

# ALLIGATOR PIT

Suggested by Dana DeCarlo

Crossing an alligator pit on a narrow balance beam is a thrilling challenge for children! The alligator pit is really your floor, the balance beam is a flat foam pool noodle, and the alligator is you!

**GOALS FOR CHILDREN** • Practice stability

## EQUIPMENT

- A 'balance beam' made from two pieces of flat foam pool noodle sections, joined at ends and taped to the floor. Masking tape lines on the carpet will also work.
- Basket
- Many safe objects to carry, such as socks, beanbags, foam puzzle pieces, and pieces of foam cut from pool noodles.
- Duct tape

## INSTRUCTIONS

Tape the balance beam to the floor. Place the basket at the far end of the balance beam. Have plenty of small toys and other safe objects for the children to carry at the near end of the beam. Tell the children where



alligators live and what they eat. The children's job is to walk the beam, and put things into the basket at the other end of the beam. Explain that the alligator who lives in the pit will not bother the children as long as they stay on the beam and don't drop anything that they are carrying. If they drop something, or step off the beam, the alligator will chase them until they drop everything they are carrying in the basket.

Give each child one item to carry across the beam and drop in the basket. After each child has gone once, increase what each must carry. Vary the skills. Ask children to carry beanbags balanced on their heads and shoulders. Have them jump across with foam blocks between their knees. Let them walk backwards across the beam with arms full of socks. When children drop objects into the pit, or step off the beam, chase them and move your extended arms up and down like an alligator's jaws. School-aged children might enjoy playing the part of the alligator during this activity.

*Harder:* Give the children more things to carry and harder ways of moving to make this activity more challenging. Tape a curved line on the floor as the balance beam to increase difficulty.

*Variety:* Pretend that floor spots are 'lily pads.' Arrange spots on the floor and let the children pretend they are frogs that must step, jump or hop from lily pad to lily pad across the alligator pit.

