

MEET ME AT THE CIRCUS



Little 
Acrobats™

PART OF THE
Children's Dance
Method™

Meet Me At the Circus

TODDLER: AGES 1.5 TO 3, WITH A CAREGIVER

PRESCHOOL: AGES 3 TO 5 YEARS OLD

How to Begin Class

Begin your class by greeting your students. Ideally, they'll line up at your classroom door before class begins. When it's time for class, have them enter. You can give them a step to do to take their places for roll call, or simply have them walk to their places.

Next, take roll. Have a question of the day ready to ask your students. It can be something simple like, "What is your favorite color?" It can be theme-related like, "Have you ever been to a circus?" Or it can be something more personal like, "Tell me one fun thing you did this week." The purpose of the question is to help you connect with your students.

Circle Stretch

For complete activity details, please refer to the [Little Acrobats Curriculum - Syllabus Guide](#).

Let's Blow Bubbles!

Wiggles and Wakeup

Peek-a-Boo Toes

Hamstring Stretch (Preschool Only)

Acrobat Stretch (use a baton or empty paper towel roll as your trapeze bar, reaching down to your toes)

Hide and Seek

Flying Trapeze

Rock and Roll (Preschool Only)

Flying Trapeze (continued)

Butterfly

Tightrope Balancing (pretend to climb a ladder with your hands / rock side to side in butterfly as you balance / look down as you stretch / sit tall to balance)

Straddle Stretch (Preschool Only)

Let's Juggle!

Hands and Wrists

Fireworks

Tabletop Bridge

Cat/Cow Pose (Preschool Only)

Lion Roars

Superhero Pose (Preschool Only)

Let's Soar through the Air!

Seal Pose (Preschool Only)

Seals Performing

Technique

For complete activity details, please refer to the [Little Acrobats Curriculum - Syllabus Guide](#).

Plié

I can't wait to go to the circus! Let's count down: 3-2-1!

Twirls (Toddlers) / Rise and Turn (Preschool)

I see twirling dancers at the circus!

Tendu (Preschool Only)

Would you walk the tightrope?

Passé

Would you balance in passé halfway across a tightrope?

Sways

Let's sway side to side like flying trapeze artists!
Preschoolers: add a chassé, then (optional) sway front to back.

Sautés and Échappés

Our trapeze artists fly high through the air!

Directional Hops

Silly Clown Cars (optional: give each student a paper plate as a steering wheel). Call out directions to drive (hop in).

Hops with Quarter Turns (Preschool only)

Our silly clown cars are turning! (Call out right or left for which way to turn.)

Hops on One Foot from Side to Side (Preschool only)

Fire Act! Hop from side to side over imaginary fire.

Hops on One Foot (Preschool only)

Put out the fire. (Pretend to hold a hose to put out the fire as you hop on one foot.)

Fireworks Jumps

Nighttime Fireworks

Traveling

Please use the movement cards included at the end of this lesson plan.

Stations

Please use the station cards included at the end of this lesson.

Prop Time

For toddlers, “Prop Time” is simply a free dance with a prop of the teacher’s choice. You may also do a freeze dance to reinforce listening skills.

For preschoolers, [choose one to three “Prop Time” activities from the Little Acrobats Curriculum - Syllabus Guide](#) for additional skill work.

Goodbye

You can (optionally) end your class with a brief free dance for students while you blow bubbles for them.

Finish your class by giving each student a sticker and telling them each something they did well in class that day. Focus on complimenting good effort, listening skills, and positive attitude more than skill accomplishments. Give each student a coloring page. These are a great way for students to bring a piece of dance class home with them for the week. Hand out certificates if it’s the last week for the theme.

Music Playlist

You can find a music playlist with theme-inspired music for your acro dance class here:

[Meet Me at the Circus Music Playlist in Spotify](#)



MEET ME AT THE CIRCUS - MOVEMENT CARDS

There are SO MANY ways you can use movement cards in your dance classes. For toddlers, we typically do use movement cards for traveling across the room and occasionally the merry go round option. For preschoolers, we like to incorporate all of the following ways with traveling across the room and the merry go round option as the most common. You may incorporate any of these ways during the "traveling" portion of class.

Traveling Across the Room

This is what we typically design our movement cards for. (Although they certainly don't have to be limited to this!) Choose a movement card like you're picking a card from a deck of cards. Or, let one of your students pick the card. The anticipation of what the next card and movement will be will help to keep your students' attention during the traveling portion of class. Plus, they always like seeing what cute animal or picture is on the card chosen!

Merry Go Round

Place your movement cards in a pile face-down in the center of the room. Have your students make a large circle. Call on one student to pick a card from the center. They pick a card from the pile. Play music as all students do the chosen movement in a large circle around the room. Pause the music and your students freeze (like in freeze dance!). Call on another student to pick a card next. Repeat until all students have had a turn or all movement cards have been used.

Add-On

This is one of my favorite pre-choreography activities. Make a dance by playing "Add-On", but with movement cards! Hold the cards out face-down, like a deck of cards, for a student to pick one. Have all students do the movement in place a certain number of times. (For example, 3 hops in place.) Have another student pick a card. Add that movement to the choreography. (For example, if the second card chosen was twirls, you might have your students do 3 hops then a twirl.) Continue until all students have had a turn. By the end, you'll have a little dance your students helped to make up!

Free-Dance

Let your students free dance, and choose movements from the movement cards!

NOTES FOR CARTWHEEL PREPARATION:

Cartwheel Preparation: Have students stand so their tummy faces "front" (if their tummies are facing a wall, mirrors, or something tangible, this can be helpful). Place one hand down then the other hand on a thick block or stack or mats. Hop one leg over, then the other, and stand tall with the tummy facing "front" again.

For older toddlers, the goal here is coordination. For younger toddlers, if all they can do is crawl over the block or mat stack, that is more than fine. Encourage them to place their hands on the correct places on the mat as 1st priority. As they get that part down, you can focus on the legs. After that, focus on tummies facing the front at the beginning and end.

For younger preschoolers, the goal here is coordination. For older preschoolers who have the coordination down, you can have them do a pre-cartwheel. They will follow the same steps, but aim for their torso and legs to be perpendicular to the floor and their legs stretched.

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BUNNY HOPS (OR STEPS)

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CARTWHEEL PREPARATION

TODDLER

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LITTLE MICE RUNS (OPTIONAL: CARRYING A BALL)

TODDLER

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PROUD SHOWMAN WALKS

TODDLER

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TIGHTROPE WALKS
(OPTIONAL ACROSS A BALANCE BEAM)

TODDLER

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SEAL POSE
(WALK HALFWAY ACROSS, POSE, THEN
WALK THE REST OF THE WAY)

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LION LEAPS

TODDLER

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PASSÉ WALKS
(LIKE RIDING A BICYCLE)

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BUNNY HOPS

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CARTWHEEL PREPARATION

PRESCHOOL

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LITTLE MICE RUNS (OPTIONAL: CARRYING A BALL)

PRESCHOOL

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PROUD SHOWMAN WALKS

PRESCHOOL

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TIGHTROPE WALKS EN DEMI POINTE
(OPTIONAL ACROSS A BALANCE BEAM)

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SEAL WALKS

PRESCHOOL

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LION LEAPS

PRESCHOOL

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PASSÉ WALKS
(LIKE RIDING A BICYCLE)

PRESCHOOL



MEET ME AT THE CIRCUS - TODDLER STATION CARDS

Lion Rolls

Card 1. Students forward roll down an incline mat or over a mat stack.

For this one, if your students are brand new to forward rolls, help them. Have them squat down into a ball position and place their hands palms down on the mat. Gently help them to tuck their heads and roll. Remember to never force anything. If they are just learning rolls, don't worry about their ending yet. However, if they are doing their rolls well, encourage them to land on their feet and stand up with their hands above their heads.

For toddlers, if you have any students who strongly dislike being upside down and refuse to forward roll, offer them the option to do a log roll instead. In a log roll, they roll on their sides like a log instead.

Mouse's Juggling Balls

Card 2. Run in a zig zag pathway around "juggling" balls.

Running quickly through an agility pathway is great for coordination. You can use any kind of ball for this.

Through the Circus Tent

Card 3. Crawl through a tunnel.

Prepares for handstands and cartwheels. Engages the upper body, abdominals, and back muscles.

Tightrope Walks

Card 4. Walks across a balance beam.

Balance beam walks are great for balance, as well as inner thigh and ankle strength.

Seal Pose

Card 5. Students make a seal pose.

Prepares for handstands and cartwheels. Engages the upper body, abdominals, and back muscles.

Hide and Surprise!

Card 6. Students pretend to hide like a bunny in a magician's hat by making a ball shape. Then jump out in a fireworks jump!

The ball shape prepares for forward rolls and engages the abs and inner thighs. The fireworks jump engages the upper leg muscles.



MEET ME AT THE CIRCUS - PRESCHOOL STATION CARDS

Lion Rolls

Card 1. Students forward roll down an incline mat or over a mat stack.

For this one, if your students are brand new to forward rolls, help them. Have them squat down into a ball position and place their hands palms down on the mat. Gently help them to tuck their heads and roll. Remember to never force anything. If they are just learning rolls, don't worry about their ending yet. However, if they are doing their rolls well, encourage them to land on their feet and stand up with their hands above their heads.

Mouse's Juggling Balls

Card 2. Run en demi pointe in a zig zag pathway around "juggling" balls.

Running quickly through an agility pathway is great for coordination. Running en demi pointe helps to build feet and ankle strength. You can use any kind of ball for this.

Through the Circus Tent

Card 3. Crawl through a tunnel.

Prepares for handstands and cartwheels. Engages the upper body, abdominals, and back muscles.

Tightrope Walks

Card 4. Walks en demi pointe across a balance beam.

Balance beam walks are great for balance, as well as inner thigh and ankle strength. For added difficulty, have students walk across on demi pointe or with passé walks.

Seal Walks in a Circle

Card 5. Students make a seal pose and turn in a circle around themselves with seal walks.

Prepares for handstands and cartwheels. Engages the upper body, abdominals, and back muscles.

Hide and Roll

Card 6. Students pretend to hide like a bunny in a magician's hat by making a ball shape. Then roll back and forth 3x in rolling like a ball.

Prepares for forward rolls and engages the abs and inner thighs.

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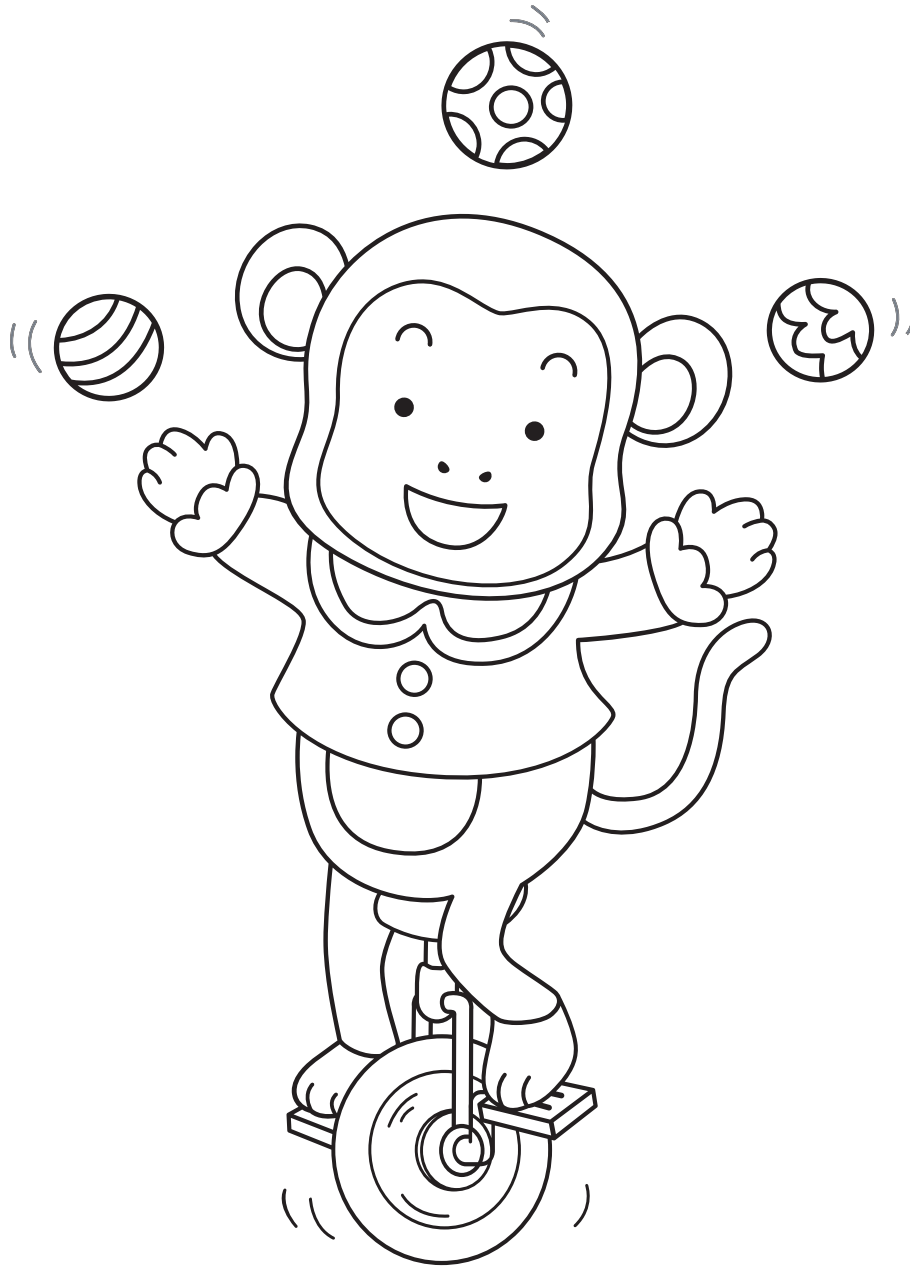
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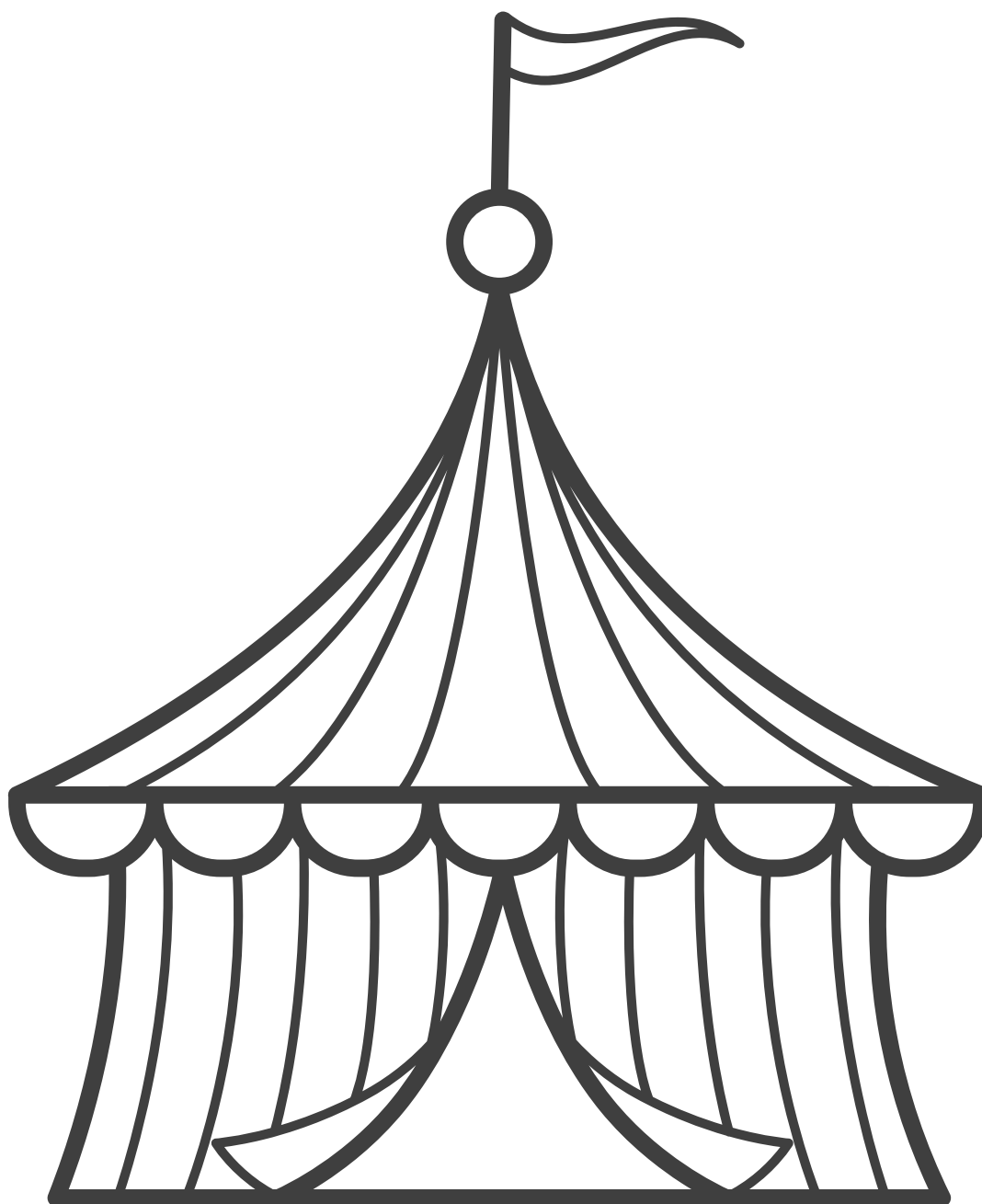
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