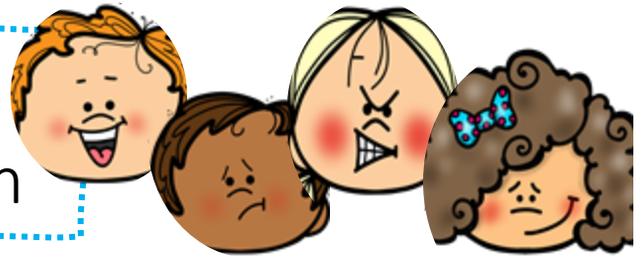


# Supporting Children - Emotional Regulation



*Whilst the following tips/ ideas are very beneficial for children with SEN, they are also very useful for young children who are just beginning the journey of recognising their emotions, and then starting out on the long road of learning to be able to self-regulate (the ability to monitor and manage emotions in a way that is acceptable and produces positive results such as well-being, good relationships and learning) It is not a 'quick fix approach' but rather the acquisition of a life-long skill set that is worth investing in so that our children grow into well - adjusted and resilient young adults.*

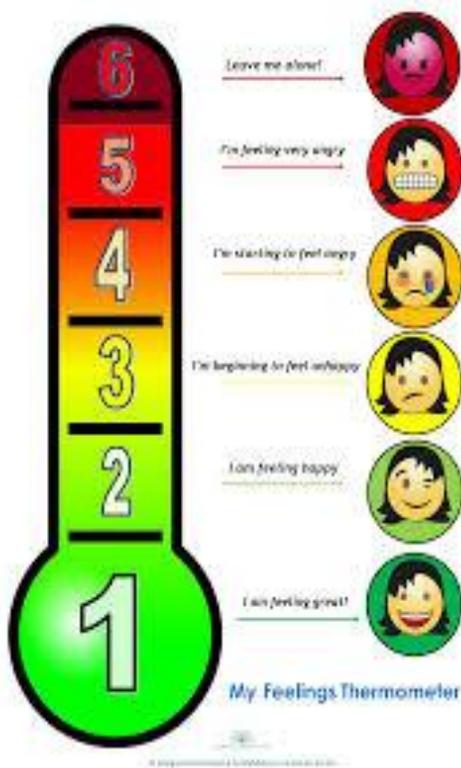


## A GOOD PLACE TO START

- **Take** an opportunity to chat with your child when they are **calm** and **settled**.
- **Talk** about feelings. Encourage your child to name them. Eg. happy, sad, angry, worried, excited etc. You might want to use visuals - pictures of faces showing different emotions. (See the links section in the purple box.)
- **Try** to help them verbalize what happens in their body when they feel a particular way. For example, you might say 'I know when you are really happy because you have a great big smile on your face' or you might share with them, 'when I'm worried about something my tummy feels a bit funny...like there are butterflies all fluttering around in there'. Etc.
- You might read a book that helps the conversation too.  
*Here a few useful titles to explore:* Lucy's Blue Day by Chris Duke  
Listening To My body by Gabi Garci  
Emotions Series by Sue Graves

**Visuals** can be (and arguably SHOULD be) effectively used to help children identify/ verbalise how they feel. They can be a useful tool to use to help start a conversation.

One example of something that might be used is this 'feelings thermometer' produced by Middletown Centre For Autism. A free printable version can be found using the following link:  
[https://www.middletownautism.com/files/shares/Sara/Emotion\\_Thermometer\\_2.pdf](https://www.middletownautism.com/files/shares/Sara/Emotion_Thermometer_2.pdf)



There are many different visual tools available for helping children talk and learn about emotions. Below are some useful links to other websites, where there may be a slightly different feelings thermometer and/or other useful resources for you to explore to help children talk about and understand emotions.

<https://www.social-emotional-workshop.com/2019/03/feelings-thermometers/>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-c-2549002-feelings-thermometer-a4-display-poster>

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-t-3588-my-emotions-faces-discussion-cards>

# So, your child can talk about their emotions....now what's next?

Some emotions are 'bigger' than others and are harder for children to deal with. Therefore, we need to introduce them to the tools/skills to tackle these 'big' emotions. There are so many ideas/strategies available for this, but the following are some easily put together and useable ideas for home.



## Create a 'calm zone'



You could use a pop-up tent in the corner of the child's bedroom, or a create a quiet corner with a blanket thrown between 2 pieces of furniture.

Make it an inviting space. Use cushions, a bean bag, a cuddly toy or two, whatever your child likes.



## Create a 'calm box'



Include some 'fidget' toys, or sensory toys. Things like sand timers, liquid filled toys to turn over and watch, squishy, tactile toys, bubbles or bubble filled toys. There are huge amounts of things available.

Check out the following website for ideas of toys  
<https://www.learningspaceuk.co.uk/>

Or there is always Amazon

Whether it is hyper-sensitivity to sensory stimulus around them that causes too much excitement or an angry meltdown that they need time to settle from, a 'calm zone'/ 'calm box' affords them the space to withdraw from other arousing stimuli and gives them space and time to just 'chill' for a little while. It allows them time to 'regulate' again.

**It is important** to try to encourage your child to use their calm zone or calm box. **It's important** to give them time without you trying to talk to them. The hope is that they will come to recognise that these are tools they can use themselves when those 'big' feelings start to overwhelm them.

Of course, **it is also very important** if your child has had an angry meltdown to talk to them about that episode but only once they are calm. When a child becomes so angry that there is a 'meltdown' research has shown that it can take at least 45 minutes for them to settle again so trying to chat before they have had time to settle is not going to be successful.

However, once calm **it is important** to take time to chat about how/ why they were cross. Talk about ways in which they could react differently next time. Give them options to 'make a better choice' next time. You could try reminding them of these options:



- use their calm zone/ calm box
- they could go into another room
- draw a picture / read a book
- practice their slow and calm breathing (**this really works**) – one of the best free resources to explain how to practise calm breathing with your child is found at this website:

<https://copingskillsforkids.com/deep-breathing-exercises-for-kids>

It really is worth taking time to look this one up!

The ideas highlighted here are only a few. There are a huge number of ideas and resources available on this topic.

If you would like more information on anything mentioned please do not hesitate to get in touch by contacting school and asking for Mrs Weatherup (SENCo)