



Right Whale Obstacle Course



Photo: NOAA Fisheries/Allison Henry MMPA research permit #17355

How to Start!

1. Parents or Guardians-set up an obstacle course in your home or backyard.
2. Allow your child to go through the course. If they do not do part of it correctly, (i.e. if they touch the ground on accident instead of remaining on couch cushions), send them back to the start of the course, only this time with a hindering item of clothing to wear or hold. For example, they can wear a parents shoe, or hold a jacket in one hand.
3. Allow them to go through the course with the hindering item, and add an extra item if they go through the course incorrectly again.
3. Explain how the added “burden” of either wearing/holding an article of clothing while doing the obstacle course is similar to a right whales’ burden of entanglement on their body.

Optional Ideas

1. Have child carry a larger item throughout the whole course. This item represents their “calf” that they must protect the entire year. If they mess up the course at all while carrying it, they must restart.
2. Use specific items to represent certain obstacles. For example, use a rope they must jump over to represent fishing line, or avoid cones that represent ships and vessels.
3. Have them try the course blindfolded with an adult guiding them. This can represent how a right whale has no clue about the threats that lie ahead for them along their journeys.

There is no right or wrong course set up; use it as a chance to get creative!