



Self-Regulation Skills: Breathing Strategies

Self-Regulation is the ability to recognize and manage your emotions and behaviors in different settings and activities.

Children who learn to regulate their emotions:

- ▶ Have an easier time making friends
- ▶ Handle disappointment better
- ▶ Relate more successfully with peers and adults
- ▶ Are less impulsive

Teaching this Skill

Teach the following strategies when the children are calm and engaged. Remind children of the strategies when they need to calm down through use of visuals or props.

Controlled Breathing: Smell the Flower, Blow Out the Pinwheel

Using visual on the following page, have children smell the flower (to breathe in through their nose) and blow out the pinwheel (to exhale through their mouth). Repeat several times.

Belly Breathing

Have children lie on their back on the floor and place a small stuffed animal on their stomach. When the children inhale and exhale rapidly have them notice what happens to the stuffed animal. Then have the children slow their breathing and notice what happens to the stuffed animal.

How You Can Help Children Self-Regulate

- ▶ Teach clear positive expectations/rules daily.
- ▶ Model and discuss reasons for desired behaviors.
- ▶ Validate feelings.
- ▶ Assist with language through labeling actions, feelings, and emotions.
- ▶ Provide positive feedback in response to the child regulating their behavior and help child regulate by modeling ways to calm down when needed.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate play.
- ▶ Promote children's independence across the day.
- ▶ Provide a place child can go to take a break and calm down.

Take a Deep Breath

Smell the flower



Blow the pinwheel

