

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Catch That Word!
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus in an effort to hear certain words
Directions:	Identify a word like <i>the</i> or <i>and</i> for which students should listen. Then read or tell a short story (one or two minutes), and ask students to raise their hands (or touch their noses) every time they hear the identified word.
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of words for which students must listen. • Pick two words that are similar, like <i>ham</i> and <i>am</i> (perhaps using a rhyming text). Have students raise their hands when they hear one word and touch their noses when they hear the other.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



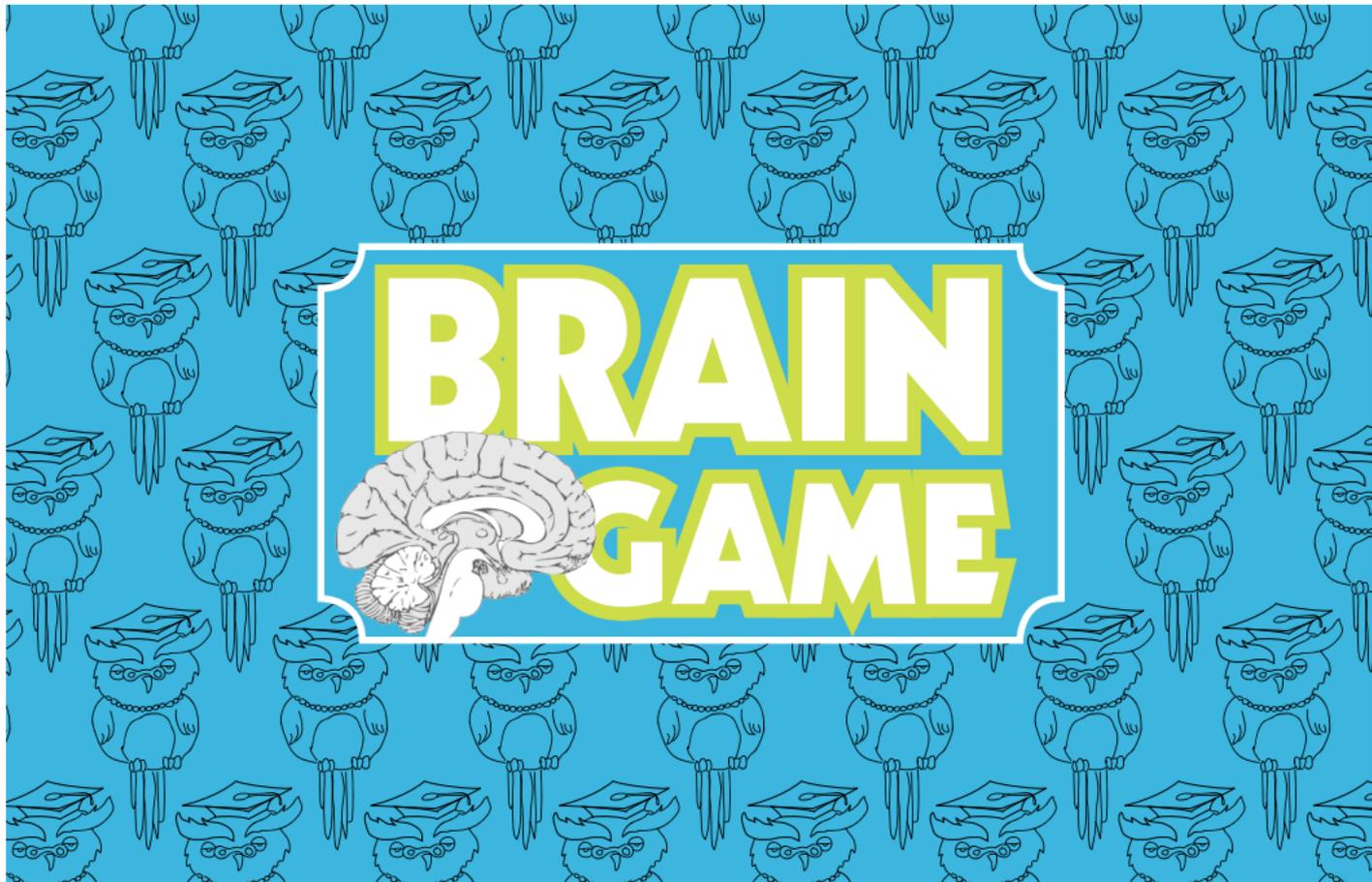
Brain Game:	Catch the Signal!
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus and respond as quickly as possible to the Active-Listening Signal
Directions:	<p>Give the Active-Listening Signal, and see how quickly students get into the active-listening posture. With each successive round, try to be more discreet about giving the signal, and see if students are able to catch the signal!</p> <p>NOTE: This version of the game is best played in the beginning of the year to help students master active listening. Once they have done so, you can invent a new signal and action, such as folding your arms to signal that everyone has to line up quietly. Tell students that every time they catch that signal, they should perform the appropriate action.</p>
More-Challenging Variation:	Give the signal very quickly or increasingly more discreetly.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Chip on a Stick
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus on passing the chip to the next player's craft stick without dropping the chip
Directions:	<p>This game is played in teams, in a circle. Each player has a craft stick. One player on each team is given a plastic chip. The goal of the game is to pass that chip around the circle, from one person's craft stick to the next. Players can only use the hand holding the stick. If the chip falls off the stick, the chip goes back to the first person, and the team has to start over. The team that gets the chip around the circle first wins.</p> <p>NOTE: Circulate during the game, and increase the level of difficulty, as needed, for each team.</p>
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add another chip so teams must pass two chips around the circle instead of one. • Have players use their nondominant hands.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	I Spy
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus on questions, answers, and clues to guess the object
Directions:	This game is played in teams. A person chooses an object in the room and names only its color, saying: "I spy with my little eye something that is [color]." The rest of the team asks questions as they try to guess the object. You may want to ask questions with students the first time so you can model how to ask useful questions. After about a minute, if no one has guessed the object, a second clue (e.g., location, size) may be provided. The person who guesses the object first gets to choose the next object.
More-Challenging Variation:	Limit the number of questions that students can ask or the number of clues allowed.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Mirror Game
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus very closely on the actions of another person in an effort to mirror that person
Directions:	Each student pairs up with a partner. One student is the Person and performs a series of slow-motion movements while pretending to look in a mirror. For example, the Person might stretch up his or her arms, make certain facial expressions, pretend to brush teeth, etc. The other student is the Mirror, and this student must focus on following the Person's movements exactly, so the two people look like a mirror image of each other. After a minute or so, have students switch roles.
More-Challenging Variation:	Allow the pairs to quietly decide between themselves who will be the Person and who will be the Mirror. Then see if an observer can guess which partner is the Person (the more in synch the pair, the harder it is to tell).
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	My Hat Has Three Corners
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus on making the correct hand motions to replace certain words in a chant
Directions:	<p>The whole class plays together. The chant/hand motions are:</p> <p>“My hat (touch head) has three (hold up three fingers) corners (make a corner with arm and touch elbow), three (hold up three fingers) corners (make a corner with your elbow), has my hat (touch head). If it didn’t have three (hold up three fingers) corners (make a corner with your elbow), it wouldn’t be my hat (touch head).”</p> <p>After saying the chant and doing the motions once, repeat, but do not speak the word <i>hat</i> when you touch your head. In the next round, do not speak the words <i>hat</i> or <i>three</i>, but continue to do the motions. Finally, do not speak <i>hat</i>, <i>three</i>, or <i>corners</i>, but go through the whole chant doing the correct motions at the correct time.</p>
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed up the pace of the chant. • Change the hand motions so they do not match the words. For example, use three fingers for <i>hat</i> and touch your head for corners. • Make up a new chant and actions.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Sha Zam!
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus on the pattern to remember and replicate it
Directions:	Make a pattern of two distinct sounds, such as two hand claps and one foot tap, and repeat it a few times for students. Once students can recognize the pattern as it has been explained and demonstrated, they should say “Sha Zam!” Then make a series of patterned sounds, some of which follow the identified pattern and some of which do not. Whenever students recognize the original pattern, they call out “Sha Zam!” Pause briefly after each set of sounds for students to decide whether or not to say “Sha Zam.” As the game progresses, students may take a turn setting the pattern. Advise student leaders to make the Sha Zam pattern simple enough that they can remember it after they have introduced the trick patterns.
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the speed of play. • Make a more complex pattern. • Ask students to play with their eyes closed.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Telephone
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus on the silly message and tell it correctly to the next person
Directions:	<p>Ask students to form a circle or get in a straight line. Whisper a silly phrase to the student on your left, such as “My favorite breakfast is bugs and worms.” That student repeats what he or she heard to the next person. The phrase is passed around until the last person gets it. He or she announces the starting phrase or what it has become in the process. The goal is to get as close as possible to the starting phrase.</p> <p>NOTE: If necessary, start with a simple one- or two-word phrase until students learn the game.</p>
More-Challenging Variation:	Make the starting phrase longer and more complex.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Tongue-Twister Game
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To listen closely to the challenging phrase and to focus on repeating it correctly
Directions:	<p>Each student pairs with a partner. Read a tongue-twister to the class (check online for examples, or make up your own). One student in each pair tries to repeat the tongue-twister twice without making a mistake. If he or she is successful, the student gets a point. Read a second tongue-twister to the class. The other student in each pair tries to repeat the tongue-twister twice without making a mistake. If he or she is successful, the student gets a point. The game continues through five or six different tongue-twisters.</p> <p>Sample tongue-twisters: Betty better butter Brad's bread; the blue bluebird blinks; crisp crusts crackle crunchily; good blood, bad blood; Greek grapes; a proper cup of coffee from a proper copper coffee pot; Sam's shop stocks short spotted socks.</p>
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students repeat the tongue-twisters faster and more times. • Use more difficult tongue-twisters.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

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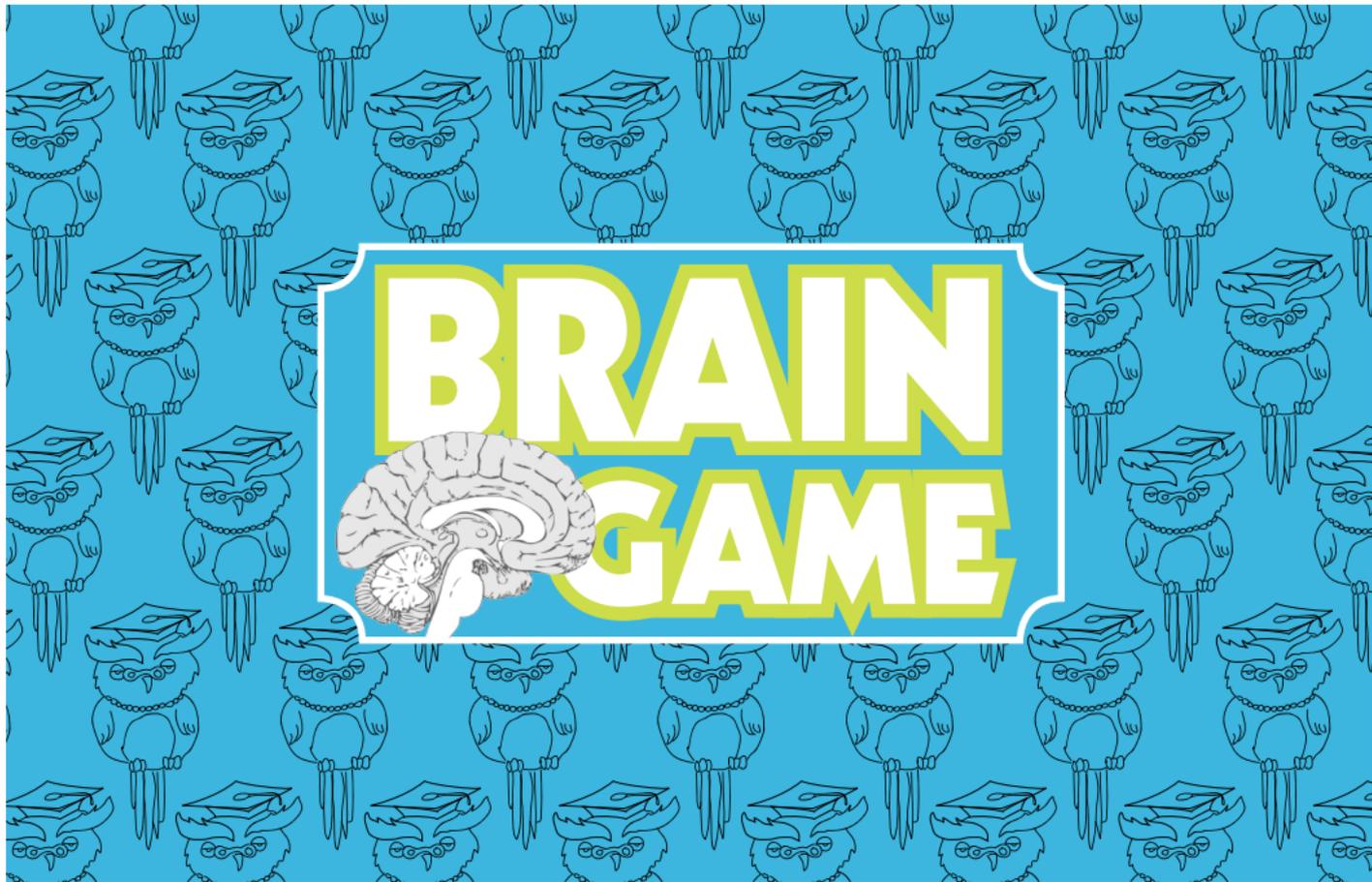
Brain Game:	What Is the Magic Word?
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus on a particular word in a song and determine what action is paired with that word
Directions:	<p>Play any popular appropriate song that has a few words that are repeated often. Tell the students that whenever they hear the magic word in the song (e.g., in the song, “I’m a Gummy Bear,” a word like <i>bear</i> could be chosen), they will do a specific action, such as touch their noses or pull on their ears. The challenge is to hear every instance of the chosen word and do the appropriate action. Play the first round this way so students understand how to play. In round two, send two students out of the room before you choose a word for the next song. While students are gone, have the class choose a word in the song (choose a different word in the same song or choose a different song) and a corresponding action. Have the two students return to the class. They must now be detectives, listening closely to the song and watching the other students, to guess the chosen word.</p> <p>NOTE: Use very obvious actions until students get good at this game.</p> <p>NOTE: You will need to provide music for this game.</p>
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a second magic word. • Have only one student leave the room before a word is chosen.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	What's That I Hear?
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus on a particular sound in an effort to identify what the sound is
Directions:	This game can be played as a class or in teams. Think of five to eight simple ways to make an identifiable sound, such as ripping paper, pouring water, ringing a bell, etc. Ask students to close their eyes, or perform the sounds from behind a screen so students cannot see the source. After each sound, have students guess what the noise was. Students can either answer individually, or teams can confer and guess as a team.
More-Challenging Variation:	Make the sounds harder to identify, such as a stapler or the click of a ballpoint pen, etc.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

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Brain Game:	Who Is the Leader?
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus on the actions of the other players
Directions:	Have students sit in a circle. Randomly select one student to be the detective. Have this student leave the room for a short time. Randomly select another student to be the leader. That student will initiate a series of movements/sounds, such as finger-snapping first, then clapping, then patting knees, that the rest of the students copy. The leader should change up the activity about every twenty seconds. The leader's job is to lead the actions without the detective guessing the leader's identity, and the rest of the students need to follow the leader without revealing the leader's identity either. When the detective rejoins the circle, he or she then watches all students closely to see who is leading the group in the actions. When the detective cracks the case, choose a new detective and leader. The game can also be played in teams (putting two or three teams together). The detective can close his or her eyes rather than leave the room, and the teacher can quietly tap leaders on their shoulders.
More-Challenging Variation:	Select two leaders, and have the leaders take turns changing the motion.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Who Stole the Honey Pot?
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Focus
Purpose:	To focus closely on where the sound of the bell is coming from
Directions:	Have students sit in a circle. Select one student to be the Bear who sits in the circle with the honey pot, which is represented by a bell (or anything that makes a noise). Students chant, "Mr. Bear is very sleepy. Mr. Bear is dreaming deeply." The Bear then closes his or her eyes, and one student selected by the teacher steals the honey pot. The Thief sits back down, rings the bell loudly, and then hides it behind his or her back. The group then chants, "Wake up, Mr. Bear. Your honey pot is no longer there!" The Bear then has to guess who has the honey pot based on the direction of the ringing bell. Choose a new Bear and a new Thief for the next round.
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of honey pots to two or three so the Bear has to focus on more sounds. • Play distracting music during the game.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Going on a Bear Hunt
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Memory
Purpose:	To remember the correct order of events, sounds, and actions when running away from the bear
Directions:	<p>Have students sit in a circle. While tapping both hands quickly on your thigh, say, “We’re going on a bear hunt. Gonna catch a big one!” Students repeat the words and actions. Say, “I’m not scared.” Students repeat. Say, “Do you see what I see?” and shade your eyes with your hands. Students repeat the words and the action. Say, “Looks like a big mountain!” Students repeat. Say, “Can’t go under it, can’t jump over it, can’t go around it. Gotta climb over it.” Act out climbing the mountain. Students repeat the words and actions. Then you encounter other obstacles, such as tall grass (“Can’t go under it, can’t jump over it. Gotta go through it. Swish, swish.”), a muddy puddle (“glug, glug”), and a lake (“swim, swim”). Students repeat the words and the actions. You reach a bear cave and again say, “Can’t go under it... Help, it’s a bear!” Students then retreat quickly, encountering all the obstacles in the proper order and repeating all the sounds and actions. Once back over the mountain, say, “Phew, we are safely back home!”</p>
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add more obstacles with actions and sounds. • Increase the pace of the hunt and the retreat. • Have students do the activity without teacher guidance.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Going to Grandma's
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Memory
Purpose:	To remember the order of the items packed
Directions:	This game is played in teams. Choose a student to start the game. That student says, "I'm going on a trip to grandma's house, and I will pack..." and then names something he or she will take. The next student repeats the first student's statement and adds another item to pack. This continues until each student has added something to the packing list. When the last student has added something, have all students repeat the list of items packed.
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each person adds two items. • Increase the size of the group (by combining teams or playing as a class). • Each item added has two syllables or more.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Here Is Your Ice-Cream Sundae!
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Memory
Purpose:	To remember what each student ordered
Directions:	This game is played in teams. One student is the waiter at the ice-cream parlor. The other students take turns ordering their sundaes of choice, picking one ice-cream flavor (e.g., “I would like chocolate ice cream, please.”). As students order, all team members need to remember which student ordered which sundae. When the last student has ordered, the waiter then has to deliver the correct sundae to each customer. The customer also needs to remember what he or she ordered.
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a topping to each ice-cream flavor. • Increase the number of toppings ordered. • Increase the number of customers by combining teams.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Hot Potato Memory
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Memory
Purpose:	To remember the task for each round
Directions:	Have students sit or stand in a circle. Use a small ball or other item that they can hold with one hand to use as the potato. Announce a task that the person left holding the hot potato will perform when the music stops (e.g., jump, turn around, touch his or her head). Play a lively song. While the music is playing, have students pass the potato around the circle until the music stops. The student left holding the potato when the music stops has to remember and perform the task that you announced at the start of the game.
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number and/or complexity of tasks to be performed. • Toss two or more potatoes around the circle at a time. Each person who ends up with a potato will have a different task to perform.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	On My Pizza, I Like
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Memory
Purpose:	To remember the ingredients and then name them in reverse order
Directions:	This game is played in teams. One student goes first and says, “On my pizza, I like _____” (naming one ingredient: cheese, pepperoni, or even something silly like peanut butter or chocolate). The next student says, “On my pizza, I like _____ and _____,” repeating what the first person said and adding another item. The third person does the same. Then the fourth person says, “On my pizza, I do NOT like...” and has to remove each of the three items mentioned, starting with the most recent addition and stating them in reverse order. Encourage all teammates to remember the order so they can check if the last person is correct.
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine teams to increase the number of ingredients that the last student has to take off; in that case, the sixth or seventh person would be the person who does not like the toppings. • Allow people to add two ingredients at a time.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Pattern Memory
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Memory
Purpose:	To remember and replicate a color pattern
Directions:	<p>This game is played in partner pairs, with partners sitting next to each other. Give each partner pair two matching sets of four colored chips. One partner gets one set, and the other partner gets the other set. One student lines the chips up in a pattern, e.g., blue, red, red, blue. The other student has a few seconds to study the pattern, and then the student who made the pattern covers it. The second student uses his or her own chips to then replicate the pattern of the first student. Students take turns being the pattern maker.</p> <p>NOTE: You will need to assemble bags with two sets of matching chips per partnership before playing.</p>
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students more chips and colors to create harder patterns. • Add other objects to create the pattern.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Ten Questions
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Memory
Purpose:	To remember the information gathered so far to be able to ask the next useful question and guess the object
Directions:	Choose a random student as It. Assign an age-appropriate category, such as animals, sports, foods, fruits, or clothing type. Have the It student think of something in that category (e.g., a horse, baseball, pasta). Have the rest of the class ask the It student ten yes-or-no questions to guess what's in Its mind. After five questions, if no one has guessed, allow It to give one hint. Have students ask five more questions. If no one guesses at the end of that round, It reveals the answer. Once students get good at asking questions and processing answers without assistance, they can play the game in teams.
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students name their own categories. • Play it without the hint.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	What's Missing?
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Memory
Purpose:	To remember the objects and notice what's missing
Directions:	This game can be played as a class or in teams. Place five objects, such as a pen, a button, a rubber band, and a paperclip, on a tray. Gather students so they can easily see the tray. Give students twenty to thirty seconds to study the tray. Then cover the tray and secretly remove one object. Uncover the tray, and allow students to guess the object that is missing.
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove more than one object at a time. • Add more objects to the tray. • Limit the amount of study time.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Who Has the Last Word?
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Memory
Purpose:	To remember the last word in a series of sentences and then put all the last words together to form a new sentence
Directions:	<p>Before playing the game, think of a three-word sentence (noun-verb-noun) such as, “Pigs eat potatoes,” but do not share the sentence with students. Then think of three consecutive sentences, each of which ends with one of the three words from the noun-verb-noun sentence, such as “Sonya has two pink pigs,” “My dog loves to eat,” and “Tyrell mashed the potatoes.”</p> <p>Slowly read the three sentences. Students need to remember the last word of each sentence without writing it down. Then ask students to put the three words together to make a new sentence. Using the example above, the new sentence would be “Pigs eat potatoes.” This game can be played in teams or as a class.</p> <p>NOTE: Prepare the sentences ahead of time to make this game run smoothly!</p>
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the new sentence four or five words long. • Ask students to remember a different word in the original sentences, like the first or second word, as long as it makes a complete sentence.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Who Moved?
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Memory
Purpose:	To remember the location of people in a circle to determine who moved to a different spot
Directions:	<p>The whole class stands or sits in a circle. Two students play it. They go into the middle of the circle and carefully study who is where. Then the two students leave the room, and two people switch places in the circle. When the students return, they need to determine who moved.</p> <p>NOTE: The first few times you play this game, encourage students to note details about what people are wearing or if friends are grouped together to increase their chances of identifying who moved.</p>
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have three, four, or five students move without necessarily switching places with each other. • Send only one student out at a time.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Categories
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Stop and Think
Purpose:	To stop and think about the new category to give a correct response
Directions:	<p>Students can play in teams or with two teams combined. Pick one person to be the leader (for the first rounds, the teacher should be the leader). The leader names a category, such as foods, animals, or types of candy, for that round. Then, going around the circle, have each student name something that fits that category. After four or five students have named something in the chosen category, the leader announces a new category, and the next student in the circle names something that fits that new category. After four or five students have named something to fit the new category, the leader again announces a new category, and the game continues. Continue playing as time allows, appointing a new leader after every few rounds.</p> <p>NOTE: This game is often played with clapping and finger snapping to keep it at a brisk rhythm. If you are familiar with that version, feel free to introduce it.</p>
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play the game at a faster pace so players have to think of answers quickly, even when a new category is introduced. • Switch categories more frequently.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Don't Break the Sugar Bowl
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Stop and Think
Purpose:	To stop and think in an effort to control the urge to talk or make noise
Directions:	The Leader (should be the teacher in early rounds), says, "One, Two, Three, Don't break the sugar bowl!" After that phrase, no one can speak or make a noise. When someone forgets or cannot resist speaking or laughing, that person has broken the sugar bowl and the rest of the class says, "You broke the sugar bowl!"
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions or make comments to trick students into breaking the sugar bowl. • Add moving to the list of things that break the sugar bowl.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Freeze
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Stop and Think
Purpose:	To stop and think before moving
Directions:	<p>For the first round, explain that when the music starts, students should dance/sing along in place. When the music stops, students must freeze completely for five seconds until you restart the music. In the second round, have students freeze for ten seconds. For the third round, have students freeze for fifteen seconds and so on.</p> <p>NOTE: If music is not available, start and stop the game with commands “Start” and “Freeze.”</p>
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start and stop the music at quicker intervals. • Have students sit out if they do not freeze to make the game more competitive.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Stop and Think
Purpose:	To stop and think before doing the actions
Directions:	<p>Sing the song, and have students join in when they know the words. The song is as follows:</p> <p>Head, shoulders, knees, and toes, knees and toes (repeat); Eyes and ears and mouth and nose, Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes!</p> <p>Students touch the correlating body parts during the song. With each round, speed up the tempo.</p>
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the order of the body parts in the song (e.g., knees, shoulder, head, and toes). • Substitute one body part for another (e.g., when you say “head,” students actually touch their toes).
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Simon Says
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Stop and Think
Purpose:	To stop and think about whether to complete the action
Directions:	The game is played as a class, and the teacher should be Simon in the opening rounds. Simon announces that the class should copy his or her actions only when they are prefaced by the phrase “Simon says.” For example, when Simon says, “Simon says, touch your nose,” students should touch their noses. When Simon says, “Simon says, do a jumping jack,” students should do a jumping jack. When Simon says, “Spin around in place,” students should not follow the action.
More-Challenging Variations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon does the action whether or not he says “Simon says,” which tempts the players to follow the example instead of listening for the key phrase. • Play the game faster.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	The Pickler
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Stop and Think
Purpose:	To stop and think and resist the urge to laugh or smile
Directions:	Students play this game in pairs. One person is the Pickler, and he or she says or does something to make the other person smile, such as making a funny face, doing a silly dance, or using a funny voice, for ten seconds. The observer listens and watches, trying not to smile or laugh. Announce when the ten seconds are up, and the observer has to say “Pickle” without smiling or laughing. If the observer can both watch the other person and say “Pickle” without smiling or laughing, he or she wins the round. Then the students switch roles and/or partners.
More-Challenging Variation:	The observer must look directly at the Pickler during the entire round.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Pass It Down!
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Stop and Think
Purpose:	To stop and think and adjust one's actions depending on what imaginary object is coming next
Directions:	Have students stand in a circle. Name an imaginary object, and pretend to pass it to the next player. For example, say, "Here is a bag of bricks; pass it down!" Act out appropriate motions according to the weight and size of the object. The person receiving the object does so too. That object gets passed down until you call out another object of a very different weight and size. For example, say, "Here is a feather (or a cup of boiling tea); pass it down!" The passer and the receiver need to stop and think and adjust their actions accordingly.
More-Challenging Variation:	Have two or more objects going at once so students need to stop and think more often.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	What's the Story?
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Stop and Think
Purpose:	To stop and think about how to add to a story that is unfolding in an unexpected way
Directions:	<p>Read a story starter aloud to the class. After hearing the starter, each student takes a turn thinking of one sentence to say next to add to the story. Allow a few seconds for students to think after each person speaks. Stress that students need to listen closely and stop and think about what the last person said. Play as long as time allows or until the story has lost its momentum, in which case, choose a new story starter.</p> <p>Sample starters include: "I was walking down the road, and I found a magic wand..."; "When I got to school today, there was an elephant standing on the playground..."</p>
More-Challenging Variation:	Have students play the game in teams; this will require them to think more quickly and have more opportunities to add to the story.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?

BRAIN GAME



Brain Game:	Zoom Eek!
Cognitive-Regulation Skill:	Stop and Think
Purpose:	To stop and think about what to say next and adjust to the direction in which the game is going
Directions:	Have students sit in a circle. The starting person sends an imaginary car around the circle by saying “zoom” to the person on his or her right while using his or her hands to pretend to drive a car. The following person says “zoom” to the person on his or her right, and so on until a player says “eek!” and puts his or her hands up in a stop-sign motion. This action reverses the direction of the car (and the game). The person to the left of the player who said “eek!” says “zoom.” No one can say “eek” more than once in a row. The challenge is to move the game along briskly and without mistakes.
More-Challenging Variation:	Start a second car going in the opposite direction.
Debriefing Questions:	What strategies did you use to play this game? How else could you use those strategies during the school day?