

Pass the Smile – Levels A & B

STAY ACTIVE

To support students to express kindness and positive emotion through movement and non-verbal communication. Students practise sharing joy using gestures and simple movements, helping to create a happy, connected classroom community linked to Earth, the Playful Astronauts' first stop, where caring for others matters.



Learning Intentions

Students aim to participate in a shared movement activity with others.



Students aim to respond to and share positive emotion using facial expression, movement, gesture, or AAC.

Students aim to take turns and attend to others during a predictable group routine.



Success Criteria

I can participate by watching, copying, or responding to a smile or movement.

I can show a movement, facial expression, or signal with support.



I can take a turn with help from an adult.

I can respond to others by looking, smiling, or showing interest.



Pass the Smile – Levels A & B

Duration: 8 - 12 minutes

Objective

To support students to express kindness and positive emotion through movement and non-verbal communication. Students practise sharing joy using gestures and simple movements, helping to create a happy, connected classroom community linked to Earth, the Playful Astronauts' first stop, where caring for others matters.

Players

Whole class or small groups

Suitable for 3 - 16 students

Played seated or standing in a circle

What You Need

No equipment required

Clear space for safe upper- and lower-body movement

Optional: visual cards showing simple movements or facial expressions

Setup

Arrange students in a small circle with enough personal space.

Students may sit on the floor, chairs, or remain in wheelchairs.

Introduce the activity using short, consistent language:

“We are going to pass a smile.”

“We use our face and our body.”

“When it’s your turn, we want you to try and show how you feel using your smiles and hands.”

Model calm body positioning and safe movement boundaries.

Ensure AAC devices are switched on and open to basic social or emotion words.

Gameplay

Step 1: Adult Modelling

The teacher always begins the activity.

Turn to the student next to you and clearly model:

- A smile
- One simple movement, such as a wave

Say while modelling:

“I pass my smile to

Activate or point to a matching AAC symbol if available.

Pause and allow the student next to you time to respond.



Pass the Smile – Levels A & B

STAY ACTIVE

Step 2: Student Turn

The student receiving the smile may respond in any way, including:

- Looking at the teacher or peer
- Smiling in return or changing facial expression
- Copying the movement the teacher made (wave)
- Making a sound or gesture
- Activating an AAC symbol

The adult narrates positively:

“You are smiling.”

“You are moving your arms/hand.”

With support, the student then shows a movement or expression to pass on.

If needed, the adult offers two choices or models again, eg:

A smile or a wave.

Step 3: Passing the Smile

With adult guidance, the student turns toward the next student or adult in the circle.

The adult supports the student to:

- Look toward the peer
- Show the movement or smile
- Indicate “finished” or “your turn” on AAC

Continue slowly around the circle.

The activity may stop early if students show signs of fatigue or dysregulation.

Debrief / Reflection

Keep reflection brief and concrete.

Ask one question at a time with wait time:

“Did you like the smiles?”

“Who is happy?”

“Can we smile again?”

Accept responses through eye gaze, gesture, AAC, facial expression, or movement.

Reinforce the message:

“Smiles help us feel good together.”

Winning the Game

There are no winners or losers.

Success is shown through shared attention, participation, and positive engagement.



Pass the Smile – Levels A & B

STAY ACTIVE

Sensory-Specific Learner Variation

Purpose: To support regulation, comfort, and engagement through movement.

Adjustments may include:

Allowing students to choose very small or very big movements.

Using slow, repetitive movements for calming input.

Offering strong movements such as arm presses or pushing hands together for proprioceptive input.

Allowing students to observe first and join later.

Reducing expectations to eye contact, facial expression, or body orientation only.

AAC-Specific Supports

Prepare AAC in Advance

Ensure access to symbols such as: smile, happy, hello, my turn, finished, yes.

Use single-message switches where appropriate.

Model AAC Consistently

Adults activate AAC every time they model a smile or movement.

Supported Participation

Students may:

- Activate a switch to show “my turn”
- Choose a movement from two visuals
- Use eye gaze, pointing, or gesture

AAC Reflection

Ask:

“Happy?”

Students respond using AAC, gesture, facial expression, or yes/no signals.

Accessibility and Inclusion Notes

All movements can be adapted to upper-body actions only.

Ensure wheelchair users have equal space and visibility.

Allow seated participation for all students if preferred.

Provide adult or peer support without reducing student ownership.

Celebrate all attempts equally, regardless of complexity.

Teacher Notes

“Pass the Smile – Levels A & B” supports early Personal and Social Capability, emotional expression, joint attention, and cooperative movement. It works well as a warm-up, regulation activity, or connection ritual and pairs effectively with Kindness Catch and Kindness Garden to reinforce kindness through action, not words alone.

