TEAM NUTRITION IOWA™

No to Low Cost Ways to Promote Physical Activity

in the Childcare Setting

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This project was funded by a Team Nutrition grant from the United States Department of Agriculture. This card set supports the Iowa Team Nutrition grant objective to provide fun and interactive physical activity for children, teachers, parents, and other caregivers by showcasing low to no cost equipment and activity ideas. The "Junk Equipment" cards were prepared by Ripley Marston, Professor of Health, Physical Education and Leisure Services at the University of Northern Iowa. The "Pavement Paintings" cards were prepared by Carrie Scheidel, M.P.H., Iowa Department of Education. The "Stories in Motion" were prepared by Jennifer Neal, Iowa Department of Education. This set is a supplement to the existing Iowa Team Nutrition Setting the Stage cards that promote nutrition and physical activity.

To view the existing cards visit: http://www.iowa.gov/educate/

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No to Low Cost Ways to Promote Physical Activity

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Junk Equipment

These cards demonstrate ways to reuse materials to promote physical activity. All equipment is to be constructed by adults and only used by children while being supervised by an adult.

Fluffer Balls

Equipment: Styrofoam packing peanuts; nylon fabric; plastic grocery bag

Construction: Dissect an old beach ball as a pattern. Trace the pattern onto the nylon fabric; cut and sew pattern together, leaving one side open to slip the plastic bag inside as a liner. Fill the ball with the Styrofoam peanuts and finish sewing the last panel together.

Use: This creates a soft ball for the children to catch without fear of hurting their hands. The balls can also be kicked or punted easily without fear of damage to surrounding area. This is a nice ball for beginning catchers to use.

The Spinning Target

Equipment: Discarded plastic bottles; 3 wooden dowels; pieces of broken hoops or garden hose; 10 feet of 1” x 4” lumber; wood glue; 4 bolts.

Construction: Side pieces are 3 feet long; bases are 2 feet long. Drill holes for bolts and dowels. Bolt the bases to the side pieces. Slide the bottles and spacers onto the dowels and glue the ends into the sides. Let dry and you’re ready for some fun.

Use: Have children throw at the bottles, using fluffer balls (page 2) or other throwing objects. When hit, bottles will spin. Numbers, letters or other symbols can be placed on the bottles to integrate academic concepts.

Small Rhythm Instruments

Equipment: Soda plastic bottles, shampoo bottles, school lunch milk cartons, etc.

Construction: Place 1-2 ounces of popcorn kernels into the container and tape/glue the opening closed. If using clear plastic containers, use color popcorn kernels to add an extra stimulus.

Use: Have the children follow along to the provider's or CD's beat; create a marching band; do an aerobic rhythmical routine with the shakers. Container with handles can be used as rhythm sticks.

Geo Twister and Target

Equipment: Cut up bed sheets; Paint or permanent markers.

Construction: Draw geometric shapes on the bed sheet using the primary colors. Be sure to randomly place the shapes on the sheet and in random colors.

Use: The sheet may be hung from the wall as a throwing target or be placed on the floor as a form of the game of twister. The children may be asked to name the shape and/or color of the shape they hit. If on the floor, a simplified twister game can be played or the child could be asked to cross the area trying not to step on a certain shape or color. A game can be played by the older children by selecting a specific shape and color as the target shape.

Shower Curtain

Equipment: Shower curtain; permanent markers.

Construction: Some commercial curtains will need no additional work; blank curtains can be drawn on to create a variety of stimulating activities. For safety reasons, it is recommended that the curtain be taped to the floor when in use.

Use: Works on many of the locomotor patterns. For example, walk in the “water” being careful not to step on any fish; jump over the alligators; hop from lily pad to lily pad. Follow the animal tracks across the sheet. Use the same movement pattern as the animal that made the track (i.e rabbit, alligator, bear, cat).

Throwing Target Box

Equipment: Discarded cardboard box, string, empty plastic bottles, two washers (at least ½") for each bottle.

Construction: Attach the string to the bottles by drilling a small hole in the cap. Pull the string through the hole and tie to one washer. Fasten the cap back on the bottle. Next, punch a hole in the top of the box to thread the string through. Tie the string to the second washer, to secure the string from slipping through the hole. The width of the box will determine the number of bottles appropriate as targets. Six inches between bottles is recommended as minimum distance. A hole can be cut in front of the box to help the balls roll back out.

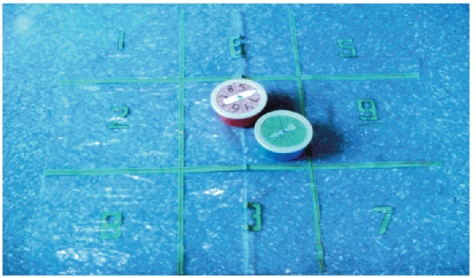
Use: The box is a good self contained target to keep the throwing objects, such as fluffer balls (page 2) from getting scattered all over the area. The bottles will swing when hit, which adds to the child's sense of accomplishment. Markers can be used to put letters or numbers on the bottles for integration concepts.

Beginning Twister

Equipment: Clear shower curtain or piece of clear plastic tarp, permanent marker, and disposable plastic margarine tubs with lids.

Construction: Cut the shower curtain into 36” X 36” squares (or larger if desired). Divide each square into 9 squares, by drawing a tic-tac-toe board. Write the numbers 1 through 9. Cut out the numbers you drew earlier. Spinners can be made from the margarine cups. Dissect the top into as many sections that you’d like. Put numbers on one top and body parts on another top. Cut out an arrow shaped spinner and put a hole in the middle using a hole puncher. Attach the arrow with a metal clasp.

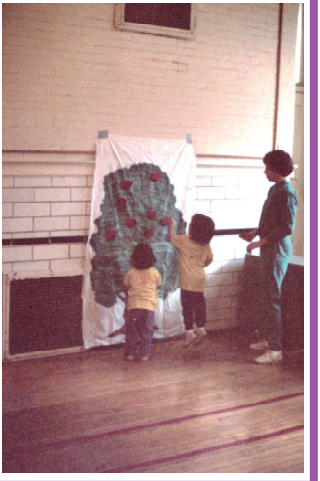
Use: Make enough sets of the equipment for every pair or group of 3-4 children to have one. One child spins for the number while another child spins to see which body part is to be used. The provider could also spin and give the children directions.



Picking Fruit Trees

Equipment: Old bed sheet; fruit cut outs; Velcro/magnets; permanent markers.

Construction: Draw a big tree on the sheet. Color the fruit cut-outs (note: some hobby stores will sell thin, wooden fruit cut outs). Use Velcro to attach the fruit to the tree (magnets work well for younger children).



Use: Have the children practice jumping up to pick the fruit. They can count each piece they pick. Letters or numbers can be added to the fruit to spell words or to work on math functions such as adding or subtracting the points) Have the children do the picking first with their dominant hand and then with the non-dominant hand.

Jumping Ropes

Equipment: Cord sash (rope) from hardware store.

Construction: Rope can be bought in bulk and then cut to the proper length for the children. If using plastic rope, melting the ends will help keep the ends from unraveling. However, do this in a well vented area, as the fumes may be dangerous! Short sections of garden hose can make nice handles for the rope. Proper length of the rope= While standing on the rope, the ends should go from arm pit to arm pit.

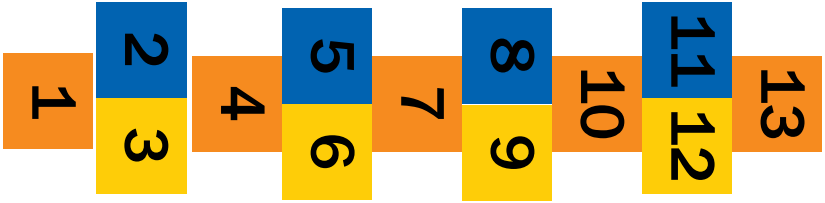
Use: In addition to jumping activities, ropes can be used to make letters and shapes on the floor. For example, make the letter of your first name; walk your letter; jump over your letter; skip around your letter; find a partner and see how many two letter words you can make. Make a shape and stand inside your shape; jump in the air and land softly inside your shape; how far away from your shape can you get in one jump? Quickly run and get inside someone else's shape- be careful not to touch someone else's rope.

Pavement Paintings

Pavement paintings are an excellent way to promote physical activity in an outdoor space that may not be fully utilized. Use emulsion, gloss or road paint, or special playground paint. Do not have a budget for paint? Use sidewalk chalk for a temporary design or contact local construction businesses to donate the paint and/or their time to apply the paint. Artistic parents may be willing to donate their time as well. Also contact the local school to borrow stencils that they use on their playgrounds.

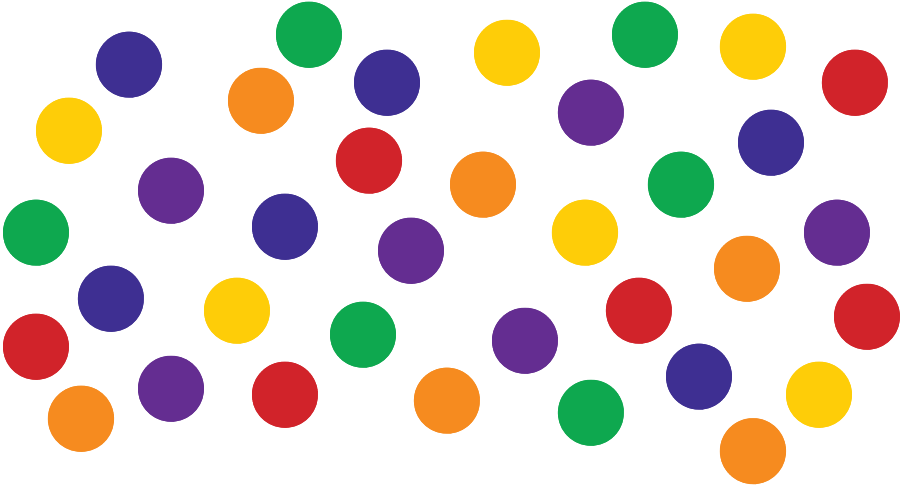
Hopscotch

Single squares must be hopped on one foot. For the first single square, either foot may be used. Side by side squares are straddled, with the left foot landing in the left square, and the right foot landing in the right square. For the younger children they can jump from square to square using both feet. Counting aloud during this activity can help reinforce counting skills.



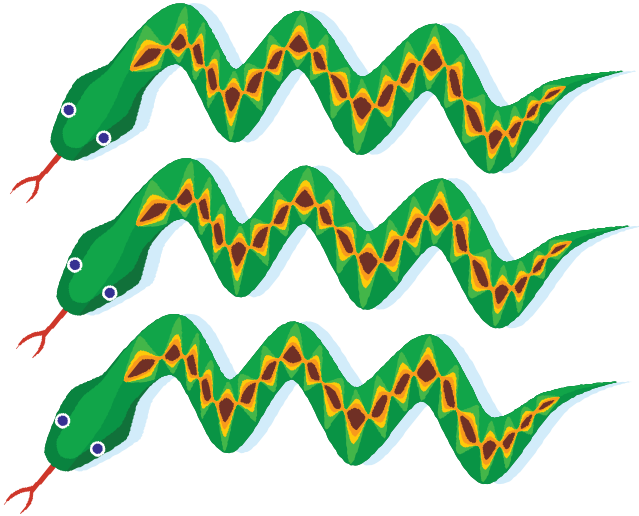
Color Circles

Have a group of 6 children or less (based on the number of circles you have) listen for a color and then run to the circle of that color.



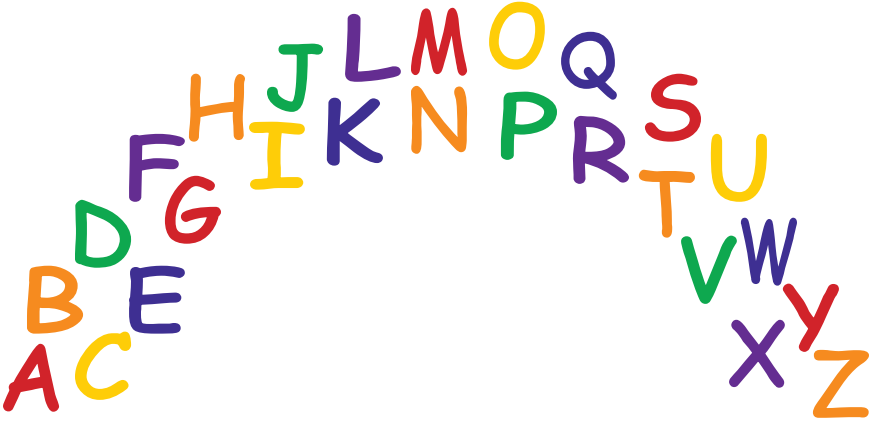
Follow the Snake

Have children run, walk, or skip by following the waves of the snakes.



Alphabet Rainbow

Have a child say the ABC's while jumping to the next letter.

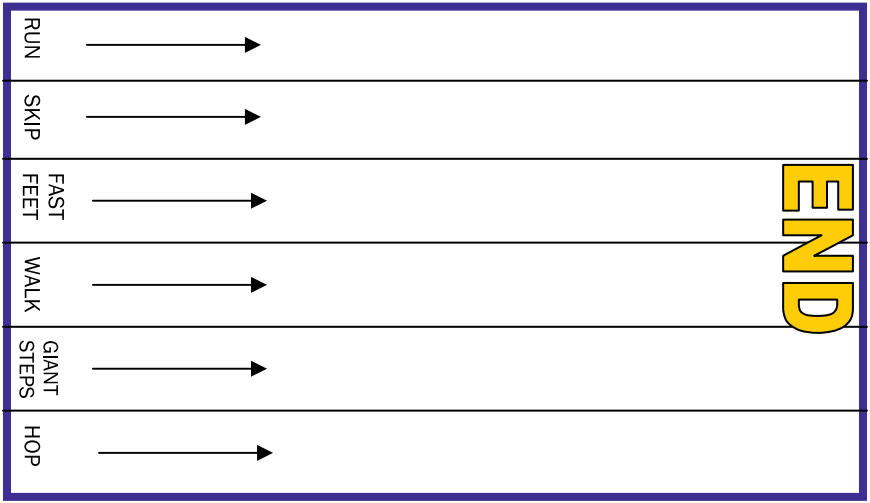


START

FINISH

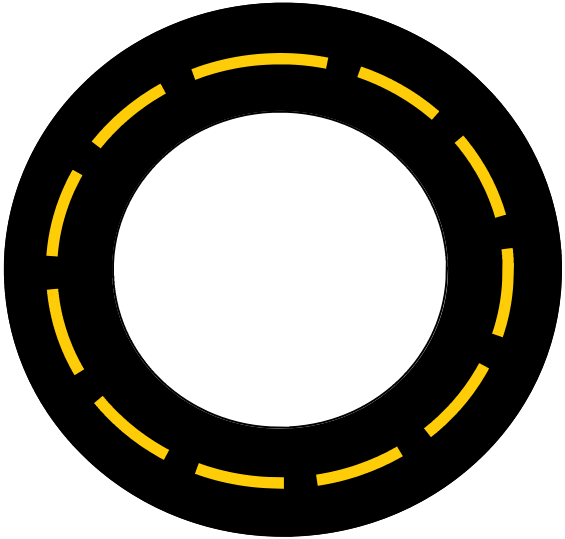
Movement Lanes

Each lane identifies the movement that is to be completed to the end of the lane.



Highway to Health

Have children form two groups. Group 1 walks, runs, skips, etc. on one side of the road and Group 2 does the same on the other side.



Stories in Motion

Read each story out loud. When an underlined “action” word or phrase is read have children demonstrate the action for 15-30 seconds. These stories can easily be incorporated into other educational lessons or weekly themes. Use of props is encouraged as well as activities to extend the story. Examples are provided.

A Trip to the Zoo

Hi! Today we are going to the zoo. Put your shoes on and start walking! I'm so excited, I can hardly stand it! Let's jog so we get there faster! Keep your arms close to your body and stand tall. Come on, faster!

We're here! The giraffes are up there. Let's try to reach to touch the giraffe. Maybe if we jump we can get a little bit further up. Ready? On the count of three. One … Two … Three … jump!

Wow! Look at those fish. Let's pretend we are swimming with the dolphins. We can do the front crawl and the back stroke. Now, plug your nose and wiggle under water.

I see the flamingos over there and they are standing on one leg! Let's try that. Can you close your eyes while you do it?

Let's imitate the monkeys. They are bending down to pick up a banana and then they jump up in the air and flail their arms!

Look at all of those birds flying! Lift up your arms and fly like them! Now, put your hands together and slither like a snake.

Just for fun, go ahead and imitate your favorite animal. I'm going to waddle like a penguin. What animal did you choose? Before we leave, let's get on the train for a final trip around the zoo. Pull on the bell to make the choo-choo noise! Now, move your feet quickly to help the train move!

This ends our trip to the zoo!

Props: pictures of each animal
Extend the activity: have the children draw a picture of their favorite animal

A Snowy Day

It snowed last night and school is cancelled! Let's get dressed to go outside! Put on your boots and jacket and don't forget your hat.

First, we need to walk through the snow so we can start building a snowman. Lift your feet high and don't fall over. I think it snowed at least 2 feet!

This looks like a good spot. Bend down and start making snow balls. Pack the snow together and roll it on the ground if you need to. Make as many as you can.

Now, pick up the snow balls and stack them to make a snow man. Make it sturdy and add rocks or coal for the eyes and a carrot for the nose!

That looks great. I feel like making snow angels. Start by moving only your arms; keep them extended and bring them up and over your head and back down to your side. Now, move your legs by themselves as if you were doing jumping jacks. Great! Can you try moving your arms and legs together?

My friend wants to have a snowball fight. Let's start throwing these snowballs! Bend down to pick them up and throw them as fast as you can. Now, try throwing them with the other arm!

It's almost time to head home. Run to the sled with me! Now, hop in it and lean forward as we go down the hill. Let's walk back to the house now for a healthy snack. Remember to lift your feet up high; it is a challenge to travel through the snow.

That was a lot of fun! Maybe we can do that again soon!

Props: snow gear, hats, mittens, etc.
Extend the activity: have children make paper snowflakes

Fun at the Lake

Get in your boats; we are at the lake today! To row forward, pull your shoulders back and move your arms in a "J" shape. Make big, powerful motions!

Good job. Now that we are away from the shore, let's row backward to get back to land. Be sure to move your arms in the opposite direction.

We're back to shore! Hop out of your boat; it's time to fish now! Grab your fishing pole. First, cast it out, and then reel it back in, tugging on it from time-to-time. Did you catch anything?

Why don't we join that volleyball game for a while? Jog over to the sand court with me.

Here comes the ball! Put your hands together to make a fist, and bump the ball up in the air! It keeps coming back over the net! Keep bumping the ball.

Now let's try spiking the ball down over the net. First, jump in the air and slap the ball down over the net. Try that several times. Great work!

Let's take a dip in the water before we go home. Skip over to the dock with me! Now, run to the edge of the dock and jump in! That was fun. Let's walk a little deeper into the water.

Why don't we swim for a while? Do whatever stroke you would like: the back stroke, side stroke, or front crawl. Whew! That's all we have time for today! Let's do the dog paddle up to shore and call it a day. See you next time!

Props: toy fishing poles
Extend the activity: have the children "go fishing" with an activity using a sheet and a pole with string attached. The "fish" can be a letter or number to introduce sequencing.

Helping on the Farm

Today we are helping on the farm. There is a lot to do, and things are going to get dirty, so let's put on our farm clothes. Don't forget your hat! First, we have to feed the horses. Pick up all of these buckets and pour all of the feed into the trough.

Now, we need to help the farmer herd cattle. Hold the herding sticks out to your side and keep the cows from moving past you! Here they come! Shuffle side-to-side to keep them from getting by. Good work.

While we are in the pasture, we need to chop down this old tree. Pick up your axe and swing it at the base of the tree. Now, chop on the other side. Quick, set down your axe and run! The tree is falling down. That was close.

The farmer needs help picking up rocks now, so grab your gloves and push the wheel barrow over toward the barn yard. Bend down and pick up as many rocks as you can find and set them into the wheel barrow. Great!

Next, we need to climb up these stairs to get to the top of the barn. Now, start carrying these bales to the other side of the barn where you can stack them all against the wall.

How about we play with the dog after all of that work? Throw the Frisbee to her! When she brings it back, throw it out again! Now, let's go walk with the dog. Oh boy, she is starting to run! Try to keep up!

What a fun day! It's time to go home now, but hopefully we can come back soon!

Props: buckets
Extend the activity: have the children draw a barn with their favorite farm animal in it

Going to School

Hi Everyone! It's time to go to school. Put on your shoes and backpack! First, we need to walk to the bus stop. It is a couple blocks away, so we have to make sure we get there in time.

Oh no! The bus is already there! Run! It's starting to drive away! I hope it stops for us or we will miss it!

Whew! I think the driver saw us. Let's walk again. The bus stopped for us. Now, we just need to climb up the stairs on the bus and walk down the aisle to find a seat. Squat down to sit after you find a spot. Take off your backpack and set it on your lap.

Here we go! Gosh, we are all bouncing in our seats. This road is bumpy! It has been such an adventure trying to get to school this morning.

Finally, some smooth roads. Now we can sit without moving up and down so much. Oh, look! It's starting to rain. Move your arms like windshield wipers to let the driver know he should turn the wipers on.

We are here! Walk off the bus and step down onto the ground. Look at that puddle! Let's jump into it a few times! Maybe that wasn't such a good idea. We better wipe off before we go in the building. Let's walk up to the building now; we've got a busy day at school today! The door is heavy, so use all of your muscles to pull it open.

See you after class!

Props: picture of a school bus
Extend the activity: sing the "Wheels on the Bus" Song

Jungle Safari

Hello boys and girls! Today we are going on a jungle safari. First, we have to balance as we walk across this rope bridge. Keep one foot in front of the other, and try not to fall off.

We made it! Now, we need to climb this tree. Use your arms and legs to get up; I want to get a nice picture of all of the plants and animals. Perfect! Very carefully, jump down onto the ground. Oh no! That lion must have heard us. Run! He is coming after us!

Let's duck under the edge of this giant rock and maybe the lion will leave us alone. Shh! Be very quiet. Thank goodness, that worked! It looks like he found a little mouse to chase anyway.

Now, we have to cross this alligator pond to get to the other side. Carefully and quietly hop from rock to rock. Try not to fall in! The alligators look hungry today. We did it!

I want to see more animals, but I think we have to go up this hill first. Let's start hiking; be sure to pump your arms. If you haven't noticed, the jungle is full of animals and obstacles, so stay alert at all times.

We are almost there; just climb this rope to reach the top of the hill and we will be able to see the elephants. Look! There they are! Quick, run with me to see them! We should probably stop here before we get too close.

That's all we have time for today; hopefully we can have another jungle adventure soon!

Props: safari hat and binoculars
Extend the activity: have the children make binoculars out of empty toilet roll tubes

Take Me Out to the Ballgame

We have a game to play today! Let's run out to the ball diamond! First, we need to warm up. Slow down a little and jog lightly around the edges of the field. We need to loosen up our muscles so we don't get injured during the game.

Next, let's do some high knees to loosen up our legs. Move your legs a little higher and faster than the person next to you! The coach said we need to jog a couple more laps around the field, so let's get going. Don't forget to pick up your feet and maintain good posture.

We better warm up our arm now. Throw a couple of baseballs/softballs to the infielders to practice. Make sure to follow through with every throw!

It's time to practice batting. Every time the pitcher tosses a ball to you, swing your bat and try to make contact with the ball. Keep your core tight as you swing!

Quick, the coach said we have to do jumping jacks. Let's get going! Next, we have to do a few stretches. First, reach down to touch your toes and stand up.

The last part of our warm-up is doing some overhead stretches. Reach your right arm up and over your head, and then reach up and over with your left arm. Keep switching back and forth.

The game is about to start! Extend your arm into the huddle and on the count of three, yell "Go Team!" One … Two … Three … Go Team!

Props: baseball
Extend the activity: have the children draw a baseball field

Working in the Garden

Put your gloves on! We've got lots of work to do in the garden today. First, we need to rake the dirt to make sure the ground is ready for planting.

Next, we have to dig holes for our tomato plants. Hold your shovel, push down into the ground, and throw the dirt off to the side. Keep it up! Now, crouch down and set all of the tomato plants into the holes.

Pick up the shovel again! We need to scoop up some dirt and spread it around the bottom of each tomato plant. Make sure you fill every hole! Great job! Now, squat down and pat the dirt with your hands.

Since we are all finished planting tomatoes, we should probably pick some weeds. Stay near the ground and pull as many weeds as you can.

We don't want any wildlife eating our plants, so we better build a fence. Pick up the stakes off of the ground, and one at a time, pound each stake into the ground with a hammer. Make sure you use all of your muscles!

Then, wrap the chicken wire around the stakes to make a square. Just be careful not to trap yourself inside the fence! Good work. We are almost done. Grab the watering can and pour some water on all of the tomato plants.

That was hard work! Reach up to the apple tree and find a good looking apple to have as a treat.

Props: pictures of each animal
Extend the activity: offer a snack that could be grown in a garden or from a tree

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