

## FACT SHEET

Emotional regulation develops throughout childhood and adolescence as individuals become able to identify their feelings and control their responses to emotional situations.

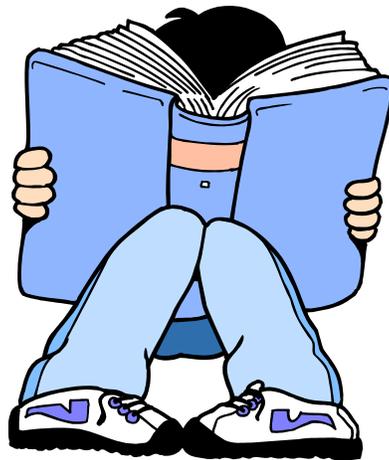
The ability to regulate one's emotions is necessary for positive mental health, building and maintaining friendships, and work productivity.

For more information please visit:

Emotional Regulation in Children: A Guide for Teachers

[http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/files/Powerpoint%20Presentations%202524%20Spring%202010/Emotion\\_Regulation\\_Scanlon\\_Christina%20L\\_Study\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.sbbh.pitt.edu/files/Powerpoint%20Presentations%202524%20Spring%202010/Emotion_Regulation_Scanlon_Christina%20L_Study_Guide.pdf)

# Promoting Emotional Regulation in the Classroom



## Emotional Regulation Requires Two Levels of Knowledge:

1. The knowledge of and ability to identify emotions
2. The knowledge of and ability to use regulation strategies

As a teacher, you are in the perfect position to help students develop both levels of knowledge. You can help students identify their emotions by providing vocabulary words that describe emotions. You can teach students strategies to meet their needs in socially acceptable ways.

Additionally, you can model the appropriate use of these strategies daily, and provide a safe environment for children to practice using them.

## What is Emotional Regulation?

Emotional regulation does not mean “turning off” one’s emotions. Rather, it is the ability to detect, monitor, manage, and respond to one’s emotional situations in socially acceptable ways. A student’s ability to regulate their emotions can be influenced by internal and/or external cues.

Examples:

A student who becomes angry in response to someone stealing her favorite toy displays emotional regulation when she uses her words, rather than using her fists, to address the problem and resolve it in a safe and socially acceptable way.

A student is very anxious for his big spelling test and starts to notice that his stomach is hurting. This student displays emotional regulation when he becomes aware that his emotions are causing his physical symptoms and is able to talk to the teacher about them.



## Emotional Regulation Techniques

- **Turtle Technique** – When children are upset or frustrated their bodies need time to calm down. Teach them how to use the turtle technique to help them manage their emotions.
  - “First imagine you have a shell that you can retreat into...like a turtle. In your mind, go into the shell and take 3 slow, deep breaths. Only come out of your shell when you are calm and ready to try your task again.”
- **Positive Self-Talk** – Encourage children to engage in positive self talk when they find themselves in an emotional situation.
  - “Everyone makes mistakes. When you get upset, tell yourself that nobody is perfect and I will do better next time”
- **Provide Validation** – By validating a child’s physical pain or frustration and their emotional reaction to it can help a child understand that it’s ok to feel that way.
  - “I understand that stubbing your toe can be incredibly painful and that you would want to react. I’ve done it myself countless times and it’s never a good feeling.”
- **Allow for Movement** - Sometimes a little calming movement can help children regulate their emotions.
  - “Every child has different needs. Some children need to move around from time to time to help them focus and learn. When you feel you are having trouble focusing come talk to me and we can give you the chance to move and talk a ‘body break’ ”.
- **Cognitive Restructuring** – Help the child replace a negative thought with a positive one.
  - “Rather than thinking the worst, let’s brainstorm ideas about how to make this situation better. Can we fix the problem?”

### RESOURCES

Helping Young Children  
Deal with Anger  
<http://www.athealth.com/Consumer/issues/childsanger.html>

ADHD (Attention Deficit  
Hyperactivity Disorder)  
and Emotional  
Regulation (Anger)  
<http://adhdvancouver.blogspot.ca/2011/03/adhd-attention-deficit-hyperactivity.html>

National Association of  
School Psychologists  
(2011). *Best Practices in  
Working With Students  
With Emotion  
Dysregulation*  
<http://www.nasponline.org/publications/cq/40/3/best-practices.aspx>