

# 6 TIPS FOR TEACHING

## Emotional Regulation



### 1 Name It to Tame It

Kids can't manage feelings they can't identify. Naming feelings reduces intensity and increases awareness.

- "It sounds like you're frustrated."
- "Your shoulders are tense – are you feeling nervous?"
- "I see a big feeling coming. Let's slow down together."

### 2 Model Healthy Emotional Management

Kids learn emotional regulation by watching you use it in real time. Let them see you regulate:

- "I'm feeling overwhelmed, so I'm going to take a breath."
- "I'm frustrated, but I can handle it."
- "I need a minute – I'll come right back."

### 3 Create a Calm-Down Toolbox

Give kids easy, accessible tools when emotions rise. Ideas for a calm-down kit:

- Stress balls or fidgets
- Coloring or drawing items
- Bubbles (for slow breathing)
- Weighted blanket
- Scented lotion
- "I Need a Break" card

### 4 Teach Breathing and Grounding Skills

Use these breathing techniques to calm kid's nervous systems down:

- Square Breathing: Trace a square in for 4, hold 4, out 4, hold 4.
- Smell the Flower (breath in through nose), Blow the Candle (exhale through mouth)
- 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding: Name 5 things you see... etc.

### 5 Practice Regulation When They're Calm

Kids can't learn new skills in the middle of a meltdown. Teach skills during low-stress moments:

- Role-play "what to do when you feel upset"
- Draw a "feelings thermometer"
- Practice breathing before bed
- Create a plan for overwhelming moments

### 6 Break Big Feelings into Manageable Steps

Emotional regulation is about tolerating, not eliminating, discomfort. Prompt them with:

- "What's one small thing you can do right now?"
- "Is your feeling getting bigger, smaller, or staying the same?"
- "Let's take this one step at a time."

