

## Emotion Regulation:

It is Important for children to learn to manage their emotional responses appropriately (regulate not suppress). Parents also need to remember that children will learn much of their emotion regulation from what they observe in their own household. Some families are naturally good at discussing feelings and scaffolding emotional expression for children. For others this may be less natural and/or easy so it may require more thinking about. Parents and children can also be temperamentally different which may impact on how each expresses their emotion. Strong willed, sparkier children may require more support with this than others. Below are some tips to assist:

- Stability, consistency, positive reinforcement and boundaries can help
- Parents can also:
  - Provide validation of child's emotions
  - Talk about feelings (avoid good vs bad) – this doesn't have to be their children's feelings. Parents can use books, films, play characters and this is often easier for children in the first instance
  - Model appropriate emotional regulation
  - Teach positive self-talk
  - Encourage appropriate expressions of feelings
  - Remind parents that feelings are always valid although behavioural responses may not be

Naming feelings helps children understand what is happening for them:

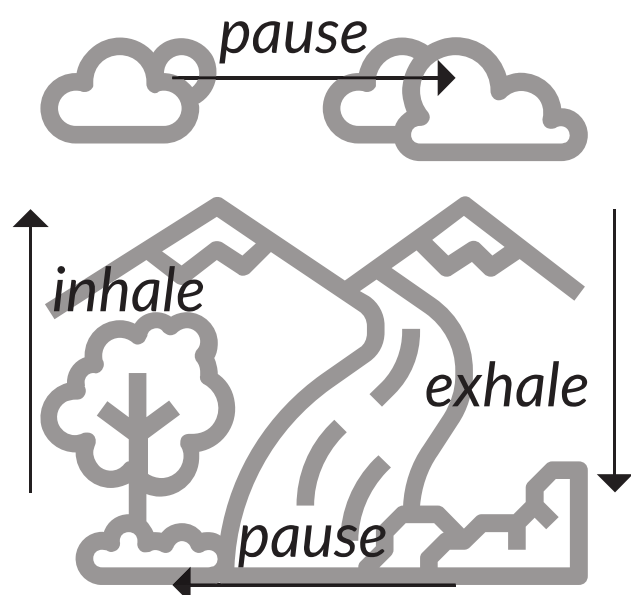
- That must have been disappointing for you!
- Sounds as if you are pretty resentful about...!
- Wow! You are so excited about going to that party
- I know it's scary, but...
- My, you sound angry!

Hopefully through the use of attending and descriptive commenting during attending this is a skill that parents have already started to pick up on. Parents can model the sharing of both positive and difficult feelings

Talk to parent about strategies they are already using and help them to tweak these where necessary. Below are some other suggestions which might be helpful:

- Breathing strategies
- Grounding/five senses (5, 4, 3, 2, 1)
- Calming self-talk
- Calm spaces
- Glitter bottle/other calming toy
- The turtle...

### Box Breathing



- 7-11 breathing – breathe in for 7 seconds, out for 11 seconds
- Balloon breathing – breathe in slowly and imagine (or watch) filling your belly like a balloon, then breathe out until all the air is gone

### Glitter Bottle:

- Small bottle (plastic if concerns re breakage) + water + glycerin/clear glue + food colouring + glitter (the internet is full of instruction pages)
- Metaphor of glitter as thoughts/emotions feeling out of control –if we stop, take a breath and focus, everything slows down and we can feel calmer and in control again
- Encourage child to practice when calm and to use it when stressed, but don't force it...

### Calming self-talk:

Encourage parent to think collaboratively with child about helpful things to say to themselves when overwhelmed. They can practice them together or write them on cards:

- 'I can turn things around'*
- 'Remember to breathe'*
- 'This feeling won't last'*
- 'I can get through this'*
- 'I'll be going home soon'*

### The Turtle Technique:

