



## 3–5 Years

### Self-Regulation: Self-Control

**WHEN INTRODUCED AND EMPHASIZED:** Weeks 1–3 and 5–7

#### BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Self-Control of Behaviors
- Self-Control of Emotions
- Self-Control of Thoughts

## OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

### Self-Control of Behaviors

How does the child demonstrate self-control of his/her behaviors as he/she:

- uses an appropriate volume when speaking (any free play period after Week 2, Day 1)?
- follows your room's circle time rules (any group activity after Week 2, Day 2)?
- listens and repeats what he/she heard through the craft tube (Week 3, Day 1 center activity)?

### Self-Control of Emotions

How does the child demonstrate self-control of emotions as he/she:

- responds calmly to having a non-preferred item offered at a meal (any mealtime after Week 5, Day 1)?
- responds to an upsetting event (any free play period after Week 5, Day 1)?
- stays calm while waiting for a turn to pop bubbles or play a musical instrument (Week 5, Day 2 group activity)?

### Self-Control of Thoughts

How does the child demonstrate self-control of his/her thoughts as he/she:

- waits for his/her turn (Week 6, Day 1 center activity)?
- waits patiently to take a bite of a snack (Week 7, Day 1 group activity)?
- plays *I Spy* while waiting (any transition after Week 7, Day 2)?



## FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

### Reinforce

*The following activities are designed to support the ongoing development of self-control skills of behavior, emotions, and thoughts.*

#### Self-Control of Behaviors

- Invite children to take turns being a “Self-Control Captain” during times of waiting, such as waiting to wash hands, go outside/inside, waiting to eat. Invite the “Captain” to suggest ways of waiting patiently, such as humming or marching in place.
- Provide a timer and invite children to see how long they can wait for highly desirable items. Provide a pencil and paper and help children record how long they waited.

#### Self-Control of Emotions

- Invite children to identify a person whose facial expression on the Our Feelings poster suggests that some type of activity might be helpful, such as doing something else when we are sad or getting calm when we are excited. Encourage children to suggest things the pictured child might do.
- Invite children to describe a time they felt sad or angry or frustrated, and to describe what they did to change in order to feel better.

#### Self-Control of Thoughts

- Invite children to describe several ways we can help our minds get quiet.
- Read and discuss a book about waiting, such as *Waiting Is Not Easy* by Mo Willems.

### Reintroduce

*The following activities are designed to support the development of self-control skills of behavior, emotions, and thoughts among children who find it challenging to use self-control. These activities are also appropriate for all children.*

#### Self-Control of Behaviors

- Use the Week 2, Day 1 group activity to remind children of classroom rules and expectations for voice volume. Ask children what might happen if the rules are not followed.
- Invite children to all speak at the same time. Ask children if they could hear anyone’s words clearly. Remind children of, and reasons for, circle time rules (Week 2, Day 2).



## Self-Control of Emotions

- Remind children that part of waiting patiently is not getting upset or complaining. (This is found in the Week 6, Day 1 activity.) Challenge children to see how long they can go without complaining or getting upset.
- Create an area in your room for quiet activities only. Provide children with squeeze balls, pillows, yoga mats and *The ABCs of Yoga for Kids* by Teresa Power. Describe ways children can use the area to calm down.

## Self-Control of Thoughts

- Remind children of the meaning of self-control (Week 5, Day 1). Repeat the Week 5, Day 2 group activity (playing with bubbles). This time, suggest children pop bubbles at the beginning of the activity for one minute. Then encourage children to sit crisscross applesauce with their hands on their knees and practice watching bubbles—but not popping bubbles. Children may wish to place their hands under their legs or bottom to resist the urge to pop a bubble.
- Remind children that they can hum or play a game, such as *I Spy*, to help with waiting for food to be served at a mealtime.
- Read *Mouse Was Mad* by Linda Urban and Henry Cole. Invite children to stand as still as Mouse. Encourage discussion with questions, such as “What did you think about as you stood as still as Mouse?” and “Did your thoughts go away like Mouse’s thoughts went away when he stood perfectly still?”