

Change It Up - Levels C - D

PLAY

To support the life skill of adaptability by helping students experience change in a safe, playful way. Through changing rules in a familiar game, students learn that it's okay to feel unsure, make mistakes, and try again. Inspired by Pluto, this activity highlights that being different, flexible, and curious helps us grow.



Learning Intentions

Students aim to follow changing rules during a familiar game.

Students aim to practise staying calm when things change or feel unexpected.

Students aim to keep playing and trying even when they feel confused or make mistakes.



Success Criteria

I can listen for new rules and try to follow them.

I can keep playing when the rules change.

I can stay positive and try again if I get mixed up.



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Duration: 10 - 15 minutes

Objective

To support the life skill of adaptability by helping students experience change in a safe, playful way. Through changing rules in a familiar game, students learn that it's okay to feel unsure, make mistakes, and try again. Inspired by Pluto, this activity highlights that being different, flexible, and curious helps us grow.

Players

Whole class or small groups
Suitable for 4 - 26 students

What You Need

Clear open space
No equipment required
Optional: music for transitions
Visual cue cards (optional, recommended)

Setup

1. Revisit the Pluto page from *The Playful Astronauts*.
2. Use concrete, simple discussion prompts:
 - "What happens when rules change?"
 - "How does your body feel when things are different?"
3. Normalise uncertainty:
 - "It's okay to feel confused."
 - "This game is about trying, not getting it right."
4. Explain clearly:
 - "We will play a game that changes."
 - "The rules will not stay the same."
5. Model calm language and tone before starting.



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Gameplay

Step 1: Start with a Familiar Game

1. Begin with Simon Says (or another well-known listening game).
2. Play for 1 - 2 minutes using simple, predictable instructions.
3. Ensure all students understand the base rules before changing anything.

Step 2: Pluto Changes the Rules

1. Pause the game and announce clearly:
 - "Simon has gone to space."
 - "Now Pluto is in charge."
2. Introduce **one change at a time**. Examples:
 - Only follow instructions if they are said in a silly voice
 - Do the opposite action
 - Everyone adds a clap after each movement
 - Get creative and have fun with this!
3. Model the new rule once before continuing.
4. Restart the game slowly.

Step 3: Keep It Flexible

1. Add or change rules gradually, not all at once.
2. When students get mixed up, respond with reassurance:
 - "That was tricky, let's try again."
 - "You're still playing, that's great adapting."
3. Pause briefly between changes to reset attention.

Reflection Pause (Short)

Ask one or two simple questions with wait time:

- "How did it feel when the rules changed?"
- "What helped you keep going?"

Students may respond verbally, by gesture, or using AAC.

Winning the Game

There is no winner.

Students are successful when they stay involved, try again, and keep playing despite change.



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Sensory-Seeking / Sensory-Sensitive Learner Variations

For sensory-seeking learners:

- Add strong movements (jump, reach, spin arms)
- Use upbeat music during rounds
- Allow students to help demonstrate new rules

For sensory-sensitive learners:

- Reduce movement size
- Use fewer rule changes
- Offer a quiet observer role (watch and signal thumbs up/down)
- Allow seated participation

Students may step out briefly and rejoin at any time.

AAC-Specific Supports

1. Pre-teach Key Words:

- change, stop, go, same, different, try again

2. Visual Rule Cards:

- Show the new rule before playing

3. Choice-Based Participation:

- Students indicate “same” or “different”

4. Leadership Option:

- AAC users can be “Pluto” and select the next rule

5. Reflection Support:

- Sentence frames or symbols:
 - “Change makes me feel ____.”
 - “I can try again.”

All communication methods are valid.

Accessibility Notes

- All movements can be adapted to upper-body actions.
- Wheelchair users may:
 - Use arm movements
 - Signal actions
 - Lead the game as Pluto
- If space is limited, use gestures, facial expressions, or sounds only.

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Inclusion Notes

- Celebrate effort, not accuracy.
- Expect and normalise mistakes.
- Pair students thoughtfully to support regulation and confidence.
- Use affirming language throughout:
 - “You kept going.”
 - “You adapted.”
 - “That was tricky and you stayed calm.”

Closing Reflection / Affirmation

Say together:

“Change can feel tricky, but we can adapt, try again, and keep going.”

Teacher Notes

“Change It Up – Levels C & D” provides structured exposure to unpredictability in a playful, emotionally safe way. The activity strengthens flexible thinking, emotional regulation, and resilience, while reinforcing that differences, like Pluto itself, are not problems, they’re strengths.

