



## Connecting in Play

# Stop-and-Go Games

Learning to respond to *stop* and *go* is a very useful safety skill for your child to develop. Introducing this skill in a fun, play-based situation will help your child embed this ability, so it becomes a good habit. Stop-and-go games can contribute to a range of skills, including:

- Gross motor control (the ability to control the large muscles in the body for big movements such as walking, running and climbing).
- Timing, motor planning (the ability to conceive, plan and carry out a physical task), attention, and teamwork

### What you need?

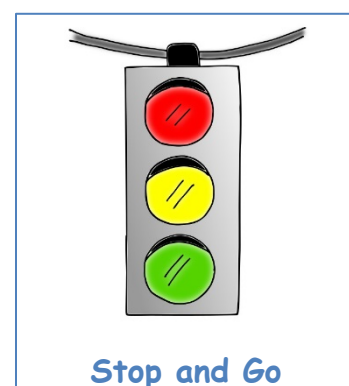
- Visual cues (e.g. stop, wait and go visuals) could be helpful but are not necessary

### Preparation and Helpful Hints

When introducing the game and interacting, being on the same level as your child will encourage them to watch you and be ready to listen. As your child becomes more confident with stop-and-go games, you can begin to increase the distance between you. Continue to encourage them to look toward you when you are giving instructions.

You may need to model an activity a few times before your child joins in with your game. Keep persisting and make the activity fun and enjoyable.

Do not go into the game with a fixed agenda. Be flexible and have fun with your child!





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## Activity Suggestions

### Walk, Stop, Wait

The walk, stop, wait game can take place in everyday situations, multiple times of the day for 1 to 2 minutes at a time. Playing simple games as your child moves to the next routine or activity can make the transition from one task to another easier.

You might play the game during short journeys from the kitchen to the bathroom at bath time or from the front door to the car. Introducing this game during routine times allows it to become predictable for your child and provides lots of opportunity for practice. To play, hold your child's hand and say where you're going and why, e.g. **"Bath time – let's walk to the bathroom."** As you walk, repeat the word, **"Walk."** After a couple of steps say, **"Stop."** Then, stand still. To start with, your child may continue walking. If so, bring them back and repeat, **"Stop."** Stand still and say, **"Wait."** Introducing the word **wait** is useful, as your child may stop when you say **stop**, but start moving again without much of a pause. You can add a physical prompt by bending slightly at the knees as you repeat the word **wait** until it's time to move again. Keep the wait time short to begin with (i.e. 2 to 3 seconds) and gradually build to longer times (10 to 15 seconds). Then say, **"Walk"** and continue walking to your destination adding in some more stops and waits as you go.

Once your child has practised this a few times, you can add variations to the game. Rather than walking normally you can model some funny walks. For example:

- Robot walk using a robot voice. When you say stop, power down and bend at the waist.
- Horse gallop saying, **"Gallop, gallop!"** On stop say, **"Whoa!"**
- Pretend to be racing cars revving engines on walk, and screeching brakes on stop.

This game can be transferred into situations when you need your child to stop and wait, such as crossing the road or waiting in line.





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## Activity Suggestions

### Stop and Go in Play

You can practice stop-and-go games with your child's favourite activities. Start by sitting opposite your child with an object/toy between you. Some activities that can incorporate stop, wait and go include:

- Blowing bubbles. Hold the bubble blower near your mouth, ready to blow. Say, "Wait, wait, go!" Blow the bubbles and let your child run after and pop them.
- Wind-up toys. Have the toy wound up and ready to go. Hold it still saying, "Wait, wait, go!" Let the toy go, and when it stops moving, say, "Stop."
- Noisy toys that can be turned on and off. Hold the toy ready to turn on. Say, "Wait, wait, go." Turn the toy on for a short period, then say, "Stop" and turn it off again. Pass the toy to your child and encourage them to respond to the wait, go, and stop instructions.

As your child becomes more able to respond to stop and go instructions, you can practise the game during more active activities, such as:

- Jumping on a trampoline
- Dancing to music
- Throwing a balloon in the air

