

Play Snowball Hopscotch

Who knew you could combine a lesson about numbers with a silly snow game? Involving many different options for play, this physical activity is sure to please on a sunny, snow-filled day. Your child will use vibrant food coloring in reds, blues, or yellows to "paint" a colorful hopscotch court directly onto the snow, or for a little less mess she can set up a grid with rocks or pebbles. This activity is a great way to get kids moving during the winter months. Sitting indoors often consumes snowy days, but it will benefit her to get some fresh air and physical exercise—and she'll give her mind a workout, too!



What You Need:

- Snow
- Food coloring and squirt bottles
- Small stones or pebbles (optional)
- Sidewalk chalk (for non-snowy climates)

What You Do:

1. Decide on a board option with your child. This decision may be made based on available materials, the mess factor, or weather. Options include:
 - **Food coloring, squirt bottles, and snow:** This is the messiest option—and probably the most fun! Avoid this version if you have concerns about staining clothing, or have your child dress in clothing she doesn't mind getting dirty. Mix the food coloring with water in a squirt bottle. Ask her to draw a classic hopscotch board directly onto fresh snow with the squirt bottle. For added artsy fun, have your kid combine colors to create and mix new hues, or design a rainbow of lines.
 - **Small stones, pebbles, leaves (crushed or torn), or birdseed:** Ask your child to line up the chosen objects. This may be very time consuming, aso some adult assistance might be welcome. Pebbles or stones may have to be removed after playing, while birdseed provides a great treat for our feathered friends.
 - **Sidewalk chalk:** This option works best for non-snowy climates; try it on a cleared sidewalk or driveway. Do not try this option if the concrete area has been covered by salt or melted snow. Help your child draw the hopscotch board and discuss lines and shapes as you go along.
2. Ask your child to describe the shapes that she sees, such as rectangles or squares.
3. Help your child to form snow balls. These are going to be used as the markers.
4. This number version of hopscotch will include counting. Numbers can be drawn on with food coloring, chalk, or pebbles.
5. Now it's time to play hopscotch! Have your child toss a snowball (or pebble) onto the hopscotch board, designating the space she will have to skip. She then hops on one foot throughout the course, and hops over the space with a marker in it. She'll look at and say the numbers as she hops through the course, skipping the number that holds the marker.

For added fun, get creative and turn this into an imaginative movement exercise. Encourage your child to choose her favorite winter weather animal and move like it as she goes through the game. Polar bears can lumber, snow bunnies can hop, and arctic foxes can stealthily skip through the board.