



i WHAT IS IT?

Handling Emotions is a collection of techniques that teachers can use to help students regulate their strong feelings. These strategies guide students through the process of recognizing their own emotions, describing these emotions, and calming down.

👁️ WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

April has been getting very frustrated and hitting her classmates during centers, so her teacher introduces the Turtle Technique to help teach emotion regulation skills. April's teacher then keeps an eye out during Center Time to catch April *before* she gets too upset. When April's teacher notices April's frustration starting to grow, she guides her through the Turtle Technique calm-down steps until she is calm.

★ WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Kindergartners are in the early stages of learning how to regulate their emotions and often have difficulty coping with strong feelings (e.g., anger, frustration, sadness, fear). When teachers help students develop the skills to recognize *what* they are feeling and strategies to *manage* these emotions, students will have more success regulating their behavior independently and remaining engaged in learning activities.

While useful for all students, these strategies are especially useful for:

- Students who tend to get upset very easily when things do not go their way
- Students who tend to be aggressive if they get mad or frustrated
- Students who might easily blame others when things do not go the “right” way

Building Blocks for Handling Emotions

The following are three essential pieces to helping students manage their emotions.

Recognize the emotion

In order to understand and manage their emotions, students need to know what to call them. When teachers purposefully work with students to draw awareness to what they are feeling and connect it with language, they are helping students build and practice the skills needed to recognize their own and others' emotions.

Describe the emotion

Once able to name the emotion, being able to describe its intensity is an important next step. The ability for students to recognize when they are starting to feel a “big emotion” can help them learn to manage the emotion and prevent it from building further in the moment.

Regulate the emotion

After recognizing what it is that they are feeling, students need to know what to *do* with these feelings. When an emotion becomes “too big,” it is important for students to be able to calm their bodies when they are feeling (or starting to feel) overwhelmed by that emotion.



TIPS FOR HELPING STUDENTS HANDLE EMOTIONS

1. Prepare students to handle strong emotions

- Teach how to RECOGNIZE emotions.
 - Read stories that talk about emotions.
 - Reference *Emotional Vocabulary* handout for tips on how to label emotions.
 - Introduce a classroom “Feelings Chart” or “Feelings Wheel” (see resources below).
 - Sing songs and play games that incorporate emotions.
 - Visit CSEFEL’s website for
 - “Scripted Stories for Social Situations”
 - “Book Nook” activities (select activities included in Resources)
- Teach how to DESCRIBE emotions.
 - Introduce a “Feelings Thermometer” or “Feelings Scale” as a way to guide students through measuring the intensity of an emotion (see activities below).
- Teach how to REGULATE emotions.
 - Read stories that incorporate calm-down strategies.
 - Introduce and practice the “Turtle Technique” (see activity and handout below).

2. Guide students through strong emotions in-the-moment

- Monitor the student’s early signs of escalation.
- Reflect the student’s feelings using a calm and soft voice.
- Cue the student to use a self-regulation technique.
- Reinforce the student’s use of the technique.
- Once calm, think of ways to better anticipate triggers and plan use of techniques next time.
 - Make sure to do this as soon as possible! The more recent the situation, the better able students are to connect what you are saying with their behavior.

RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT HELPING STUDENTS HANDLE EMOTIONS

Book Nook (available as PDFs)

- [On Monday When It Rained](#)
- [Glad Monster, Sad Monster](#)
- [Hands Are Not For Hitting](#)
- [Sometimes I’m a Bombaloo](#)

CSEFEL©

Emotional Vocabulary

[Available as PDF](#)

CSEFEL©

Feelings Chart

[Available as PDF](#)

CSEFEL©

[Activity](#) (CASTL©)

Feelings Thermometer

[Available as PDF](#)

CASTL©

[Activity](#) (CASTL©)

Turtle Technique Materials

[Available as PDF](#)

TACSEI©

[Activity](#) (CASTL©)

Control Anger and Handle Disappointment

[Available as PDF](#)

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