



How to help children regulate their emotions



INCLUSION IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

TIP SHEET

What is Emotional Regulation ?

Emotional Regulation is the process of recognising and managing strong feelings and how they are experienced and expressed.

Proactive Strategies

- Check in regularly with children about how they are feeling.
- Listen to what children are saying and observe physical signs, such as those listed in the table below.
- Use the [Zones of Regulation](#) resource to assist children with identifying how they are feeling. Use strategies that have been recommended to help with regulating emotions when needed.
- Ensure the [environment](#) is welcoming and [sensory-friendly](#).
- Build relaxation time into the schedule.
- Modify activities to be more inclusive. The [TREE model](#) can be a useful tool.
- Support children with their [communication](#) needs. [Visual aids](#) can be a useful tool.
- [Social Stories](#) can help to prepare a child for an upcoming event or situation.
- Identify and minimise any triggers. The child's parents or [Snapshot](#) can provide information.
- Use distraction methods when a child starts to become distressed e.g., talking about their favourite pet or hobby.

Ways of helping a child to calm down

- Use proactive strategies. These are most effective in reducing an emotional escalation from occurring in the first place.
- Don't judge. It's important that the child feels accepted and valued.
- Provide a warm, calming presence and acknowledge their distress.
- Use a calm tone of voice.
- Give the child time to respond.
- Encourage the child to make their way to a [sensory space](#) or rest area and give them time and space to calm themselves.
- Move other children away from any risk of harm and ensure that they are supervised at all times.
- Support a child to re-enter into the activity when they are ready.
- Talk to the child's parents about ways of supporting their child during and after emotional distress.

Triggers	Physical Signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory Overload • Transitions • Tired, hungry, discomfort, sick • Novelty, uncertainty • Task-performance anxiety • Pressure to socialize • Unexpected change • Unstructured social setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased stimming (repetitive or unusual movements or noises) • Change in voice • Increased motor activity • Increased repetitive behaviour • Perseverative behaviour ('gets stuck' on a topic or an idea) • Changes in body language (facial expressions, posture)