

Stretch and Say Thanks - Levels A & B

STAY ACTIVE

To support students to experience gratitude and calm through gentle stretching and slow movement. By pairing simple body actions with positive noticing, students build early emotional regulation and wellbeing skills. Linked to the Saturn theme from The Playful Astronauts, this activity reinforces that slowing down helps us feel calm, safe, and connected.



Learning Intentions

Students aim to experience gentle movement in a calm, supportive environment.

Students aim to notice positive or pleasant things while stretching their bodies.

Students aim to participate in a shared routine that supports calm and connection.



Success Criteria

I can take part by moving, watching, or listening.

I can copy or experience gentle stretches with support.

I can respond to thankful or positive ideas using actions, visuals, or AAC.

I can stay with the activity for part or all of the time.



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Duration: 8 - 12 minutes

Objective

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Players

Whole class or small groups
Suitable for 3 - 16 students
Played seated, standing, or chair-based

What You Need

Clear open space, mats, or chairs
Optional: soft background music or nature sounds
Optional: simple gratitude picture cards (family, play, home, friend)
AAC devices, switches, or communication boards as required

Setup

Arrange students comfortably in a small circle or shared space.
Students may sit on the floor, chairs, or remain in wheelchairs.

Introduce the activity using calm, simple language:

"We will be moving slowly."

"We will stretch our bodies."

"We can think about good things."

Briefly connect to the Saturn theme in accessible terms:

"Saturn reminds us to slow down."

"Slowing down helps us feel calm."

Model calm posture and slow breathing.

Confirm AAC devices are switched on and open to basic like, happy, or people words.



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Gameplay

Step 1: Gentle Stretching

The teacher models each stretch slowly. Students may copy, partially copy, or watch.

Suggested simple stretches:

- **Reach Up** – arms lift slowly (or lift arms while seated)
- **Side Stretch** – one arm reaches gently overhead to one side, then switch
- **Self-Hug** – arms wrap around the body
- **Butterfly Arms** – arms gently open and close

Adults narrate calmly:

“Slow, gentle arms.”

“Great gentle stretching.”

Step 2: Add Thankful Noticing

After each stretch, pause briefly.

Offer a simple gratitude prompt:

“Think about something you like.”

or

“Point to something you like.”

Students may respond by:

- Pointing to a picture card or something/someone in the room
- Activating AAC
- Smiling or nodding
- Thinking quietly

Adults model by saying or showing one example:

“I love my dog.”

Activate or point to AAC while modelling.

There is no expectation to speak or respond every time.

Step 3: Calm Finish

Finish with a self-hug or hands resting calmly in their laps.

Guide one slow breath in and out.



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Debrief / Reflection

Keep reflection brief and concrete.

Ask one question at a time with wait time:

"Do you feel calm after stretching?"

"Which stretch did you like the best?"

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

Reinforce the message:

"Moving slowly helps us feel good."

Winning the Game

There are no winners or losers.

Success is shown through calm participation and shared stillness.

..... Sensory-Specific Learner Variation

Purpose: To support regulation, comfort, and emotional safety.

Adjustments may include:

Using fewer stretches.

Repeating the same stretch each time for predictability.

Removing music if sound is distracting.

Allowing students to lie down, sit, or observe.

Focusing only on breathing or self-hug movements.

AAC-Specific Supports

Prepare AAC in Advance

Ensure access to symbols such as: like, happy, family, play, calm, finished.

Use single-message switches if appropriate.

Model AAC Consistently

Adults activate AAC symbols when modelling gratitude or calm words.



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Accessibility and Inclusion Notes

All stretches can be completed seated or standing.
Upper-body-only participation is always acceptable.
Ensure clear space for mobility aids.
Accept watching and listening as valid participation.
Maintain slow pacing and predictable routines.

Teacher Notes

“Stretch and Say Thanks – Levels A & B” supports early emotional regulation, body awareness, joint attention, and positive noticing. The activity is not about naming gratitude items, but about experiencing calm movement and gentle positive feelings. Linked to the Saturn theme, it reinforces that slowing down helps students feel safe, connected, and ready to learn.

