

Silence Exercises

- Material** A Comfortable place for each person to sit
Exercise 3: A Pin or other common item.
- Purpose** Coordination of Movement of the Whole Body
Development of the Will –Self Control
Social Cohesion
- Age** Silence Exercises are introduced while children are learning to control their movements
The Silence Game is introduced when children have developed:
- The ability to concentrate
 - Reasonable self direction and control of movement
 - Experience with silence and sound in the silence exercises
 - Obedience

Presentation for Silence Exercise ONE:

Contrast Between Movement and Stillness focusing on LARGE muscle groups

1. *Invite a group of children.* This can be a small group of children gradually getting larger as the groups progress. Gather children in chairs. Model being comfortably seated in the chair. Verbalize: Back against the back of the chair, feet against the floor, hands relaxed and open on the thighs.
2. *Verbally guide children using quietest voice possible (Not a whisper).* Guide big movement for muscle groups in a progression i.e.: feet, knees, torso, arms, shoulders, head.
3. *For each step, “move your feet....now keep your feet very still. Continue until, Move your head, now keep it very still.”*
4. When the progression is complete, hold the stillness as long as possible. Before child breaks the stillness, begin a calm transition, a song or poem works well.
5. After the group has done this a few times, invite children to close their eyes. This will maintain the stillness longer.
6. Transition the group with a quiet song or poem then dismiss group to go back to work.

Follow Up

Continue repeating this activity until the entire group is able to do it at one time.

Move on to Small muscle groups

Presentation for Silence Exercise TWO:

Contrast Between Movement and Stillness focusing on SMALL muscle groups

1. *Invite a group of children.* This can be a small group of children gradually getting larger as the groups progress. Gather children in chairs. Model being comfortably seated in the chair. Verbalize: Back against the back of the chair, feet against the floor, hands relaxed and open on the thighs.
2. *Verbally guide children using quietest voice possible (Not a whisper).* Guide small muscle groups. Toes, heels, tighten thighs, move tummy, move fingers. Scrunch face, blink eyes.
3. *For each step, “scrunch your toes....now keep your toes very still. Continue until, blink your eyes, keep them very still. Take a deep breath. Now keep your breathing very still. Close your eyes.”*
4. When the progression is complete, hold the stillness as long as possible.
5. If children are completely still, label it. “When we are still and not moving or making noise we call that making silence. We made silence, Congratulations.” If anyone broke the stillness, do not label it. Wait until next time. Experience precedes language.
6. Did you hear anything while we were being still (or silent -if reached)?”
7. Transition the group with a quiet song or poem then dismiss group to go back to work.

Pedagogical Notes

- Do not move on from here until the children have made silence several times.

- If there are children who are not ready to do this, have an assistant take them for a walk or take them out to read a story or something else.
- If there are returning older children, begin this early in the year.

Presentation for Silence Exercise Three:

Refining Control to Make Silence.

1. *Invite a group of children.* This can be a small group of children gradually getting larger as the groups progress. Gather children in chairs. Model being comfortably seated in the chair. Verbalize: Back against the back of the chair, feet against the floor, hands relaxed and open on the thighs.
2. *Remember when we made silence.* Every one get into a place they can be still. (Could do the second exercise)
3. *Establish silence.* Explain. "I am going to ask you all to close your eyes and listen very carefully. I will be dropping something and I would like you to point to where the sound came from. Once your finger is pointing to where the sound came from, you may open your eyes and see if you are pointing at me. We will practice one time here. This is what the sound is you will be listening for." DROP OBJECT. Invite group to close their eyes and drop the pin.
4. *Move around the room.* Continue to move around the room and dropping the pin. Wait longer and longer between intervals of dropping the pin.
5. Transition the group with a quiet song or poem then dismiss group to go back to work.

The purpose is to interrupt and re-establish silence several times.

Exercise Four: Preliminary to the Silence game

This assumes two things about the children

- They have the capacity to sustain silence AND
- They have the capacity to return to silence once interrupted.

Initiate exercise Four when the most of the children in the group can do 1-3 successfully.

Many Preliminaries Skills should be in place here!

- ✓ Getting up from chairs without a sound
- ✓ Putting chair in without a sound
- ✓ Walking without a sound sitting on ground without a sound

- A. Gather students
- B. Describe new process
 - After children become silent call each child's name from somewhere else in the room.
 - That child will come to me without making a sound and stay in silence while I call the other children.
- C. Invite the silence as in previous exercises
- D. Have children close their eyes and listen for their name
- E. Move to a different part of the room.
- F. Use quietest voice possible to call the names of children who are still. If a child disturbs the silence, even to cough or sneeze, do not call that child. If possible, wait a great deal of time to allow sneezers to return to silence. If a child taps or something, wait until they become silent to call them.
- G. Once all children who participated in the silence are gathered, offer a smooth transition such as a song or poem that preserves the elevated calm.

EXERCISE FIVE: THE SILENCE GAME

- A. When all children were called and true silence has been achieved SEVERAL TIMES, walk over and get a chalkboard.
- B. I am going to create a signal to start the silence game from now on. I will stand in the room and hold up the board. When you see this signal, get in a comfortable place where you can make silence and wait for your name to be called.

C. Transfer with a smooth transition.