

FIVE GAMES TO PRACTISE SELF-REGULATION

LEARNING SELF-CONTROL AND ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS THROUGH PLAY.

Does your child recognise the need to speak in a low voice in a library? Does he remain calm when faced with a problem and ask for help? Does he listen and respond appropriately in conversations? The ability to self-regulate means that the child is able to hit pause, think and then act. It involves learning a complex set of skills, such as resisting impulses, handling frustration and taking turns, to name a few. The five activities below offer young ones plenty of practice on self-regulation while having loads of fun.

1 FREEZE DANCE / MUSICAL CHAIRS

Children dance on the spot when the music comes on and stay perfectly still when it stops. Vary the tempo with fast and slow songs to make it fun and interesting. If there are more children, play Musical Chairs. Arrange to have one chair less than the number of children.

BENEFIT: Children learn to pay attention and control their movements.



2 SNAP

Draw pairs of pictures or shapes on thick card or craft paper. Deal out the cards face-down. Players take turns to flip over their top card and place it face-up on a new pile. When one player turns over a card that matches another's top card, the first one to call out "Snap!" wins the pile of cards. Play continues until one player wins all the cards.

BENEFIT: Matching games improve concentration and increase attention to detail.



3 MIRROR MIRROR

One person is designated as the leader and the rest facing him mimic the positions or poses that the leader does. For example, the leader can put one hand on his head and stand on one leg. To make it more challenging, set a timer at 30-second intervals to change and follow the poses.

BENEFIT: This game hones children's visual perceptual skills and motor control skills.

4 TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Use paper plates to make steering wheels and red, yellow and green traffic signs. As children pretend-drive around the house, they must pay attention to your commands to stop, slow down or go, or respond to the coloured signs which you hold up.

BENEFIT: Playing stop-and-go games is good practice for listening, following directions and controlling body movements.



5 WACKY RELAY

Two children transport an object (e.g. book, pillow, ball) between them from one point to another, using only designated body parts, such as elbow to elbow, cheek to cheek or back to back. An adult-child pairing also works. Keep it interesting and fun by varying the body parts and objects for each round.

BENEFIT: This game develops cooperation and concentration skills.

