Physical Therapy Activity of the week: “Stop and Go”

It’s hard for children to develop control over their bodies. Playing “stop and go” games helps them practice control, so that they may be more likely to have self-control and be able to stop in other situations. There are many variations of stop and go, and it can be adapted easily. Other benefits to playing stop and go games are learning to follow directions, improving timing and moving with coordination / control, as well as using imagination to come up different ways to move.

1) Stop and Go- This is a simple one to start with kids. It can vary from a command of stop and go, to turning music on and off such as “the Freeze” song. Children can be moving in different ways from clapping, to walking, to galloping but when they hear “stop” they quit that action and wait for “Go”
2) Red light, Green Light- Using their eyes to look for a signal, or to listen to someone say “red light” / stop, “green light” / go
3) Musical Chairs- This is a great one to do as a family or with siblings- you can start with just turning the music off and finding a chair to sit in. When your child understands that part of it you can play the game more traditionally by taking a chair away etc…
4) Speed up, slow down, to stop. This is similar but adds another speed/or level of control. You can use the traffic light colors again. Red is stop, yellow is slow and green is fast.

“We all feel good when we learn how to stop ourselves from doing something we shouldn't do. Learning to manage our feelings takes time. We all want things we can't have from time to time, but for children, it can be especially frustrating to have those feelings. They haven't yet learned how to manage their frustration or anger when they can't have what they want or when they can't do what they want to do. Children need the help of caring adults who will help them learn how to stop themselves by setting clear limits for acceptable behavior while allowing children ways to express their feelings by talking or playing about them.”
-- Fred Rogers