Brain Builder 3: Stop and Start

Preparation
The symbol you’ll need to play this game is on the following page. Photocopy it before you play the game.

Have children stand, leaving enough room to move.

Rules
- Rule 1 is, when I say “Start,” move in your own space.
- Rule 2 is, when I say “Stop,” show me the stop pose.

Steps
1. Model the stop pose for children (see suggested stop poses below).
2. Say: Start. Children move in their own space.
3. Say: Stop. and show the stop pose. Wait for all children to show the same pose.
4. Repeat Steps 2 and 3.

Tips
- Play the game for only a few minutes at a time.
- Play the game at least twice a day.
- Use the same stop pose all day or all week.
- Increase the challenge as children become more adept at the game.
- Use the game for transitioning between activities. Say: Stop to get children’s attention. Then say: Start ___________ (cleaning up, lining up for recess, moving to a different center).

Suggested Stop Poses
Simple
- Put both hands on a body part
- Stand up tall
- Squat down low
- Make your body wide
- Make your body small

Complex
- Put each hand on a different body part
- Put your right hand on a left body part and vice versa
- Make shapes with your hands/arms
- Make letters with your whole body
- Balance on one foot

Increasing the Challenge
Attention (A), Working Memory (WM), Inhibitory Control (IC)
- Add an action to the “start” direction: Start ___________ (walking, hopping, crawling, stretching). (A, WM)
- Propose different forms of locomotion (train, airplane), animals (bird, dog), and so on, for the start action. Have children propose stop poses to match. (A, WM)
- Model a sequence of two or more actions for the stop pose. (A, WM)
- Say: Stop without showing the stop pose. (A, WM)
- Use a symbol (see the stop sign on the following page) with or instead of words. (A, WM)
- Increase the time children are stopped. (A, IC)