

## PROMOTING SELF-REGULATION THROUGH GAMES – SAMPLE GAMES AND INSTRUCTIONS

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### Move to the Magic Word

#### Materials needed:

None

#### Directions:

- Designate a movement word (e.g., “march”) as the “magic word” for the game
- Have children identify the beginning sound (e.g., /m/ for “march”) and other words that begin with that sound
- Instruct children to act out the magic word when they hear it, but not when they hear other words, even though they will begin with the same sound
- When playing the game, use words with the same beginning sound (e.g., “mom” or “map”) periodically to “trick” children so that they have to resist the urge to move

#### Self-Regulation Skills:

##### **Inhibitory control**

Students are *controlling the impulse* to stop the designated movement until they hear the “magic word”

##### **Working memory**

Students are *using short-term memory* to remember the “magic word” as well the *directions*; *recalling* what they know about the initial sounds of words

##### **Attention/cognitive flexibility**

Students *pay attention* as they listen for the “magic word”; *listen and follow directions*; *switch focus from one task to another* – listening and moving

## Follow the Baton

### Materials needed:

Baton (for teacher/leader), various musical instruments (or objects) for students to hold

### Directions:

- Instruct students to follow the movement of the baton (e.g., if the baton moves up then students' objects move up, if it moves down then the objects move down)
- Increase the complexity of this game by instructing students to do the opposite (e.g., if the baton moves down then students' objects move up, if it moves up then the objects move down)

### Self-Regulation Skills:

#### **Inhibitory control**

Students are *controlling the impulse* to do something else with their object; *taking turns* as they wait for the teacher/leader to decide which way the baton will move

#### **Working memory**

Students are *remembering the directions*

#### **Attention/cognitive flexibility**

Students *pay attention* as they watch for how the baton will move; *listen and follow directions*

## Move to the Music

### Materials needed:

Music that can be stopped and started again easily

### Instructions:

- Instruct students to dance while the music is playing and then stop dancing when the music stops
- Increase the complexity of this game by changing how the students dance when the music plays (e.g., fast or slow) and then doing the opposite (e.g., if teacher/leader says, "Fast," then students dance slow or if teacher/leader says, "Slow," then students dance fast)

### Self-Regulation Skills:

#### **Inhibitory control**

Students are *stopping one behavior and choosing another more appropriate action* – stop dancing when music stops

#### **Working memory**

Students are *remembering the directions*

#### **Attention/cognitive flexibility**

Students *pay attention* as they listen for a change in the music; *listen and follow directions*