

When your child is experiencing big emotions such as sadness, worry, anger or anxiety, they may need support and strategies to help them to regulate their feelings. These strategies need to be taught when your child is calm so that they can start to learn what to do when having a big emotion. Try involving your child in thinking about the strategies they could use to regulate their own emotions as each child is different and some strategies may work better than others.

## Strategies to help with regulation

- **Regular breaks** in the learning to stretch, exercise or play a game to help refocus the mind.
- **Mindfulness and meditation** are a good way for children to learn to pause and focus on breathing and calming down highly-charged emotions. Yoga can be a great option. Cosmic Kids Yoga has some great videos to follow.
- **Breathing exercises** can really help to calm and organise the brains. See our 'breathing techniques' handout for some great ideas or try an app such as Smiling Minds. Blowing bubbles is another great way to practice deep breathing.
- **'Heavy work'** is a helpful strategy for calming, e.g. Digging & pouring (e.g. sand or water tray), Rolling and cutting out play dough, pushing a trolley or box, carrying heavy objects.
- **Creating a calming space** or den to use during big emotions. See our 'calm space' handout for ideas of how to create your own space.
- **Listening to music** - this might be a favourite song or for others it might be listening to white noise.
- **Visual displays** e.g. Lava lamps, liquid timers or sensory bottles. There's many apps available too, for example, Pocket Pond, or Laser Lights.
- **Chewy or crunchy foods** like dried fruit, breadsticks, crackers.



## Supporting your child through big emotions

It is important for adults to regulate their own emotions, before addressing their child's. Even if emotions are rising inside, it is important to present a calm front to the child. Children will be learning from how we manage our own emotions.

- Remain calm
- Acknowledge how your child is feeling – focus on the feeling, not on the behaviour (e.g. "I can see you are feeling angry/sad/frustrated.")
- Remind your child how to use the calming strategies they have started to learn (these could take time for them to be able to learn and put into practice by themselves)
- Give them time to calm down. It is more effective to talk with them about how they were feeling once they have reached a calm state.
- Normalise the feeling and address the behaviour ("It is ok to feel angry, everyone feels anger, but it is not ok to hit/throw/swear." – name the behaviour).

When little people are  
overwhelmed by  
**BIG EMOTIONS,**  
it's our job to share  
**OUR CALM,**  
not to join their chaos.  
- L.R. Knost.

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