

**Example spark\* Lesson**

**Lesson B:H1**

**The goal in this lesson** is to help children learn they have control of their hands and can command them to move in different ways when imitating an adult.

<b>Area of self-regulation 1:</b> Behavior			
<b>Area of focus 1:</b> Hands			
<b>Area of skill development 1:</b> Awareness of Ability			
<b>Primary executive functions:</b>		<b>Secondary executive functions:</b>	
	Cognitive flexibility		Planning and organization
	Inhibitory control		Working memory
	Self-monitoring		

**Comments on executive functions:** This activity requires children to control their impulses and begin to monitor their performance. There's little emphasis on planning and organization and working memory in the sense that only single actions are required each time and actions are done in direct imitation. Children must vary the location, speed, intensity, and manner they perform different actions, so inhibitory control and some degree of cognitive flexibility are needed. That is, they must go from doing the action at one rate, intensity, or manner and then shift to another. When working on different manners of movement, associations are made between actions and animal or cartoon character movements so children's cognitive flexibility will receive a fairly significant 'stretch' during that task variation. Children will have to switch from the notion of a butterfly as a concrete thing and focus on its movement patterns.

**Task variation:**

Change in (1) location/position (where actions are performed and/or where hands are placed), (2) speed (rate at which actions are performed), (3) intensity (force with which actions are performed) and (4) manner (style with which actions are performed).

### **Task structuring:**

**Directness of adult involvement:** Imitation of adult model

**General organization and arrangement of the activity:** You may wish to start work on imitation in a side-by-side position with the child, so they don't have to reverse/mirror your actions. Move on to face-to-face practice once the child successfully imitates actions.

For younger children, be sensitive to whether an action is visible or invisible to the child when first starting this lesson. Visible actions are those that they can see as they perform them. Invisible actions are out of the child's range of vision, such as on their head or behind their back. Some children may perform visible actions more readily at least in the initial stages so start there. Move on to invisible actions as the child's performance improves. Examples of songs/rhymes with visible and invisible actions can be found in the Resource files.

Using the dynamic of a group can help induce the child to engage in the activities more readily; they'll be side-by-side with peers and may be prompted by 'peer pressure'. Sometimes, however, being in a group can induce a lot of 'silliness' in some or all of the children. It's important to have strategies ready for dealing with group 'sillies' (see the Resource files).

Model actions so the positions/locations, three speeds (fast, in-between and slow), three intensities (hard, in-between, soft) and manners are clearly evident to the child. You may need to limit the amount of time spent doing higher speed and intensity actions as it can over-excite some children. Monitor them carefully.

It's usually best to use only one task variation for each song or story. At this stage, intermixing location, speed, intensity and manner may be overly complex for some children; for example, doing an action quickly, then switching to doing it softly and then doing it like a kangaroo within one song or rhyme. Be sure to try it out and see if the child can tolerate more than one variation. If they can, go ahead and include as many as possible. It's important to use familiar songs and storybooks in the initial stages of this lesson so the new task requirements are used with known material. After the child's performance becomes more consistent, introduce new songs or stories.

### **Objectives:**

The child will be able to imitate (1) location/position, (2) speed, (3) intensity and (4) manner variations in hand movements from an adult model with at least 80% accuracy each.

### **Materials:**

- rhymes and songs and storybooks (see the Resource files – MATERIAL - Selected songs and rhymes for the Behavioral Self-regulation, RESOURCES - *Internet sites coordinated with lesson activities* and RESOURCES – *Storybooks coordinated with lesson target areas* files for websites and examples of materials appropriate for both younger and older children) – incorporate favorites identified by the children and/or families
- illustrations of action locations/positions, speed, intensities and manners (see examples in the Resource files – ILLUSTRATIONS – *Action intensity*)

variation, Action speed variations, Action manner variations, Hand action and position variations); for older children, incorporate manners of movement from the child's favorite TV and cartoon characters (see the Resource files – RESOURCES - Internet sites coordinated with lesson activities). For older children who are able to read, you may wish to use just the printed word as the animal associations may seem too young for them.

- drums and rhythm instruments (like tambourines, shakers, triangles) – all can be homemade (see the Resource files - RESOURCES - Internet sites coordinated with lesson activities for suggestions)

### Language of spark\* to use in this lesson:

#### Key words & phrases:

We're ...

Let's ...

Did your hands ...?

How did your hands do?

You really know how to ...

We can ...

I need your help.

Help me ...

Look how you made your hands ...

You did that all by yourself.

#### Vocabulary & concepts:

Positions: up, down

Body parts: hands,

Speed: fast, slow(ly), in-between

Manner: animals, cartoon or video characters

Locations: in, on, under, beside, behind, over, etc.

Intensity: hard, soft(ly), in-between

### Introduction:

- (1) Location/position: "Let's do a song/story. I need your help with it, though. Help me with the actions. Do the same thing as me. Watch and listen carefully."
- (2) Speed: "Now we're going to do the actions in different ways. We can do them slowly like this turtle (show picture of turtle and demonstrate a slow hand action). We can do them fast like this rabbit (show picture and demonstrate a fast hand action). We can also do them in between – that's like how we usually do them (show picture and demonstrate a regular rate of action)."
- (3) Intensity: "Now we're going to do the actions in even more ways. We can do them softly like a cloud (show picture of cloud and demonstrate performing an action softly). We can do them hard like this rock (show picture and demonstrate performing the action with force). We can also do them in between – that's like how we usually do it (show picture and demonstrate regular intensity of action)."
- (4) Manner: "Now we're going to do the actions in even more ways. We can do them like a butterfly (show picture of butterfly and demonstrate 'fluttery' hand actions). We can do them like an elephant (show picture and demonstrate slow, forceful hand actions).

### Practice:

Use illustrations of actions to accompany the targeted action words in

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each song or story so the child receives additional prompting in the beginning stages especially for younger children. Always accompany actions with key words, such as "on my head", "in my pockets", "behind my back", "fast", "soft", "like a butterfly", "hop like a bunny", etc.

### **Prompting:**

For children just learning to imitate others, say "I do this \_\_\_\_ (position, speed, intensity, manner). Make your hands do the same". You can also just say "Do the same" or "Do this" and then make the action. Do an action and then say "You do" as you point to the child.

Use the illustrations of actions to help clarify the meaning of words, especially for younger children. Typically, the pictures of the symbols of different action speeds (for example, the turtle) are the primary focus for visual prompting.

If the child becomes distracted from the activity, tap your finger on the picture repeatedly and wait for them to look. Remain silent while tapping, speaking only if the child hasn't responded after 20 seconds or more.

**NOTE:** There are no 'correct' ways to move your hands when practicing different manners. Allow the child a fair amount of latitude in performing actions so long as their interpretations are plausible as actions for that animal or character. They don't have to be identical to yours.

### **Self-monitoring:**

After the child becomes engaged in the actions and begins to imitate them, ask, "Did your hands do the action okay."

After every second or third time they do an action, ask them, "How did your hands do? Did they do the action (speed, intensity, manner word)?" Wait for them to respond. Give them feedback about whether you agree or disagree and explain why.

### **Solidifying:**

Help the child review (a) what skills and strategies were learned in the lesson, (b) why it helps to use them and (c) what they noticed when they used them. Some children won't be able to verbalize or indicate some of this information but try to prompt responses from them. Clarify and add information as needed.

### **Highlighting:**

Point out to the child how they made their hands do the action and how they controlled their hands all by themselves. "Look at how you made your hands go (speed, intensity, manner word). You really know how to tell your hands what to do."

### **Additional Comments:**

During these activities, avoid having the child touch other people until they gain consistent control of their body. This can avoid sensory and personal space issues.

Share with the child's family different songs and rhymes they're enjoyed so they can practice them while driving in the car and whenever they can fit them in.

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**Optional supplemental activities** to increase each child's knowledge about their hands and what they can do: help the child make a "My Hands" book that shows in pictures or photos and words all the things that child can do with their hands in day-to-day life (for example, dressing themselves, eating, drawing, holding things).

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