

## K-3 Construct Progression Emotion Regulation Quick Guide

Below, you will find information and activities for the K-3 Emotion Regulation Construct Progression. See the [NC Construct Progressions and Situations Book](#) for additional information and full references.

### Why focus on Emotion Regulation?

*Emotion regulation, or the ability to control one’s own emotions, is related to children’s success in school (Denham, 2006; Howse, Calkins, Anastopoulos, Keane & Shelton, 2003; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg & Walberg, 2007). When children regulate emotions, they can work in collaborative groups, play with other students, and engage in behaviors such as asking questions, offering ideas to a group, and investigating an idea that supports academic success and positive relationships. Learning to regulate one’s emotions involves learning skills over time that are essential for doing well in school and in relationships. Children need support to learn to regulate emotions and use these strategies over time.*

### This construct is about:

- Building strategies to help regulate emotions and using these strategies across situations and over time.
- Learning empathy and compassion for others.
- Building skills that will help children to build healthy relationships with others.

### This construct is *not* about:

- Categorizing/sorting emotions as being good or bad.
- Learning to repress “bad” emotions.
- Shaming expressions of emotions.
- Responding in only one way to emotions.

**Emotion Regulation:** Children understand that they have a choice in expressing their emotions and that expressing their emotions has external effects for themselves and others. Children understand that external support can be used to help regulate the experience and expression of emotions.

A. Reacts to an experience or stimulus without demonstrating awareness of the reactions of others around them.	B. Shows awareness that a reaction to an experience or stimulus has an impact on others.	C. Shows awareness that one’s choice of how to express emotions has an effect on relationships with others and with getting one’s needs met.	D. When offered support for regulating the expression of emotions, sometimes uses the strategies offered.	E. When offered support for regulating the expression of emotions, consistently follows directions and/or suggestions offered by teacher, parent or peer.
F. Sometimes uses learned strategies independently to regulate the expression of emotions.	G. Consistently uses learned strategies independently to regulate emotions.	H. Uses learned strategies for regulating emotions during transitions, because of interruptions, to accomplish a different or new type of task, or because of changes in the daily routines.	I. Reflects about emotions and the consequences of actions. Demonstrates reflection by changes in behavior, by incorporating feedback into self-regulation strategies, or by displaying compassion.	

### A Safe Place

- Create a safe place in the classroom. Notice that this safe place has rules and activities. Children will require practice to learn to use the safe place. Teachers model and demonstrate how to use a safe place as a strategy for regulating emotions.



### Calm Down Tools

- A great example of a calm down tool is a calm down bottle. It can be homemade by adding glitter glue, warm water, and regular glitter to a bottle with a leak-proof lid. Then, students can use the calm down bottle as a hands-on strategy for regulating emotions by shaking up the bottle and watching the glitter settle to the bottom as a strategy to support regulating their emotions. Children will require practice to learn to use a tool like this, and teachers can model and demonstrate in-the-moment and over time to promote successful use. To see a YouTube demonstration about how to make a calm down bottle click:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7617mDKqfo>



### Breathing or Counting Strategies

- A simple way to help students regulate emotions is to teach them to count slowly to five or take deep breaths. They will need practice to use this strategy when they are faced with a need to regulate their emotions. Teachers can model in-the-moment and scaffold the use of these strategies in an ongoing way. It is helpful to provide prompts as you demonstrate, “Let’s count like we’re in slow motion together” or “Let’s take a big breath together.”