

# EMOTIONAL REGULATION

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## What is it?

Emotional regulation is a vital skill that empowers children to understand and manage their emotions effectively. For children with disabilities, such as PWS, learning emotional regulation can be particularly challenging as a result of brain differences and executive functioning challenges. However, by incorporating co-regulation and self-regulation techniques, we can create a supportive environment that fosters emotional well-being. This handout outlines strategies for teaching emotional regulation to children with disabilities, helping them develop lifelong skills for managing their emotions.

## Two Types

**Co-Regulation:** *Building Emotional Connections*

Co-regulation involves forming emotional connections and providing external support to help children regulate their emotions. It promotes a sense of safety and security, enabling children to better understand and manage their emotional experiences

**Self-Regulation:** *Empowering Emotional Independence*

Self-regulation empowers children to independently identify and manage their emotions. It enables them to develop a sense of autonomy and build resilience.

## Strategies

**Co-Regulation:** Directly support your child's calming process. Develop a step by step procedure that you use to help them calm down. This may include discussing and validating emotions, modeling calming strategies, and using sensory input (e.g. back rubs, hand squeezes).

**Self-Regulation:**

*Emotional Awareness:* Teach children to identify and label their emotions using visual aids or emotion charts. Encourage self-reflection by asking questions like, "How do you feel right now?"

*Breathing and Relaxation Techniques:*

Introduce deep breathing exercises to help children calm their minds and bodies. Practice when your child is calm!

*Coping Strategies:* Collaborate with children to identify personalized coping strategies (e.g., sorting, drawing, listening to music, taking a break, flipping through a book). Create a "Coping Toolbox" with visual reminders of their chosen strategies. Make a designated, comfy, calming space where toolbox items are available.

*Step by Step Plan:* Create a step by step plan of what you expect your child to do when they're upset. Clearly communicate this plan and have them practice when calm. Plan to shape the behavior slowly across time.

**REINFORCE SUCCESSFUL CALMING!**

Celebrate every win, no matter how small.