

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Top tips: Co-regulation

To achieve self-regulation, children need plenty of opportunities to co-regulate with trusted adults.

Children use the secure attachments they have formed with key staff to engage in co-regulation, supporting them to develop emerging self-regulation skills.

Here are some top tips to help you in your setting:

- Respond to children's needs effectively so they begin to understand how they can return to a state of happiness and contentment following upset
- Provide consistent and clear boundaries. For example, a child may show disappointment in the fact that they cannot play in the sinks in the bathroom, but if they are gently and consistently redirected to the water tray in the nursery room or outside, then they will learn how to cope with this
- Label children's emotions. For example, instead of saying phrases such as "There, there, it'll be OK", put children's feelings into words by saying, "You're very sad because you've fallen over. Let's have a cuddle, take some deep breaths to calm down and then we'll clean it up."
- Where possible, draw children's attention to any noticeable body language they use, so they can begin to recognise these as signals to their emotions. For example, "Sammy, I can see you biting your lip, you seem worried about something."
- Help children to find calming strategies, such as suggesting soothing activities, giving them a comforter like a soft toy, engaging in deep breathing techniques, or directing them away from what is causing upset such as by going with them to a cosy, quiet space to soothe them
- Activities which engage the vestibular and proprioception senses can help children relax and gain control. Find out more about this in our [online physical activity course](#)
- As a staff team, discuss successful strategies for managing children's emotions and co-regulating with them. Provide opportunities for staff to buddy up so that less confident or experienced staff can witness and practice effective co-regulation strategies.



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NDNA products to support you with these tips

- Online course – [Physical Activity in the Early Years](#)
- Face to face course – [Self-regulation, Supporting Well-being](#)

And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna