

REFRESHING RECESS EXPANSION PROGRAM NEWSLETTER #8:

Emotions

Understanding Emotions

It is important for children to recognize and understand the emotions they experience, so that they know how to appropriately react. As children get older, they learn how to identify what they feel and choose a response that is suitable to the feeling and appropriate for the setting. Emotional awareness can help children know what they need or want to be able to cope with powerful emotions, negative or positive.

Coping Skills

Coping skills are behaviors or thinking patterns that can be used to manage or navigate everyday life stressors. For example, some children may respond to anger or frustration by hitting a sibling or throwing their toy. Some children may find it difficult to settle down after an exciting day, talking a mile a minute or running laps around the house. Try teaching your child to express their feelings in a positive way, using one of these coping strategies:

- Jumping jacks
- Deep breathing
- Listen to music
- Positive self-talk
- Count to 10
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Weighted blanket
- Go for a walk /get some fresh air
- Yoga
- Talk to an adult
- Get a drink of water
- Read a book
- Draw a picture /artwork
- Jump rope
- Play a game
- Write down how you are feeling

Kids who learn healthy ways to express and cope with emotions are more likely to:

- Be empathetic and supportive of others
- Perform better in school and in their careers
- Have more positive and stable relationships
- Have good mental health and well-being
- Display fewer behavioral problems
- Develop resilience and coping skills
- Feel more competent, capable, and confident
- Have a positive sense of self



● Zones of Regulation™ (Kuypers, L. M., & Winner, 2011)

The Zones of Regulation™ is a tool used to teach emotional awareness and self-regulation by categorizing all the different feelings and emotions children might experience into four concrete, colored 'zones.' This framework helps teach children to become more aware of their emotions and enhances their independence in controlling impulses, managing sensory needs, and problem-solving conflicts. These four 'zones' are as follows:

BLUE

- Sad
- Tired
- Bored
- Sick
- Hurt
- Exhausted

GREEN

- Good
- Calm
- Okay
- Proud
- Content
- Ready to learn

YELLOW

- Silly
- Excited
- Anxious
- Overwhelmed
- Frustrated
- Scared

RED

- Mad
- Angry
- Mean
- Aggressive
- Terrified
- Out-of-control

● Helping Children Regulate their Emotions

1. Tune into cues—behind every behavior is an emotion
2. Help them make a habit of recognizing how they feel in different situations throughout the day
3. Identify the emotion and which Zone of Regulation™ they are in
4. Discuss appropriate coping strategies to express or manage this emotion as needed
5. Take action—try out the strategy and reflect on how it made them feel. What zone are they in now?

CHECK THIS OUT!

- Coping Skills for Kids: <https://copingskillsforkids.com/blog/welcome-to-coping-skills-for-kids>
- Helping Kids Identify and Express Their Feelings: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/issues/helping-kids-identify-and-express-feelings>
- Understanding Your Emotions: <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/understand-emotions.html>

Halloran, J. (2016). *Welcome to coping skills for kids!* Retrieved from <https://copingskillsforkids.com/blog/welcome-to-coping-skills-for-kids>

Kids Helpline. (2018). *Helping kids identify and express feelings.* Retrieved from <https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents/issues/helping-kids-identify-and-express-feelings>

KidsHealth Behavioral Health Experts (Ed.). (2020). *Understanding your emotions.* Retrieved from <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/understand-emotions.html>

Kuypers, L. M., & Winner, M. G. (2011). *The zones of regulation: A curriculum designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control.* Santa Clara, CA: Think Social Publishing, Inc.

