

Activities to Promote Social and Emotional Health of Toddlers

Activity Title: Still as Statues

Age Range: Toddlers

Purpose of Activity: Music is an excellent source to help children develop self-regulation and self-control. Children learn to move their bodies, slow down their bodies, and finally rest their bodies—all to the rhythm of the music. The more self-awareness a child can gain, the better she will be able to recognize states of excitement or even agitation in her own body and find positive ways to release her energy or calm down.

Materials:

Recorded music or a rhythmic instrument

Steps:

- 1.) Talk to your child about what a statue is.
- 2.) Tell your child that you're going to play a game in which she will move around the room to the music. When the music stops, she will "freeze" and become a statue.
- 3.) Start the music or play a simple rhythm on an instrument. When the music stops, you and your child both must become "statues." Restart the music, encouraging the statues to come alive!!
- 4.) Offer acknowledgment: "Wow! Your eyes are closed, and you're standing very still." "You are really paying close attention to the music and to me!" Be enthusiastic with your comments.
- 5.) Ask her questions... "Is this fun?" "Do you like this game?"
- 6.) Ask your child has feelings about this activity – talk about them – "You are confused when we freeze!" "You like it when the music plays, you are happy!"
- 7.) Talk through how to problem-solve... "It seems like you are getting really excited and a little fussy... would slower music be better?" "What is your favorite thing to do? I think you like the raspberries I give you when we freeze! Do we need to stop and do those for a few minutes?"
- 8.) Because this activity can be lively, it is best to conclude it with calming music to help your child settle down.

Activity adapted from "Socially Strong, Emotionally Secure: 50 Activities to Promote Resilience in Young Children", by Nefertiti Bruce and Karen Cairone, with the Devereux Center for Resilient Children, 2011, North Carolina: Gryphon House, Inc.