

May 2024
3rd EDITION



HSC Northern Health
and Social Care Trust

RISE Higher

RISE NI (NHSCT) KS2 NEWSLETTER

Welcome back! This is the third edition of the RISE NI NHSCT Key Stage 2 newsletter! We welcome you back and hope you enjoyed our last edition of this newsletter.

This newsletter aims to bring some insight into how to support children who are in Key Stage 2 (Primary 5, 6 and 7)!

This edition of RISE Higher will focus on what you as parents/carers/families can do to promote talking about emotions, encouraging sensory input to aid regulation (our ability to be calm, focused and ready for action) and to explore the link between Speech, Language and Communication needs (SLCN) and Social, Emotional Well-being (SEWB). We hope you find some great tips, strategies and advice to try at home with your children!

But first....

A REMINDER OF WHAT WE DO...

RISE NI stands for the Regional Integrated Support for Education (RISE) NI. We work in mainstream primary schools in the Northern Health & Social Care Trust (NHSCT) area to support staff and children from Preschool to Key Stage 1 in the following areas:

Social,
Emotional
and/or
Behavioural

Speech,
Language
and
Communication

Sensory
Processing,
Fine Motor and
Visual
Perception

RISE NI has received some additional funding to pilot supports into Key Stage 2 (Years 5, 6 & 7). The focus of these supports is on children's social, emotional and well-being (SEWB) needs.



FOR PARENTS/CARERS...

The KS2 RISE NI Parent Website can be accessed as follows:

<https://view.pagetiger.com/RISENI/parents>

On the website you'll find lots of useful information, leaflets, video demonstrations and training opportunities. Please check it out...especially the Key Stage 2 training, advice and resources!

Take time to go through this using the QR or link provided!



This edition of the RISE Higher Newsletter consists of information on:

- Talking and dealing with emotions and feelings
- Breathing techniques
- The importance of sensory input to aid emotional wellbeing and sensory integration.
- The link between Speech, Language and Communication needs (SLCN) and Social, Emotional Well-being (SEWB).

What to expect...



MENTAL HEALTH IN CHILDREN STATISTICS WITHIN NI

“Rates of anxiety and depression are around 25% higher in the child and youth population in NI in comparison to other UK nations”

“1 in 8 children and young people in Northern Ireland experience emotional difficulties, 1 in 10 conduct problems, and 1 in 7 problems with hyperactivity. 1 in 8 children and young people meet the diagnostic criteria for common mood and anxiety disorders”. This indicates the need for SEWB support for children across Northern Ireland.

The Youth Wellbeing Survey was commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board

The survey and report was compiled by Ulster University, Queen's University Belfast, and the Mental Health Foundation.

TALKING ABOUT OUR FEELINGS

Label feelings and emotions in the moment by using ‘I wonder...’ statements to help develop your child’s knowledge of the labels used, for example: ‘I wonder if you’re feeling let down?’.

Build your body awareness - recongise body cues e.g. ‘What does sadness feel like in our bodies?’ or ‘If your heart is beating fast, perhaps you are worried?’

How strong is your feeling? - you can draw out slopes or scales to talk about the intensity of the feeling.

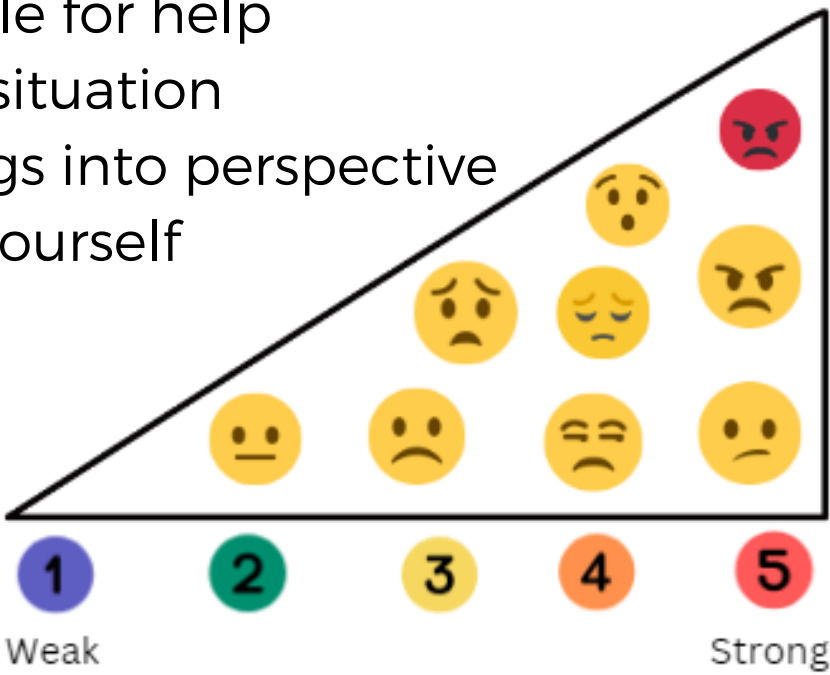
Being able to label and discuss emotions and feelings is step one, but as children get older it is essential they are able to deal with and manage some of their own emotions.

DEALING WITH OUR EMOTIONS

Promoting positive self-regulation is important in supporting children to deal with emotions. As adults we should model to our children e.g. “I feel a bit frustrated, I am going to take 5 minutes to myself”.

A few positive self-regulatory strategies that can be used/suggested are:

- Asking people for help
- Leaving the situation
- Putting things into perspective
- Distracting yourself



Using our 5 senses can help to ground ourselves and bring us back to a calm and regulated state. Try this with your child.

Using our 5 Senses

5

Things you can see

4

Things you can hear

3

Things you can feel

2

Things you can smell

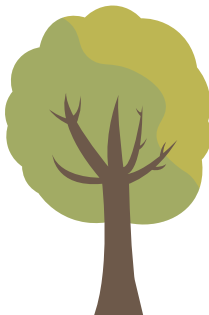
1

Thing you can taste

Other ways to help with regulating emotions...

Encourage your child to...

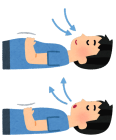
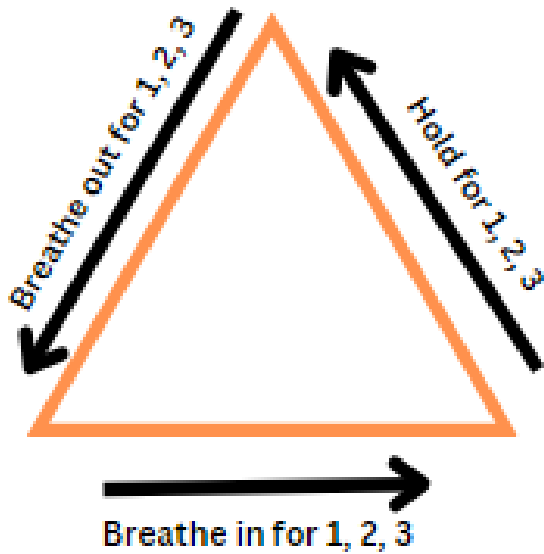
1. Have a drink of water
2. Get outside and be active - go for a walk or run
3. Wrap themselves in a blanket and read a book
4. Listen to music
5. Take time in a quiet corner
6. Practise breathing techniques
7. Do some yoga or stretches
8. Slowly count to 10
9. Say positive statements to ourselves
10. Get help from some friends or family



BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Snake Breathing - Sit upright, take a deep breath through your nose and then as you exhale make a hissing sound like a snake - do this several times.

Triangle Breathing - Using your finger in the air or by tracing a drawing of a triangle, take a deep breath in for 3 counts, then hold for three counts and then exhale for three counts - repeat this several times.



“Breath is the power behind all things. I breathe in and know that good things will happen”

Tao Porchon-Lynch



THE IMPORTANCE OF SENSORY INPUT FOR ENCOURAGING SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

All children benefit from strong input to their brain to help them to either be calmer & more settled, or to be more awake (alert) at any given time. To achieve this, sensory input can be provided via alerting, organising & calming activities.

Poorer levels of sensory regulation have been found to negatively impact on emotional well-being & life satisfaction.

Children who struggle to remain regulated in the classroom environment often become overwhelmed, with feelings of anxiety and sadness reported. They can also struggle to engage in appropriate behaviours.

To promote sensory input at school, activities can be built into the school day first thing in the morning, after break or after lunch (prior to table-based activities requiring prolonged attention & concentration).

To promote sensory input at home, alerting & organising activities can be completed before school if your child struggles to get going in the morning. Additionally, completing alerting -> organising -> calming sensory input after the school day, can help your child to remain regulated.

ALERTING – Alerting vestibular activities are movement and balance based activities, which often include jumping, spinning, running & climbing. These activities are particularly beneficial to children who frequently seek movement input, or for children who need to become more awake/alert.

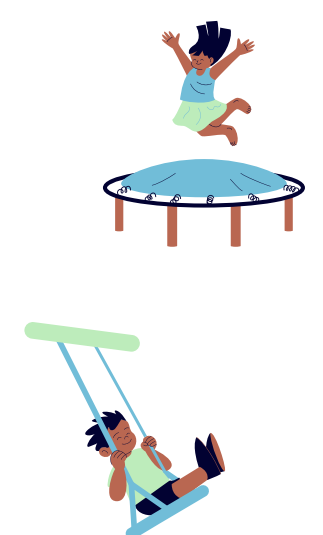
INDOORS:

- Spins on a computer chair
- Animal walks (e.g. frog leaps, bunny hops)
- Bouncing on an exercise ball
- Gymnastics, somersaults, wobble disks & stepping stones for balance training



OUTDOORS:

- Trampoline bounces
- Log rolling in the grass
- Speedy hula hooping
- Riding a swing
- Skipping rope jumps



ORGANISING- organising activities often contain a sequence to remember, or a 'heavy work' component such as pushing & pulling. Heavy work activities can add deep pressure through our muscles & joints to help us feel calm & relaxed.

INDOORS:

- Commando crawling
- Obstacle courses
- Pulling self along on a scooterboard
- Heavy household chores (moving bin bags/ laundry basket/ vacuuming the floor)
- Resistance activity such as swimming



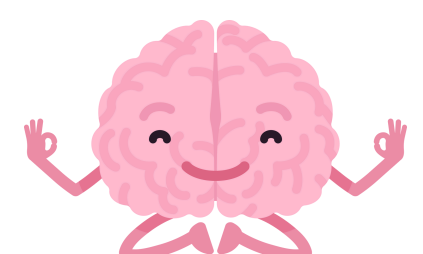
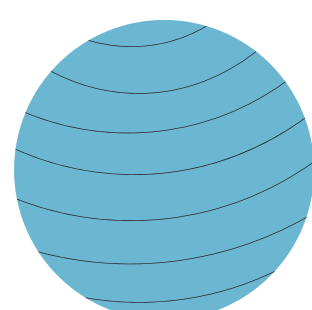
OUTDOORS:

- Wheelbarrow walking in the grass
- Help wash a car at home
- Dig, rake, shovel (weeds/ soil/ snow) in the garden
- Hang on monkey bars in the park



CALMING – This input can help to prevent us from getting overstimulated by sensory input. It is best to try these activities after busy or energetic periods:

- Complete kids yoga poses (themed videos with example poses are on YouTube)
- Give a self-massage to head and arms
- Tight self squeezes & bear hugs
- Get the child to lay on the floor & roll an exercise ball up & down their body, focusing on applying their preferred amount of pressure
- Get the child to lay under a blanket, with dimmed lighting & listen to a relaxation script or gentle music in the background



TIPS FOR SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS (SLCN) IN RELATION TO SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL WELLBEING (SEWB)

The facts ...

“Children with speech and language challenges have a much higher risk of mental health problems. Research tells us that:

- 81% of children with emotional and behavioural disorders have significant language difficulties, often unidentified.
- Between 40% and 54% of children with spoken language difficulties have been found to have behaviour problems.
- In addition to the above, support for mental health is usually in the form of “talking therapies” which are very difficult for children who have speech and language challenges to access. “



Speech and Language UK (2024)

What does the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) say about SLCN and SEWB?

Children and young people with SEWB who have unidentified and or unmet SLCN are more likely to experience:

- Peer rejection (SLCN can inhibit the development of positive relationships and friendships)
- Frustration and misunderstandings, resulting from difficulties in expressing their views and perspectives clearly, or in explaining or constructing clear narratives; problems with emotional literacy, resilience, and health and wellbeing (including mental health);
- Poorer overall educational attainment; challenging behaviour, which can result in exclusion from school or involvement in the criminal justice system; and difficulties accessing and benefiting from behavioural and mental health interventions.



RCSLT (2022)

Tips on how to support SLCN with SEWB in mind...

- Use simple and short sentences/instructions
- Ask your child to repeat back the information you have provided them with
- Use direct statements such as ‘walk’ in instead of ‘don’t run’
- Support spoken language with a clue e.g. hand signal, visual or object
- Pause - when you provide information or an instruction. Give your child 10 seconds to process the information
- If you ask a question and do not get an appropriate response, always follow up your question with the answer

Signs which may indicate your child has an underlying SLCN:

- Difficulty with or reluctance to complete school work
- Taking longer than expected to process information
- Misunderstanding jokes, idioms or metaphors
- Difficulty understanding language or following instructions
- Lack of or limited social skills
- Difficulty initiating conversations
- Difficulty retelling a story or narrative
- Difficulty forming sentences
- Word retrieval issues



For further support and information please access the RISE NI Parent Website

<https://view.pagetiger.com/RISENI/parents>

✉ EMAIL US:

If you have any comments on the content of this newsletter or indeed any queries, please send an email to us at riseni.nhsct@northerntrust.hscni.net