

Emotional Regulation Resources for Early Years

Emotional regulation develops through supportive relationships, modelling, and consistent practice. The following resources can help children recognise, express, and manage their emotions.

Visual Supports

- **Emotion cards** showing feelings such as happy, sad, worried, angry, excited, and calm.
- **Zones of Regulation** visuals to help children identify how they are feeling.
- **Feelings check-in boards** where children can indicate their emotions on arrival.
- **Mood meters** using colours, faces, or symbols.

Calming Strategies

- **Calm-down boxes** containing:
 - Stress balls
 - Fidget toys
 - Sensory toys
 - Soft fabric items
 - Picture books about feelings
- **Breathing prompts** such as:
 - Smell the flower, blow out the candle
 - Rainbow breathing
 - Bubble breathing
- **Mindfulness activities** designed for young children.

Story Books

Some useful books include:

- *The Colour Monster* by Anna Llenas
- *Ruby's Worry* by Tom Percival
- *The Huge Bag of Worries* by Virginia Ironside
- *When I'm Feeling Angry* by Trace Moroney
- *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae



Physical Regulation Resources

- Movement breaks
- Obstacle courses
- Yoga cards for children
- Stretch and move activities
- Outdoor sensory play

Communication Supports

- Feelings fans or keyrings
- Choice boards
- Now and Next boards
- Social stories for specific situations
- Emotion vocabulary displays

Sensory Regulation Resources

- Weighted lap pads (where appropriate)
- Chew tools (if advised)
- Sensory bottles
- Playdough
- Sand, water, and messy play opportunities
- Quiet or sensory spaces

Helpful Practitioner Strategies

- Name and validate feelings: "I can see you're feeling frustrated."
- Model calm behaviour and emotional language.
- Use co-regulation before expecting self-regulation.
- Maintain predictable routines and visual timetables.
- Celebrate children's efforts to manage emotions.

Simple Calm Corner Ideas

Create a cosy space with:

- Cushions and soft toys
- Emotion cards



- Sensory bottles
- Books about feelings
- A mirror for recognising facial expressions
- Visual prompts for calming strategies

Key Message

Children learn emotional regulation through repeated experiences of **co-regulation** with supportive adults. Before they can regulate independently, they need adults to help them understand and manage their feelings in a calm, consistent, and nurturing way.

