

12 SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN



Alert and Engaged



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Secure and Calm

1. Take a Time-In

Spend 5 minutes in a calm, quiet space with the child. Connection is a key component of self-regulation.

2. Listening Break

Auditory stimulation such as a meditation, soothing music, or an audio book can help re-focus children's attention.

3. Rainbow Breath

Inhale and raise your arms above your head, painting a rainbow with your fingers! Exhale and return arms to your sides. Deep breathing regulates the vagus nerve.

4. Sing Vowel Sounds

Singing long, open vowel sounds such as "ahh" and "ohh" can balance sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

5. Face Painting

Pretend to "paint" the child's face in imaginary hues with the tip of your finger to provide sensory input.

6. Cool Down

Offer the child a cool glass of water or a popsicle, or run their wrists under cold water to help their nervous system reset.

7. Smell the Flowers

The scent of lavender can reduce anxiety. Mindfully smell fresh or dried lavender flowers with the child, focusing on how the smell makes them feel.

8. Move Like Animals

Invite the child to move like an animal that they would like to feel like, such as a carefree bird or proud lion. Somatically, this can help them shift their state.

9. Smiling Contest

See how long you can smile for together! Turning a frown upside down can really make you feel happier!

10. Tense and Release

Invite the child to clench their fists as tight as they can, then exhale to release. Repeat with various body parts to lower cortisol levels and heart rate.

11. Freeze Dance

Play upbeat music and instruct the child to freeze every time the music stops. Linking movement to their senses helps children regulate their bodies and minds.

12. Reflect Together

Fostering a self-reflective environment can help children learn to make better self-regulation choices in the future.