

If interested, this topic can be learned in greater detail through a full day workshop called “Trauma Informed Classrooms.” Please contact Sara at [sara@growingrootstherapy.ca](mailto:sara@growingrootstherapy.ca) or 204-333-9804 for more information or to book a workshop.

## Being Trauma Sensitive

# Classroom Strategies for Regulation

## Why is this important?

- Promoting self-regulation at the classroom level helps all children in your classroom. It gives all students skills they can use to feel safe, calm and ready to learn. It can also promote student-to-student co-regulation. Children, especially those who have experienced trauma, sometimes need help figuring out for themselves what they need, so these activities and environmental strategies can help!

## Strategies

### Body Breaks

- Plan times throughout the school day when students have an opportunity to get up and move their bodies.
- Body breaks are most effective when they include these three elements:
  - 1) Movement
    - Ex. Simon Says, dancing (there are many videos on youtube and GoNoodle with follow-along dances for children)
  - 2) Heavy Work - activities that involve pushing or pulling
    - Ex. animal walks, chair push-ups, lifting/carrying
  - 3) Calming
    - Ex. breathing exercises, mindfulness activities (youtube and GoNoodle are great resources for these as well)

### Calm Down Box

- Create a box full of tools that may be effective in helping students up and down regulate. Teach your class how to use them at times when they are ready to learn, rather than times when they need the tools to self-regulate.
- Include items such as:
  - Noise-cancelling headphones
  - Hand-held fidgets
  - Weighted stuffed animals

- Play-Doh
- Gum (depending on the age of your students)

## Various Seating Options

- Some children need more movement than others to stay regulated. Rocking chairs, wobble cushions/stools, exercise bands tied across the front legs of a chair, etc. can be beneficial for some students.

## Deep Pressure Exercises

- The following exercises can be performed at a child's desk. They can be taught as a class and performed class wide. Once the students have learned them, they can be used at any time throughout the day as the individual needs.
  - Hands on stomach: put your hands on your stomach and apply firm, steady pressure
  - Hand on forehead: put your elbow on your desk and place the palm of your hand on your forehead and apply firm, steady pressure
  - Bear hug: wrap arms around chest, grabbing onto shoulders, and squeeze. Can also be done by bringing knees toward chest and squeezing

## Consider Transitions

- Transitions are challenging for many students who struggle with self-regulation and is often when behaviour issues are noticed. We can support smooth and controlled transitions, whether it be to another classroom or another activity within the classroom, in order to maintain a consistent and school appropriate level of self-regulation.
- Use a visual schedule that includes pictures along with words to help students understand what is expected of them during the day.
- Use transition warnings (5 minute warning followed by a 1 minute warning) to prepare students for the transition.
- Use a visual timer such as an hourglass or other visual timer displayed on the smartboard. Something to keep in mind is that numbers can be abstract to students in early elementary years so it is best to use a visual representation of time (hourglass or clock with a red area getting smaller).
- Sing or play songs to help students transition. Teaching them a transition song or making one up will help them to focus on the transition. Please see the following YouTube video for an example of transition songs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aPnLIVhdlpc>

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