



## EMOTIONAL REGULATION GAMES FOR CHILDREN 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**

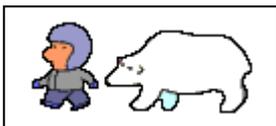
Verbal games, leader says “peanut butter” and group or child respond with “jelly” using the same pitch, speed, tone and volume as leader. Varying ways of saying “peanut butter”.  
(change to British words if helpful)



### **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**

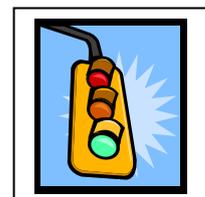
Group starts talking, then gets louder or quieter depending on the leader’s hand signals (i.e hands moving up or down).

### **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.