

Follow the Leader Parade (Levels A-B)

STAY ACTIVE

To build early imitation skills, social awareness, and confidence through a playful movement parade where students take turns leading and following in simple, creative ways.



Learning Intentions



Follow Simple Movements:

Students will practise copying basic actions with adult modelling.

Take a Supported Turn as Leader:

Students will experience leading the group with simple, supported movements or choices.

Persistence and Enjoyment:

Students will participate in a joyful parade that builds awareness of others and a sense of belonging



Success Criteria

Students attempt to copy at least one movement shown by the leader.



Students participate in at least one turn as a supported leader (physically leading or choosing a movement).

Students show enjoyment, smiling, vocalising, looking toward peers, or engaging in movement.



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Duration: 5 minutes

Objective

To build early imitation skills, social awareness, and confidence through a playful movement parade where students take turns leading and following in simple, creative ways.

What You Need

Open space for walking or moving

Optional props: hats, scarves, ribbons, soft toys

AAC devices with symbols such as "go," "stop," "walk," "wave," "jump," "my turn," "follow," "happy"

Setup

1. Students stand or sit in a line or semicircle behind the teacher.
2. Teacher models simple parade actions they will copy (e.g., wave, stomp, march, wiggle).
3. Props are available for sensory engagement or motivation.
4. AAC devices are prepped with movement and turn-taking vocabulary.

Gameplay

1. Start the Parade

Teacher begins as the leader and uses one simple action at a time, leading the students around or through a pre determined route (ensure route is clear of any obstacles).

As the leader walks, complete a simple movement such as:

- waving their left hand
- marching with high knees
- clapping their hands
- tiptoeing (or gentle stomps for seated students)
- swaying side-to-side as they walk

Students follow behind or beside an educator, copying the movement. Please note, if walking and completing the movement is difficult for some learners, you can simply stop the parade each time a new movement is created for the students to follow.



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2. Copy the Leader

Students copy in any accessible way:

- full-body movements
- arm gestures
- small seated motions
- eye gaze toward the leader paired with slight movement
- pressing AAC ("wave") while moving their hand

Teacher offers verbal encouragement:

"Great copying!"

"Follow me!"

3. Supported Student Leadership

Invite one student to be the leader.

Leadership options:

- walk at the front and lead the parade with a simple action just like the teacher did or have the students in a semicircle formation with the student leader at the front (this removes the parade aspect for safety as there is no walking).
- press an AAC symbol ("clap") to choose the movement

Group copies the movement together.

4. Rotate Leaders

Give each student a short turn to lead.

Keep transitions smooth by saying:

"New leader!"

"Your turn!"

Teacher can provide hand-over-hand support if needed.

5. Celebrate

At the end of the parade, students pause for a "big finish" pose:

- arms up
- big wave
- wiggle
- smile

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Debrief / Reflection

Use simple visuals and prompts:

- "Show me your favourite move!"
- "Did you like following or leading?" (yes/no visuals)
- "How does your body feel?" (happy, calm, excited visuals)

Accept all responses, look, gesture, sound, AAC.

Sensory-Seeking Learners Variation

1. Add Big Movement

Offer high-input actions depending on safety and ability:

- big stomps
- fast marches
- arm swings
- bouncing
- spinning (if safe and supported)

2. Add Music or Rhythm

Use a drum, clapping pattern, or upbeat song to guide the parade.

Students follow rhythm naturally and stay engaged longer.

3. Provide Sensory Props

- ribbons for waving
- scarves for swirling
- pom-poms
- textured bands for stretching

These increase motivation and regulation.

4. Built-In Regulation

Between leaders, offer a quick:

- deep pressure push on a wall
- heavy hug to a soft toy
- squeeze ball
- slow rocking

Students return ready to follow again.



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AAC-Specific Supports

1. Prepare Vocabulary

Include:

- go
- stop
- walk
- wave
- clap
- jump
- more
- finished
- my turn / your turn
- happy

2. Aided Language Input

Teacher models AAC during the parade:

“Follow.”

“Wave.”

“My turn.”

“Your turn.”

“Happy!”

3. AAC Leadership

Students lead by pressing a movement symbol:

- “wave” → group waves
- “clap” → group claps
- “go” → parade begins
- “stop” → freeze pose

4. Choice-Making

For students needing support, present two movement cards:

“Wave or clap?”

They respond by pointing, pressing, or looking.

5. AAC Reflection

Use AAC to choose:

- “I liked ____.”
- “More parade.”
- “Finished.”
- “Happy.”