



## Self-Regulation Tool Cards Instructions

*Learning how to regulate your emotions is something that takes practice. It helps to have easy (and fun) ways for kids to practice calming their bodies and regulating their emotions. These tool cards make it QUICK and EASY for your children to practice this critical skill. It helps to practice multiple times a day when your child is fairly calm...that way when they do become stressed out, their bodies can access the self-regulation skills they have learned. Adults should practice the skills with the kids...self-regulation is important for adults too!*

Here are quick instructions for each tool card in the PDF. There are also blank cards for you to write in your own ideas.

Read – read any book that helps you calm or focus

Drink Water – Take a nice long drink of water

Walk / Roll – Go for a walk or roll

Color – draw or scribble or doodle whatever you want

Rainbow Breaths – hold arms out to the side, as you inhale move your arms up to meet above your head (like going up a rainbow), then as you exhale lower your arms back to your side (reach for the gold if you want!). Do slowly

Listen to Music – Whatever music helps you feel relaxed

Listen to the Bell – Ring a chime (or a triangle or something that resonates for a bit) then raise your hand when you can't hear it. Could close eyes to listen.

Count - Count up to 10 (or 20 or whatever). Could count backwards.

Breathe - smell the flower and blow out the candle – Take a big breath in while pretending to smell a flower, then blow out the candle using a long slow breath

Self-Talk – Say something to yourself like “I am a nice person” or “I can do this”

Take a Break – leave the situation and take a minute for yourself. It's always OK to take care of yourself!



Ask for Help – ask someone you trust (an adult or a sibling/friend) to help. It's OK to ask for help.

Square Breathing – With your finger, trace a square in the air (or on a surface). Breath in for 4 seconds while tracing up one side, hold for 4 sec while tracing top side, breath out for 4 sec while tracing down, pause for 4 sec while tracing bottom side. Repeat as needed.

Figure 8s Hands or Feet – Trace a sideways big figure 8 with each arm and leg in the air

Figure 8 Breathing - Trace a sideways figure 8 with your fingers. Breath in on one side and breath out on the other. Try to take it slow (4-6 seconds for each)

Look for Your Favorite Color around the room – Take a second to focus on looking for your favorite color...how many different places can you see it?

Squeeze Muscles & Slowly Release – Squeeze your muscles in your whole body and then slowly release. Then try one muscle at a time (maybe fists, then arms, then shoulders, etc.)

Cross Body Elbows to Knees – Bring your elbow to your opposite knee, then repeat on the other side (R elbow to L knee, then L elbow to R knee).

Whole Body Movements - Any big body movements can help! Stretch or do push-ups or jumping jacks or...

Finger Knitting - Take a string or yarn and wrap it around your fingers alternating in and out.

List Feelings - Write a list of your feelings. Notice which are big feelings, and which are smaller feelings. All are important!

Color Feelings in body outline – Color how you are “feeling” in a body outline. What color is happy? What color is sad? Where do you feel that feeling?

Write a Note to someone you care about – Often we feel good when we help others feel good. Write a simple note to someone you care about.

Look Outside – Stop and take a few minutes to look outside. What do you notice? What do you hear or see? Notice anything you've never seen before?

**Butterfly Tapping** - Using your hand like butterfly wings, tap your opposite shoulders with your hands continuously for a minute. You can move along your arms and down to your wrists.

**Draw** - Draw a picture. It doesn't have to be anything specific, just something that helps you feel better.

**Breathe: Hand on Heart & Hand on Belly** – Take slow deep breaths with one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly. Feel your belly expand as you inhale. Feel your chest rise and fall as you breathe.

**Breathe - Feel Your Belly** – Take slow deep breaths with your hands on your belly. Feel your belly expand as you inhale.

**Brush Off the Stress** – Imagine brushing off the “stress” from your body starting at your head and moving down to your toes. You can make this fun by imagining you're covered in green slime, feathers, water....and brush it all off.

**Play Dough** – Play with some playdough. Feel the texture. How does it feel?

**Lay Down** – Take a minute to lay down and try to relax

**Knees to Elbows Cross Crawl** – On your hands and knees, bring one knee up to meet the opposite elbow, then switch to the other knee to the other elbow as you crawl.

**Hoberman Sphere** – Open up the Hoberman sphere as you inhale and close the Hoberman sphere as you exhale. Imagine the sphere is your lungs. Or this YouTube version - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9Q8D6n-3qaw>

**Think Tree Branches to sky. Strong trunk. Rooted in the ground.** – Imagine you are a tree with a strong trunk that's rooted in the ground, but your body can sway a little, like branches.

**Do a Helpful Job in Your Classroom (or house!)** – Find something to do that would help your classmates or your family (sweeping or cleaning or organizing). Sometimes doing something helpful for others makes us feel better.

**Bugs & Wishes** – Let someone know something that **bugs** you AND what you **wish** they would do differently. Just remember wishes don't always come true.

**Finger Breathing** – Trace your hand with your finger. When you trace up a finger slowly breathe in, and when you trace down slowly breathe out.

**Finger Focus** - Press palms flat together. Move each pair of fingers apart without moving the others. Start slowly. Then, increase speed.

**Hot Cocoa (or Soup) Breathing** – Imagine you're holding a cup of hot cocoa (or soup), but it's too hot to drink. It smells really good, so take a big slow whiff through your nose (inhale) and then slowly blow on the hot cocoa (or soup) to cool it down. Do this several times.

**Headphones** – Put on a pair of headphones and listen to some music you enjoy. Or just put on headphones to quiet the noise around you!

**Use Positive Time Out (or Cool Down) Area** – Find a space that you can take a “timeout” and relax or cool down. It works even better if you help create that space. You can put things there that comfort you or help you feel better.

**Shake Your Body**- Wiggle and shake your body. You can start in one part of your body then move to other parts. Or just shake your whole body (safely!).

**Notice...** Take a minute to notice 3 things you see, 3 things you hear, and 3 textures you can touch. What do you notice about them?

**Imagine a Calm Place** - Imagine a place that seems calm and peaceful (maybe a place you've been to or seen). You could even close your eyes to picture what it would be like to be there.

**Glitter Bottle** - Shake your glitter bottle and watch the glitter float in the liquid. Notice how it swirls around. You can imagine those pieces of glitter as your feelings. As the glitter settles imagine your feelings settling down to calm you. (Google 'glitter bottle' or 'glitter jar' for instructions to make your own.)

**Stress Ball** – Squeeze your stress ball as you think about all your feelings. Then as you release the ball, try to imagine your body relaxing.

**Stretch** – Take a few minutes to stretch your body out. Arms, legs, neck, shoulders, fingers and hands.

**Name Your Feeling** – Take a second to think about what you are feeling. Can you name that feeling? You might even say it aloud or tell someone.

**Imagine Flying a Kite** - Picture it way up in the sky. Slowly pull it In. As it comes to you, imagine feeling the wind pull it away, but you keep control of it.

**Change the Scene** – Take a break in a different place. Sometimes just changing your scenery can help you feel better or help calm you.

**Ask for a Hug** - Find someone you trust and ask them for a hug. It might make you feel better and it might actually make them feel good by helping you.

**Self-Hug** – Wrap your arms around your body and give yourself a hug. Squeeze tight for a few seconds then slowly release as you feel yourself calm.

**Make a List of Bugs & Wishes** - Write down a list of things that people do that bug you AND what you wish people would do instead.

**Write a Thank You Note to someone you appreciate** - Write a short thank you note to someone who you appreciate or who has helped you.

**Windmills** - Pretend your arms are part of a windmill. Swing them slowly around as you imagine wind blowing steadily to move them.

**Clap Rhythms** - Clap your hands to a rhythm or a beat. You can speed it up and then slow it down. Or you can find a partner who would clap with you.

**Wet Dog Shake** - Imagine you are a wet dog. Shake your body parts to try to shake the water out of your fur.

**Talk to Someone** - Find someone you trust and talk to them about anything. Sometimes being around someone you trust helps you feel better.

**Random Act of Kindness** - Do something nice for someone who doesn't expect it. Helping others can help us feel better.

**Balance on one foot or press feet into floor** - Try to balance on one foot for as long as you can. Press your feet into the floor and notice what it feels like.

**Create your Own** – Everyone regulates in different ways! Create your own card with an idea or strategy that helps you feel calm, focused, or even loved!

