

Self-Regulatory Games

Cotton Wool Games

Resources: 1 tea towel per pair, at least 10 cotton-wool balls per pair, 1 straw per person, 2 spoons per pair, 2 cups per pair

Popcorn Pop: Pick up the tea towel together and hold it between yourselves by its four corners. Place some pieces of cotton wool on the tea towel as you prepare to warm up the popcorn. Start by gently shaking the tea towel as the popcorn becomes warmer and warmer. Gradually get faster and faster until the popcorn gets really hot and all the little pieces jump and fly into the air as it pops. Make sure you work together to warm the popcorn up just as you like it.

Cotton Wool Hockey: Take it in turns to be the goal and the shooter! Create a goal using your hands, standing your four fingers upwards against the floor and joining your two thumbs in the middle. Then, whoever is starting as the shooter, gently blow the pieces of cotton wool using the straw and try to score a goal! Make it harder by moving further away from the goal. Don't forget to have a go at being both the goal and the shooter!

Cotton Wool Throw: One person starts as the thrower, and the other person holds the goal. See if you can score a cotton wool goal! Make it harder and see if you can do it being further away from each other?

Cotton Drop: See if you can drop the cotton wool balls into the cup from high up! Now try with your eyes closed!

Cotton Scoop: Place the cotton wool ball on the floor and see if you can scoop it up by using the spoon in your basket! You can't use anything else, just the spoon. Who can pick up all of their cotton wool balls and put them into their cup the quickest? Make it into a race!

Cotton Wool Blow: Sit opposite each other and cup your hands in front of you, with your palms facing up. Place a piece of cotton wool in the palms of your hands, then breathe in through your nose and gently out through your mouth. As you breathe out, pass the cotton wool over to your partners hands nice and controlled. Once you have mastered doing it slowly and calmly, see if you can move further away and still pass it from palm to palm. How far can you get?

Games using touch

Joint Stand/ Sit: Hold each other's hands and gently lower yourselves to the floor at the same time, helping each other to sit down.

Then, hold each other's hands and balance the weight by helping each other to stand back up at the same time.

Can you do it? Are you balanced?

Weather Report Massage:

This activity practices helping others to feel good and reinforces the concept of relaxation through touch. Touch is a crucial part of play as it is a sign of affection and love towards parent and child.

- It is time to open the curtains and check the weather.
 - Swipe hands across the back, starting in the centre and moving outwards
- The first thing that can be seen is a big, yellow sun...
 - With one hand on the shoulder, take the other hand and make a circle clockwise on the back
- ...that warmed the whole world
 - Make "rays" to the sides
- But look, clouds appear and cover the sun
 - Make small circles with fingertips
- Then the wind comes, and blows harder... and harder...and harder
 - Stroke with hand from side to side, harder and harder
- ...until the wind turned into a tornado and hurricane
 - Make spiral with finger, starting in the centre of the back, getting bigger, harder and faster
- Then came the lightning
 - Make lightning bolt shape with finger
- ...And thunder
 - Pat hands on back gently
- Then came the rain...
 - Begin at shoulders and stroke down with fingertips, tapping each finger
- And it rained harder, and harder
 - Same as above but harder and faster

- Until the rain turned into hail...and more hail
 - “play” with fingers on back... harder and harder
- Then it began to snow, and everything was white and beautiful
 - Pad clenched fists on back gently and slowly
- And the only thing to see was the cat that climbed up to the roof of the house
 - Climb hands up back towards neck
- Finally, fog appeared
 - Swish hands round back
- Until the sun came out and warmed earth again
 - Make large circle with one hand on back
- Everything looked bright and golden as the curtains closed
 - swipe hands back towards the centre of the back

Tip: Facilitator to lead this activity for the group

Time: 5 minutes

Lotion Massage

Warm, soft touch is an effective way for parents and children to feel close to one another and connected. Massage encourages nurturing touch and boosts people’s emotional wellbeing. Using massage that has different focuses utilises children’s imagination and creativity.

Parents, you are going to be given a small amount of lotion each. To start, check with your child if they have got anything that they want you to take care of, or any poorlies on their hands. Make sure your hands are nice and warm and then gently rub in some lotion onto your child’s hands, making sure we are taking care of any of those poorlies. Have they got any freckles that you can see? Or any birth marks that you’ve not seen before?

Next, you can write a word on each other’s hand using the lotion. Can you guess what word it is?

Resources: lotion

Tip: ensure the lotion you use is for sensitive skin

Time: 5 minutes

Group Lean

Stand in a circle with everyone facing the same way, so you can see the back of the person in front of you.

Everyone should place their hands on the back of the person in front of them and apply gentle pressure.

Tip: Try to apply the same amount of pressure as the person behind you is putting on your own back. This helps us to get in tune with each other and fosters focus.

Time: 5 minutes

Pizza Massage

Using gentle massaging strokes, pretend to make a pizza on your partner's back. Think about how you can represent the different stages of the recipe with positive touch.

Start with the base – you could make big sweeping circles with your hands. Now, think about what toppings you would like, and be imaginative with your touch.

Time: 5-10 minutes

Games taken from ideas from Theraplay

These games can be used to help children follow a leader to help take them through a journey of different states of affect. Practising how to calm down when excited helps children to learn to calm themselves when they get upset. **Always end the games with gentle, relaxed, slow and soft movements/sounds to enable them to practise the transition between excitement and calmness.**

Peanut Butter and Jelly

Verbal games, leader says “peanut butter” and group or child respond with “jelly” using the same pitch, speed, tone and volume as leader. varying ways of saying “peanut butter”.
(change to British words if helpful)



Hand Stack

Make a stack of hands going up and then down. Guide child to put their hand on top and alternate hands to make a stack. Leader calls out “fast, slow, medium, getting

slower” etc.

Bear Hunt patting legs game



Children’s game of ‘we’re all going on a bear hunt... I’m not scared’ with leader leading the rhythm by patting their legs and then clapping, rubbing hands etc to describe the journey and the child copying.

Vary volume, pitch and speed of the song and the clapping, patting etc. Again end up slow and gentle. Be wary of the story line you choose so as not to scare or excite the children too much.

Hand beat along the floor or clapping game

Leader sends a hand clap rhythm or hand beat on the floor/table around the group. Child/ren copy. Vary in speed and volume.

Regulate how loud or soft you talk by leader’s signal

Group starts talking, then gets louder or quieter depending on the leader’s hand signals (i.e hands moving up or down).

Mirroring

Face the child, move arms, face or other body parts and ask child to move in the same way. Vary tempo and use slow motion actions too. Take turns being leader.

Red light green light

Ask child to do something, for example, run, jump, move arms. Green light means go, red light means stop.



Mother May I?

Leader gives instruction to the child to do something funny for example “take 3 giant steps towards me”. Child must say “mother may I?” before responding to the command. If the child forgets they must return to the starting line. Vary the speed and excitement of the different movements. If it is a parent who is leader, give the child a hug at the end.