Create, Test, Improve!
Create an Obstacle Course

When you want to make something, you can use a three-step process: **create, test, improve!** This **computational thinking skill** is a creative way of thinking that can help children solve problems in more organized ways. Try the ideas below to practice this skill with your child.

Total time needed: 20–30 minutes

1. Watch the Story

Making a Racket Playing Whack-It

Ask your child:

- *Why do you think the monkeys were losing the game?*
- *What did the monkeys do to **improve** the way they played?*
- *Tell me about a time when you lost a game. Why do you think you lost?*

2. Do the Activity

Create an Obstacle Course

Follow the directions on the next page to design an obstacle course. Here are some suggestions for things to use:
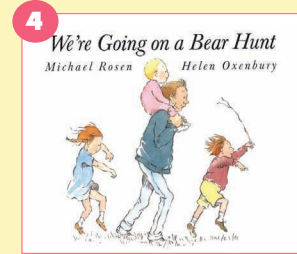
- Chairs, tables, other furniture
- Towels, blankets, pillows
- Baskets, buckets, cardboard boxes
- Other household items

3. Watch the Music Video

Make It Better

Watch the monkeys sing as they **create** a musical instrument, **test** it out, and then **improve** it. That's what you did when you made your obstacle course!

4. Read a Book (Optional)

We're Going on a Bear Hunt

By Michael Rosen
Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury

Ask your child:

- *What obstacles did the family face on their bear hunt?*
- *Since they can't go over or under the obstacles, what do they do?*

Do the Activity
Create an Obstacle Course

Design an obstacle course that has things to climb on, jump over, or crawl under. Use these three steps: **create, test, improve!** You can use these steps to make almost anything!

Create! (see materials on first page)

1. Tell your child that she's going to **create** an obstacle course. Explain:
   - *An obstacle course has things you can climb on, jump over, or crawl under.*

2. Find an open space, inside or outside. Ask your child:
   - *What can we use around the house (or outdoors) to make an obstacle course?*

3. **Create it!** Help your child try out her ideas.

TIP: Creating obstacles

Anything can be an obstacle! Chairs can be hills to climb, towels can be rivers to jump over, and a box can become a tunnel to crawl through.

Test!

1. Tell your child:
   - *Let's **test** our course to make sure the obstacles are working, and that they don't fall over when you try them.*
   - *I wonder if some of the obstacles are too easy or too hard?*
   - *How do you think we can we **test** our obstacle course?*

2. Have your child think of a way to **test** the course.

Improve!

1. Depending on the test results, ask:
   - *Which obstacles are not working the way you want them to?*
   - *How can we **improve** the obstacle course?*
   - *Can you think of ways to make it even more fun?*

2. Keep making **improvements** and **testing** them out.

3. When your child is satisfied with the obstacle course, remind her of what she did:
   - *To make the course, you **created, tested,** and **improved** it. You can use these three steps to make almost anything!*

TIP: Challenge friends or family

Who do you predict will complete the obstacle course the fastest? Gather your family or a group of friends to test it out and see.