

Change It Up - Levels A & B

PLAY

To support early adaptability by gently introducing change within a familiar, predictable game. Inspired by Pluto from The Playful Astronauts, this activity helps students learn that differences and changes are okay, and that they are supported to keep going even when things feel different.



Learning Intentions

Students aim to experience simple changes during a familiar play routine.

Students aim to remain engaged when something changes, with adult support.

Students aim to practise staying calm and continuing to participate during change.



Success Criteria

I can stay with the activity when something changes.

I can respond to a change using my body, attention, or AAC.

I can continue playing with support, even if I feel unsure.



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Duration: 6 - 10 minutes

Objective

To support early adaptability by gently introducing change within a familiar, predictable game. Inspired by Pluto from The Playful Astronauts, this activity helps students learn that differences and changes are okay, and that they are supported to keep going even when things feel different.

Players

Whole class or small group
Suitable for 3 - 16 students

What You Need

- Clear open space
- No equipment required
- Optional:
 - Simple visual cue cards (same / different)
 - Music for start-stop cues
 - AAC devices or switches as required

Setup

Arrange students seated or standing in a familiar formation (circle, line, or at desks).

Revisit the Pluto theme using very simple language:

"Pluto is different from the other planets."

"Being different is okay."

Introduce reassurance before starting:

"We will help each other during this activity."

Confirm AAC devices are on and open to simple words such as stop, go, same, different.



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Gameplay

Step 1: Play a Familiar Game

Begin with a highly predictable movement routine and model it for the class, for example:

- Clap hands and then
- Tap your knees and then
- Raise your arms

Have the students aim to copy your movements. Teachers to assist students where needed.

Keep the pattern the same for several rounds.

Use calm narration:

“We will do the same routine.”

“Let’s try the same movements again.”

Step 2: Change One Thing

Pause clearly.

Say:

“We are now going to change one movement in the routine.”

or

“Let’s try a slightly different movement.”

Introduce **one small change only**, such as:

- Clap becomes tap of the head
- Arms move in a circle motion instead of straight up by the side of the body
- Movement is done seated instead of standing

Model the change visually.

Restart the routine slowly.

Narrate supportively: Everyone try and copy the new movement routine

“We are trying the different routine now.”

“We are trying something new together.”



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Step 3: Support Staying With It

If students pause, stop, or become unsure:

- Allow stillness
- Gently model again
- Use AAC or visuals

Reassure verbally:

"It's okay to take your time and start again."

Repeat the same change once or twice before finishing.

Avoid adding multiple changes in one session.

Ask the students if they can model the routine without teacher support.

Debrief / Reflection

Keep reflection concrete and brief.

Offer one simple prompt with wait time:

"Was it hard for you to try a different routine?"

Students may respond by:

- Pointing to the teacher
- Eye gaze and smiling or frowning
- AAC responses
- Gestures such as thumbs up or down

Reinforce verbally:

"You tried to do the new change, well done."

Winning the Game

There are no winners or losers.

Success is staying present and supported during change.

Sensory-Seeking Learner Variation

Purpose: To support engagement and regulation.

Adjustments may include:

- Bigger movements
- Music during "same" rounds
- Allowing the student to help model the change



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Sensory-Sensitive Learner Variation

Purpose: To support emotional safety.

Adjustments may include:

- Very small movements only
- One change per session
- Seated participation
- Observation-only role

Students may step out and rejoin at any time.

AAC-Specific Supports

Prepare AAC in Advance

Key words: same, different, stop, go, again

Model AAC Use

Adult models during narration:

“Same.” → “Different.”

Accessibility and Inclusion Notes

All movements can be adapted to upper-body actions.

Wheelchair users may participate fully seated.

No expectation to “get it right.”

Mistakes are expected and accepted.

Teacher Notes

“Change It Up – Levels A & B” introduces adaptability as a felt experience, not a skill to explain. By keeping the base routine predictable and changing only one element at a time, students learn that change can happen safely and that support remains constant. Linked to Pluto, the activity reinforces that being different is not a problem, it is part of learning and growth.

