

# Self-Regulation

Pembroke's Friday Freebie

Joey Mandel | Foreword: Joanne Cummings

## Moment to Moment

A positive approach to managing classroom behavior



**Social-  
Emotional  
Learning**

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**Self-Regulation**

**Looking Beyond the Behavior**

In a student with weak self-regulation skills, you will observe

- student’s body and energy level do not match the situation or environment
- student has a hard time identifying his/her body’s energy level
- student does not connect his/her influence over physical behavior and ability to manage his/her own regulation
- student lacks sensory tools to calm down or be ready to learn

**Understanding Self-Regulation Skills**

Some children are not able to control their body’s energy level or adjust their body’s arousal level to meet the needs of the environment. In order for us to support these children, they must first have a cognitive understanding of the variety of energy levels and their appropriateness for different environments. They need to understand that their energy level should match that of the environment and that of their peers. Children need to be shown that they can change their body’s energy level by changing the way they think about a situation and their control over it. Help children examine the relationship between feelings, thoughts, and actions and the impact they have on our bodies. We need to help them determine which self-regulation techniques work well for them.

**Active Skill Development**

- to learn to match the body’s energy levels to the needs of the environment

*Tools for Cool*

**Instructions**

1. Tell students you are going to work together figure out which activities work best to alert us when we feel tired or calm us when we feel hyper.
2. Use mats to define space or give each student a specific location in the room. Students are to stay in place and not run around or touch other students.
3. Have students run on the spot and act hyper, angry, energized.
4. At your signal (e.g., a whistle), everyone stops and copies you in a self-regulatory activity from the Self-Regulation Chart on page 59.
5. Do three Arousing activities in a row: e.g., kicks, dancing, skipping). Between each activity, have students walk one lap around the room.
6. Have students return to their places and color a picture or read a page from an age-appropriate book.
7. Ask students to think about how they feel; if it was easy for them to read or color, or if they were unable to concentrate. Give each a copy of the Self-Regulation Chart on page 59 and have them circle how they felt after each group activity.
8. Repeat the game using three Relaxing activities: e.g., yoga, breathing, stretch.
9. Repeat the game using three Heavy Work activities: e.g., pushups, lunges, weights.

**Grades K–6**  
**Approximate Time: 30–45 minutes**

**It is important for students to perform an age-appropriate cognitive activity to recenter after the self-regulatory task. It helps focus their minds.**

Throughout this book, shapes are used to show emotions and actions:



Heart = what we feel



Rectangle = what we do



Speech balloon = what we say



Thought bubble = what we think

## Discussion Before and After

- Discuss how their bodies feel after each self-regulatory exercise.
- Reflect on which activities they found most calming.

## Moment-to-Moment Support

### *Scaffolding*

Have your own chart with you and make notes on particular students you are concerned about. Be aware that this activity will not give you real-life answers, because the break between activities is not long enough. This is simply a starting point, for you and for them, to understand that different activities can help increase or decrease our level of excitement.

### *Model*

Model the activities you find helpful throughout the day. Stretch; bend down and touch your toes. Tell students that after lunch you feel tired and want to have a nap, but you have learned that a few quick stretches and moving your body up and down is just as helpful in preparing you to learn.

### *Detailed Positive Praise*

Connect the tool to a student's level of alertness. "I think that Neil looks like he has washed his worries away. The relaxing activity has made you look calm and stress-free. Well done. What do you think about how you feel?"


### *Regulate the Environment*

In math class, as the class gets squirmy, pull out the Self-Regulation Chart and have students pick one activity each to try. Have them perform the activity for three minutes and then return to work; ask them to think about whether or not the activity helped them for the last part of the class. Make notes and changes to the chart using real data from class. Use this information to help you work more effectively as a class.

### *Verbal Thinking Cue*

"Self-regulation is the ability to match our bodies' energy level to our environment. If we are really hyper in class, we want to learn ways to calm ourselves. We all have different ways to calm ourselves and to help us relax. But it would be great if we could find one or two of these activities that we all found useful, so then we could do them between each subject, together as a group."

### Self-Regulation Chart

Type of Activity	Action <input type="text"/>	How Your Body Feels 		
Arousing	Lunges	Tired	Focused	Hyper
	Kicks	Tired	Focused	Hyper
	Cancan	Tired	Focused	Hyper
	Dancing	Tired	Focused	Hyper
	Skipping	Tired	Focused	Hyper
Relaxing	Mindful Breathing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breathe in deeply through your nose. Feel the breath come into your lungs. Pause and silently count to three. Now, let out your breath very slowly. Feel your breath leave your body. Repeat this 5 times.</li> <li>Notice the muscles in your face. Relax them, beginning with your jaw. Next, relax your shoulders, feeling the tension melt away. Be aware of each relaxation.</li> <li>Place both hands on your stomach to feel your breaths come in and out, in and out. Breathe in slowly and deeply, deep down in your belly. Then let out the breath slowly. Feel your hands go up and down with the air coming in and out of your body. Repeat this 10 times, watching your hands move up and down.</li> </ul>	Tired	Focused	Hyper
	Progressive Muscle Relaxation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Squeeze your toes. Release your toes.</li> <li>Open your eyes wide, then close your eyes tightly.</li> <li>Point your toes, then flex your toes.</li> <li>Open your mouth, then shut your mouth.</li> <li>Scrunch your cheeks, then relax your cheeks.</li> </ul>	Tired	Focused	Hyper
	Yoga Poses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Downward Dog</li> <li>Warrior</li> <li>Tree</li> </ul>	Tired	Focused	Hyper
	Stretch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise hands in the air</li> <li>Roll shoulders</li> <li>Leg stretch</li> </ul>	Tired	Focused	Hyper
Heavy Work	Do 20 pushups	Tired	Focused	Hyper
	Turn to a partner and push on each other's hands	Tired	Focused	Hyper
	Sit back-to-back with a partner and try to push against each other's backs	Tired	Focused	Hyper
	Lift heavy books 20 times	Tired	Focused	Hyper