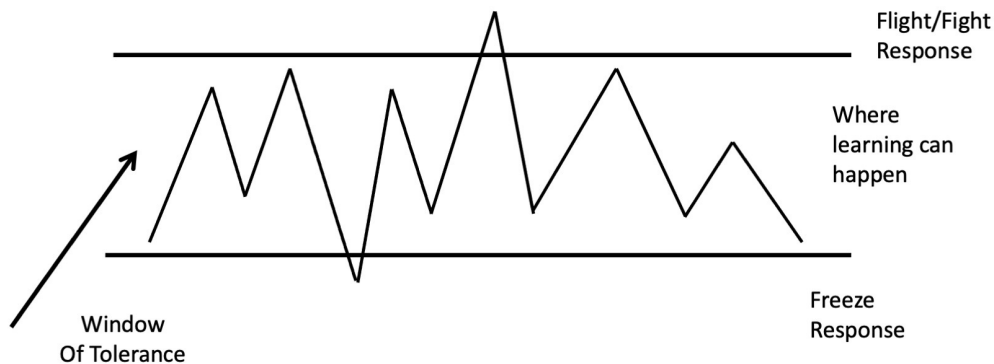


When to Teach Emotional Regulation Skills

- The optimal time to teach children skills they can use to regulate their emotions is when they are already calm and ready to learn.
- Recall the concept of a person's window of tolerance.

Window of Tolerance: Typically Developing Child



- Learning can only happen when a child is within their personal window of tolerance. A child's experiences and temperament can impact how wide or narrow their window of tolerance is.
- When a child is already in a state of dysregulation (outside of their window of tolerance), they are not ready to learn skills for regulating their emotions.

When to Teach Emotional Regulation Skills

- Once a skill is taught, the child should have many, many opportunities to practice using the skill while calm.
- Once the child has mastered the skill, such as when they have learned how to physically take a deep breath, start to talk with them about situations when the skill may be useful and why. For example,
 - "I noticed that I feel so calm after I take a few deep breaths. When your body is not feeling calm, taking a few deep breaths can help."
 - "Earlier today, it seemed like you got really frustrated when Maria was in your way and then you pushed her. Then you had to leave the dramatic play area. Do you think next time someone is in your way, you could try shaking your feelings out first to help you calm down and think of a different solution?"



Which of these examples do you think would be most appropriate when talking to a 2-year-old? Which would be most appropriate with a 5-year-old? Why?

When to Teach Emotional Regulation Skills

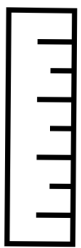
- When the child has mastered the skill through repeated practice and understands when and why they can use the skill, you can start to support them in using the skill when they are dysregulated.
- Choose a time when the child is slightly dysregulated to suggest using the skill to help them feel calm. Consider the intensity of the child's feelings in these examples:
 - A 3-year-old child is starting to get frustrated with a block tower they are building. The block they are attempting to place has fallen 3 times and you notice their facial expression just starting to change and their movements becoming a bit more forceful and less coordinated.
 - A 3-year-old child is sitting in a corner crying loudly and throws toys at any child who approaches them.



Which situation do you think would be more appropriate for suggesting a regulation strategy? Why?

When to Teach Emotional Regulation Skills

- Gradually reduce the amount of adult support until the child can use the skill mostly independently when slightly dysregulated.
- Gradually suggest using the skill when the child is a bit more dysregulated and feeling a bit more intense emotions.



If we think of dysregulation on a 10-point scale, you started with teaching it at a level 1. Now move to teaching it at a level 2 with full adult support, then gradually withdraw that support. Move to a new level when the child can use the skill without adult support.

- After the child successfully uses the skill to regulate their emotions, help them reflect on what happened. For example:
 - “You were very frustrated with that toy and I couldn’t understand what you were trying to tell me. Then you took a deep breath to calm down and you were able to tell me what you needed!”
 - “You were feeling very mad. Then you jumped on the trampoline and felt better!”

When to Teach Emotional Regulation Skills

Teach the skill to a child when they are regulated

Practice the skill many times while the child is regulated

Talk about situations when the skill could be used

Support the child is using the skill when slightly dysregulated

Help the child reflect on what happened when they use a skill successfully.