

Helping Children to Self - Regulate

What is self-regulation?

Self-regulation is the ability to understand and manage your emotions and behaviour in response to things happening around you. It helps you to control your impulses (to make better decisions), to not overreact when upset or excited, and to be able to calm down after an incident, should one occur.

Sometimes, children are not able to manage their 'big emotions', resulting in a meltdown or explosion either in the classroom or at home, which can then lead to further distress caused by sanctions or other negative consequences. One possible reason for this disruptive behaviour is poor self-regulation, so it can be helpful to look at what might be going on and what we can do to help.

Teachers and parents must work together to find the most effective strategies, so children can manage the 'big emotions and challenges they may face.

Why is self-regulation important?

Managing our feelings and emotions is vital, as our ability to do so can affect our lives in so many ways.

- physical, emotional, and social wellbeing
- academic achievement
- physical
- sense of self
- social skills, friendships, and relationships

Strategies

Talk about emotions

Find opportunities to talk about the range of emotions we all experience – how we all experience different feelings, it's normal and it's how we manage them that's important.

Examples:

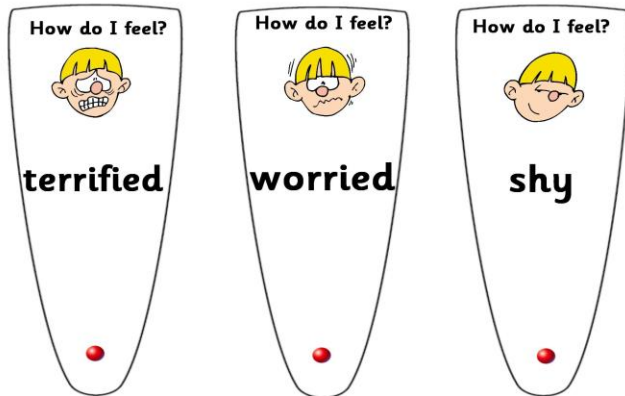
Useful books include:

The Incredible 5-point scale
When my worries get too big
Zones of regulation

Emotions Card Games

- Sort the cards into positive and negative emotions.
- Ask the child to pick a card and with you, act out the emotion. Both of you think of why you might feel that way

Emotions Fans



Feelings Diary

Today I feel...

Directions: Circle the emoji that best describes how you are feeling.

Because...

Draw or write about what happened

Mindfulness or Meditation

If you sense your child getting stressed, then try to engage them in a quiet activity. Mindfulness and meditation are good ways for children to learn to pause and focus on breathing and calming down highly charged emotions. There are some fabulous apps where you can find a range of meditations for children.

Have a Bank of Calming Techniques

Examples:

- Zen Flash Cards



Blowing Feathers



Visualise a Quiet Place



Go to Your Safe Space

- Worry bag - personalised bag with some fidget toys, stress ball, notebook, and pen to write worries down to access at times anxiety strikes.
- Breathing exercises
- Do something physical-throw or kick a ball, run around

Useful References and Links

[PowerPoint Presentation \(hct.nhs.uk\)](https://hct.nhs.uk)

[Metacognition and self-regulation | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)