

TEACHER REGULATION STRATEGIES

Finding it hard to stay regulated in the classroom? You're not alone. Here are some ideas brought to you from teachers across the globe.

ENVIRONMENT/SENSORY

- Keep blinds open to allow natural light in.
- Turn overhead lighting off when you're feeling overstimulated. Instead use fairy lights and desk lamps for students who want more light on just a few tables.
- Keep lots of plants around the room.
- Keep doors open to let air in when weather permits.
- Play music before class.
- Play calming music in the background during lessons, as long as it's not distracting for students.
- Play songs/music that you like (screen for explicit content first!)
- Wear Loop earplugs so you can still hear everything just at a softer volume.
- Drink tea at the end of the day (the hot temperature helping to soothe and ground the body).
- Sit in the sun.
- Spin on a chair.
- Play with fidget tools.
- Play with scented playdough.
- Have an essential oil diffuser in the classroom.
- Utilise flexible seating for yourself.
- Crunchy snacks.
- Rub hand cream on your hands.
- Sip water throughout the day.
- Wear clothes that feel nice to touch.
- Walk around the oval with the kids when possible.
- Explore your Sensory Profile with an OT.

SELF-REGULATION DURING LESSONS

- Tag with another teacher or support worker to give yourself a few minutes off the floor to reset.

- Let students know you need time to self-regulate. Set a timer on the board and let students know not to come and talk to you unless they really need to.
- Physiological sigh – take a deep inhale followed by a short second inhalation, and then an extended exhalation. Repeat a few times.
- Play a book online or have an Education Assistant read a book or sing a song while you take 5 minutes to have a break.
- Have an Education Assistant repeat instructions or use visuals to help the students who need extra support so you don't end up getting frustrated with them.
- Stay hydrated; sometimes electrolytes are needed, not just water.
- Go to the bathroom and splash your face with cold water. This stimulates the vagus nerve.
- Humming – also stimulates the vagus nerve.
- Change of scenery – move to a different room or outside.
- Tapping.

SELF-REGULATION THAT'S ALSO CO-REGULATION

- Take students outside for at least one hour each day, exploring maths, science, sounds etc.
- Participate in movement breaks, mindfulness and meditation with the class.
- Read a story or chapter of a book at different times during the day to reset.
- Stop the class to take deep breaths together.
- Lots of singing. Singing requires breathing and diaphragm engagement plus stimulation of the vagus nerve which is calming.
- Yoga stretches with the class.



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- Mindful drawing and colouring.
- Offer "cuddle puddles" (may not be appropriate in all settings) – sit on the mat and offer anyone who wants to to gently dog pile on you. Helps everyone to feel silly, playful, loved and can help you feel re-connected to students. It's also a form of deep pressure which is calming for the nervous system.
- Start the day or after lunch period with a joke or funny video.
- Colouring in with the kids after lunch.
- Lay down outside and look up at the sky when possible.
- Play a game to reset.
- Keep mat sessions short.

SELF-REGULATION DURING BREAK TIMES/ONCE HOME

- Stay off your phone.
- Don't do work.
- Go outside to mark.
- Pack your favourite lunch/foods if you know it's going to be a difficult day.
- Eat lunch mindfully.
- Avoid the staff room at lunchtime if your social battery is low or auditory input is too much.
- Go to the staff room at lunch for some adult company and conversation.
- Go for a walk.
- Playground duty to get outside.
- Leave the classroom.
- Stay in the classroom.
- Sit in silence.
- To get work done during DOTT time, find an empty classroom or put headphones on.
- Don't take work/laptop home. Go in a little bit earlier or stay a bit later if necessary, so work stays at work.

- Once home, have a shower or bath in the dark or with a candle. Extra hot or cold depending on what you feel like.

COGNITIVE/MENTAL STRATEGIES

- Chanting mantras in your head, e.g. "Kids do well if they can", "This will pass".
- Don't shame yourself for disengaging with a dysregulated child until you feel regulated enough to help them.
- Show yourself compassion – you won't be able to stay regulated all the time.
- Be upfront and tell kids how you're feeling and what you need to avoid dysregulation, e.g. no noisy fidget toys on the mat, but they can be used at desks.
- Be upfront about your neurodivergence.
- Find a group of teachers you can vent and learn from.
- Take a day off without guilt.
- Learn about the neuroscience behind the development of executive functioning skills, including emotional regulation – it can help you become more compassionate towards children.
- Recognise and understand what your triggers are, e.g. hunger, fatigue, boredom, time pressure, children not "respecting" you, loud noises, uncomfortable clothes, feeling unheard – there are too many to list! This may take work with a psychologist.
- Complete the "Circle of Security" for the classroom program to understand how your attachment style and history affects your teaching.



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