



Regulation Strategies For Young Children

When practiced regularly, these strategies can enhance capacity for emotional regulation in the brain making it easier to return to a regulated state when big feelings happen.



Just Breathe

The simple act of taking deep breaths send signals to the brain and body for calm and regulation.

Co-regulated breath: Sit close to child Match the rate and pattern of a child's breathing and then gradually begin to take deeper and slower breaths as the child's breath follows your lead.

Breath through play:

- Bubbles- Who can blow the biggest bubble? Breath needs to be long and slow
- Blow a long note on a musical instrument
- Pinwheel – Keep it spinning using a count: Breath 1, 2, 3 blow 4, 5, 6
- Cotton ball and straw- Take a deep breath in and blow cotton ball down a long table. Can you get it across the finish line?



Guided Breathing:

- Rainbow breathing: Breath in- arms go up straight overhead; breathe out – arms go down to your sides making a rainbow
- Child and adult lay on floor with stuffed animal on their belly. Breath in and out and watch animal rise and fall.
- Birthday Breathing: Smell the yummy birthday cake baking - Breath in through your nose; blow out the candles – Breath through your mouth

Rhythm

Repetitive rhythms resonate with the lower parts of our brains. These are the parts of the brain that help us to feel calm and safe.



- Drumming call and response patterns (adult can drum and children can clap or stomp feet to repeat pattern)
- Singing
- Bounce ball to a beat
- Partner bean bag toss to a beat or song



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Movement

Movement is an essential part of how we learn. It can alert us and give us energy and help up to cope with frustration. It also promotes attention and memory. Be sure to include steady rhythm in your movement activities.

- Reach for the ceiling with hands up high then touch your toes
- Take a walk; follow the leader
- Learning stations
- Hokey pokey
- Hands on your hips, turn and twist.
- Yoga poses (mountain, tree, lunge, warrior, forward fold, down dog)



Sensory Tools

We take in information from the environment through our 7 senses. These senses perceive changes in the environment and send messages to the brain to respond. Each of us develops a natural “sensory profile” in which we experience input into our different senses as pleasurable (sensory seeking) or not pleasurable (sensory avoiding). When our sensory needs are met, we are more likely to be able to self-regulate.

Sense	Seeking	Avoiding
Sight	Pictures, reading, fish tank	Closed eyes or low light
Hearing	Singing, chanting	Quiet time, noise cancelling headphones
Smell	Essential oils, scented markers	Low odor materials Wearing mask
Taste	Spicy, sour, sweet foods	Bland foods
Touch	Hugs, fidget toys, playdough, sensory balls	Personal space Wave hello/thumbs up Gloves
Balance/Movement	Toe touches Stand on one foot	Slow movements with support
Proprioception (position of our body)	Follow the leader Head, shoulders, knees and toes song	Guided pathways on the floor Marked personal space

