

Developing an understanding and appropriate response to 'STOP' and 'WAIT'

STOP!!!!

An understanding of 'stop' is critical for the safety of all children. As understanding grows and 'STOP' is practised, an automatic response can usually be developed to this command. Some children have difficulty comprehending that not all areas of their environment are safe, and an understanding of stop is critical for such children. Some children benefit from boundary training to build their awareness of where their 'safe space' is and where it ends. Where is the boundary between safe and unsafe? The boundary might for example run along the fence line at the end of the garden, or the school yard. Within such comprehensions is embedded an understanding of 'STOP'.



The activities developed here are loosely listed in a suggested sequential approach to develop an appropriate response to 'STOP'. As an initial understanding and introduction to 'STOP' is made, children sit in a tightly controlled environment. As understanding is built, so the parameters widen until eventually children are active participants moving quickly around the room responding independently to cues to stop.

A multi-sensory approach is used in teaching 'STOP'. Visual cues are coupled with auditory, which are coupled with kinaesthetic. Use a variety of visual cues: a large traffic stop sign can be fun and effective for outdoor use, while a stop symbol on a card or a physical 'stop like a policeman' cue might be appropriate at other times. Have lots of fun while children are learning and practising. The more interesting and enjoyable the activity, the more the children will engage with it!

Lets clap our hands *Track 1

This initial activity requires children to be sitting down. By sitting, children are anchored to one spot and this enables greater opportunity for each child to focus, and for the group leader to be very aware of the needs of each child. Action takes place through 'clapping hands, tapping knees' etc and..... STOP!!

The Crazy Conductor *Track 2

This activity is also a sitting one. Each child is given a non-tuned percussion instrument that sounds a single clear beat. (Finger castanets, claves, tambourines, drums, sound shapes and maracas are all good choices.) Have an immediate explore and play... and STOP! A stop sign is taught as a large sign, two hands at chest level, palms facing outwards – like a policeman! Practise 'play and stop' using the stop sign. Engage with the activity using the CD. The activity has many stops –some more expected than others. As the group leader you will need to be very familiar with these before you begin, so that you can reinforce with a strong physical 'STOP' sign. In the



activity where the word 'STOP' is included, a sudden silence is evident in the music and the group leader reinforces with a large physical 'STOP' sign. These combined medium give a strong experience of the meaning of 'STOP'. If a child is apparently oblivious to these indicators, a physical prompt to cease from playing their instrument may be necessary.

Get you Moving *Track 3

Now that some initial work has been undertaken with children seated in front of the teacher it is time to extend the boundaries within which 'STOP' is practised, by allowing the children to get up and move to the music. Using a large clear space, simply play the CD which requires children to move around the room.....and STOP! With an awareness of any child who may still be struggling to grasp this concept, walk near to them (or instruct them to walk near you if there are multiple children). On the cue of 'STOP', give a physical prompt to stop. The stop is reinforced by the silence in the activity. The real test then comes when children are invited to run around the room – and STOP! (If you have children in your group who respond well to 'STOP' and need greater challenges, add in some 'pathway' challenges. These might include 'move only in straight lines with corners', 'move only in curvy lines and circles', 'move only sideways'.

Let's clap our hands 2 *Track 4

This is similar in style to the first activity except that the actions required are more exploratory. It returns to the beginning of our understanding and practise and as such is a strong reinforcement – while adding some new fun and creative ideas. The familiarity of the music and its form enables the child to succeed with the challenges of moving and stopping.

Who wants to play *Track 5

This activity offers opportunities for **individual** students to practise and demonstrate 'STOP' within the group context. The entire peer group support the child through counting out 1-2-3 in preparation for the imminent 'STOP'. A strongly motivating instrument is offered to the group – a thunder maker, kokoriko or sparkle drum are effective choices. Listen to the song. How will we know when our turn is finished? The entire group counts 1-2-3. This is a strongly supported context for a student to practise individually - and to be successful.

Moving down the street *Track 6

This activity provides many opportunities for moving in similar manner to what might be expected in outside unstructured play time. The activity invites 'Let's go moving/ running/ hopping/jumping down the street' etc. The sudden 'STOP' amidst all the noise and fun is great preparation for the unstructured outside break times. This is a close simulation, yet the fact that it **is** still controlled and supervised closely makes it a very effective real life simulated learning opportunity.



Let's make a Racket *Track 7

Listening for the verbal language cue of 'STOP' is critical to this activity. The stops in this activity are less predictable than previous activities and therefore require the child to be alert to cues. The verbal cue is supported by sudden silence in the music. The sound in the activity is produced by shaking, scraping and tapping non-tuned percussion instruments.

Jumping Dance *Track 8

A strong physical activity of jumping and dancing has embedded within it three occasions for a sudden 'STOP'. The jumping stops and the sound ceases while the song pauses. This sudden ceasing of movement and sound is an opportunity to listen, look and reinforce the 'stopping' of all participants.

The Melbourne Train *Track 9

The 'train ride' requires sustained concentration and careful listening. The train gathers speed as it journeys on its way until it arrives at a station and 'stops'. Everyone gets off the train for some additional challenges and quickly get back on when the whistle blows. This activity is busy and active. The 'STOP' commands are supported by the entire group of 'riders' on the train. This is strongly supported if a Rainbow Ring is used to set the physical parameters of the train.

Biggest Band *Track 10

Children participate in playing in a band. At this initial stage, focus on enjoying playing in the band, being an active participant and... 'STOP'. This is a challenge following the fun of noisy participation as children generally are not keen to stop. When you are confident that your children understand and respond to 'STOP', this activity can be extended as described in the 'WAIT' section.

Get you Moving 2 *Track 11

This is similar in style to activity #3 except that the actions required are more exploratory. It returns to the beginning of our understanding and practise and as such is a strong reinforcement – while adding some new fun and creative ideas. The familiarity of the music and its form enables the child to succeed with the challenges of moving and stopping.

WAIT...

Biggest Band *Track 10

This activity has already been used in relation to teaching 'STOP'. Now that the children are familiar with it, use it again with a different focus...

The band described in this song incorporates the following instruments: bells, maracas, claves and tambourines. Place in front of each child one of each instrument and build up their recognition of the names of each one. Once this is established, place only 3 instruments out of the four in front of each child so that each child has

one section where they have to wait. Discuss waiting: Why do we need to wait? How do we wait? What does waiting look like? In each section as children without the particular instruments sit waiting, praise them for 'good waiting'. Over time, reduce the number of instruments that each child has, so that they are increasingly required to wait for longer periods of time. The distribution of instruments can be individualised for each child's capabilities. As you build up your children's tolerance of waiting continue to give praise and reinforcement for 'good waiting'. It is important to generalise this understanding of 'WAIT' throughout the day to many different circumstances.

Who wants to play *Track 5

This activity has been outlined in the previous section for developing an understanding that 'taking turns' have a beginning and ending point. Now we are looking again at this activity in relation to waiting. Use highly motivating instruments that are irresistible to your children – the activity is only successful when the instruments are exciting so that children are highly motivated to play them. Once the child is 'hooked' by the interest of the instrument, they learn that if they want a turn to play they need to 'WAIT' while one of their peers has a turn. They also need to support the turn of their peer by clapping while they have their turn. Keep the interest and enthusiasm keen by occasionally adding new unusual instruments.

On with the show *Track 12

This activity has two sections: a section where all children play and a section where one child, or a specially selected group of children, play while the remainder of the group waits. The lyrics provide a springboard for teaching that 'waiting entails being quiet'. The lyrics also reinforce why the remainder of the group are waiting and listening. The song has a short gap within it so that a specific child's name can be inserted to give clarity as to who the remainder of the group is waiting for.

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