

Date:



Dear Parents:

We've been working on Behavioral Self-Regulation to help your child learn that he can control his body. He is also learning that he can decide what action he wants to do. That is, do I want to move fast or slow or up or down or ...

Right now, we are focusing only on hand movements—they are a simple but effective place to start. Your child is learning that he has control of how his hands move. Now we want to extend his learning to home.

Here are some things you can practice

Practice doing hand actions with songs and rhymes. Vary the actions so they are at different:

- Speeds—fast, slow or in between
- Intensities—hard, soft or in between

Use the attached pictures to help your child to use different speeds or intensities.

Use either speed or intensity variations in one song or rhyme but not both. Using one or the other will be less confusing and more fun.

Try these in the car, in the bathtub or any other place when your child **CAN** (see the side box).

Encouraging your child to participate

The main thing to remember with these activities is that they should be fun! We've practiced them already so we know your child can do all of the actions. Now, we want to encourage him to do them with family members and friends. The strategies below will encourage your child to participate:

1. Use familiar songs and rhymes. They will help get the actions going.

Before you practice ...

Always make sure your child **CAN**. That stands for

C—Calm—your child is calm and not stressed or anxious

A- Alert—your child is alert, awake and not sleepy or feeling sick

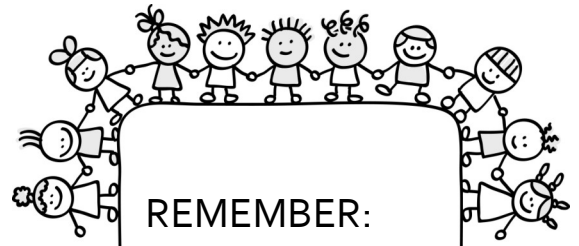
N—Nourished—your child has eaten something nourishing within 2 to 2 1/2 hours of your practice time.

By making sure your child **CAN**, the practice times will be positive and fun for all.



We have attached some songs and rhymes that your child likes. Feel free to add other ones you know your child enjoys! Please share them with us too.

2. Don't give him a chance to say "no". Use phrases like "let's sing *If You're Happy and You Know It*." rather than "do you want to sing *If You're Happy and You Know It*?" The second question can give him a chance to say "no". Using "let's" is positive and inviting without being too demanding .
3. Show your child how much fun it is. Invite your child to join you in a song or rhyme only two times. If he doesn't join you after two tries, go ahead and do it yourself. Make sure you show how much fun you're having—just don't get frustrated or, at least, let him know.
4. Prompt your child to fill in the blanks. When you get to one of the repeated phrases in the song or rhyme, pause and see if your child fills in the words or does the action. Whether or not your child joins in, just keep going to the end of the song or rhyme.
5. Offer your child choices about which song or rhyme to do and which speed or intensity to use. Give your child a choice of two songs or rhymes. Then, ask him child which speed or intensity he wants to use. Have the pictures of speeds and intensities close by to help him say or point to the one he wants. Letting him choose will make your child feel more like he has some say in the activity.
6. Let your child be 'teacher'. Being 'teacher' puts your child in the driver's seat. He can feel more in control of what is done and how. Take turns with him so that everyone gets a chance to be 'teacher'. Sometimes, a child might be nervous about acting as 'teacher' because that makes him the center of attention. If your child is hesitant, be supportive. Make a deal with him, like "I'll tell you how to do one action and then you do one" to help him know that it doesn't have to take long.



REMEMBER: learning is a process

All learning takes time and practice.

Many children need time to think about new learning, new actions and new songs before they will join in with others. Modeling the actions and songs for your child can give him more chance to learn them.

Some children need time to see that the same activities can be done at home. In the beginning, your child may need you to tell him that the teacher said "it's okay".

All children need time to practice with other people and on their own. Don't expect perfection right away. Rejoice with your child in every improvement.