

Big Feelings: Music & Emotional Regulation



What is emotional regulation?

Emotional regulation is the ability to regulate one's emotions. We all experience a myriad of emotions throughout our day. For children, these can be big and small emotions. To be able to focus and learn, children (and adults) need to be able to regulate their emotions.

How does music help?

Music can help by creating a grounding or neutral avenue to regulate feelings. Singing with a child helps to refocus the child's energy and create calm. Labeling and describing the emotions felt, and then singing about these feelings supports a child's ability to reduce stress and cortisol levels. Singing can promote relaxation and reduce stress using long controlled breaths. Movement can slow down the body and help promote a reset to feelings.

Musical tips to promote emotional regulation:

I Have Feelings

Sing lullabies while rocking a child or having them rocking back and forth. Sing songs such as **Twinkle, Twinkle, Rock-a-bye Baby**, as well as the following:

I Have Feelings

*(Sung to the tune of **Twinkle, Twinkle**)*

I have feelings so do you,
Let's all sing about a few.
I am happy, I am sad,
I am scared, I am mad
I have feelings so do you.
We just sang about a few.

If You're Happy and You Know It

Change the underlined words to different feelings and actions to act out:

If You're Happy and You Know It

If you're Happy and you know it,
Clap your hands!
If you're Happy and you know it,
Clap your hands!
If you're Happy and you know it,
Then your face should surely show it.
If you're Happy and you know it,
Clap your hands!

Additional verses:

- Sad – say "boo-hoo"
- Mad – stomp your feet
- Excited – say "hurray"

Activities

Toddler or Preschooler:

Teacher/Caregiver-dim the lights in their room and grab a flashlight. Turn on a quiet piece of music and slowly move the flashlight around on the ceiling. Ask the children to follow the light with their eyes. You can add breathwork to this.

For example: When the light moves up, breathe in. When the light moves down, breathe out.

Baby: Use a quiet voice and rock back and forth to music or while singing.

Breathe Like a Bear book by Kira Willey. Scan the QR code below to watch a read-along video.

Check out video and music resources we recommend learning by scanning the QR code:





Daily Routines: Music for Welcoming the Day



How does music help to welcome the day?

A musical start to the day is a positive and fun way to acknowledge and celebrate your students. Hearing their name sung is a special, personalized experience that promotes inclusion. Singing songs may also help when separating from their caregiver. For the other children in class, it helps them recognize and appreciate each child by name, noticing when someone arrives.

Musical tips to welcome the day:

Pick a favorite tune or chant and change the words to greet each child by name.

Hello Name

Try singing these words to the tune of **Goodnight Ladies**:

Hello Name,
Hello Name,
Hello Name,
It's time to say hello!

Name is Here Today – Chant

Pat a steady beat while saying this chant:

Name is here today,
Name is here today,
Yaaaaaay (*drumroll*)... Name!

Name is Here Today – Song

Sing this song sung to the tune of **The Farmer in the Dell**:

Name is here today,
Oh, Name is here today,
Everybody say "Hurray,"
Name is here today.

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Music & Transitions

Why are transitions important:

Transitions can be a stressful part of a child’s day. Often transitions are not the child’s choice and can be challenging. It’s important to make these transitions as calmly and positively as possible.



How does music help with transitions:

Singing instructions with a familiar tune can make this time enjoyable while reducing anxiety. By singing instructions, language is slowed down, and ideas are repeated. This results in a greater focus for children. Adding clapping and other physical actions maintains focus while keeping children engaged.

Musical tips to ease transitions:

Choo Choo Song

Change underlined words to each child’s name, and locations that fit the situation in the following song:

Choo Choo Song

Choo, choo, choo, choo
 Choo, choo, choo, choo
 Down the railroad track.
 Choo, choo, choo, choo
 Choo choo, choo, choo
 Then, it comes right back.
 First it goes to _____.
 Then it goes to _____.
 Then, it goes to _____.
 Then it comes right back.
 Repeat...

This is the Way

Change the actions to words like “wash,” “walk down the hall,” “clean up our toys,” etc. to fit the situation.

This is the Way (Sung to the tune of *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush*)

This is the way we _____
 _____,
 This is the way we _____
 So early in the morning.

The More We Get Together

Change the words/actions to fit the situation like “clean,” “get our coats on,” etc.

The More We Get Together

The more we get _____
 _____,
 The more we get _____
 The happier we’ll be.

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