

Can calm with support

Positive relationships are at the heart of emotional regulation. When adults respond consistently and sensitively to children's signals, children feel safe, secure and valued.

Children need adults to co-regulate with them before they can begin to self-regulate. Through warm, trusting relationships, children learn how to recognise, express and manage their feelings.

Practitioners can support children by:

- Being emotionally available and responsive when they need support with big feelings.
- Providing calm, safe spaces where they can go with a trusted adult for co-regulation.
- Establishing clear, consistent boundaries so children understand expectations e.g. simple golden rules.
- Creating a communication-friendly environment with visual supports and clear language.
- Using outdoor spaces positively, giving children opportunities to move, run, breathe deeply and gain perspective.
- Supporting children to resolve conflicts by modelling language and problem-solving. Instead of asking "*Why did you do that?*", try "*What happened?*"
- Building strong partnerships with parents and carers. Use curious, non-judgemental conversations to understand how a child is feeling at home and whether there have been any recent changes or challenges.

Activities, ideas, resources and strategies:

Books and Stories

- Share books that explore emotions and feelings
- Discuss characters' emotions and reasons for their behaviour
- Use phrases such as, "*I wonder how they are feeling?*"

Modelling Emotions

- Talk openly about your own feelings e.g. "*I'm feeling sad because...*" or "*I'm feeling excited because...*"
- Demonstrate healthy ways of managing emotions

Total Communication Approaches

- Use visuals, gestures, signs and simple language alongside spoken words
- Reinforce routines and boundaries with visual reminders

Calm Spaces/Calming Strategies

- Soft furnishings – Cushions, blankets etc
- Soft lighting – Warm white
- Sensory resources
- Deep breathing
- Sitting quietly together
- Wrapping up in a blanket
- Listening to calming sounds

Working with Families

- Share strategies used in the setting.
- Offer ideas for supporting emotions at home.
- Encourage consistency between home and preschool approaches