songs, Rhymes, and Games about Pathways

Are We There Yet? *-to the tune of Are You Sleeping?/Frère Jacques*

Are we there yet?

Are we there yet?

Not even close!

Not even close!

A long, long way to go yet,

A long, long way to go yet,

We're not even close!

Additional verses

2. Almost there!/Not too far to go now.

3. Yes we are!/End with a cheer - Yaaaaay!

This song can be fun for field trips or walks to the park. One of the easiest ways to teach the call-and-response structure is for two adults to sing it back and forth to one another. Children will join in as they catch on.

Everyone Can Hike *- traditional, adapted*

Use this song to teach the ASL sign for stop. To sign [stop](#), extend one hand out flat with your palm facing up. Bring your other hand down with a chopping motion to rest on your palm. This game could also be played with a traffic light or stop sign prop.

March around a large rug or other play space as you sing:

Everyone can hike, hike, hike.

Everyone can hike, hike, hike.

Everyone can hike, hike, hike,

Until it's time to STOP! (Everyone freezes!)

Repeat with other actions, such as bike (pedaling or steering motion with hands as you walk), skip, and jog. What other actions would children like to try?



Pathways Playlist

Get Up and Go - Rhythm Child

Happy Trails - Roy Rogers

Hop to School - Jazzy Ash

On the Sunny Side of the Street – Dan Zanes

Riding in My Car - Elizabeth Mitchell

Through the Woods - The Okee Dokee Brothers

Small Group Learning Experiences – Pathways

Share learning experiences like the ones on the following pages with small groups of children each day. Groups should usually consist of three to seven children, rather than the whole group at once. Small group experiences may occur as children choose to join a teacher during free play time or during a separately scheduled small group time.

Consider the following questions as you choose daily learning experiences.

- **What is it about pathways that children seem most curious about?**
Let your observations and conversations with children be your guide as you select experiences that invite children to pursue their interests and seek answers to their questions.
- **What are our learning goals for individual children and for the group as a whole?** Choose experiences that support specific objectives for learning. Strive to create well-rounded plans that support all domains of development.
- **How can we extend children’s thinking and learning?**
Choose activities that can be connected to children’s experiences so far. Remember that it is often appropriate to re-run planned experiences. Offering an experience two or more times over a few days or weeks invites children to gain expertise and deepen their understanding.

In the course of this investigation, additional interests such as bicycles or bridges may emerge. It’s always OK to follow children’s interests in a new direction, as long as the related learning experiences are firsthand, authentic, and engaging.



Pair planned learning experiences with ample opportunities for open-ended, free choice exploration in the classroom and outdoors.

Investigating Pathways

Let's take a closer look at the pathways around us. What will we notice? What questions will we have?

Materials

- Clipboard with paper and pencil/marker for each child and adult in the small group
- Camera (optional)

There may be many different types of pathways to discover indoors and out. Here are some possibilities.

- Alleyways
- Breezeways
- Driveways
- Garden Paths
- Hallways
- Sidewalks
- Staircases
- Trails for walking or bicycling
- Walkways

Before sharing this experience with children, take time to explore pathways on your own. Plan a route that will invite children to notice several different pathways, **or** plan to focus primarily on one pathway that you predict children will be most interested in.

Explain to children that you often follow paths as you walk to investigate your favorite places. Today, you'll investigate the pathways themselves. Remind children about specific safety rules and boundaries before you go and throughout the walk as needed.

Go together to explore pathways. As children look around, talk together about their observations and ideas. Here are some guiding questions.

What makes this a pathway?

What do you notice about this pathway?

How do you think this pathway was made?

How is this pathway different from (another path experienced recently)?

What would you like to find out about this pathway?

Find a safe, comfortable place for children to sit and make field sketches on their clipboards. An adult can also use a clipboard to write down children's comments and questions. When you return to your room, debrief by talking together about where you went, what you saw, and what you would like to learn about next.

Investigating Pathways (cont.)

Helpful Hints

If you have several different pathways to explore, plan to repeat this experience numerous times. There are many things to discover! For example, children on a sidewalk might measure the number of steps between each crack in the walk, point out road signs and house numbers, and wonder about storm drains. Children in a stairwell might count steps, notice features of handrails, explore high and low perspectives, and spot EXIT signs or floor numbers.

Including Every Explorer

Plan with the needs and abilities of your group in mind. Even a hallway near your room can be fascinating when children have time to look closely. Think of ways to provide close supervision for children with more impulsive behavior. This could be a good opportunity for family volunteers.

More to Do (optional)

- Create a KWL chart with children. Divide a large piece of paper into three columns. In the first column (K), invite children to tell you what they *know* about the pathway. In the middle column (W), record what children *wonder* about the pathway. Go investigate and/or talk with a groundskeeper who can help answer children's questions. Afterward, in the last column of your chart (L), record new things that children have *learned* about their pathway.
- Decorate a pathway with sidewalk chalk.
- Revisit your pathway in different weather. Has anything changed?
- Invite families to visit the pathway with their children before or after class. What would their children like to show or tell them?
- Create a display or book that combines quotes from children, children's field sketches, and photos of your pathway investigation.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Cognitive Development – CD 1.1, CD 2.1, CD 2.4

Physical Health and Development - PH 1.1, PH 2.2, PH 3.2

Language Development – LD 1.1, LD 2.1

Emergent Literacy - EL 3.1, EL 3.2, EL 3.3

A Path Like That

Let's take a closer look at photos of pathways.

Materials

- Path photo cards from this curriculum
- Camera (optional)

Prepare for this experience by printing and cutting apart the photo cards. You may wish to laminate them or cover them with clear contact paper for durability.

Examine the path photos together. You may wish to look at them all together informally, or you may want to invite each child to choose one to hold, look at, and talk about.

Begin this small group experience by considering some things that your group already knows about paths. For example, children may know that paths are used to go from place to place. People make paths, and paths can be made in many different ways.

As you look together at the path photos, talk about things that children seem curious about. Here are some possibilities.

- Where might this path go?
- What do you think this path is made of?
- How is this path like or different from other paths in the photos?
- Have you ever walked on a path like this? Does this photo remind you of a path in our community?
- If you could visit one of these paths, which one would you pick? Why?

Listen to children's stories as they tell about their experiences on paths like these. You might also encourage children to look for helpful features on different paths. For example, a boardwalk path helps people travel over wet ground.

Children may notice that the photos show a *linear perspective*. That means that the path seems to stretch out from the bottom of the image, becoming narrower and sometimes vanishing farther away from the photographer.

Try using a camera to take photos of a hallway, sidewalk, tricycle path, or another familiar path. If children want a photo with a linear perspective, where could they stand to take their photo? If children seem interested, experiment with different angles and perspectives.

A Path Like That (cont.)

Including Every Explorer

We can include not-yet-verbal and less-verbal children in conversations like these by incorporating questions that can be answered by nodding or pointing. We can also check in with families for background information that can help children feel included. “Naomi, I heard that you love to go for rides on the trail around the lake!... Has anyone else been on that trail?”

Notice children’s cues about interest and engagement. Shorten the activity for children who are younger, less experienced, or less interested. Stretch and extend for children who are older and highly engaged.

More to Do (optional)

- This curriculum can be found online under the resources tab at www.asuchildservices.org. If viewing this curriculum online, [click here](#) to view slides of the pathways photos. A smartboard or projector can be used to share large images with children. What new ideas are sparked by large images?
- Display a pathway photo next to your easel or on your art table. Children may wish to paint or draw pictures that incorporate pathways like these.
- Look for pathways in books and/or magazines. Magazine photos can be added to a collage if desired.
- Create an email, newsletter, or blog post that explains linear perspective to families. Invite each family to share a photo of a favorite pathway. Print the photos to make a book, collection of sortable cards, or wall display.
- If your program takes field trips, plan to investigate a unique pathway in your community. Pedestrian tunnels, boardwalk trails, and brick walkways are all pathways! Prepare for your outing by finding out about experiences children have had with the path so far and what they are curious about.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Language Development – LD 1.1, LD 2.1, LD 3.1

Mathematical Thinking – MT 2.1

Science and Technology – ST 1.1, ST 3.3

Social Studies - SS 1.1, SS 2.2







Pathway Survey

What questions do we have for other people who use a path? Let's create an invitation to hear what others have to say!

Materials

- Sticky notes, such as Post-It brand notes, small squares of paper, or index cards
- Pencils or inexpensive ink pens
- A box or basket for pens and notes
- Materials to make a sign
- A weighted response box (see Helpful Hints)

This experience may be a fit when children have expressed curiosity about something along a path or about people who use a path. Here are some examples of things that children might wonder.

- Where are you going?
- What do you know about this bridge?
- What broke the sidewalk? (In a place where the sidewalk is bowed and cracked.)
- How do you use this path? (Run, walk dog, bicycle, etc.)

Remind children, "You wondered about..."

Explain that you are going to invite other people who use the pathway to share what they know.

Work together to make a sign to introduce your survey. Arrange your response materials and sign where they can be easily seen by people on the trail.

At the end of the day, retrieve the sign and materials. Let children know that you will open the response box on their next school day. Do children have predictions about what people might have said?

Important: An adult should open the box and preview the contents before sharing them with children. This can occur after children leave or before they arrive the next day.

When children join you, open the box again and read through the responses. Talk together about what you find out. Have any new questions emerged?

Where are you headed?

Our Pre-K class at St. Patrick's School is conducting a survey. We wonder where people on the sidewalk are going.

Please write a note and drop it in our survey box. Thank you!



Pathway Survey (cont.)

Helpful Hints

Use a shoebox or coffee canister to create a response box. Cut a hole in the lid so that sticky notes can fit inside. Add weight by placing some sand or rocks in the bottom of the box, and then tape the lid closed.

Survey materials can be placed on a bench or chair, tied to a fence railing, or displayed in some other way. Secure your materials so that they don't blow away.

You may wish to encourage colleagues and families to visit your survey station to ensure that your group receives plenty of responses. You could also offer the survey for several hours each day for several days.

Including Every Explorer

Older, more experienced preschoolers may want to help write words on your sign. Younger children can contribute by dictating what they want the sign to say, drawing pictures, and/or decorating with stickers.

More to Do (optional)

- Sort or group responses that are similar. What was the most prevalent response? Were any of the notes funny or surprising? In some cases, you may want to talk about which answers are real and which are not. For example, someone may suggest that dinosaurs broke the sidewalk. Children can identify that this is not really true. The person who wrote this note was pretending or telling a story for fun!
- Use clipboards to conduct a poll of families or children in another group. Choose a question that has two possible answers, such as the survey questions found in this curriculum.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Social and Emotional Development – SE 3.1

Cognitive Development – CD 2.3, CD 2.4

Emergent Literacy – EL 3.1, EL 3.2, EL 3.3

Social Studies - SS 1.1, SS 2.1, SS 2.2

Meet the Pathways Expert

Let's talk with someone who builds, maintains, or uses a path.

Materials

- Large, blank index cards
- Dark ink pens or markers

To prepare for this experience, identify someone who can answer the children's questions about pathways. Here are some possibilities.

- A city Parks Department employee
- A state park ranger
- A groundskeeper who maintains a courtyard or garden path at your program
- Someone who uses trails for hiking, jogging, or mountain biking
- Someone who can tell about a multi-day backpacking trip or a cross-country run

Invite your visitor to bring items that relate to their trail work or hobby. Explain that they will interact with a few children at a time. Plan enough time so that every child has a chance to talk with the visitor.

Before the guest arrives, invite children to think about questions they would like to ask. Write each child's question on one side of an index card and have them write their name on the other. Remind children that they will talk with the visitor a few at a time. They will all get a turn if they would like one.

When your guest arrives, invite them to display the items they have brought on one of your classroom tables or in an outdoor meeting space. Your guest will become a learning center during a scheduled playtime, with a few interested children at a time coming over to look, touch, listen, and ask questions.

Stay near to provide supervision and support. As children visit with the expert, help them find their question cards and ask their questions. Ask children what they would like for you to write down on their card so that they can remember the expert's answer.

Helpful Hints

Interacting with a few children at a time creates a richer, more meaningful experience for guests and children alike. If this experience is new to children, they may worry about being left out. With consistent opportunities to interact with guests in this way, they will eventually trust that everyone will get a turn to ask their questions.

Meet the Pathways Expert (cont.)

Including Every Explorer

More impulsive children may have a tough time waiting for a turn. Subtly include them in the first group to visit with the guest.

Some children are slower to warm to new people. They may prefer to hang back, watching and listening from a distance. You might ask this child if they would like for you to ask a question on their behalf.

Some older preschoolers may prefer to use inventive spelling to write their questions and answers.

More to Do (optional)

- Add preschool-appropriate versions of your expert's tools to children's play areas. Examples include concrete trowels with wet sand, a trail map and framed backpack in the dramatic play area, or balance bikes with helmets in the outdoor play area.
- If your group takes field trips, consider a visit to a trail that your visitor talked about. Or, provide information for families who may want to visit the trail after school or on the weekend.
- Invite children to draw pictures representing something they learned from their visitor. Write down exactly what children say about their drawings.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Social and Emotional Development – SE 1.2, SE 3.2

Language Development – LD 1.1, LD 2.1, LD 3.1

Emergent Literacy – EL 1.1, EL 3.1, EL 3.2, EL 3.3

Social Studies – SS 1.1

Elevated Pathways

Let's use simple, open-end materials to construct pathways on the table or floor.

Materials

- Wide craft sticks
- Paper cups
- Photos of elevated pathways - printed or on a digital device (optional)
- Teddy bear counters or other small figures (optional)
- Clipboards with paper and pencils (optional)

Plan to share this experience in an area where children can find ample room to work. A table and wide floor space, a large rug, a gymnasium, or a hallway are all possibilities.

Look together at elevated pathways, such as boardwalk trails and pedestrian bridges. What do children notice? What do they wonder about? Invite children to explore today's building materials, cups and craft sticks. Allow time for open-ended investigation as children experiment with different ways to stack and arrange the materials.

Soon, a child will discover that a craft stick can be balanced between two cups. Invite the child to show their work to others. Do children agree that this structure resembles an elevated pathway? Experiment together with ways to combine cups and sticks to make longer and more complex pathways.

Notice whether children work together to build one long pathway or work independently to create their own paths. Also, notice whether pathway structures are linear (one straight line) or web-like, with offshoots and spurs. Do children curve their pathways or create sharp corners?

Once children feel satisfied with their designs, they may want to experiment with arranging small figures on their pathways. They may also want to use clipboards to draw diagrams of their paths before taking them apart at the end of playtime.

Helpful Hints

- Small bathroom cups or larger party cups both work for this experience. Non-disposable cups may also be used if preferred.
- Some children may prefer to build towers or use materials in other ways rather than constructing pathways. That's OK! The group may even think of creative ways to incorporate towers and other elements into their pathway-related play.

Elevated Pathways (cont.)

More Helpful Hints

- If children become engrossed in building long or wide pathway structures, help them create space to continue their work. For example, children might work together to move chairs to make space for a pathway to continue under the table.

Including Every Explorer

Lightweight materials like these are easily toppled as children move through the play space. Stay near to provide social support as children work through moments of frustration. This may be an excellent time to reinforce what “by accident” means. Children can help one another rebuild structures when needed.

If your group includes very young preschoolers or children with limited use of hands, you may want to substitute larger, heavier materials. Wooden unit blocks and plank blocks such as Kapla planks are possibilities.

More to Do (optional)

- Fine-tipped markers can be used to write and draw on craft sticks. Children may wish to create passing lanes or other details.
- If your group takes field trips, consider visiting a boardwalk trail or other elevated pathway. Plan ahead to find a safe place where children can get a close look at how the path is supported from below.
- Create a pathway building kit for free choice use. Possibilities include cups and planks of varying sizes, battery-operated tea light candles, glass floral gems, and more. Additional materials can be added over time in response to children’s ideas.
- In an outdoor area with a protective surface, such as rubber tiles or pea gravel, work together to construct a low, elevated pathway that children can walk across.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Social and Emotional Development - SE 1.2, SE 2.1, SE 2.2

Cognitive Development – CD 1.1, CD 1.2, CD 2.1, CD 2.3, CD 3.1, CD 3.2

Mathematical Thinking - MT 1.2, MT 3.1, MT 4.1

Science and Technology – ST 2.1, ST 3.2

Path Games, part 1

Let's play a simple turn-taking game that follows a path. Later, older preschoolers can create a path game of their own. (Path Games, part 2)

Materials

- Teacher-created path game such as the ones shown here:
<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/apr2019/number-path-games>
- Or, a commercial path game such as:
 - Snail's Pace Race
 - Hoot Owl Hoot
 - Barnyard Bunch
 - Chutes and Ladders

Show the game to children. Talk about whether they have played board games at home before. If so, who did they play with, and what do they remember about playing board games?

Explain that board games are a fun way to play together. Players take turns as they move pieces on the board. In some games, everyone works together to achieve the same goal. In other games, it's a race. Each player moves as far or as fast as they can, and everyone celebrates with the player who gets to the goal first.

Set up the game board together and look at what you see, including illustrations and text. Use your fingers to trace along the path on the game. Read the rules aloud and teach children how to use special game pieces, such as dice or spinners. Check children's understanding. "I drew a card with a purple square. Can I go here? How about here? Where should I go?"

Once children understand the game, play away!

Helpful Hints

- Because we want children to have positive experiences with games, playing board games should always be optional. Children are invited but not required to play.
- Simple board games offer an opportunity for children to explore structured games with rules. An adult's patient, composed support is beneficial to children as they learn about turn-taking and navigate setbacks that are sometimes part of gameplay.
- Notice natural opportunities to introduce and practice math concepts, such as using one-to-one correspondence, counting, and recognizing written numerals.

Path Games, part 1 (cont.)

Including Every Explorer

Match the complexity of the game to the ages and abilities of children in your group. The simplest games use a game board with a short, straight path. They invite children to use a color-coded card, dice, or spinner as they move just one or two spaces at a time.

More complex games invite children to count dots on dice and/or recognize written numerals. The game's pathway may be circular, and it may have different paths to choose from. Children playing more complex games might use more than one component (such as cards and dice), and they might incorporate strategy as they decide which pieces to move.

When choosing or designing games for young children, our goal is to provide a satisfyingly challenging game without being overly frustrating. There may be times when a teacher simplifies a game for some groups and extends it for others. Some children also benefit from playing a game one-on-one with an adult or partnering with an adult to play with just one or two peers.

More to Do (optional)

- Once children know a game well, add it to your table toy/fine motor play area. To make games more durable for independent play, reinforce box corners with clear tape and laminate fragile pieces.
- Invite children to teach their game to a different adult. Can they explain how to play and answer this new player's questions?
- Create a lending library of games for family game nights. Include path games alongside matching games, simple card games, and other favorites. You may wish to create a brochure or flyer that explains the benefits of board game play and offers tips for success.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Social and Emotional Development - SE 1.2, SE2.1, SE 2.2

Cognitive Development – CD 1.2, CD 2.1, CD 2.3, CD 2.4, CD 3.1, CD 3.2

Mathematical Thinking - MT 1.1, MT 1.2, MT 4.1

Path Games, part 2

Let's create our own games! This activity is ideal for older preschoolers and kindergarteners.

Materials

- Board games that children have experience with
- Game making materials, such as:
 - Construction paper
 - Figures or animals to use as game tokens
 - Dice or cubes to make your own dice
 - Index cards, sticky notes
 - Scissors, tape, glue,
 - Markers, crayons, stickers
 - Posterboard or a large piece of paper to serve as a game board

Begin by talking about what children know about board games. You may wish to make a chart with children's responses, such as, "Everybody takes turns." Ask if children would like to work together to design their own path game.

Begin with decisions about the theme of your game. Children might want to create a frogs-and-lily pads game, a rabbit's path through a garden, or something else. Are there any props that might support the children's chosen theme? For example, a race track game might use Hot Wheels cars as game pieces, while a castle path game might use plastic jewels from your loose parts collection.

Next, think together about the path you'll make. Will it be straight, or will it be circular? Do children want to make a small path on a tabletop game? Or a larger path on the floor? You can see some examples of floor games by following the link in *Path Games, part 1*.

Finally, decide how players will move around the path. Will they use dice? Or cards? Or something else? Will there be any special spaces on the board for extra turns or moves? What is the goal of the game, and how is the game won? Work together to make components for the game.

Give your game a test run, and then decide about any additions or changes you would like to make. Later, each group can show and talk about their games during a brief whole group gathering. Do children want to try playing one another's games?

Path Games, part 2 (cont.)

Helpful Hints

- This experience works best with groups of four or fewer children. In larger groups, it is hard for everyone to be actively involved and agree about game decisions. If you must work with groups of five or more children, consider having children within the group work with partners or groups of three.
- Children may wish to work on their games over several sessions throughout the week. Create a safe space to save materials for later.
- To the adult eye, games designed by preschoolers may seem illogical, incomplete, or hard to understand. As long as children are happy with their game, the game is a success!

Including Every Explorer

If your group includes younger and/or less experienced children, consider modifying this activity by offering a collection of miscellaneous game boards, tokens, and other pieces from old board games. Children can investigate these materials in open-ended ways. Some children may invent games, while others may be content to group and arrange the pieces in various ways.

More to Do (optional)

- Display children's board games in your program's lobby or in another place where families can look closely at their children's work.
- Add child-created games to your fine motor or table toy area.
- Offer oversized dice, rubber spots, sidewalk chalk, and/or other large materials for open-ended gameplay in your outdoor gross motor area.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Social and Emotional Development – SE 1.2, SE 3.2

Cognitive Development - CD 1.2, CD 2.1, CD 2.4, CD 3.1, CD 3.2

Physical Development and Health – PH 2.1, PH 2.2

Emergent Literacy - EL 3.1, EL 3.2, EL 3.3

Mathematical Thinking – MT 1.1, MT 1.2, MT 2.1, MT 3.1, MT 4.1

Investigating Maps

Let's look at a collection of maps. What will we notice?

Materials

- A collection of maps, such as these.
 - Atlas
 - State or regional street map
 - Topographical maps
 - Trail maps
 - City maps
- Magnifying glasses
- Paper with pencils, markers, and/or other tools for drawing and writing
- Book, *Me on the Map*, by Joan Sweeney and Qin Leng (optional)
- Device for viewing online maps (optional)

Talk with a small group of children about what they know about maps. They may talk about their family using a map or remember maps in stories or movies. You may also wish to use the book, *Me on the Map*, to introduce maps and scale.

Look through the collection of maps together. This is an informal exploration. Plan to be responsive to anything that sparks children's curiosity. Here are some things that children may want to do.

- Investigate how maps fold and unfold
- Trace the path of roads or rivers with their fingers
- Compare maps. Wonder about the colors and features of different maps
- Notice words and symbols on maps
- Use a magnifying glass to take a closer look
- Represent something about maps by drawing or writing

Talk informally with individual children to answer their questions and provide information that helps them understand the maps. A map is a drawing of a place that shows where everything is. Maps can help us know where to go. Labels on a map tell us the name of places and things, like roads or rivers. Many maps use symbols, and a map's legend tells us what the symbols mean.

Children may talk about online maps they have seen, such as navigation or weather apps. If desired, you can use a device to look at Google Earth, Google Maps, or another map app or website you are familiar with. What questions do children have about maps? If there's something about maps that you don't know, how could you find out?

Investigating Maps (cont.)

Helpful Hints

State and regional visitor centers offer free road maps. Maps can also be found in state park guides and tourism brochures that are available at visitor centers.

Including Every Explorer

The intent of this experience is not for children to become fluent in map reading. Instead, it is an opportunity for them to interact with maps in their own ways. Watch for cues about children's engagement, moving on to something else if children's interest seems to wane.

More to Do

- Add maps to your dramatic play area or elsewhere in your play space.
- After looking at the map of a room in the book, *Me on the Map*, invite children to use clipboards to draw maps of their classroom or outdoor play area.
- Work together to create a large map of your indoor or outdoor play space that can be used for a simple game. Hide an object somewhere in the play space, and then mark its location on the map. Can children read the map to find the hidden object?
- Create an invitation to make maps in your art area.
- Invite children to talk with their families about how they use maps in everyday life.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Language Development – LD 1.1, LD 2.1, LD 3.1

Emergent Literacy – EL 1.2, EL 3.1, EL 3.3

Mathematical Thinking – MT 3.1, MT 4.1

Social Studies - SS 1.1, SS 2.2

Bear Hunt Map

Let's create a map that depicts a pathway from a familiar song.

Materials

- Paper and marker for making a chart
- Posterboard or large piece of paper for making a map
- Drawing and writing tools such as markers and crayons.
- Additional art materials, such as paints and/or collage materials (optional)

Begin by enjoying the action song, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. After you're through, invite children to recall all of the places that were mentioned in the song. There are many different versions of the song, but examples include home, tall grass, mud, river, forest, and cave.

With children's help, make a numbered list of the places in your song. As you sang the song, where did you go first? Where did you go next? And where did you go after that?

Next, ask children if they would like to make a map to represent all of the places in the song. Show children your large paper and make a curving line that leads from one corner to a corner on the opposite side of the page. This will be your path. Write evenly-spaced numbers along the path that match the numbers on your list.

Invite each interested child to add something, such as forest, river, or grass, to the map, using the numbered chart as your guide. When your map is finished, sing the song again. This time, point to each place on the map as you sing.

As with all Explorers small group activities, this experience is intended to be shared with just a few children at a time. This means that you will end up with several similar maps. Invite children to notice similarities and differences on other groups' maps.

Bear Hunt Map, (cont.)

Helpful Hints

If you are unfamiliar with the action rhyme, *Going on a Bear Hunt*, you can find many videos online to view while you are away from the classroom. Once you've learned the words and actions, you can put the video away and share the activity with children in your own way. Singing and playing with a favorite person is far more valuable for children than watching videos!

Including Every Explorer

With younger, less experienced groups, you may wish to make a single, very large map. Each group can choose one place from the song and decide how to represent it using art materials. For example, a group representing "tall grass" might opt to snip various shades of green paper and sprinkle the paper bits onto glue or sticky contact paper. A group representing "ooey, gooey mud" might choose to finger paint with thick, brown paint. Children's completed work can be arranged along a pathway display on a wall in the hallway or classroom.

More to Do (optional)

- With a small group of children, create a storytelling path to act out/retell a familiar story. One character (child) moves to interact with other characters. Stories that work well for telling this way include *I Went Walking*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *Goat's Coat*, and *The Gruffalo*.
- Display one of the maps in your music and movement area. Laminate another for floor-level play in your block area, and laminate a third for imaginative tabletop play with dollhouse figures. Notice how children use the maps in different ways.
- Mix a batch of ooey, gooey mud for outdoor play. If you have a place where children can safely do so, experiment with walking through the mud barefoot to leave muddy footprints along a pathway.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Cognitive Development – CD 2.1, CD 2.4, CD 3.2

Physical Health and Development – PH 2.1, PH 2.2

Emergent Literacy - EL 1.1, EL 1.2

Mathematical Thinking – MT 3.1, MT 4.1

Creativity and Aesthetics, - CA 1.1, CA 2.1, CA 3.1

Where Does the Water Go?

What happens on and around our pathways when it rains? Let's go for a wet-weather walk to find out.

Materials

- Umbrellas or raincoats and rainboots for children (optional)
- Camera (optional)
- Clipboards with paper and pencils or fine-line black markers (optional)

You'll need to plan ahead or respond in the moment to carry out this experience while it is raining or soon after a rain. This is an opportunity for children to see storm drains and other drainage features in action.

Invite children to go for a rainy day walk with you to take a closer look at rainwater on and around your favorite pathway. Pause to look closely and talk about things you notice together. Here are some possibilities.

- Water flowing into storm drains beside a sidewalk
- French drains, channel drains, or other sidewalk features
- Previously dry creek beds that are now flowing alongside a natural trail
- Wood or stone water bar features that divert water to the sides of a natural trail
- Puddles in low-lying areas of the trail
- Bridges across flowing water

Depending on the weather and children's clothing, you might opt to make field sketches and/or take photographs of interesting features. What questions do children have? Once you return to the classroom, you can research together or ask an expert to find answers to children's questions.

Safety Note:

Carry out this experience on a mild, rainy day. Stay indoors if thunder can be heard or lightning can be seen, or if severe weather warnings are in place.

Do not allow children to play around storm drains.

Helpful Hints

You may wish to explore pathways around your program on your own as you prepare for this experience. What features do you notice that children are likely to be interested in? This can help you plan your walk with children.

Where Does the Water Go?, (cont.)

More Helpful Hints

Rainy day walks are a treat for the senses, and there's so much to explore! While this experience is guided by the question, "Where does the water go?", remain open to children's other interests. You may find yourselves observing earthworms, floating twigs in a puddle, or exploring in some other way.

An adult can use an image search such as Google Images to find diagrams that can help answer children's questions about storm drains. Always preview images before sharing with children.

Including Every Explorer

Plan a route that is accessible to children using wheelchairs and walkers as needed.

Some children may feel uncomfortable walking in the rain. This experience can be carried out after rain has passed by. Another possibility is to use a covered walkway to observe the flow of rainwater nearby.

More to Do (optional)

- If the rain has ended, revisit your pathway the next day. What has changed? What theories do children have about where the water went?
- Use a garden hose or sprinkler to explore the flow of water along a playground path. Children can experiment with using materials to divert the water.
- Research together to find out where water that enters creek beds or storm drains goes. Older preschoolers, especially, may be interested in ways that they can help protect waterways.
- If your program's budget allows, consider investing in a class set of rain suits or rain pants and galoshes. These enable active play and exploration all year round.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Cognitive Development – CD 2.1, CD 2.4, CD 3.1

Science and Technology – ST 1.1, ST 2.1, ST 3.1, ST 3.3

Social Studies – SS 2.1, SS 2.2

Bird's Eye View

Let's take a look at aerial images of a pathway that we know well.

Materials

- Print-outs from satellite map program, laminated or covered in contact paper
- Clipboards
- Dry erase markers (optional)

As you prepare for this experience, use a satellite mapping app or website to capture images of a pathway your children know well. For example, you might choose an image that shows a city block with a sidewalk or an image that shows trails on your school grounds. You can find a tip sheet for capturing photos in this curriculum packet.

Print a full-page image and make an identical copy for each child or each pair of children. Laminate these or cover them with contact paper.

Ask children, "What do you think [our pathway] might look like to a bird flying over?" Or, "What do you think [our pathway] would look like if you flew over in an airplane?" Remind children that maps usually offer a bird's-eye view, which means looking down from above.

After you've talked about what the children think they might see, distribute the satellite images of your path. What do children notice? Use your fingers to trace a route that you often follow.

Place the satellite maps on clipboards and take them for a walk. Pause now and then to use landmarks such as buildings or trees to find where you are on the maps. Older preschoolers may wish to use dry erase markers to trace your route on the map.

Use words like *curve* and *intersection* as you study the maps. Talk about distance and spatial relationships in ways that interest children. "We just passed the playground. What will we come to next?" You could also think together about ways that a map can help people.

When you return indoors, take a few minutes to debrief. What did children notice? What are they thinking or wondering about?

Bird's Eye View (cont.)

Helpful Hints

Clear page protectors are another inexpensive way to protect your printouts.

Including Every Explorer

The intent of this experience is not for children to become skilled in reading maps. This is simply an opportunity for children to become more curious about various perspectives and ways to see a place. Invite each child to participate in the way that seems best suited to their age, interests, and abilities.

If your group includes very young, impulsive, or inexperienced preschoolers, consider making maps of your fenced playground that can be used while children engage in outdoor play.

Did You Know?

The aerial images that you see on map apps and websites come from cameras on satellites or aircraft. You can often find photographic clues that tell you what time of year they were taken.

More to Do (optional)

- Add a map and dry erase marker to your writing area or another play space. Notice how children interact with the map.
- Invite a family member or friend of the classroom to show children a remote-controlled drone with a camera. What questions do children have? Use the drone to take an aerial photo of your group. This experience should only occur with an experienced adult drone pilot and children should stand at a safe distance when the drone launches and lands.
- Continue to use your favorite satellite map app or website to help children conduct research and answer their questions throughout the year.

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Cognitive Development – CD 2.1, CD 2.4, CD 3.1

Science and Technology – ST 1.1, ST 2.1, ST 3.1, ST 3.3

Mathematical Thinking - MT 3.1, MT 4.1

Social Studies – SS 2.1, SS 2.2

Capturing Images from Google Maps

This is one option for the *Bird's Eye View* learning experience.



Go to [Google.com/maps](https://www.google.com/maps)

Enter the address or name of the place you want to find in the search bar.



Use the button at the bottom of the screen to switch to a satellite image.



Use the + and - buttons to zoom in on exactly the area you want. You can re-center the image by clicking and holding down your left mouse button.

If desired, you can turn off labels by clicking “more” and then unchecking the box that says, “labels”.



Save a screen shot by pressing the **Windows key** and the **print screen** key at the same time. This will save the image to your photos file.

Now, you can crop the photo and/or insert it into your favorite program to print.

In addition to pathways, this technique can be used for all sorts of things children are interested in, including roads, waterways, and construction sites!

Making a Path

Let's design and build a path of our own. This complex experience will take place over several days or even weeks.

Materials

- Drawing paper with crayons, markers, or pencils
- Path-building tools and materials such as:
 - Landscape fabric
 - Paving stones
 - Gravel or mulch
 - Wooden planks

Prepare for this experience by talking with colleagues and administrators. What are your goals for children? What feels feasible and appropriate for your program? A pathway project could be simple and temporary, or children might be involved in designing something more extensive that will be used by groups for years to come.

Think with both adults and children about paths you might make. You may wish to use magazines and online resources to gather ideas. Here are some possibilities.

- A path for riding on wheeled toys
- A sensory path through an herb and/or wind garden
- A stepping stone path to hop along
- A miniature roadway for toy cars and trucks
- A temporary, creative path for imaginative play, made from a variety of repurposed materials
- A path that leads into a wooded area, ending in a small clearing that can be used for nature study

You may wish to invite someone with path-building expertise to partner with your group. Consider the decisions that children will be able to make and ways that they can be actively involved. Talk with children about their ideas for the path. They might conduct polls or vote to help make some decisions.

Invite children to draw diagrams to show their ideas for their path. You can use clipboards to make sketches at the site where your path will be built. Once path-building begins, give children opportunities to investigate materials and tools and invite small groups of children to become involved in safe and age-appropriate ways.

When the path is complete, children can help decide on safety rules and introduce their path to families and others. Invite children to tell what they remember about building the path. What happened first? Then what? What was the last step to be completed?

Making a Path (cont.)

Helpful Hints

This experience can be modified to meet your resources and your group's abilities. If you're seeking something very simple, try making a chalk path on concrete. Or, use flattened cardboard boxes to build a temporary track on grass. If you are ready for something more complex, try making a path with wood, gravel, or other more permanent materials. Many ideas can be found by searching for "garden path" or "playground path" on sites like Pinterest.

You might also look for inspiration in the book *Seasons of Play: Natural Environments of Wonder* by Rusty Keeler, Gryphon House, 2016.

Including Every Explorer

Consider the needs of children in your group as you plan your path. Will the path be accessible to a child who uses a wheelchair, walker, or another assistive device? If your group includes a child with limited vision, does your path lead safely to exciting things to touch and smell? You'll also consider children's abilities when finding ways for them to help with this project. Different groups of children may take on tasks of varying complexity, but everyone can be involved in some way!

More to Do (optional)

- Take photos of each step as you complete your project. Use these to create a scrapbook, timeline display, or sequencing cards.
- Enlist the help of children's families as you build your path. Many family members may have skills and knowledge to lend to this project!

This experience offers special opportunities to build and strengthen:

Physical Health and Development – PH 1.1, PH 1.3, PH 3.2, PH 3.3

Mathematical Thinking - MT 2.1, MT 3.1, MT 4.1

Science and Technology – ST 1.1, ST 2.1, ST 3.2

Social Studies - SS 1.1, SS 2.1, SS 2.2

Active Physical Play – Pathways

Invite children to participate in activities such as these during outdoor play times. Some children will want to join in, while others will prefer to continue their own free choice play. Some activities found in this section may also be appropriate for indoor gross motor play or active group gatherings.

Obstacle Course

Gather a collection of materials to create a simple obstacle course path. For example, children might weave through traffic cones, hop along a stepping stone path, crawl through a tunnel, and circle back to begin again!

Follow the Leader

Introduce or revisit this classic game. Children and adults can take turns leading a line of children all around the play space. Look for opportunities to incorporate balancing, leaping, crawling, and other locomotor skills.

Wagon Path

Use traffic cones or other markers to define a path for wagons. Children can use loose parts and props to create anything they envision along the route - gas stations, drive-thru restaurants, campsites, and so on!

Chalk Trails and Tape Trails

Invite children to use pieces of chalk to make the longest trail they can. Would they like their path to be straight, curved, or zig-zag? Once the trail is finished, walk along it or drive large toy trucks along it. Blue painter's tape can be used to make similar trails in an indoor play space.

Big Truck Tracks

This is a fun activity for a sprinkler play day or another time when children will be able to clean up after getting messy. Mix equal parts tempera paint and water. Pour this mixture into low-sided, plastic storage boxes and place next to a sidewalk or other hard play surface. Provide an assortment of large toy trucks that children can dip in the paint and roll to make tracks. Periodically move the paint container(s) to find new spaces to work. Or, pour the paint mixture directly on the sidewalk for children to roll through.

Active Physical Play – Pathways (cont.)

Hopscotch

Using a hopscotch mat or chalked hopscotch board, adapt the game to meet your group's abilities and experience level.

Beginner

Hop with two feet together to land on each single square. Try to land with one foot in each square on double squares. When you get to the end of the board, hop off and run back to the beginning.

Intermediate

Hop on one foot on single squares. Try to land with one foot in each square on double squares. When you get to the end of the board, turn around to hop back along the board to the start.

Advanced

Toss a stone or beanbag onto the board. As you hop down the board, do not land on the square with the stone/beanbag. Hop over it instead! When you get to the end, turn around and hop back. When you arrive at the square with the stone or beanbag, try to lean down to pick it up without losing your balance.

Many cultures have their own path games that are similar to hopscotch. Do families have any other versions to share?

A Camping We Will Go (parachute game)

Hold onto the edges of the parachute and stretch it tight. March around in a circle as you sing to the tune of the Farmer in the Dell.

*A-camping we will go, a-camping we will go,
Hi-ho, away we go, a-camping we will go.*

- Continue to march and pretend to huff, puff, and strain as you sing the next verse, "We'll hike up the hill."
- Raise and lower the parachute in unison as you sing the third verse, "We'll pitch our tent right here."
- Sit down with your legs under the parachute. Pull the edge of the parachute to your chins as you sing, "We'll crawl into our tent." Pretend to sleep.
- If desired, you can reverse the steps when you wake. We all wake and stretch ... We pack our tent away... We hike down the hill... A-camping we did go!

Even More Pathways Experiences

- Invite children to use orientation skills as they move around their school building. You might ask, “If we wanted to get to the library from here, which way would we go?” Or, notice how many doors you walk past on your way to the playground.
- Become stewards of your favorite pathway. Children can wear gloves to pick up non-hazardous litter. They could also sweep the path and care for it in other ways.
- Invite a guest to show children how concrete is framed and poured. Children should not handle wet concrete, but they can watch closely, ask questions, and observe how the concrete changes as it dries.
- Search for animal tracks, leaf imprints, and other impressions on sidewalks and paved paths. How did those get there? Investigate impression-making with clay or playdough.
- Use commercial stepping stone kits or your own materials to invite each family to create a stepping stone to add to a path. This could be a lovely tradition for a graduation ceremony or other special event.
- If your group takes field trips, think of other places in your community where you might investigate pathways. Possibilities include but are not limited to a college or high school track, a nature center or botanical garden, or a bicycle pump track (to observe).

Notes:

Concluding Your Pathways Exploration

1. With your teaching team, think about and discuss the following questions.

What new experiences have our children had during this exploration? What new knowledge and skills have developed?

Do the children seem ready to conclude this exploration? Have their questions been answered? Is their interest waning? If children are still excited about pathways, think about ways to continue and extend the investigation.

How can we document children's learning and help children share what they have learned with others?

Your pathways exploration might end with one of these activities.

- Invite families to join you for a walk on a community trail or pathway.
- Create a book of photos of children's path-making activities. Share this with families digitally or send a photocopy of the book home with each child.
- Invite children to serve as experts as they show others a path they built or maps they are familiar with. They can share this information with children from another group or you could invite a program administrator or other guest to visit.

2. Talk with children about their favorite memories about your pathways investigation. Model gratitude by creating thank you cards or letters to the families, school members, and community members who supported your group.
3. Where will you go next? This topic may transition gradually into an investigation of ramps, tunnels, or bridges, or children may be ready for something entirely different! Use your observations and conversations with children to help you plan your next exploration.