

# EVERYTHING BUT THE HORSE

AN EBOOK OF HOME ACTIVITIES THAT GUIDE  
YOUR CHILD FROM HIPPO THERAPY TO HOME

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[TAKINGTHELEAD.ORG](http://TAKINGTHELEAD.ORG)  
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# CHAPTER 1

# BALANCE & COORDINATION



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# Barn Bag Toss



## Materials:

Gather up your bean bags

An exercise ball

A basket

(bin or laundry basket)



Pairs of socks

Small balls

A bag of sealed candy

Any other small household  
object approx. 1 lb or less



**How to Play:** Sit on an exercise ball and

toss bean bags into a bin from a suitable distance

**LEVEL UP:** Move the bin further away to increase  
the challenge

**Add Points:** Use multiple bins in a line and  
give each bin a point value, getting higher as the bin  
is farther away. Ex. closest bin is 10 points, second is  
20, third is 30

**Make it practical:** Toss socks into a drawer,  
tupperware into the cupboard, pillows onto a couch  
square



# Check In

## RATIONALE

This activity will challenge your child's balance by addressing trunk control through sitting on an exercise ball or another challenging seating option. Trunk control is an important aspect of balance because it allows your child to sit up straight and adjust their posture as they engage in everyday activities. In addition, this activity will simultaneously address upper body coordination as your child throws the bean bags into the bin.

## ADAPT

Instead of an exercise ball, sit on a stool or chair with a pillow on the seat. However, ensure your child is able to place feet on the ground. Move the bin closer to your child. Use a larger bin. Use objects of different weights or sizes to meet your child's abilities (heavier objects challenge the strength, lighter object challenge control). Change the texture/feeling of the object to incorporate sensory needs.



# Collect the Apples

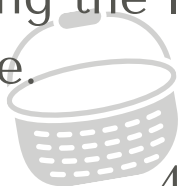


1. Use tape or string to outline the shape of a tree on the ground.

2. Place an apple at the end of each tree branch. You can use other objects like tennis balls or bundled up socks.

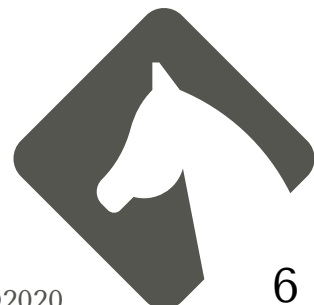


3. Your child can walk along the lines and pick up the apples, then walk back along the lines and place the apples in a bin at the base of the tree.



Use these supplies to create other paths around your home!

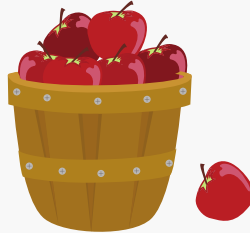
4. Time your child to see how fast they are able to collect all of the apples. This can add a competitive aspect to the activity, which can act as a motivation for the loved one.



# Check in

## RATIONALE

This activity will address your child's balance and gross motor coordination as they focus on walking along the lines outlined on the floor. Additionally, the two skills will be challenged as the participant bends over to pick up the apples and carries them back to the bin.



## ADAPT

Replace the apples with lighter/smaller objects or printed out pictures of apples, making it easier to carry. Add fewer branches and fewer apples.





# CHAPTER 2

## FOCUS

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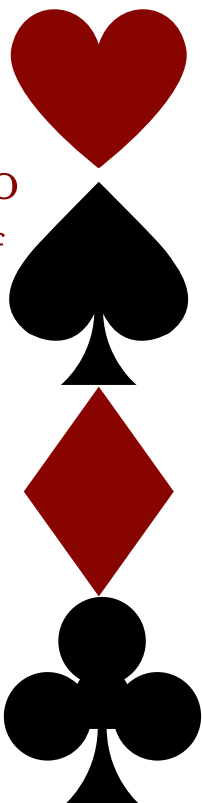




# Matching Cards



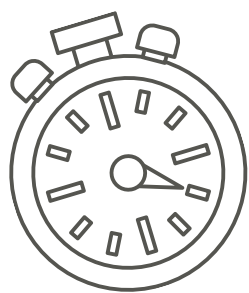
1. Set up: On pieces of paper, use pen/pencil to draw a picture of each suit (heart, spade, diamond, club).



## Materials:

- Tissue boxes or other household objects (cups/bowls) that can hold playing cards
- A deck of cards
- Paper
- Writing utensil
- Scissors
- Tape

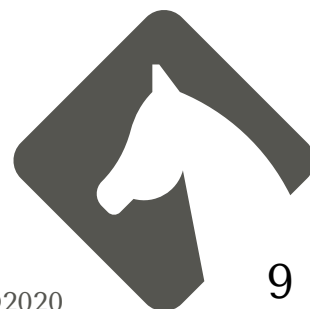
2. Cut out the picture and tape them on the front of the tissue boxes.



3. Encourage your child to draw cards from a shuffled deck and put the cards into the tissue boxes that match the card's suit.

Add a competitive component and try timing it!

Practice matching & organizing other like items around the house: sorting items by color or shape



# Check In

## RATIONALE

This activity will address your child's focus by challenging them to attend to the task for a prolonged amount of time. In addition, the participant's focus will be challenged as continuously sort through the cards and match the correct suits.

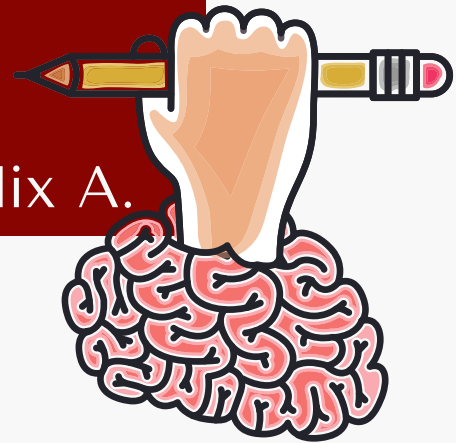
## ADAPT

Using an object such as a cup or a bowl will make the activity easier as it eliminates the challenge of fitting the card into a smaller slit. To completely eliminate the task of reaching and placing the cards into objects, the pictures of the suits can be placed on the table, allowing the your child to simply place the cards on top. The activity can also be done sitting on the ground with the objects on the floor, or any other position that meets the your child's needs.

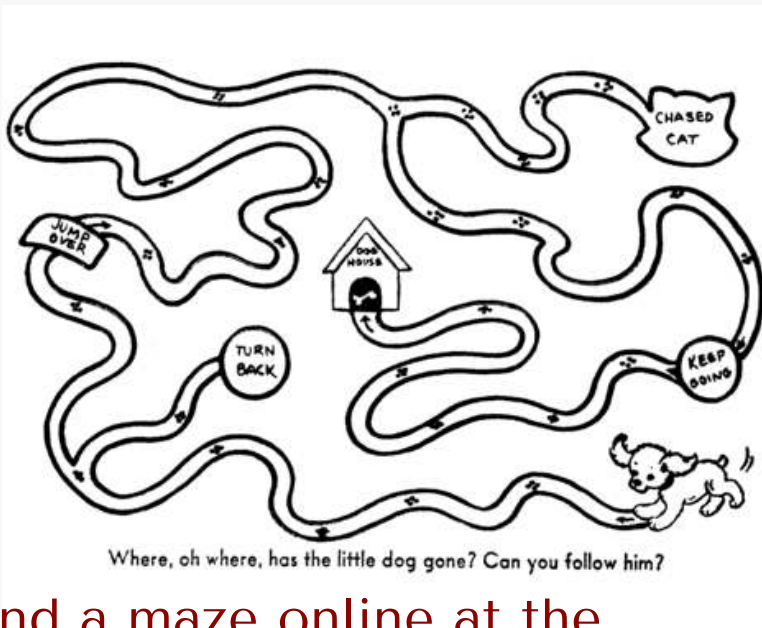


# Hay Maze

Materials in Appendix A.

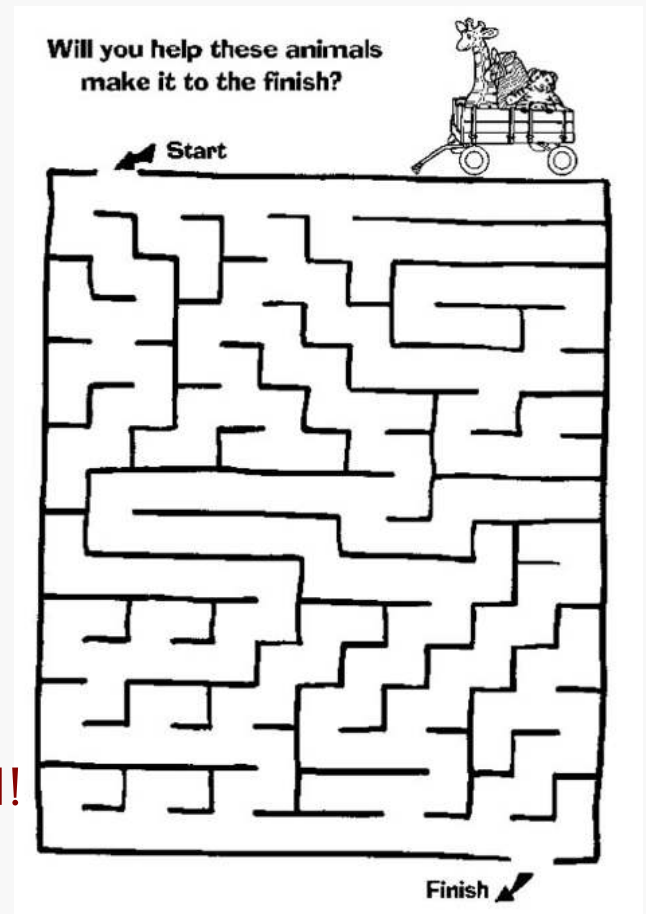


Use any maze, print it out, and use a pencil to navigate the maze!



Find a maze online at the appropriate skill level.

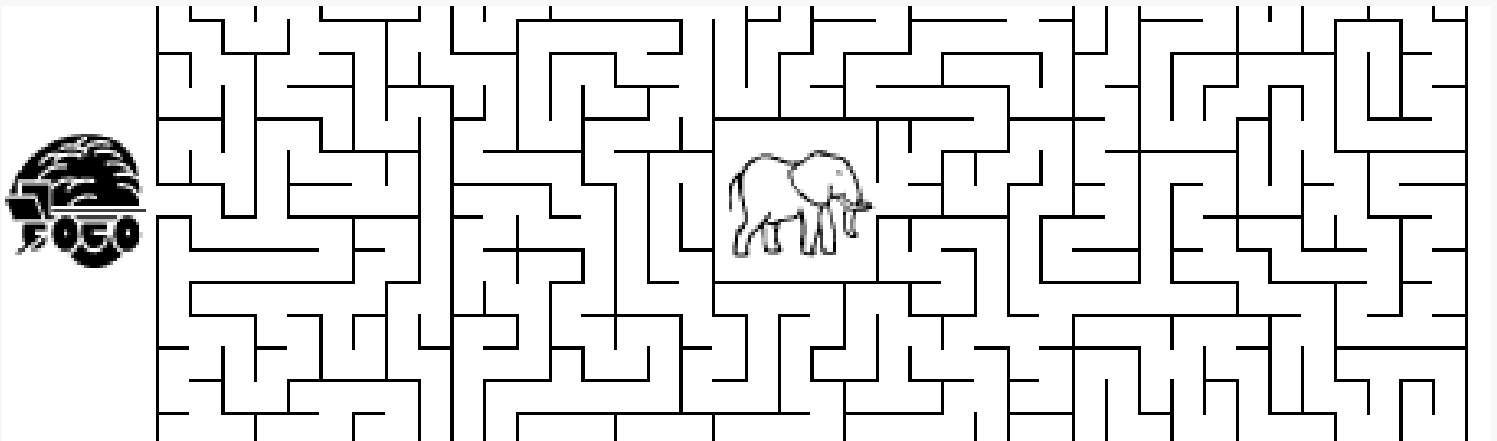
Try creating a maze with your child!  
You can even set up obstacles around the house to navigate around.



# Check In

## RATIONALE

Mazes are great activities to address your child's focus because they require prolonged attention, as well as cognitive processes such as decision making, planning, and sequencing.



## ADAPT

If available, your child can use pencil grips or a thicker pencil to make drawing the lines easier. Start with an easier maze and then continue with harder mazes after completion of the first.





## CHAPTER 3

# COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL CONNECTIONS



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# Friendship Bingo

Materials in Appendix B



## Materials:

- Bingo cards & BINGO game
- Any small object to act as a placeholder- coins, candy OR a pencil with an eraser

## Qualities of a Good Friend

B	I	N	G	O
Trustworthy	Honest	Loyal	Empathetic	Good listener
Forgiving	Funny	Generous	Encouraging	Kind
Playful	Helpful	FREE	Respectful	Unique
Polite	Accepting	Fair	Thoughtful	Selfless
Cooperative	Sense of humor	Confident	Apologetic	Patient

1. Make sure your child has everything they need to play
2. Shuffle the Bingo cards -Randomly draw a card and read the sentence aloud- your child should mark the matching quality on the board with a placeholder
3. After your child marks a quality, encourage them to give an example of a time either they or a friend has shown that quality.
4. Finish the game when your child marks 5 spaces in a line in any direction.

Prior to playing bingo, have a conversation with your child about qualities to look for in a friend, including those written on the bingo board. Define those terms with your child to ensure they have a grasp on each concept.



# Check In

## RATIONALE

Although it can be difficult to improve your child's social connections while at the home, this activity will help to grow their understanding and value of friendships. It will provide a chance to reflect on past and current social connections as they share experiences throughout the game. Additionally, it will help your child as they continue to form new social connections by teaching them the qualities to look for, as well as how they can be a friend to someone else.

## ADAPT

Consider using larger placeholders, such as cotton balls, if the participant has difficulty with fine motor skills. Or, use different colored placeholders, such as colorful pieces of cut-up paper, if your child could improve from increased contrast. If your child has difficulty with understanding the characteristics, try creating your own board using emojis/faces to represent the quality.



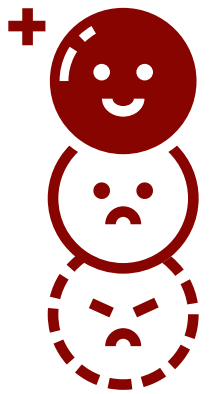
# Emotion Charades

Materials in Appendix C



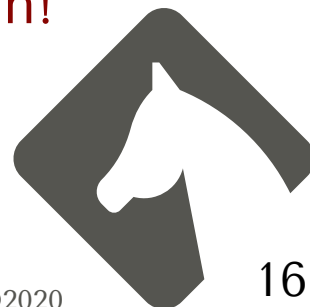
All you need is paper to write on & a bowl or cup to put the slips of paper in!

This activity requires at least 2 or more players making it a great opportunity for you to play with your child!



1. Cut out slips with actions on them that translate to specific emotions from the list provided or make them up!
2. Have each player pull a slip of paper without looking, and then read the action to themselves.
3. The player will then act out the scenario without talking- by using body language, such as gestures and facial expressions.
4. The other players will actively guess what emotion the player is acting out until guessed correctly. After the scenario is guessed, discuss with your child what emotion is being expressed and when they experienced that emotion.

Add a time limit for guessing for fun!





# Check In

## RATIONALE

This activity is a great option to help develop your child's non-verbal communication skills as they practice communicating a message with only body language, including facial expressions and gestures. Additionally, the activity addresses communication skills as your child will gain understanding of how certain emotions are expressed by themselves and others.

## ADAPT

Use scenarios that are easier for the participant to demonstrate, but still represent different emotions. For example, instead of breaking your favorite toy, the slip of paper could simply say "crying."





# CHAPTER 5

# CONFIDENCE



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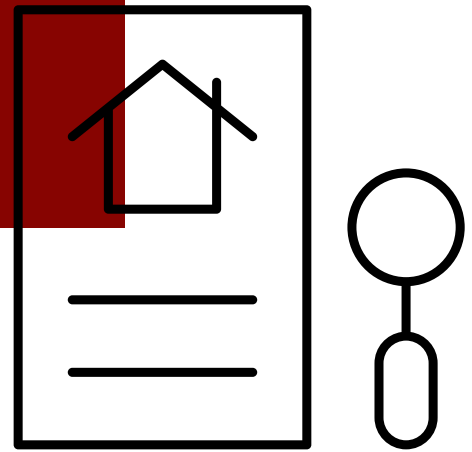
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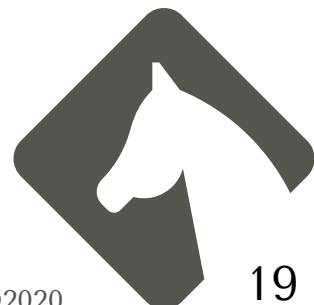
# Problem Solving Scavenger Hunt

Materials in Appendix D

Materials: Sticky notes,  
pencil/pen



1. To prepare, on slips of paper, write down practical problems that your child might experience in daily life. Choose from examples or make some up! For each problem, there should be a clear answer of how to solve it, which should lead them to a specific area within the home.
2. Give your child the first hint, and leave each proceeding hint at the answer for the preceding hint.
3. Your child should read each problem, decide where they should go to solve that problem, and find the next problem.
4. Leave a reward at the site of the last answer, such as a treat or new toy, to celebrate problem solving efforts!



# Check In

## RATIONALE

This activity will address your child's confidence in their ability to solve practical, everyday problems. It will build independence by familiarizing them with common solutions and reinforcing their perception of self-reliance.

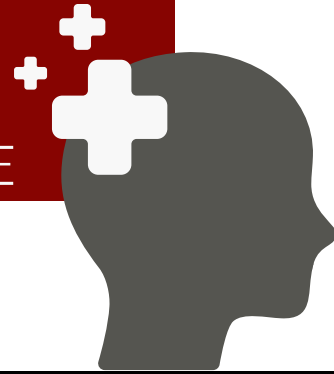
## ADAPT

If your child has difficulty reading, complete the scavenger hunt with them and read each problem aloud. You can also facilitate problem solving by giving the your child hints if they are stumped. Use easier, more applicable problems to participants who are younger or who require more daily assistance.



# Affirmations & Goals

Materials in Appendix E



Worksheet included!

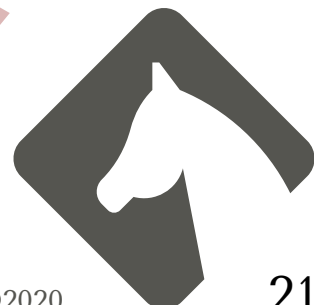
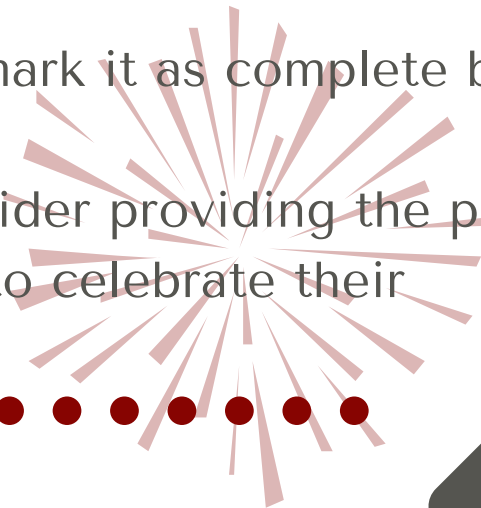
With your child, identify three things they are good at or admire about themselves. Then, have them identify three goals they wish to meet in the near future, such as within the next two weeks. Ensure the goals are easily achievable.

Write these ideas down on the example worksheet, or simply a piece of paper at home.

Hang the paper somewhere like the wall or fridge so the participant can be reminded of their positive affirmations and desired goals.

When your child achieves a goal, mark it as complete by putting a sticker or check mark next to it.

When all three goals are met, consider providing the participant with a reward meaningful to them to celebrate their achievements.



# Check In

## RATIONALE

This activity will improve your child's confidence by building self-esteem through positive affirmations and achieving personal goals. Positive self-talk is a great way build confidence, and this will be addressed as your child identifies and continuously sees positive affirmations. Additionally, confidence will be built as your loved one actively realizes they are able to achieve the goals they set for themselves.

## ADAPT

You can write for your child after they verbally identify their affirmations and goals. Your child can also draw pictures to depict their ideas, as opposed to writing sentences. Or, if more fitting for your child's needs, you can print pictures that show what the participant identifies.

If a goal turns out to be difficult for the participant to reasonably reach, change aspects of it to make it more achievable.



# APPENDIX

EVERYTHING BUT THE HORSE: HOME ACTIVITIES  
THAT GUIDE YOUR CHILD FROM HIPPO THERAPY  
TO HOME

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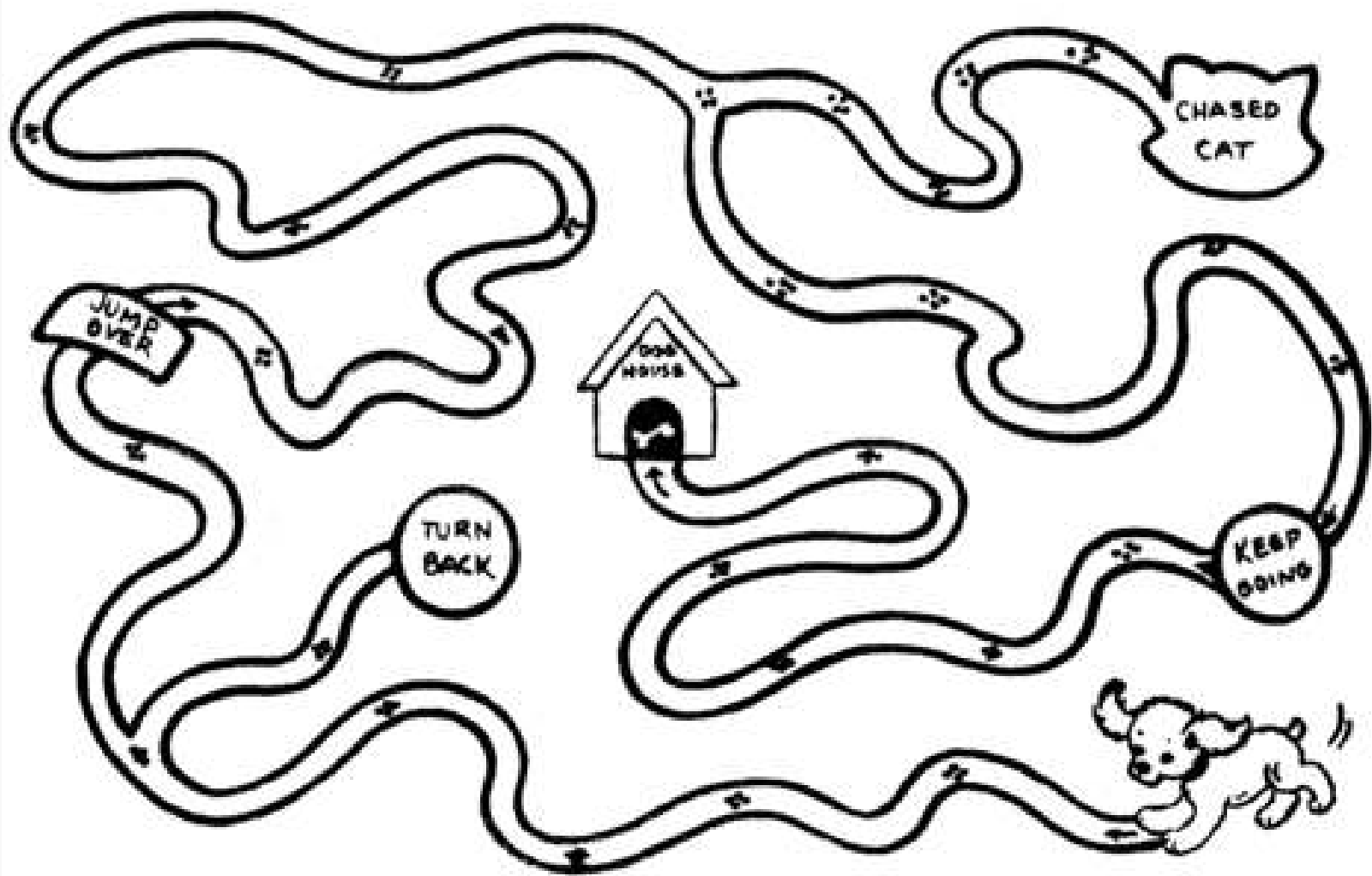
# A

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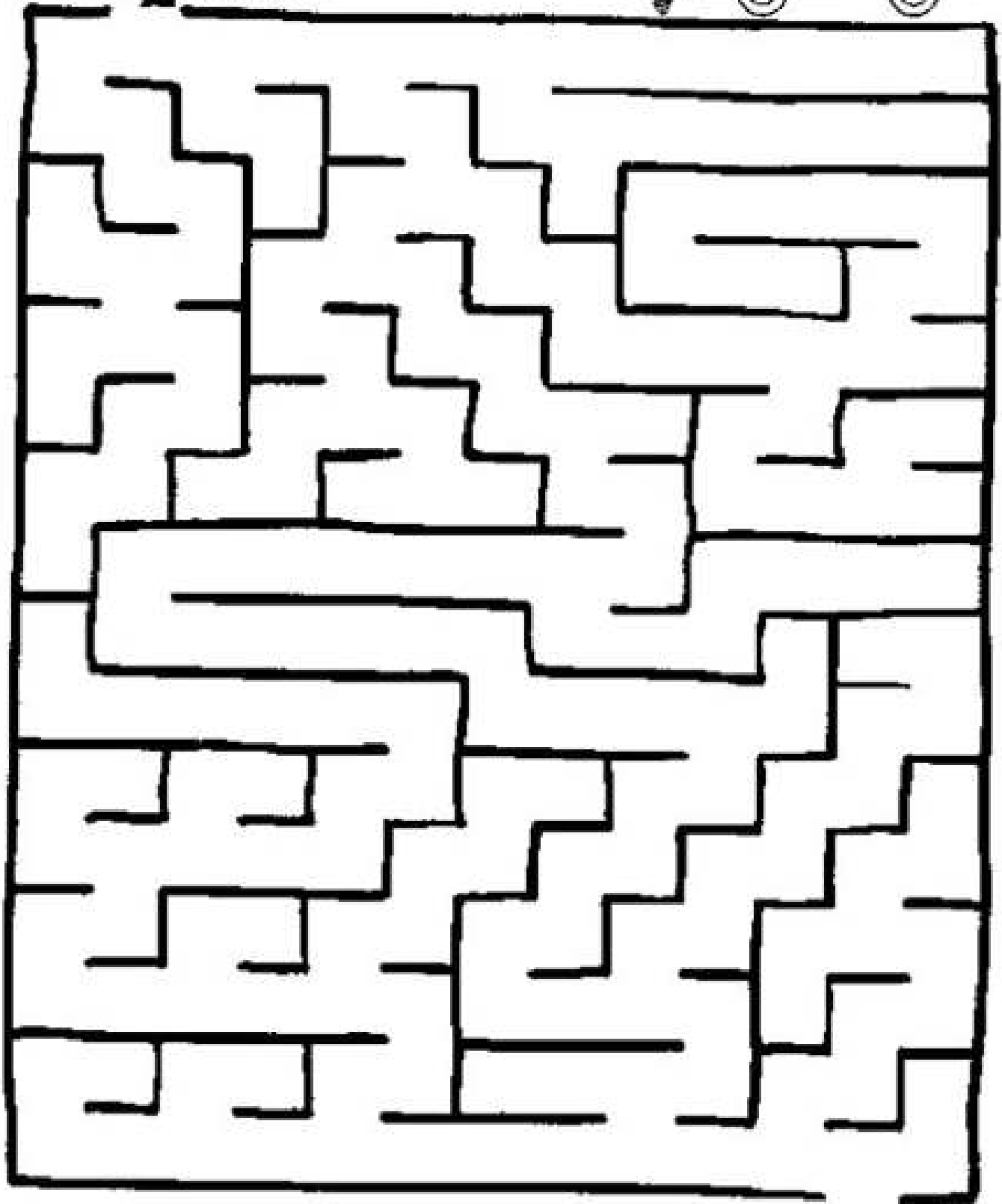


Where, oh where, has the little dog gone? Can you follow him?

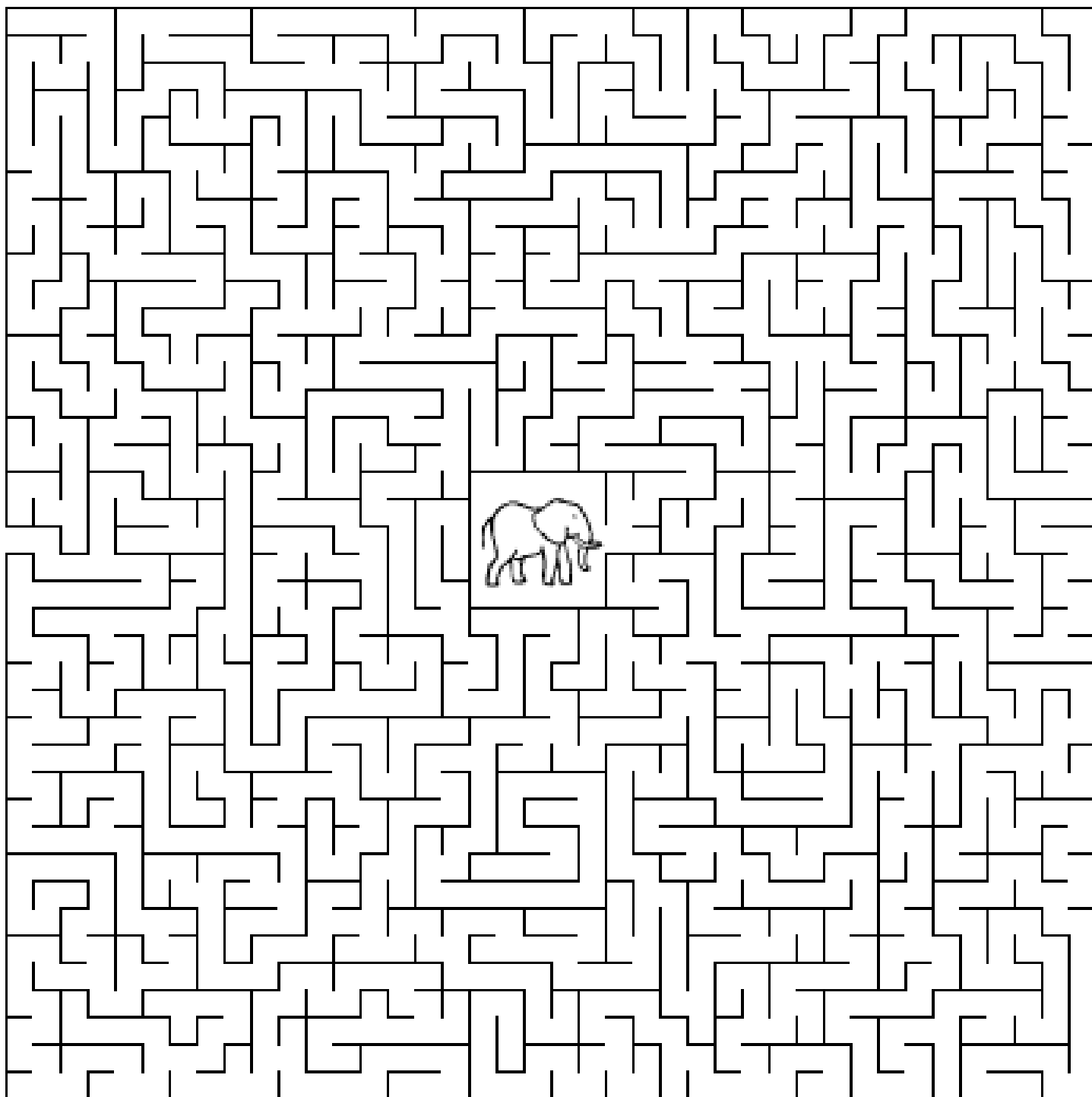
Will you help these animals  
make it to the finish?



Start



Finish



<https://www.bestcoloringpagesforkids.com/easy-mazes-printable-mazes-for-kids.html>

# B

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# **Qualities of a Good Friend**

<b>B</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>O</b>
<b>Trustworthy</b>	<b>Honest</b>	<b>Loyal</b>	<b>Empathetic</b>	<b>Good listener</b>
<b>Forgiving</b>	<b>Funny</b>	<b>Generous</b>	<b>Encouraging</b>	<b>Kind</b>
<b>Playful</b>	<b>Helpful</b>	<b>FREE</b>	<b>Respectful</b>	<b>Unique</b>
<b>Polite</b>	<b>Accepting</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Thoughtful</b>	<b>Selfless</b>
<b>Cooperative</b>	<b>Sense of humor</b>	<b>Confident</b>	<b>Apologetic</b>	<b>Patient</b>

Someone who you can count on	Someone who tells the truth	Someone who always sticks by you	Someone who understands your feelings	Someone who hears what you have to say
Someone who accepts your apologies	Someone who makes you laugh	Someone who gives to others	Someone who motivates and believes in you	Someone who is nice to other people
Someone who you have fun with	Someone who makes things easier for you		Someone who thinks about what matters to you	Someone who stands out
Someone who has good manners	Someone who likes you the way you are	Someone who follows the rules	Someone who thinks about others	Someone who puts others first
Someone who works well with others	Someone who laughs with you	Someone who believes in themselves	Someone who will say sorry when they make a mistake	Someone who waits for you

Bingo game & cards created by C. Winans



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# EMOTIONS

## Charades



**Hitting a baseball through a neighbor's window**

**Fighting over a toy with your brother**

**Saying goodbye to someone you will miss**

**Going on a rollercoaster**

**Hitting a homerun**

**Flying on an airplane**

**Breaking your favorite toy**

**Learning to drive**

**Missing the winning soccer goal**

**Riding a bike for the first time**

**Falling off your bike**

**Holding a baby**

**Taking out the stinky garbage**

**Getting dropped off for the first day of school**

**Not getting invited to a friend's party**

**Performing in a talent show**



# D

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1. I'm hungry and I have permission to eat a snack. To get one, I need to go to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I let my friend take a turn playing with my toy, but now I want to play with another. I can find one in \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I was playing outside and I scratched my elbow. It doesn't hurt so bad that I need an adult, but I need to put a bandage on it. I can find them in \_\_\_\_\_.
4. It's time to do my homework, but I need a pencil. I can get one from \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I want to watch TV but it is not on. The remote is in \_\_\_\_\_.
6. My device is almost out of battery and needs to be charged. I can find the charger \_\_\_\_\_.
7. After searching everywhere, I can't find the charger and I need to call an adult for help. I can use the phone that we keep in \_\_\_\_\_.
8. I want to read a book before bed. I can find one \_\_\_\_\_.
9. My hair is a mess and it needs to be brushed. I can find the hairbrush \_\_\_\_\_.
10. I'm getting dressed for the day and need to put on socks. I keep my socks in \_\_\_\_\_.

# E

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I am good at:



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I wish to:

1.

---

2.

---

3.

---

I am good at:



Riding my bike



Coloring



Playing video games

I wish to:

1. Play with my brother

2. Read a new book

3. Spend more time outside



# CALENDAR TEMPLATES

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# Calendar Templates

## WHY PLAN?

Using a calendar to plan when your child will do these skill-building activities is a great way to add structure and organization to your schedule. Having a visual guide will not only aid your child in staying on track, but will also provide a sense of accountability for completing these activities. Additionally, scheduling ahead will decrease any unpredictability that you or your child might experience in day to day life.

It is important to plan ahead in order to build the habit of incorporating activities that strengthen skills into daily routines. Choose activities that work best for you and your child and think of other fun things you can plan ahead.

The calendars provided are examples of the kinds of planners you can use. You can change them around to fit your schedule, or build off of them by adding more activities.

Adding visuals throughout the schedule can also be an engaging way to include your child as well as support understanding.



# EVERYTHING BUT THE HORSE: WEEKLY SCHEDULE

		GOALS
MON	Make affirmations	This week I want to play lots of game that help me learn
TUE	play date with a friend	
WED	play barn bag toss	TO DO make scavenger hunt call friend's parent to set up playdate for Tuesday
THU		
FRI	scavenger hunt	
SAT		
SUN		

EXAMPLE





# EVERYTHING BUT THE HORSE: WEEKLY SCHEDULE

MON		GOALS
TUE		
WED		TO DO
THU		
FRI		
SAT		
SUN		



# EVERYTHING BUT THE HORSE: WEEKLY SCHEDULE

<b>MON</b>		<b>GOALS</b>
<b>TUE</b>		
<b>WED</b>		<b>TO DO</b>
<b>THU</b>		
<b>FRI</b>		
<b>SAT</b>		
<b>SUN</b>		



# MONTHLY PLANNER

EVERYTHING BUT THE HORSE  
ACTIVITY PLANNING

JAN.

MONTH OF

ACTIVITIES

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bingo



emotion charades



barn bag toss



EXAMPLE

GOAL OF THE MONTH: I want to learn how to be a good friend

NOTES:

work on coordination and do practice  
activities about friendship



# MONTHLY PLANNER

EVERYTHING BUT THE HORSE  
ACTIVITY PLANNING

JAN.

MONTH OF

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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

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# MONTHLY PLANNER

BARNABILITIES ACTIVITY PLANNING

## FEB.

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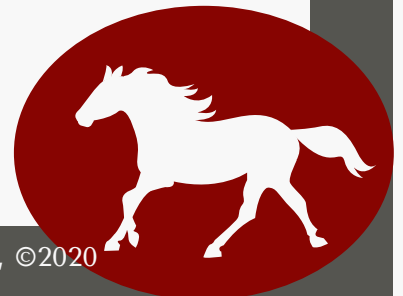
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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

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# MONTHLY PLANNER

BARNABILITIES ACTIVITY PLANNING

## MARCH.

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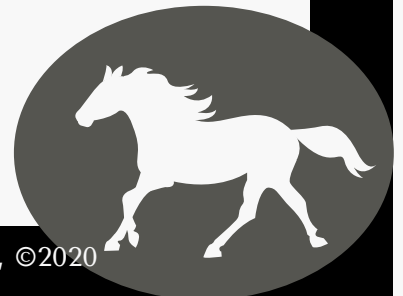
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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

NOTES:



# MONTHLY PLANNER

BARNABILITIES ACTIVITY PLANNING

## APRIL.

MONTH OF

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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

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# MONTHLY PLANNER

BARNABILITIES ACTIVITY PLANNING

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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

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# MONTHLY PLANNER

BARNABILITIES ACTIVITY PLANNING

## JUNE

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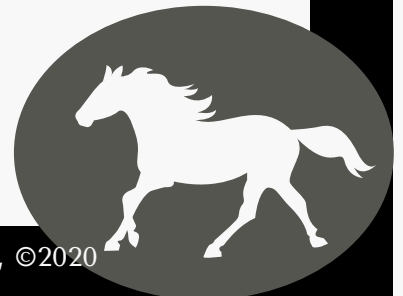
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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

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# MONTHLY PLANNER

BARNABILITIES ACTIVITY PLANNING

## JULY

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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

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# MONTHLY PLANNER

BARNABILITIES ACTIVITY PLANNING

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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

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# MONTHLY PLANNER

BARNABILITIES ACTIVITY PLANNING

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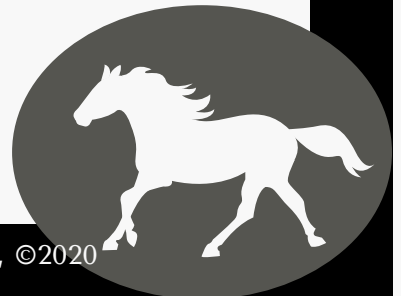
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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

NOTES:



# MONTHLY PLANNER

BARNABILITIES ACTIVITY PLANNING

OCT.  
MONTH OF

ACTIVITIES

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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

NOTES:



# MONTHLY PLANNER

BARNABILITIES ACTIVITY PLANNING

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MONTH OF

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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

NOTES:



# MONTHLY PLANNER

BARNABILITIES ACTIVITY PLANNING

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MONTH OF

ACTIVITIES

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GOAL OF THE MONTH:

NOTES:

