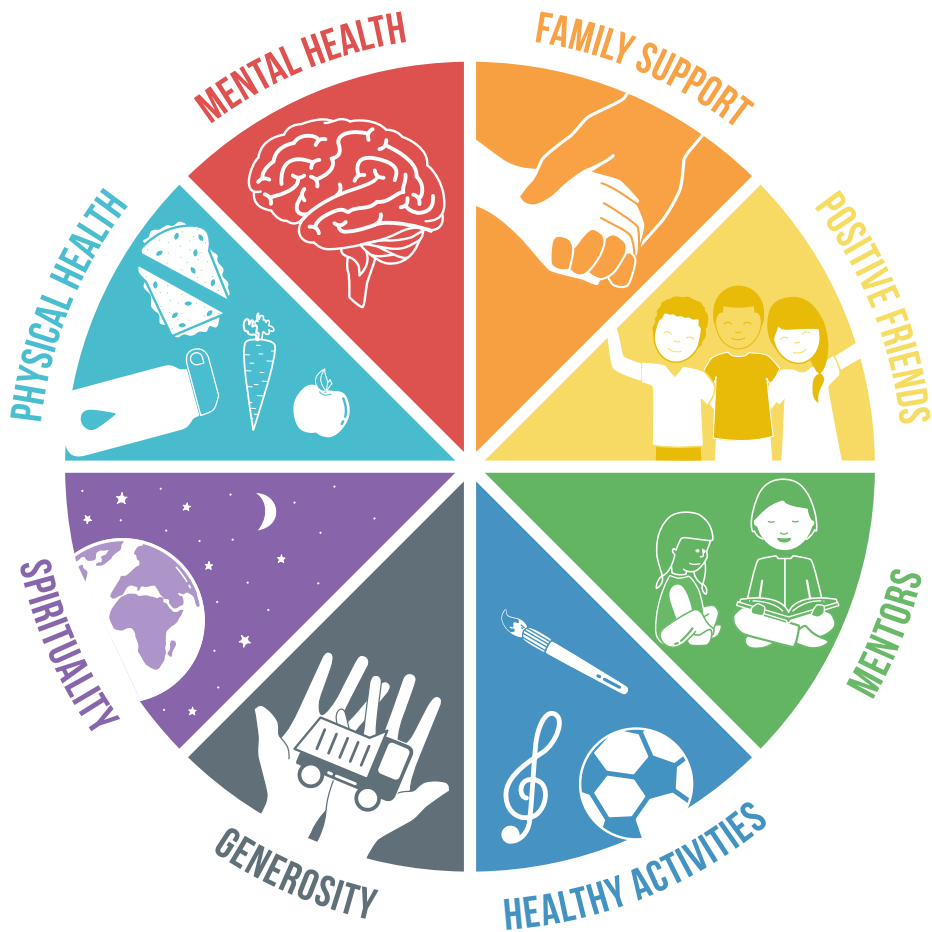




SOURCES OF STRENGTH



THIRD GRADE CURRICULUM

Lesson Spotlight

I can name different transitions that happen throughout the school day and strength-based regulation strategies to use in future transitions.

Materials

- Zany Zoo handout, one per student and Instructor (page [187](#))*
- Markers or colored pencils
- Drawing utensils (markers, colored pencils, crayons, pen, or pencil)
- Speaker for playing music
- Regulation Railroad visual (page [184](#))*

*All worksheets, handouts, and visuals can be found at sourcesofstrength.org/instructor-resources/

Preparation

- Print copies of the Zany Zoo handout
- Ensure a version of the daily schedule is available for students to reference during the Closing Talking Circle
- Select a calming song to play during the coloring activity

Time

30-40 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making

Instructor Overview

This lesson highlights how everyone experiences multiple daily transitions. Some of these transitions can evoke an emotional response, either big or small. Neuroscience has shown that previous traumatic experiences, chronic unpredictability, and a lack of routines and structure may increase one's reactivity in times of transition. This may lead to challenging behaviors for what some might consider a minor change in the routine. Learning how to navigate emotional dysregulation during transitions is an essential life skill. This lesson allows students to proactively apply Strengths and strategies to familiar transitions through art and reflection.

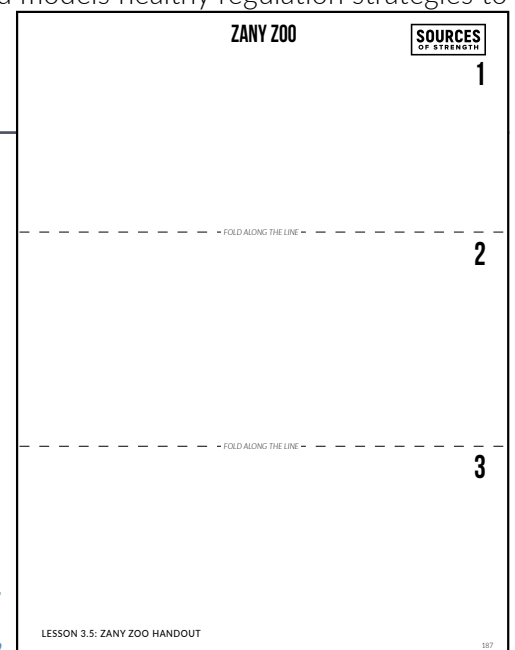
The lesson begins with a collaborative drawing activity with transitional moments that could be dysregulating for some students. This is done intentionally to provide students with safe opportunities to notice dysregulation and practice utilizing regulation strategies. Students will then have the opportunity to reflect on familiar transitions during the school day and think of Strengths and strategies that may support them during those transitions.

Neuroscience has also shown that co-regulation is instrumental in helping students develop effective self-regulation strategies. Co-regulation occurs when a Trusted Adult comes alongside and models healthy regulation strategies to help others name, understand, and navigate their emotions and actions. For more information on co-regulation, please see the Emotional Regulation Rationale on page [79](#).

Zany Zoo Activity (15-20 min)

Invite students to bring drawing utensils with them to the Talking Circle and, welcome them as they arrive. **“Welcome to our Sources of Strength lesson, everyone! Today, we will begin with a drawing activity called ‘Zany Zoo.’ Your task is to help create all of the wacky animals living at the Zany Zoo!”** Pass out a Zany Zoo handout to each student. The Instructor should have a Zany Zoo handout as well.

“There are three rounds in this activity because each animal is so wacky they will require three different artists to create them. One artist will draw the animal’s head, the second artist will draw the upper body of the animal, and the third artist will draw its lower body. At the end of our time, we will have a whole bunch of animals in our Zany Zoo. Remember,



UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.5 - Navigating Transitions in Our Daily Lives

these animals don't yet exist, so I invite you all to use your imaginations!

"Let's start with Round 1. Each of you will draw the head and neck of the wackiest animal you can think of in Box 1." Hold up your Zany Zoo handout and point to Box 1.

"Remember, do not draw any other parts of the animal during this time! This round will go by quickly; you will only have two minutes to draw the head and neck. Make sure your animal's neck goes a little bit into Box 2 so the next artist can continue drawing the animal." Give students a very quick demonstration on your own Zany Zoo handout where you draw the head of an animal in Box 1 with the lines of the neck extending into Box 2.

"Ready? Start drawing!" Give students two minutes to work on Box 1. Walk around commenting on students' drawings and reminding them to only draw the head and neck, and to be sure the lines of the neck extend into Box 2.

After the two minutes, ask students to put their drawing utensils down. **"I saw some really wacky-looking animal heads around the room! Let's keep making those animals even wackier! First, let's fold our papers so the next artist can't see what the animal head looks like."**

Demonstrate folding the Zany Zoo handout along the dotted line between Box 1 and Box 2. Then, fold Box 1 underneath the paper so only Box 2 and Box 3 are visible for the next artist. Remind students that the lines of the animal's neck should extend into Box 2.

"In a moment, I'll invite everyone to pass their paper to the left so you will each have a new piece of paper." Hold up your Zany Zoo handout and point to Box 2.

"When you get your new paper, you will be working in Box 2, drawing the upper body from the bottom of the neck to the waist. You will only be drawing the animal's upper body, but don't forget to continue the lines of the animal's waist into Box 3 for the next artist." Give students a quick demonstration on your own Zany Zoo handout. Starting from the lines of the neck you drew earlier, quickly draw a wacky animal torso that extends into Box 3.

"Remember, you don't have very long to fill in Box 2, just two minutes! When I say 'GO!', you will pass your papers to the left and start drawing the upper body of a new wacky animal in Box 2. Ready, GO!" Support students in passing the drawings to the left and working in Box 2, providing two minutes for them to draw. As you walk around, confirm students extend the lines of the waist into Box 3. When the time is up, ask students to put their drawing utensils down.

"Great work on the upper bodies of these wacky animals! Before moving to the third artist, let's fold our papers again so these animals remain as wacky as possible." Demonstrate folding the Zany Zoo handout along the dotted line between Box 2 and Box 3. Make sure Box 1 and Box 2 are folded underneath so only Box 3 is visible for the next artist. Remind students that the lines of the animal's waist should go into Box 3.

"In Box 3, we'll be drawing the lower bodies of these wacky animals. Maybe your animal will have one tail or twenty spider legs!" Give students a quick demonstration on your own Zany Zoo handout. Using the lines of the waist you drew earlier, quickly draw the lower body of a wacky animal.

"When I say 'GO!', you will pass your papers to the left and start drawing the lower body of a new wacky animal in Box 3. Ready, GO!" Support students in passing the drawings and working in Box 3. Give students two minutes to complete Box 3. When the time is up, ask students to put their drawing utensils down.

"OK, Zookeepers, it's time for the big reveal. When I say 'GO!', we will all unfold our completed drawings and look around at our Zany Zoo animals. GO!" Comment on the wacky animals found in the Zany Zoo and allow for some silliness as students look around at the drawings. After a minute or two, ask students to put their papers down in front of them.

"Now, let's take a moment to notice how we feel after this activity. We just experienced a lot of changes, or transitions, in that activity. We changed from drawing one animal to the next and from one part of the animal to another, and we never quite knew what would happen next. Sometimes, transitions can lead to big emotions and becoming dysregulated."

“Let’s check in on the Regulation Railroad before continuing with the lesson. In the moments when I asked you to stop drawing and pass your paper to the next person, what did you notice in your body? Maybe you noticed your heart beating, or maybe you were smiling or giggling about what you just drew, or maybe you even noticed your stomach drop when I said it was time to switch.” Pause.

“Now, let’s think about our emotions in those moments. You might have felt excited to start drawing again. Maybe you felt disappointed that you didn’t have more time to work on your drawings or that your animals didn’t turn out exactly how you imagined. Now, think about how big that emotion was. Maybe you felt a little silly, but it wasn’t a big feeling, like a 1 on a scale of 1 to 5.” Hold up one finger.

“Or maybe you felt super happy or really frustrated, and that emotion felt very big, like a 5.” Hold up five fingers.

“Or maybe it was somewhere in the middle, like a 2 or a 3. However big or small it felt is OK, just think of that number for yourself.” Pause.

“Let’s end our Zany Zoo adventure with another activity you can add to your list of regulation strategies.”

ADAPTATION

If you have a time constraint, you may replace the following coloring activity with a quicker regulation activity. For example, consider a breathing exercise from the Regulation Strategies Appendix (page 202).

“We will take a few minutes to color the wacky animals in front of us. Maybe you’ll create a design for the animal or imagine where they live, like in a cave or the sky, and draw a background scene. Coloring is one way we can help our bodies regulate when emotions feel big, and it can be a great Healthy Activity even if your emotions don’t feel so big right now.” Turn on some calming music and give students a few minutes to color their wacky animals. At the end of the time, collect the drawings. Alternatively, students could keep the drawings and continue coloring at a later time.

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

Other ways you may choose to continue enjoying your class’s Zany Zoo include displaying the finished animals in the classroom or hallway, asking students to come up with names for the animals, or asking students to choose the noises the animals would make. Another idea is adding a speech bubble to the drawing for the animal to say which Strength they are feeling particularly strong in.

Talking Circle (15-20 min)

Ensure students have access to a version of the class schedule before beginning the Talking Circle.

“Welcome back to our Talking Circle! We’re going to talk more about transitions. ‘Transition’ is a word that describes changes in our lives. Some transitions might only happen a few times in our lives, like if we were to move across the country and start at a new school. Some might happen more often, like when we end the school week and start the weekend, or when school closes for summer. Finally, some transitions happen each day, and we get so used to them that we might not even notice them! For example, every morning we transition from waking up to going to school, and every day at school, we move from one subject to the next; those are transitions, too!

“Let’s think about the transitions, or times we change from one thing to another, that happen during the school day. You can take a look at our class schedule for some reminders. One of the first transitions of the day for us could be when we arrive at school in the morning. Once we’re at school, what’s the next time our class goes through a transition?” Get a few Popcorn Shares, and support students to think through daily transitions based on your specific class schedule throughout the day (coming to/leaving school, subject to subject, class to recess/lunch, recess/lunch to class, etc.).

“We can’t always predict exactly what will happen each day. What are some transitions that can happen during the school day that we might not expect.” Get a few Popcorn Shares (substitute teacher, field trip, assembly, fire drill, etc.).

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Lesson 3.5 - Navigating Transitions in Our Daily Lives

“Great job naming those transitions! Sometimes, changing from one thing to the next can bring up big emotions, which means the Trunks of our BrainTree might become lopsided. When we know a change is coming, we can use our Strengths and strategies to make them feel a little easier. In fact, we’ve already had some practice doing this with the Regulation Railroad. Let’s think about how we might use the Regulation Railroad when a transition leads to big emotions. For example, sometimes the transition to or from recess can lead to big emotions.” If this example isn’t relevant to your students, use a different one that happens daily, such as going to lunch.

Reference the Regulation Railroad visual for the following prompts.

“Let’s first think about Stop 1 on the Regulation Railroad.” Point to Stop 1. “This is where we check in with the physical sensations we notice in our bodies. Our Roots might communicate with us after recess in lots of different ways. For example, who has ever been hot and sweaty at the end of recess?” Get a show of hands.

“What other sensations have you noticed in your body after recess?” Get a few Popcorn Shares, providing some examples for students if necessary (feeling thirsty, noticing heart rate, smiling/laughing, tired legs/arms, tired eyes from reading, etc.).

“Let’s move on to Stops 2 and 3, which focus on the Trunk of the BrainTree. This is where we name our emotion and how big it is.” Reference Stops 2 and 3 on the Regulation Railroad visual.

“If you spent recess telling jokes with your friends and you’re still smiling when you get back to the classroom, what emotions might you be feeling at that moment?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (happy, goofy, joyful, etc.).

“Yes, maybe you’d feel content, which might be a 1 or 2. Or, maybe you are laughing nonstop, and you feel super goofy, which might be more like a 5.

EXTENSIONS

Everyday Application

- Challenge students to count the number of transitions they notice during the school day.
- Invite students to use the Regulation Railroad when they notice a transition.

Read Alouds

Look for opportunities to connect this lesson’s content to the suggested read aloud books below.

- Once Upon an Ordinary School Day.** McNaughton, C. & Kitamura, S. (Illustrator). (2004). New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.
- Sticks.** Alber, D. (2019). United States: Diane Alber Art LLC.
- Gilbert the Great.** Clarke, J. & Fuge, C. (Illustrator). (2016). New York: Sterling Children’s Books.

Home Connection

- Invite families to make a list of typical transitions, such as going from home to school, school to home, home to sports practice, or going to bed, and encourage students to share the Regulation Railroad as a strategy for navigating transitions as a family.

Talking Circle Prompts

- “What’s a regulation strategy you used recently during a transition?”

Music

- Include music in moments of transition to support routines. As a class, pick a song to start the day, transition from one subject to another, or to end the school day.



“Now let’s say you lost a game at recess, and you notice your hands are clenched and your face is hot. What emotions might you be feeling as you transition in from recess?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (angry, frustrated, sad, upset, etc.).

“Yes, if your emotion was a 1 or 2, you may feel bummed out. Or, if your emotion is a 4 or 5 you might feel furious! Even though it can feel overwhelming when an emotion makes the Trunks of our BrainTrees lopsided, Stop 4 on the Regulation Railroad is all about remembering we have ways we can balance our BrainTrees.

“What if you come back from recess after losing a game and feel furious, like a 4, even though the game is over and it’s time for class? What are some regulation strategies we might use to balance our BrainTree and regulate in that situation?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (breathing exercises, taking a walk, coloring, talking to a Trusted Adult, etc.). Try to stay away from personal stories and focus on strategies.

“Now let’s say you come back in from recess and feel joyful and goofy, and you just can’t seem to stop giggling even though it’s time for class. Let’s turn to a partner and share some regulation strategies you could try if it feels hard to transition back into learning time.”

Give students a minute or two to Pair Share potential strategies (taking a few minutes to color, take a walk, do a breathing exercise, etc.). Invite a few groups to share their ideas with the class.

“These are all great ideas to help us regulate and transition back into class from recess. Let’s all try to be aware of how transitions are impacting us and remember to use our Strengths and strategies to regulate.”

Creative Expression

- Invite students to write strength-based stories about the wacky animals from the Zany Zoo activity.

UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.5 - Navigating Transitions in Our Daily Lives

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

In Sources of Strength lessons, our hope is to invite students to share stories through the lens of **Hope, Help, and Strength**. Sometimes you will be instructed NOT to take student stories during part of the Talking Circle; this is to avoid potential sharing of experiences that may have been traumatic or that may be activating for some students.

Remember, these lessons are not therapy sessions where valuable intervention supports are provided. Instead, this is a public health approach providing upstream prevention skills and positive social norming to help move individuals and communities toward a culture of health and well-being.

If a student does share something vulnerable or traumatic, we encourage you to redirect the conversation to Strengths with the skill of **Honor, Acknowledge, and Turn Towards Strength**. This might sound like, "Thank you for sharing. That sounds like a difficult situation. What are some of the Strengths that have helped you through it?" This provides students an opportunity to re-frame a challenging circumstance through a lens of resilience, healthy coping, and connection, which can provide a sense of agency, strength, and hope.

In addition, following a more difficult share, check in with the student and connect them to the appropriate mental health resources in your school or community.



REFLECTION

The practice of self-reflection is a powerful tool to help us as adults show up for ourselves and our students in healthy ways throughout the day. Take a moment to review the Lesson Spotlight and reflect on the following questions. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or journal.

What Strength(s) did you notice in a student or your class during this lesson or over the course of this week?

What is something you noticed or learned about yourself as it pertains to this lesson?

What is a story or an experience from this lesson that you would like to capture or remember?

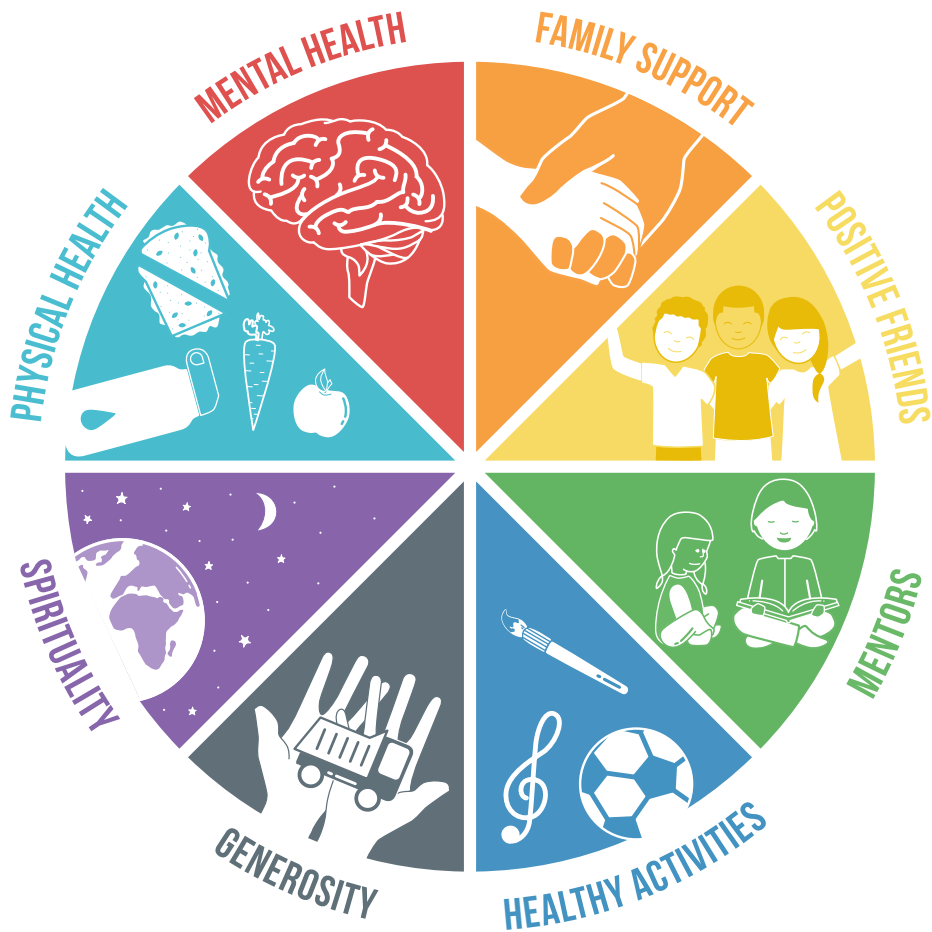
We would love your feedback on what worked well and what could improve to help Sources of Strength continue to grow.

Scan this QR code or visit www.sourcesofstrength.org/elementaryfeedback to give feedback on this lesson!





SOURCES OF STRENGTH



FOURTH GRADE CURRICULUM

UNIT 5 - GROWING IN OUR STRENGTHS

Lesson 5.3 - Solar System of Support

Lesson Spotlight

I can identify members of my Family Support who make me feel cared for, loved, and connected.

Materials

- Blank paper, one sheet per student and Instructor
- Poster paper and marker

Preparation

- Label the poster paper “Family Support”
- Read the instructions for the Family Support Solar System activity

Time

30-40 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Social Awareness

Instructor Overview

Family Support can be an incredibly protective source of Strength for many people. Conversely, the lack of Family Support can contribute to increased risk and challenges, especially during childhood. Expanding our definition and understanding of Family Support can help us increase this Strength in our lives.

Families can be complicated. Sometimes, immediate family is not necessarily a source of support; in such instances, Chosen Family and extended family can be extremely protective. In this lesson, we use the Family Support Solar System activity to help students explore the people and activities in their Family Support who help them feel cared for, loved, and connected. We are priming students to see the strength within their own families, and this activity can provide insight into students’ family lives. If something concerning arises, be sure to follow school protocol and connect with your administration and mental health team.

Opening Talking Circle (10 min)

Invite students to the Talking Circle and welcome them as they arrive. **“Who remembers back in one of our very first Sources of Strength lessons when we talked about Family Support?”** Get a show of hands.

“We learned that Family Support can come from a lot of different people and can show up in many different ways. Who here is really close with a grandparent?” Get a show of hands.

“Who feels like they have Chosen Family? People who aren’t related to you, but still feel like family?” Get a few Popcorn Shares.

“Who in your Family Support helps you if you have a problem?” Get a few Popcorn Shares.

Get a show of hands for the following questions, but do not take stories at this time.

“Who has someone in their Family Support who makes them laugh?”

“Who is close to a sibling?”

“Who is close to a parent or caregiver?”

“Who is close with extended family members like cousins, aunts, or uncles?”

“Who has a pet who is part of your Family Support?”

“Family Support can come from many people and looks different for each of us. Our families might have one parent, or grandparents, or another adult in the parenting role. Or we might have foster families. Family Support might even include a friend’s family that feels like our own. Some people in our family can make us feel more supported than others. What are some of the things the people in your Family Support do that help you feel supported?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (give hugs, make dinner, help with homework, show up to my activities, etc.).

“Take a minute and Pair Share with a partner about your Family Support. Tell your partner some of the people who make up your Family Support, as well as what you

enjoy doing together that helps you feel connected.” Give students one minute to Pair Share.

“I would love to hear about some of the people and activities you all just shared. Let’s make a list of the things you enjoy doing with your Family Support that makes you feel connected.” Write student ideas on the poster paper labeled “Family Support” (making me feel loved, asking about my day, helping with my homework, comforting me when I’m sad, laughing together, taking family trips, coming to my activities, etc.).

“This is a great list. We’ve seen how family can come from many different people and places and how our families look different. Family Support can show up in our lives in so many powerful ways. We have an art activity today to reflect on what Family Support looks like in our own lives.” Ask students to return to their desks and take out writing utensils. Pass out blank sheets of paper.

Family Support Solar System Activity (20 min)

“We are going to create our own Family Support solar systems! Together, we will follow instructions to draw our own solar system, complete with a sun, planets, moons, and shooting stars. There are many ways to draw these solar systems, so each of ours will look unique.”

Draw your own solar system along with the students as a model. Start with a sun in the middle of the paper with your name inside. Be sure to leave plenty of white space elsewhere on the paper.



“First, let’s draw a sun in the center of our paper, and then we’ll write our name inside the sun. Make sure to leave enough room for the planets, moons, and stars.” Show the class your example. Give the students a moment to draw and add their name to the sun.

EXTENSIONS

Everyday Application

- Highlight Sources of Strength concepts during events when families are invited into the school (parent/caregiver-teacher conferences, family nights, etc.).

Read Alouds

Look for opportunities to connect this lesson’s content to the suggested read aloud books below.

- ***A Family Is a Family Is a Family.*** O’Leary, S. & Leng, Q. (Illustrator). (2016). Toronto: Groundwood Books.
- ***Chicken Sunday.*** Polacco, P. (1998). New York: Paperstar.
- ***Because of Winn Dixie.*** DiCamillo, K. & Patchett, A. (Illustrator). (2020). Massachusetts: Candlewick Press.

Home Connection

- Invite families to make a list of things they like to do together as a household (game night, movie night, family dinner, going to a park, etc.), then choose one and make a plan to do it in the coming weeks.

Academic Integration

- **History/Social Studies:** Invite students to have a conversation with an older family member (sibling, parent, aunt, uncle, grandparent) about what their life was like in the fourth grade and what Strengths showed up for them. Consider sending a copy of the Sources of Strength Wheel home with students to support their conversations. Follow up with a discussion about what the students learned.

UNIT 5 - GROWING IN OUR STRENGTHS

Lesson 5.3 - Solar System of Support

“Next, we’ll draw planets around our sun and label each one with the name of the people in our life who we consider part of our Family Support. This could be siblings, parents, foster parents, cousins, grandparents, and anyone else who feels like family to us. We can put them wherever we’d like on our paper; they can be near the sun or far away. We can group certain people together, or we can have them spread across the page.” Give students several minutes to draw and label their planets.

“Now let’s draw a moon around each planet and label each one with the things we do with those people that make us feel connected, cared for, or loved. Think about little things and big things. Think about any customs, routines, or traditions we might have with them, like playing with our siblings, laughing together, celebrating a holiday, or anything else that feels meaningful. We can even look back at our Family Support anchor chart for some ideas.” Give students several minutes to draw and label their moons.

“Take a moment to look at the planets and moons in your solar system so far. What emotions and feelings do you experience when doing these activities with the people who are in your Family Support?” Give students a moment to think about the emotions and feelings they experience.

“For our last step, we’ll draw shooting stars and label them with the emotions we feel when we experience Family Support. These might be things like love, belonging, safety, joy, or connection.

“Families can bring up a lot of different emotions in us. Sometimes we might feel uncomfortable emotions when we think about family. Solar systems and families are both complicated.

“As we finish our solar systems, feel free to add anything you might have forgotten, add some color, or put in little details to make it your own.” Give the students several minutes to finish their solar systems while you move around the room and offer support as needed. Let students know when they have one minute remaining to complete their solar system.

Closing Talking Circle (10 min)

Invite students back to the Talking Circle. “Let’s all hold up our Family Support solar systems. Keep them up so everyone can get a good look. Wow, these look really great! Notice how they are all different. No two Family Support solar systems look exactly alike, just like no two families are the same. We all have unique families and the Family Support Strength looks different for each of us as well.”

- ❑ **Science:** Invite students to choose an animal that lives collectively as a family unit. Have them write a report or create a slideshow presentation highlighting various aspects of how they provide support to one another. Examples include bears, wolves, birds, lions, and penguins.

Talking Circle Prompts

- ❑ “What is your favorite meal to have with your family?”
- ❑ “What is something you’ve done in the past week with members of your Family Support?”

Music

- ❑ Ask students about music or songs they listen to or sing together as a family. Choose a few school appropriate songs and play them for the class.

Creative Expression

- ❑ Invite students to draw or write how they show up as Family Support for others in their lives.

Transitions

- ❑ As the class is dismissed at the end of the day, invite students to think of a member of their Family Support who they are thankful for or a way to show Generosity toward a member of their Family Support.

End with either a Full Circle Share where each student chooses one element of their solar system to share (a person/planet, an activity/moon, or a feeling/star), or with a Pair Share for each student to share about their solar system with a partner.



REFLECTION

The practice of self-reflection is a powerful tool to help us as adults show up for ourselves and our students in healthy ways throughout the day. Take a moment to review the Lesson Spotlight and reflect on the following questions. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or journal.

What Strength(s) did you notice in a student or your class during this lesson or over the course of this week?

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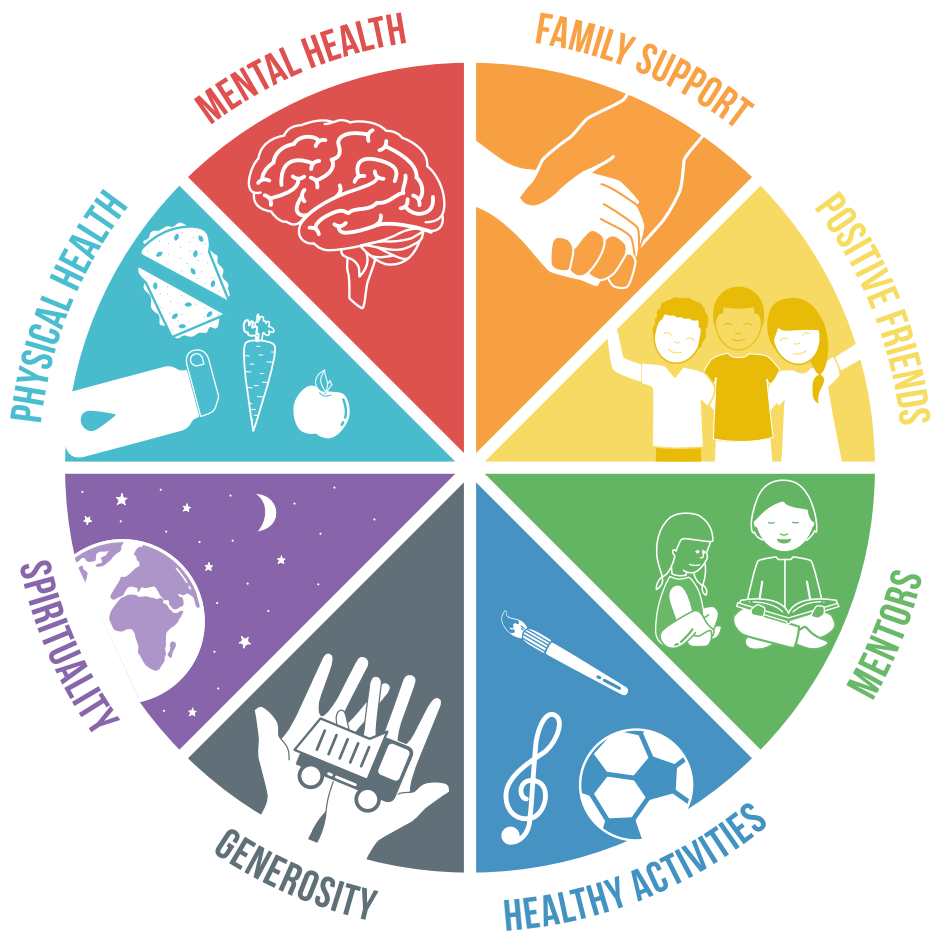
We would love your feedback on what worked well and what could improve to help Sources of Strength continue to grow.

Scan this QR code or visit www.sourcesofstrength.org/elementaryfeedback to give feedback on this lesson!





SOURCES OF STRENGTH



FIFTH GRADE CURRICULUM

UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.2 - Emotions in Motion

Lesson Spotlight

I can name and understand different levels of emotions and apply regulation strategies for different contexts.

Materials

- Regulation Bookmark worksheet, (double-sided) one per student and Instructor (page [188-189](#))*
- Writing utensils
- Coloring utensils
- Plastic cups or other objects students can grab for the Heads, Toes, Cup game, one per pair
- Calming music and speaker (optional)
- Fill-In-The-Blank Story activity (supplemental, page [190-192](#))*

*All worksheets, handouts, and visuals can be found at sourcesofstrength.org/instructor-resources/

Preparation

- Print copies of the Regulation Bookmark worksheet
- Fold the Regulation Bookmarks so Stops 1 and 2 are on the outside, **OR** factor a couple of minutes into the lesson for students to fold their own

Time

30-40 minutes

SEL Focus

Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making

Instructor Overview

This lesson builds on the concept of emotional regulation by focusing on expanding emotional literacy and identifying various regulation strategies. The Instructor will verbally lead the class through a brief version of the Regulation Railroad, allowing students to pause, check in with their BrainTrees, and learn a new regulation strategy. Repetition of emotional regulation skills is critical for skill development. Beginning the class this way helps students activate their frontal lobes, making it easier for them to engage with the lesson's content.

Students will then use the Regulation Bookmark worksheet to explore each stop of the Regulation Railroad in more depth. This worksheet will be personalized for use beyond this lesson. The importance of naming the size of various emotions is highlighted throughout the lesson, whether that is through using different words (e.g. "annoyed" versus "furious") or simply describing the size of the emotion (e.g. "a little bit angry" versus "very angry"). Distinguishing between different emotions and the size of those emotions is important because it helps us choose a regulation strategy for specific situations. In this lesson, students will create a list of regulation strategies that could work for them, both in and out of school.

Head, Toes, Cup is an energizing game that allows students to use their Regulation Bookmark worksheets to practice the stops of the Regulation Railroad. At Stop 4, students will personalize their bookmarks by coloring the many images and designs as a calming regulatory strategy.

A supplemental fill-in-the-blank story activity is included at the end of this lesson to support emotional literacy. Students can use their personalized Regulation Bookmark worksheets to help create the story by adding emotions and regulation strategies.

Opening Talking Circle (5 min)

Invite students to the Talking Circle and welcome them as they arrive. "In our last Sources of Strength lesson, we learned about noticing when we experience big or multiple emotions and how to use regulation strategies to find balance. Regulating our emotions doesn't mean completely getting rid of them. Instead, it means allowing ourselves to experience the emotions and

then bringing them back into balance by listening to our BrainTree.

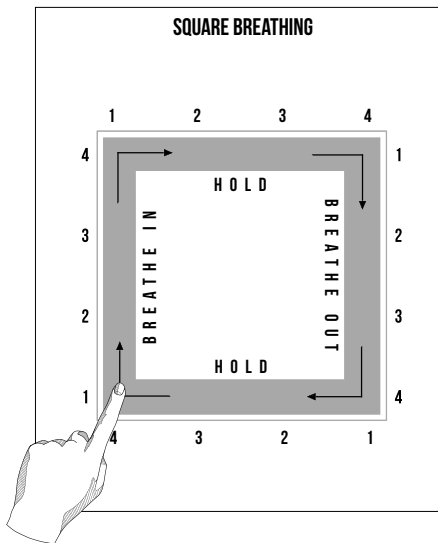
"Right now, we're transitioning into our Sources of Strength lesson. Transitions are moments of change, and sometimes they can feel dysregulating. Let's quickly check in and see how we feel in this transition. Take a moment and notice what you feel in your body." Pause.

UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.2 - Emotions in Motion

“What emotions do you feel right now? And how big are those emotions?” Pause. “Now that we’ve taken a moment to notice how we’re feeling, it’s time to choose a regulation strategy. Today, as we prepare for our lesson, let’s try a calming regulation strategy called Square Breathing.”

See the model below for a visual aid.



“To do Square Breathing, we will draw a big square in the air in front of us or on our lap to help guide our breathing. I will count out loud to four several times. Each time I count, we will draw another side of the square.” Model the following actions for students.

“As I count to four, slowly breathe in and draw one side of the square. 1...2...3...4....”

“Now, hold your breath as you draw the next side of the square. 1...2...3...4....”

“Now, slowly breathe out as you draw the third side of the square. 1...2...3...4....”

“Now, hold your breath as you draw the last side of the square. 1...2...3...4... Repeat the above directions a couple of times, ending on a final exhale.”

“Thank you for joining me in the Square Breathing exercise. We all just took a trip on the Regulation Railroad and checked in with what our BrainTree is communicating to us. Square Breathing is one example of a quick, simple strategy we may choose at Stop 4 of the Regulation Railroad. We can use this tool anytime

to help us check in with each part of our BrainTree when we notice dysregulation or when our emotions are out of balance.”

Giant Bookmark Activity (15 min)

REGULATION BOOKMARK

STOPS 2-3

STOP 1
Checking in with my Roots...
WHAT DO I NOTICE IN MY BODY?

Checking in with my Trunk...
WHAT EMOTIONS AM I FEELING AND HOW BIG ARE THEY?

Checking in with my Branches and Leaves...
WHAT CAN I DO TO REGULATE?

Trusted Adults I can go to at school when I feel big emotions:

Trusted Adults I can go to outside of school when I feel big emotions:

DID THE REGULATION STRATEGY HELP?

LESSON 3.2: REGULATION BOOKMARK WORKSHEET

“To help us remember the stops of the Regulation Railroad, we will each create our own giant bookmarks.” Pass out the Regulation Bookmark worksheets and writing utensils. If you have not pre-folded the bookmarks, invite students to do so now, folding along the dotted line so that Stops 1 and 2 are on the outside.

“Remember, when we’re feeling big emotions, the first step is checking in with the Roots of our BrainTrees, or our brainstems, to notice what we feel in our bodies.” Reference Stop 1 on the Regulation Bookmark worksheet.

“We’ll have the chance later to color in and decorate these figures to look like ourselves, but for now, let’s think about how our brainstems may communicate with us.”

“For example, has anyone ever noticed a funny feeling in their stomach when nervous or anxious?” Get a show of hands.

UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.2 - Emotions in Motion

“Has anyone ever gasped or taken a big breath of air when feeling surprised or amazed?” Model a surprised gasp and get a show of hands.

“When we pause to listen to our Roots, we might notice our breathing. Is it slow or fast? Did we take a quick gasp of air? That’s our brainstems giving us important information about how we are doing.

“After we’ve paused to notice what’s happening in our bodies, we can move up to the Trunks of our BrainTree, or our limbic system, to name our emotions and how big they are. In our last lesson, we learned that emotions are like waves—no matter how big those waves feel, they always come and go.”

Reference Stops 2 and 3 on the Regulation Bookmark worksheet. “That’s why stops 2 and 3 on the Regulation Railroad are so important. This is where we name the emotions we’re feeling and identify how big those emotions are. If we can name what we’re experiencing, it’s much easier to get the help we need to bring that wave of emotion back to a size that feels more balanced. Then, we can use our frontal lobe to choose a regulation strategy or ask for help.

“You’ll see on your bookmark that Stops 2 and 3 are combined. This is so we can try to come up with words that name the emotion we’re feeling based on how big it is. For example, if I’m feeling a low level of anger, I could call that ‘annoyed’ or ‘irritated.’” Direct students’ attention to these words on the Regulation Bookmark worksheet.

“We may also experience a high level of anger sometimes. Looking at this list or coming up with your own, can we get some ideas for words that mean a high level of anger?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (furious, rage, irate, etc.).

Remind students they can fill in the blank spaces with words that aren’t already listed. “If I can’t think of a specific word, I could also say, ‘I feel really angry,’ or ‘I feel a little angry. This can also help me decide what type of regulation strategy I need, depending on how big the emotion feels.

“Let’s unfold our bookmarks, where we can use the Branches and Leaves of our BrainTree, or our frontal lobe, to choose Strengths and strategies that could help us regulate.” Unfold your bookmark and turn it over, inviting students to do the same.

“When you unfold your bookmarks, you’ll see that Stop 4 takes up the whole page. There are ideas for regulation strategies all around the border of the page. Some of these drawings may be strategies that work for you, and some may not. That’s OK. They are simply there to give you ideas. For example, there is a labyrinth, or maze, at the top of the page.” Reference the finger Labyrinth.



“For some people, tracing their finger or a pencil through a maze like this can be a calming strategy to help balance big emotions.” Briefly model for the students.

“There’s also space for you to write down different ideas for calming and energizing regulation strategies that help you at school and out of school. Sometimes, when we feel big emotions, it might help to do something energizing, like playing a Sources of Strength game or listening to fast or upbeat music. At other times, we might need something more calming, like taking deep breaths or coloring a picture. There’s also space to write down the names of Trusted Adults in our lives, both in and out of school, who we know we can go to when we feel big emotions.”

INSTRUCTOR NOTE:

As you lead students through the next section of adding specific regulation strategies to their Regulation Bookmark worksheet, the goal is to support them in identifying strategies that work for them. Below are examples of strategies for your reference. However, these may vary depending on the opportunities and limitations in your specific school or class context.

In-school regulation strategies will be different depending on your school setting, but may include:

CALMING	ENERGIZING	TRUSTED ADULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breathing exercises Stretching Taking a sip of water Talking to friends or adults at the school Coloring Reading Journaling Body scans Thankfulness practice Mindfulness activities Playing with a fidget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Activities at recess, such as games, sports, movement, laughing with friends, etc. Quick movement exercises such as jumping jacks, running in place, etc. Walking to get a drink of water or going to the restroom Playing with a fidget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers School Counselor Social Worker Paraprofessional Front office staff Cafeteria staff Janitorial staff School Nurse Librarian School sports coach Bus drivers

Out-of-school regulation strategies will be different depending on students' contexts but may include:

CALMING	ENERGIZING	TRUSTED ADULTS
<p>All of the calming strategies listed for in school and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening to calming music Playing calming games, including board games, video games, or card games, etc. Spending time outside/in nature Spending time with animals/pets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Activities, like playing a musical instrument or sports, singing, acting, dancing, taking walks, horseback riding, playing energizing games, etc. Quick movement exercises such as jumping jacks, running in place, etc. Taking pets on walks Listening to upbeat music 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Support members (immediate, extended, and/or Chosen Family) Mentors, like sports coaches, music teachers, dance teachers, drama teachers, neighbors, religious/spiritual leaders, etc. Mental health professionals

“Now we’ll create our own personalized list of regulation strategies that work for us or that we want to try. Let’s start with ideas for calming regulation strategies we can use here at school.” Reference this question under Stop 4 on the left side of the worksheet.

“When big emotions come up at school, what are some of the activities that help you regulate?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (see the Instructor Note above for examples).

“Those are great ideas! I invite you all to write down a few calming strategies that could work for you during the school day.” Give students a couple of minutes to write.

“Something that feels calming for one person may feel energizing for another, and that’s OK. Let’s brainstorm some ideas for energizing regulation strategies that can be done at school. For example, a game at recess or a small brain break during class might help us refocus.

UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.2 - Emotions in Motion

“What ideas do you have?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (see the Instructor Note on page [65](#) for examples).

“Let’s take a moment to write down a few energizing strategies that could work for us during the school day.” Reference this question under Stop 4 on the bookmark. Give students a couple of minutes to write.

“Sometimes, when we’re feeling big emotions, what feels most helpful is talking to someone who can help. Let’s think about the adults at school we can go to when we feel big emotions. Remember, these people might be different for each of us, and that’s OK. Would anyone like to share who an adult is at school they know they can go to when they feel big emotions?” Get five to six Popcorn Shares (see the Instructor Note on page [65](#) for examples) and mention the school’s mental health professionals if students do not.

After students have shared, give them a couple of minutes to write down one or more names in this section of their bookmark. If you notice any students struggling to name someone, support them by prompting them to think of any adults at the school they may want to get to know better.

“Now, there are some regulation strategies we might not be able to do at school, but that we can do outside of school. For example, some people like spending time with their pets as a regulation strategy when big emotions come up. However, since we don’t have our pets with us at school, that’s an example of a strategy some of you might choose for yourself when you’re not at school.”

“Let’s start by thinking about what calming activities could help us regulate outside of school. Some of these may be the same strategies we use in school, but some probably look different. Would anyone like to share any ideas?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (see the Instructor Note on page [65](#) for examples).

“Thanks for sharing those ideas! Looking at the images on the bookmark and thinking about what works for you, I invite you all to take a moment to write down a few calming strategies that could help you with big emotions outside of school.” Give students a few minutes to write.

“Now, think about what energizing strategies or activities could help us regulate outside of school. Who would like to share an idea?” Get a few Popcorn Shares (see the Instructor Note on page [65](#) for examples).

“Thank you for sharing your energizing strategy ideas to use outside of school. Let’s add our ideas to our bookmarks now.” Allow time for completing this section of the worksheet.

“Trusted Adults can be helpful people to talk to outside of school as well. They could be members of our Family Support, like an uncle or aunt, or the parents of our best friends. They could also be a Mentor who helps you with a Healthy Activity, like a music or dance teacher, or sports coach. Or they could be a mental health professional, like a counselor or therapist. Would anyone like to share who a Trusted Adult is for them outside of school?” Get some Popcorn Shares (see the Instructor Note on page [65](#) for examples), then give students a few moments to jot down one or two Trusted Adults who they can go to outside of school.

If any students struggle to come up with Trusted Adults, support them by prompting them to think of any adults outside of the school they may want to get to know better. If a student is unable to name a Trusted Adult outside of school, follow up with the appropriate staff at your school to help support this student.

“Great work! We now have our own list of Strengths and strategies that can help us when feeling big emotions, whether at school or somewhere else. Remember, when we regulate our emotions, we’re not trying to get rid of them. We’re simply trying to get those emotions back to a size that feels OK so we can balance our BrainTrees and use our Branches and Leaves to decide what to do next. Whenever we try a regulation strategy, it’s always a good idea to pause and ask, ‘Did it help?’” Reference this question at the bottom of the worksheet.

“If we find that our emotions feel more balanced, that’s great! We can then make a decision about what to do next. It’s also normal to find that our emotions actually still feel big. If that’s the case, we can always go back through the stops on the Regulation Railroad and try a different strategy, or it might be a good time to ask for help.”

ADAPTATION

The following game is meant to be energizing and provide students with an authentic regulation opportunity afterward. If you would like to add a more competitive aspect, it can be played so that students who don't get the cup are "out" until only two students are left and, eventually, one winner.

Head, Toes, Cup Game (5 min)

"We've been sitting and using our Branches and Leaves for a while, so let's stand up for a game to get some new energy in the room! This game is called Head, Toes, Cup."

INSTRUCTOR NOTE

This game can be played with any object the students can grab, such as a marker, paper ball, plastic cup, etc. If you have an odd number of students, groups of three are OK.

ACCOMMODATION

The cup can be placed on a chair or desk, rather than the floor, to support different levels of mobility.

Ask for two volunteers to help demonstrate the game. Have them face each other and place the cup between them on the floor so both can reach it.

"I am going to shout out different parts of the body, and when I do, you need to use both hands to touch that part of your body. For example, if I say 'KNEES!' you will touch your knees. If I say 'FEET!' you will touch both feet. When I say 'CUP!' your job is to try to grab the cup before your partner does."

Model one round with the volunteers:

"Are you ready? HEAD...KNEES...SHOULDERS...CUP!" Thank the volunteers for their help demonstrating the game.

"Now, everyone find a partner, and I'll give each pair a cup. Once you have your cup, find an open space in the classroom and set it on the floor between you and your partner." Support students in finding partners. If there is an odd number, a group of three is OK. Pass out one cup to each pair.

"Everyone, get ready! FOREHEAD...BIG TOE...KNEES...CHIN...CUP!"



EXTENSIONS

Everyday Application

- When the class may be dysregulated (moments of transition, before tests, after a safety drill, etc.), consider using the Regulation Railroad to regulate your emotions out loud, inviting the class to join you.

Read Alouds

Look for opportunities to connect this lesson's content to the suggested read aloud book below:

- The Grand Hotel of Feelings*. Brankovic, L. (2023). London: Cicada Books.

Home Connection

- Send copies of the Regulation Bookmark worksheet home with students and encourage households to fill out the regulation strategies together.

Academic Integration

- Writing:** Search the internet for a feelings wheel and invite students to utilize this and try new words when describing different levels of emotions.
- Language Arts:** Pause stories and encourage students to use their Regulation Bookmarks or a feelings wheel to identify different words to describe characters' emotions.
- Encourage students to think about what regulation strategies might work for characters given their circumstances, even if they are different from the students'. For example, if a character is in outer space, encourage students to be playful in imagining how that character might regulate on the moon.

UNIT 3 - EMOTIONAL REGULATION

Lesson 3.2 - Emotions in Motion

“Well done! Now, if you have a cup, hold it up high and look for someone who is not holding a cup to be your next partner. If you do not have a cup, look for someone with a cup to be your next partner.” Play several rounds, allowing for noise and goofiness. When the game ends, collect the cups and invite students back into the Talking Circle and ensure they have their Regulation Bookmark worksheets.

Regulation Activity - Coloring (5 min)

“That was an energizing game! Using our bookmarks as a guide, I invite you to check in with your Roots and notice any sensations in your body. Maybe you notice your heart beating faster than usual or your breath going in and out more quickly. If it helps, you can point to that part of the body on your bookmark.” Pause.

“Now, checking in with your Trunk, what emotions are you feeling, and how big are they? Maybe you feel really happy or joyful that we got to play a game. Maybe you’re feeling a little bit sad or disappointed that you did not win. Whatever emotions you’re noticing are normal. Looking at Stops 2 and 3 on our bookmarks may help.” Pause.

“As we use our Branches and Leaves to help bring our emotions to a balanced level, let’s try another regulation strategy we can do at school.

“In a moment, I’ll invite you to spend some time coloring and decorating your bookmarks. There are many ways you could do this. You might choose to add color to some of the strategies around Stop 4. If you want, you could add details to the figure in Stop 1 to make it look like you, like adding your hair or favorite clothes.” Consider playing some calming music and give students the rest of the class time to color their Regulation Bookmarks.

Close the lesson by saying, “You just created your own Regulation Railroad that you can use anytime you need, either in or out of school.”

Supplemental Activity: Fill-In-The-Blank Story

For a fun, silly activity for students to practice their emotional vocabulary, see pages [190-192](#).

Talking Circle Prompts

- “Share one person or strategy that helps you regulate big emotions.”
- “What’s a regulation strategy you used outside of school in the last week?”
- “What’s a new regulation strategy you’d like to try at school?”

Mindfulness

- Use masking tape to create a labyrinth on the floor of the classroom or other common space in the school to use as a mindful walking activity.

Creative Expression

- Complete the supplemental fill-in-the-blank story activity with students. Then, encourage them to create a piece of work based on the completed story, such as drawing the pet or writing about what happens next in the story.

Transitions

- As school transitions such as summer or winter break approach, encourage students to review their Strengths Wheel with particular consideration for Strengths they can turn to outside of the school setting.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK STORY

This fill-in-the-blank story provides students with a fun, light-hearted opportunity to practice identifying sensations associated with different emotions, increase their emotional vocabulary, and identify different types of emotional regulation strategies.

While some of the prompts are more straightforward, such as "number" or "color," others will prompt students to think of a word for an emotion or a regulation strategy. When sharing these prompts, invite students to look at their Regulation Bookmarks for ideas. For example, when the prompt calls for "emotion: low level of anger," ask students to look at Step 3 on their Regulation Bookmarks and direct them towards the "anger" category, where they can choose words like "frustrated" or "irritated." While a goal of this lesson is to increase students' emotional vocabulary, it is more important that students can distinguish between different levels of emotion. Therefore, you may want to remind students, especially those who may be English language learners or who may struggle with learning new vocabulary that phrases like "a little angry" or "sort of mad" are also OK.

Please note that with some of the more involved prompts, you may have to adjust the grammar to provide appropriate context within the story. For example, in the sentence "I'm noticing something you notice in your body when you feel disgust," a student may say, "My stomach gets upset when I feel disgust." In that case, you could fill in the blank in the following way, "I'm noticing my stomach is upset..." Consider doing this activity in two parts first, gather student responses, and then give yourself enough time to fill in every blank with the proper grammar. At a later time, read the story to the students.

CLASS PET CHAOS!

Once upon a time, long ago, in a land not so very far away, there was a school called _____.

One day, the fifth graders were finishing their lunch and getting ready for recess, when their teacher, Mr. T, told them he had a surprise. He left the room, and when he returned, he was holding a _____ in his arms.

"Everyone, this is _____, our new class pet!" Mr. T announced.

_____ wasn't like any _____ the students had ever seen before. She was mostly _____ with _____ stripes. She was _____ feet tall, and her/his bright _____ eyes were the size of _____.

Mr. T told them s/he only ate _____ and only drank _____.

Her/his teeth were sharp and _____ inches long, but s/he was very gentle and sweet.

Mr. T announced that each day during recess, two different students would help take care of _____ and Alicia and Paul would be the first two helpers that day. Once the other students had gone out to recess, Mr. T told Paul and Alicia, "I know this is a surprise, and it's OK if you're feeling big emotions. Let's check in on the Regulation Railroad to see if there's anything we can do to make sure our emotions are balanced before we start to take care of _____." Let's start at Stop 1 by checking in with what we notice in our bodies."

LESSON 3.2: FILL-IN-THE-BLANK STORY PAGE 1 OF 3

The class erupted in shouts of "EWWW!" but helped Mr. T get cleaning supplies, and the mess was gone in a few minutes.

LESSON 3.2: FILL-IN-THE-BLANK STORY PAGE 2 OF 3

_____ recess. She checked in at Stop 1 _____ and _____ He knew that _____ were so big, so he took a _____

_____ some big emotions after all of that! _____ with the Roots of your Brain/fries _____ and I'm also noticing _____ Trunks at Stops 2 and 3, and name _____ it's at a pretty high level, so I'd say healthy. I'm still noticing a little bit _____ you want to be the one to take _____ Alicia was very grateful for _____ When Alicia returned, _____ it was over.

_____ ted each student, then began _____ s/he came to a stop at the front _____ on the floor. Then, as if nothing _____ and begged to be petted—clearly _____ students colored with Mr. T, while _____ of students, including Paul, chose _____ that day, decided that when she _____ Meantime _____ was _____ couldn't wait for tomorrow.

LESSON 3.2: FILL-IN-THE-BLANK STORY PAGE 3 OF 3

REFLECTION

The practice of self-reflection is a powerful tool to help us as adults show up for ourselves and our students in healthy ways throughout the day. Take a moment to review the Lesson Spotlight and reflect on the following questions. We encourage you to capture your reflections in a notebook or journal.

What Strength(s) did you notice in a student or your class during this lesson or over the course of this week?

What is something you noticed or learned about yourself as it pertains to this lesson?

What is a story or an experience from this lesson that you would like to capture or remember?

We would love your feedback on what worked well and what could improve to help Sources of Strength continue to grow.

Scan this QR code or visit www.sourcesofstrength.org/elementaryfeedback to give feedback on this lesson!

