



Aboriginal learning activity: Hopscotch for the Mob

Teach children about the intimate connection between First Nations Australians and the natural world with this fun take on hopscotch.

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Our adaptation of the well-known hopscotch game replaces numbers with animal tracks, and encourages children to use their bodies and voices to mimic these animals.

There are various ways for educators to introduce this activity to children in education and care services. Here are some suggestions:

- Ask the children about the different Australian animals they know, and to describe them (what colour they are, how big they are, how many legs they have, what they sound like, how they move, what they eat, etc.)
- Read the children a book like *ABC of Australian animals* by Bronwyn Bancroft and talk about the animals the children recognise and the animals they may have seen in real life
- Play 'Guess which animal I am', where you give children clues (for example, 'I carry my babies in a pouch', 'The noise I make sounds like I'm laughing') and the children can ask questions (for example, 'Do you have big ears?', 'Can you fly?')
- Watch Aboriginal dancers mimic different animals in their movements, and listen to Aboriginal performers mimic different animal sounds with the didgeridoo
- Sing a song like 'Native animal song' and practice the movements with the children (see raisingchildren.net.au > [Baby karaoke](#) > [Native animal song with lyrics](#))

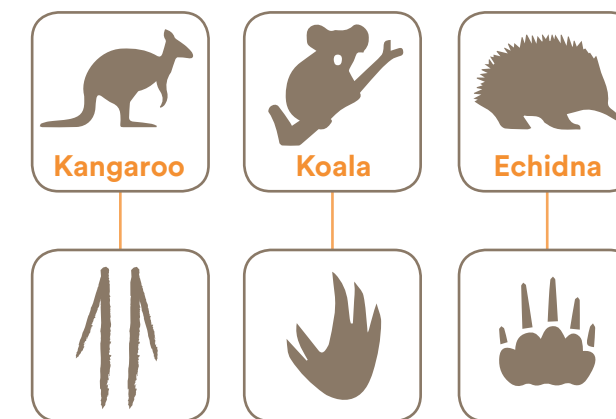
The next step is to talk about the tracks animals leave behind. This includes the footprints that humans make! In fact, footprints are probably the easiest and most recognisable way to introduce the concept of tracks to children. Here are some suggestions:

- Take the children to the sandpit and demonstrate how footprints are made
- Pour some water on the dirt/earth and make footprints
- Trace around your own foot and cut it out to show the children – the children can then practise tracing around their own feet and other children's feet
- Use red, yellow and black paint or ochre to make footprints

When the children are familiar with the idea of footprints, educators can extend the concept to animal tracks. Ask children what they imagine a snake's track might look like. Then ask about other animals like dingoes and emus.



Educators could read *Adventures of the little black trackas* by Merle Hall to the children, and then play a matching game, where children need to find the right track for each animal. For example:



Children could also use decorations like feathers and face paint to dress up as different animals and role play.

Finally, everyone can have a go at playing Hopscotch for the Mob. Use whichever animal tracks the children would like, and you can even draw up the hopscotch design in red, yellow and black chalk for added effect!

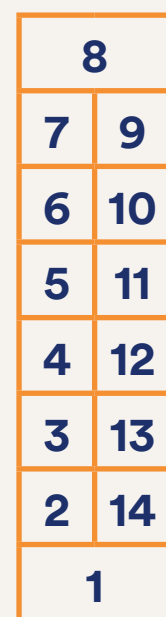
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How to play Hopscotch for the Mob

Setting up

STEP 1

Design your hopscotch course. It can be any shape or any direction. The standard one has 10 squares but it can have as many as you like! Try these different designs:



STEP 2

Draw your design on concrete with chalk.

STEP 3

Replace the numbers with animal tracks. Here are some examples:



Instructions

- 1 Throw a flat stone or similar marker to land on the first square. It has to land inside the square without touching the border or bouncing out. If you don't get it in the lines, you lose your turn and must pass the marker onto the next person.
- 2 The animal track in the square the marker lands on is the animal you have to be while you take your turn. Move through the course, skipping the square the marker landed on. If you step on or outside a line, or step on the wrong square, you lose your turn.
- 3 When you get to the last square, turn around and make your way back through the course. Don't forget to pick up the marker on the way so you can hand it to the next person in line when you finish your turn.
- 4 If you successfully completed your turn with the marker on the first square, throw your marker onto the second square the next time around. Your goal is to complete the course with the marker on each square. The first person to do this wins the game!

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