Arcola Elementary School
Playground Circuits
Introduction to Playground Circuits

These playground circuits are designed to help kids get active while still making sure that they are having fun. These circuits will encourage kids to engage in physical activity and will hopefully become a motivator to get them active on their own time.

A playground circuit is a set out pathway through a designated area that involves different forms of locomotion to get to and from different points. It also involves different physical activities throughout the course with no other equipment aside from the physical surroundings.

These circuits were designed to be completed by grades two and three. The circuits start out fairly easy and build in difficulty. All of the circuits start and end at the elementary school doors. Ensure that the students are not as close to the doors as to block them from others. All of the circuits are themed after different jungle animals. I decided this was an appropriate theme since the jungle animals are always very active. The circuits are as follows:

1) Frog
2) Chimpanzee
3) Tiger
4) Butterflies
5) Crocodile
6) Lemur
7) Koala Bear
8) Forest Elephant
9) Anaconda
10) Panda Bear

Each circuit is ranked in difficulty by a number of leaves. Example: frog circuit = 1 leaf, panda bear circuit = 3 leaves. Evenly divide the class into teams and use the chart below to keep track of how many leaves each team has acquired (you can even use leaf shaped stickers to help incline children to participate). When a team reaches a goal of 400 leaves (increase or decrease number of leaves depending on class size) they will be rewarded with a fun group prize. These prizes can include things like a pizza or ice-cream day at lunch. You can also set a grand prize that the entire class can work towards all year (like 1000 leaves). When the class reaches their grand prize, you can take a field trip.

Each circuit will be in place for one week and should be completed by the students at least once a day (it is up to them which recesses they wish to do the circuits).

A blank template of the school is provided near the end of this package so you may create your own playground circuits.
Note: Feel free to give each group a jungle animal name. You may also change the goal number depending on the size of your class.

*Each page has 100 leaves per group.

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Each Space = 1 Leaf  
Goal: 400 Leaves
**Locomotion Methods:**

- **Jogging:** run at a steady and gentle pace
- **Skipping:** to step from one foot to another with a bounce
- **Side Shuffle:** travelling sideways while dragging back foot after front foot
- **Sprint:** to run as fast as you can
- **Lunge Walk:** to take a large step forward with one foot as the other foot stays in place (the foot that is staying in place should have its knee bend at about a 90 degree angle and alternating legs. This movement should not be done in a very fast and race like manner (see figure below)

**Physical Activities:**

- **Toe Touches:** to bend at the waist and touch toes with fingers
- **Jumping Jacks:** first jump moving feet apart and arms above head, then jump bringing feet together and arms to your sides
- **Bunny Hops:** jump a couple of inches vertically off the ground with both feet
- **Basket Jumps:** jump vertically and bring both of your knees to touch your chest
- **180’s:** jump from where you are standing to face the opposite way

It is recommended that children do a brief warm up and cool down before and after the circuits to avoid injuries.

**A simple warm up could consist of:**

- Arm circles: swinging arms in circular motion
- Ankle circles: keeping ankle on ground and rotating in small, slow circles
- Running on the spot

**A simple cool down could consist of:**

- Light jogging
- Stretching the arms and legs
The Playground Represented through Pictures:

- Ball Baskets
- Play Structure
- Play Structure
- Swing Set
- Tire Line
- Slide
Facts about Tree Frogs:

- Tree Frogs are nocturnal which means they sleep in the day and are active at night
- It’s red eyes help to frighten away predators
- They have suction disks on their fingers and toes to help them stick to leaves
Facts about Chimpanzees:

- Chimpanzees are omnivores which means they eat both meat and plants
- They use many different objects as tools like a piece of grass to get termites
- Chimpanzees can live to be 60 years old
Facts about Tigers

- Tigers are the largest wild cat in the world
- Unlike most cats, tigers love the water
- No 2 tigers have the same pattern of stripes
- Tigers live alone, except for baby cubs

Circuit 3: Tiger

Realize. We can all make a difference.
Facts about Butterflies:

- Female butterflies have thicker veins (lines) in their wings.
- Butterflies that are brightly colored are often poisonous.
- Butterflies that migrate save energy by gliding on updrafts of warm air called thermals.
Facts about Crocodiles:

- Crocodiles have been around for over 200 million years
- You can tell the difference between a crocodile and an alligator by looking at its snout (nose), crocodiles have longer & narrower snouts and alligators have rounded ones
Circuit 6: Lemur

Facts about Ring Tailed Lemurs:

- Lemurs are primates, which means they are related to monkeys and apes
- Lemurs back legs are longer than their front legs
- Ring tailed lemurs spend more time on the ground rather than in the trees than any other lemur
Circuit 7: Koala Bear

Facts about Koala Bears:

- Koalas are marsupials, which means they have pouches where their babies can develop (like kangaroos)
- A baby koala is called a joey
- Koalas can spend up to 18 hours a day just resting and sleeping
Circuit 8: Forest Elephant

Facts about Forest Elephants:

- Forest elephants are smaller and have more rounded ears than savanna elephants
- Forest elephants tusks are made of ivory
- Forest elephants are endangered because of people hunting them for their tusks
Facts about Anacondas:

- The green anaconda is the largest snake in the world
- Anacondas swallow their prey whole
- It can take weeks for an anaconda to fully digest its food
- Anaconda can be up to 30 feet long (which is about the size of 8 kids laying down!)
Circuit 10: Panda Bear

Facts about Panda Bears:
- Pandas almost only eat bamboo shoots and leaves
- Panda Bears have to eat a lot and eat very fast because they only digest one fifth of what they eat
- There are only 1000 pandas left in the wild, which makes them an endangered species
Make Your Own Circuit
Taking it Further:

Here are some activities that you can incorporate into the classroom to help the students get involved.

- **Research Project**: get the students to each select a different kind of jungle animal and conduct a mini research project on it. The information required would be the name of the animal, a picture of the animal, its habitat, what it likes to eat and 5 interesting facts about it.

- **Word Searches**: as an introduction to the jungle animal playground circuits get the students to complete a fun word search. One is provided for you on the next page.

- **Jungle Animal Posters**: have the students randomly draw from a hat different jungle animal and each has to draw a poster of that animal. The posters then can be displayed as a big border around where the playground circuits will be posted and by the charts that keep track of the leaves (score).
Jungle Animal Word Search

Words can be found side to side, up and down, and diagonally.

Find these words within the puzzle below:

Jungle Animals Leaves Active Fun
Healthy Playground Circuit Chimpanzee Frog
Butterflies Tiger Crocodile Koala Bear
Forest Elephant Anaconda Panda Bear

Realize. We can all make a difference.
Word Search Answer Key:

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Sources for Animals Facts:


Chimpanzee: http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/chimpanzee/

Tiger: http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/tiger/


Crocodiles: http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/nile-crocodile/

Lemur: http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/ring-tailed-lemur/

Koala Bear: http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/koala/


Anaconda: http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/anaconda/

Panda Bear: http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/animals/creaturefeature/panda/
For further information or if you have any questions please feel free to contact me:

Brandi Smith

Phone Number: (306) 577-1849

Email: brandi.smith465@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Brandi Smith