

# IN THE GARDEN



## In the Garden

**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, "What's your favorite flower, fruit, or vegetable?" 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)

Crawling Caterpillars

#### Hide and Seek

Rolly Pollies

#### Rock and Roll (Preschool Only)

Rolling Rolly Pollies

#### Butterfly

Butterflies

#### Straddle Stretch (Preschool Only)

Grand Daddy Long Legs

#### Hands and Wrists

Catch and Release Fireflies

#### Tabletop Bridge

Garden Bridge

#### Cat/Cow Pose (Preschool Only)

Kitty Cat in the Garden

#### Superhero Pose (Preschool Only)

Bumble Bees Flying

#### Seal Pose (Preschool Only)

Pose like a Flower Blooming

### Technique

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

#### Plié and Twirls (Toddlers) / Rise and Turn (Preschool)

Let's pretend we are garden fairies (or birds or butterflies will also do). We'll land on a flower. (Plié) Then tell it to wake up. (Twirl or Rise and Turn)

#### Tendu (Preschool Only)

Pretend to plant a seed. Our legs are roots stretching long into the ground during tendus.

#### Passé

Our sprout grows up out of the ground. Can you make a passé shape like a leaf?

#### Sways

And then our flower blooms and sways in the wind. Preschoolers: There can be a big wind for a chassé.

## Sautés and Échappés

Caterpillars (sautés) and Butterflies (échappés)

## Directional Hops

Grasshopper Hops. (In this lesson theme, have your students do their directional hops as a frog hop rather than a bunny hop.)

## Hops with Quarter Turns (Preschool only)

Lady Bug Spotting Hops

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

Hummingbird Hovers. (Have you ever seen a hummingbird hover from side to side in a flower garden?)

## Hops on One Foot (Preschool only)

Cricket Hops

## Fireworks Jumps

Sprinklers On!

## 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:

[In the Garden Music Playlist in Spotify](#)



## IN THE GARDEN - 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:

**Most Likely for Toddlers.** Cartwheel Preparation 1: Tummy-Hand-Hand-Jump-Tummy. The student should begin with their tummy facing the front. They place one hand on the mat stack, then the other hand on the mat stack. Then they jump over the mat stack and stand so their tummy faces front again.

**Most Likely for Preschoolers.** Cartwheel Preparation 2: Tummy-Hand-Hand-Foot-Foot-Tummy. The student should begin with their tummy facing front. They place one hand on the mat stack, then the other hand on the mat stack. Then they hop over the mat stack to land on one foot then the other foot. They should finish standing so their tummy faces front again.

**More Advanced Option for Preschoolers.** Cartwheel Preparation 3: Cartwheel Coordination Over the Mat Stack. In this version, students have the coordination of hands and feet. They still begin and end standing with their tummies facing front, but they do a smoother, more coordinated cartwheel over the mat stack. They should work on their torso being more up and down, perpendicular to the floor. Their legs may not quite be perpendicular—they may still be at an angle as the student does the cartwheel, but the student is working on stretched legs during the cartwheel.



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## RAIN PUDDLE STOMPS

(SAME AS MARCHES)

TODDLER

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## TUNNEL CRAWLS

TODDLER

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## LITTLE SPROUT HOPS

TODDLER

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## RUNS IN A CURVED PATH

TODDLER

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**STEP OR JUMP OVER AN OBJECT**

TODDLER

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**CARTWHEEL PREPARATION**

TODDLER

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**LOG ROLLS**

TODDLER

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**WHEELBARROW WALKS**

(SAME AS TABLETOP WALKS)

TODDLER

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## RAIN PUDDLE STOMPS

(SAME AS MARCHES)

PRESCHOOL

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## TUNNEL CRAWLS

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## LITTLE SPROUT HOPS

PRESCHOOL

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## RUNS EN DEMI POINTE IN A CURVED PATH

PRESCHOOL

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## LEAPS

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## CARTWHEEL PREPARATION

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## FORWARD ROLLS

PRESCHOOL

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## WHEELBARROW WALKS

(SAME AS TABLETOP WALKS)

PRESCHOOL



## IN THE GARDEN - STATION CARDS

### Card 1

**Toddlers and Preschoolers.** Stomps (same as marches) around cones.

### Card 2

**Toddlers.** Step or jump over an object.

**Preschoolers.** Tuck jump over an object.

### Card 3

Set a mat down to indicate where students should rock and roll.

**Toddlers.** Rock and roll on the mat.

**Preschoolers.** Rock and roll on the mat then jump up with the arms reaching high.

### Card 4

**Toddlers and Preschoolers.** Wheelbarrow walks (same as tabletop walks). (Optional for preschoolers: go around cones.)

### Card 5

**Toddlers.** Log rolls.

**Preschoolers.** Forward rolls.

### Card 6

**Toddlers and Preschoolers.** Pose like a hose spraying (same as superhero pose)! (Lay on tummies with arms and legs stretched long.) Optional: have a Pilates ball or arched mat for students to lay on.

### Card 7

**Toddlers and Preschoolers.** Walk across a balance beam or taped line. For added difficulty, passé walk across or step over beanbags on the beam or taped line.

### Card 8

**Toddlers and Preschoolers.** Crawl through a tunnel.





## STOMPS AROUND CONES



**STEP OR JUMP OVER AN OBJECT**





## TUCK JUMP OVER AN OBJECT



**ROCK AND ROLL +  
JUMP REACHING UP HIGH**



## ROCK AND ROLL



**WHEELBARROW WALKS  
(SAME AS TABLETOP WALKS)**





## LOG ROLLS



## FORWARD ROLLS



**POSE LIKE A HOSE SPRAYING  
(SUPERHERO POSE ROCKING SIDE TO SIDE)**





## BALANCE BEAM WALKS

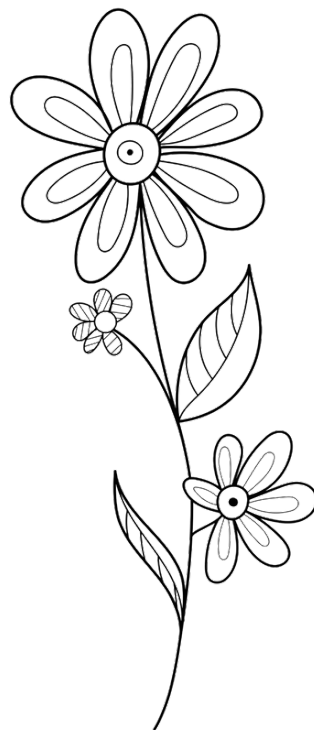
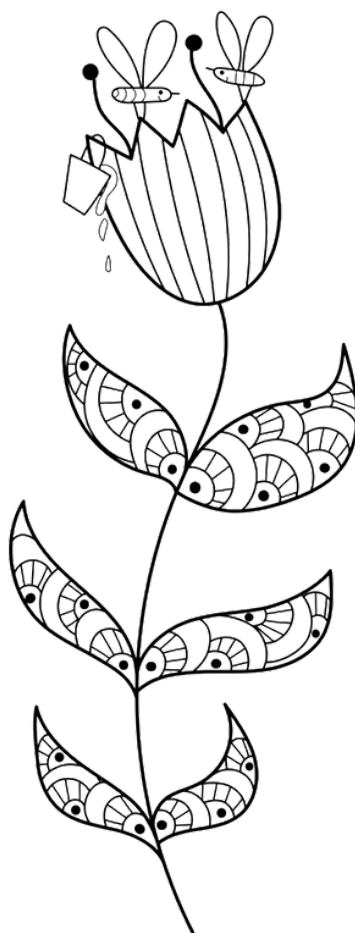
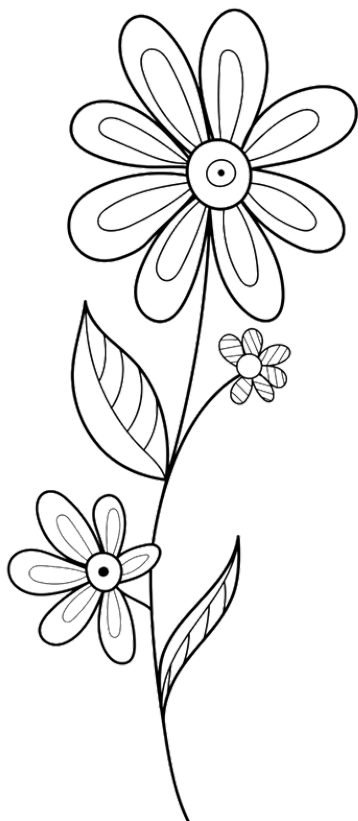
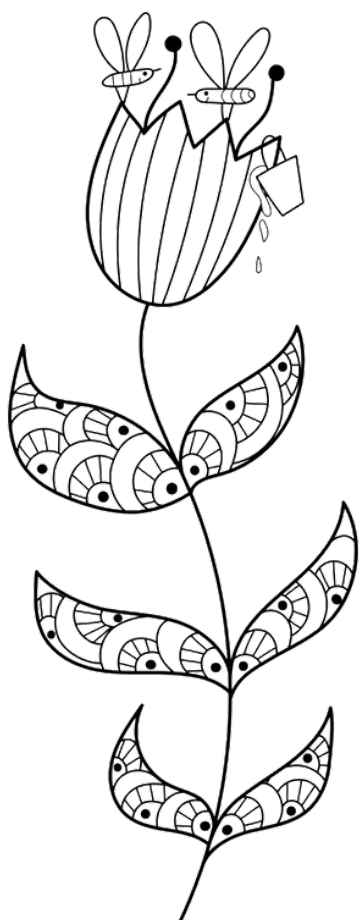


## CRAWL THROUGH A TUNNEL

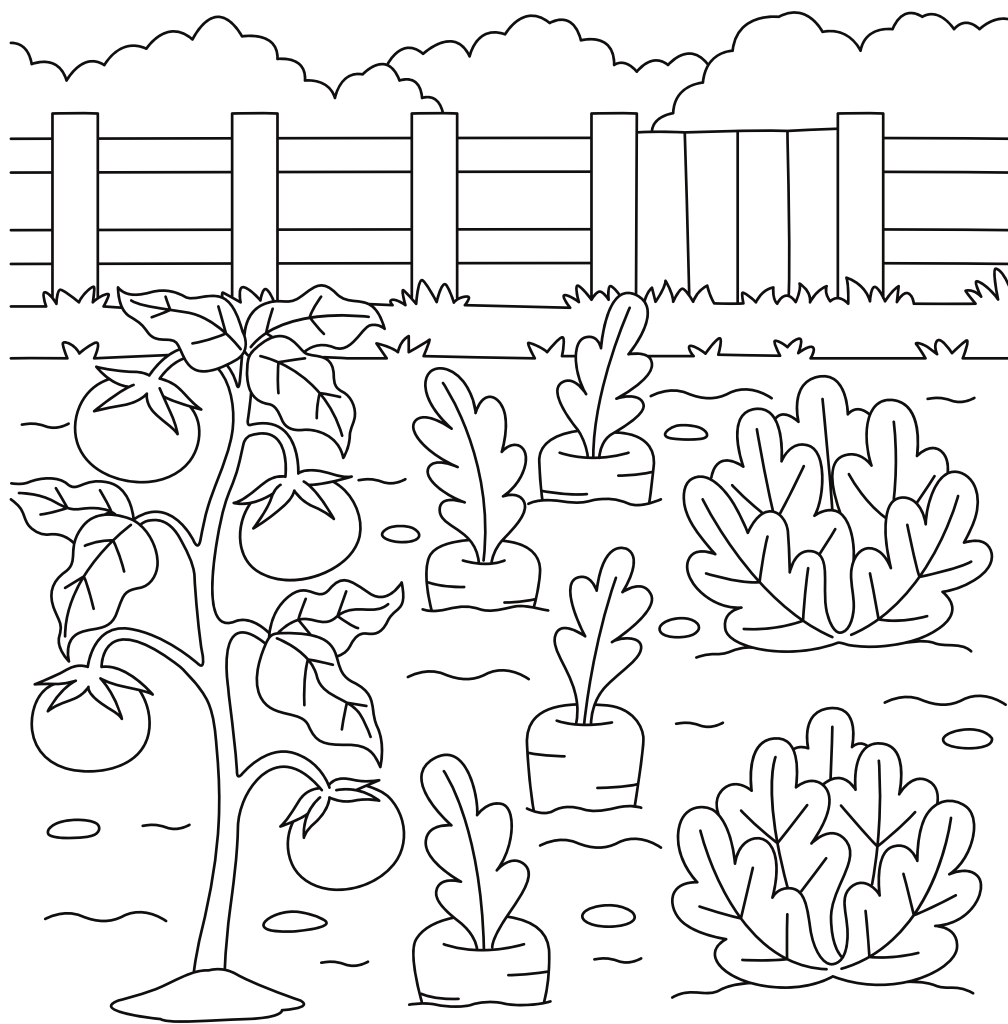
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