

# Supporting Children's Emotions

Many children struggle to regulate their own emotions.

As children learn to self-regulate, they develop the ability to stay calm and work through their emotions to respond in a healthy manner.



## Children Experience Emotions Every Day

Children experience a variety of emotions throughout their day. These emotions can produce behaviours that take different forms such as meltdowns, outbursts, screaming, hitting and tantrums. Then there are those “big emotions.” These emotions are the ones that build up quietly over time, burst in a second and typically last longer. It puts stress on not only the child, but the parent/caregiver as well.

Regulating our emotions can be a challenge for anyone, especially when it's during times of uncertainty and stress. Although we are isolated within our homes, this is a great opportunity to prepare your child with the tools they need to manage and express their emotions.

*The following steps will help you understand your child's self-regulation challenges so you can teach them the tools they need to self-regulate.*

**Reframe the behavior** – Instead of thinking “My child is giving me a hard time,” view it as, “My child is having a hard time.”

**Recognize their stressors** –What is making them feel this way? Are they over stimulated? Hungry? Stuck on a hard math question?

**Reduce the stress** - Support your child in identifying what the stressor is and either removing it or reducing it. Maybe they need to switch to a quieter activity or have some help working through that math problem.

**Reflect** – Help your child understand their warning signs for when they are no longer calm. Maybe they felt warm, started to cry or began clenching their fist.

**Respond** - Help your child develop and choose different strategies that will help them calm their bodies and help prevent any “big emotions.”

When planning calming strategies for your child, include your child by asking them what they would like to do.

Encourage them to think about the activities that bring them joy and when they need a calming activity, remind your child of the activities they picked.

If you require assistance in supporting your child's needs or developing calming strategies at this time, please contact your Resource Consultant with Childinü Oxford.

Visit

<https://www.childinüoxford.com/about/meet-our-team/> for their contact information.



## Try These Strategies With Your Children

- Take deep belly breaths
- “Blow out the candles” – hold up all five fingers to represent the candles and blow out each “candle” with one deep breath
- Take a few minutes and stretch
- Have a small, quiet space in your house where your child can go to be alone. Add some pillows, books, colouring pages and a blanket to make it comfortable and inviting
- Have your child count to 5 or 10
- Invite your child to take a break from an activity and play at another activity
- Remind them often that you are there to help them
- Blow bubbles
- Play with playdough or some kind of sensory material

### School Age Strategies

- Provide activities that keep them busy such as a new book, puzzle, colouring pages, activity books, etc.
- Listen to music with headphones on
- Let them chew gum
- Yoga
- Provide them with something weighted such as a blanket that they can put on themselves
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Build with Lego or engage in some kind of manipulative activity
- Go for a walk
- Have a bath
- Talk it out with someone
- Encourage them to push against the wall as hard they can