

How to Support Your Child with Self-Regulation



What is Self-Regulation?



Skill Building at Home

For successful skill building, be sure to practice these skills when your child is calm.

Identify

- Help your child learn about different emotions through pictures - you can create a visual chart with cutouts from a magazine with the emotion written beneath the cutouts. These images could be expressions, colors, events, numbers, or you can use pictures of your child.
 - ex: A sunset picture could mean calm (see reverse side for more examples).

Choose a Strategy

- Help your child know and recognize their emotions to help them cope in a healthy way. Make a coping plan with your child (see reverse side for more examples):
 - Safe People: who can your child talk to when feeling upset?
 - Safe Places: where can your child go when feeling upset?
 - Safe Activities: what can your child do when feeling upset?
- Reinforce use of this plan to encourage skills.

Reflect

- When talking with your child about impulsive behavior use a calm voice:
 - What happened?
 - How do you help yourself?
 - How can I help you?

Next Steps

- Once you have reflected with your child, make a plan for the following day:
 - What goals do you want to accomplish?
 - How can you handle your emotions?
 - What are we going to do if we get frustrated again?
 - Start fresh next time!

HOW BIG?

To help your child understand the severity of their concern, you can help them understand how "big" the problem is. For example:

- a little concern could be compared to a bird or a feather
- a medium concern could be compared to a sea turtle or a bucket of sand
- a large concern could be compared to an elephant or a cement truck

If a child is struggling with self-regulation, they may react to a bird-like concern as though it were an elephant-like concern. Helping your child identify how great the concern is can help them problem solve appropriately.

BREAKS

Breaks can allow emotions to calm down when in a stressful situation. When your child is attempting a difficult or stressful task, add in timed breaks. During these breaks, you can check on your child and praise them for their work. It is helpful to start small when adding in breaks before connecting it to homework. Try it with a task that is not worth a grade, such as cleaning the bedroom. Spread out breaks every 15 or 20 minutes to check in with task completion and provide praise.

Information adapted from:

Child Mind Institute. (2017). *How can we help kids with self-regulation?*. Retrieved from <https://childmind.org/article/can-help-kids-self-regulation/>
Hurst, D. (2017). *Building the core competency of emotion regulation in children and teens: Through healthy framing and skills building* [PowerPoint slides].

Kuypers, L. M. (2011). *The zones of regulation: A curriculum designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control*. Santa Clara, CA: Think Social Publishing Inc.

Create Your Own

This “ladder” uses football, numbers, and colors to help the child identify their emotions and state how “big” the emotion is.

	<u>How am I feeling?</u> <u>What do I look like/what do I do?</u>	<u>Strategies</u>
5	 <p>“Penalty Flag” I am exploding - I am so angry. I am yelling!</p>	I need to go to my bedroom and be left alone now.
4	 <p>“Tackle” I am angry and about to explode. I am not talking.</p>	I need a break and will take a short walk.
3	 <p>“Timeout!” I am getting upset and looking down.</p>	I need to get a drink of water and then ask for help.
2	 <p>“Pass to the End Zone” I am calm, and trying to focus.</p>	Great Job! Keep it up!
1	 <p>“Touchdown!” I am calm, focused, and feeling good.</p>	Great job! Keep it up!

This is the child’s own language describing how they are feeling.

The child and parent discussed strategies that will be helpful at each level.

When you and your child are just starting this plan, make sure to practice it when your child is in a calm mood. It can be helpful if you role-play this plan:

- Parent/Guardian acts as the child and displays emotions in each of the areas.
- Child guesses which emotion displayed and then explains why they think it is that emotion.
- Parent/Guardian provides feedback to their child and then discusses proper strategy.

If your child is at a 4 or 5, do not “Reflect” and process “Next Steps” until the child is back at a 1 or 2.

App Ideas for Breaks

Take a Break ● Colorfy ● Color Therapy ● Stop, Breathe & Think

Questions? Please contact your school counselor or your Boone County Schools Mental Health Regional Coordinator for additional information.