

Hi! I'm Cloud!



At times, I can be unpredictable. Some days, I'm happy and other days, I am either mad or sad. Basically, I'm moody. BUT I'm working on controlling my emotions.

If you know a child who's a bit like me, here are some helpful Tools from the *Kimochis® Educator's Tool Kit: Early Childhood Edition* to help with **self-regulation**.

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Lesson 3: Cloud Calms Downs Mad Feelings

Objective: Children will use a calm-down strategy when feeling mad.

Character Principle: Be Resilient

SEL Competency: Self-Management

Vocabulary: Calm-down breath

Materials: Cloud with Mad Feeling tucked in pouch

1. Remind children that Cloud is happy and sad. Say, “*He can get mad too.*” Turn his head.
2. Pull a name stick. Child pulls Mad feeling pillow from his pouch. Show Cloud and the Mad pillow.
 - Ask, “*What is Cloud feeling? Stand up if you have ever felt mad.*” (Children stay standing.)
 - Say, “*Cloud feels mad when someone takes his toy.*”
 - “*Everyone shows me your mad face. Look at all the mad faces.*”
 - “*Everyone shows me your mad feet, mad hands, mad hair. Make a mad sound.*”
 - Ask children to sit down.
3. Ask, “*Who can share a story with Cloud of a time you felt mad?*” Use the prompt, “*I felt mad when I ...*” Child can hold Cloud while sharing the story.
4. Tell children that when Cloud feels mad, he has to remember to be kind. Ask, “*What can you never do when you get mad [yell, hit, say hurtful words, etc.]? We all need to remember that it is okay to be mad, but it is not okay to be mean.*”
5. Say (demonstrating with your body), “*It is not okay for us to be mean with our eyes [show Fighting Eyes], our voice [said in a Fighting Voice], our hands [show punching hands], our feet [show kicking feet], or our words [use your fingers to ‘shoot’ words from your mouth]. Cloud will teach us a tool called the calm-down breath, which helps us feel better, so we won’t hurt others.*”
6. Demonstrate the calm-down breath. Hold your pointer finger under your nose. Say, “*Smell the flower [breathe in through your nose] ... and blow out the candle [blow out through your mouth]. Look, Cloud feels better already! Let’s practice together.*”
7. Pull name sticks for children to practice the calm-down breath. Model so children can imitate.



Coach the Calm-Down Breath During Daily Activities

- Prompt children to use the calm-down breath when needed in social situations.
- Remind children to use the calm-down breath at difficult times, like recess or free-choice time.
- Guide children to follow the flower/candle prompt described earlier.
- Acknowledge children when they use the calm-down breath. At the end of the day, recognize children. *“Today, I saw Joe use his calm-down breath. It helped his mad feelings get smaller.”*

Calming Strategies for Children with Social-Emotional Challenges

Children with challenging behaviors may need different strategies, such as:

- Invite them to go to the Kimochis® Corner and hug Cloud or squeeze the Mad Feeling.
- Say, *“Take a big breath, squeeze your whole body (every part!), hold it, then let out a huge breath.”*
- Suggest that they knead clay or Theraputty® (a special putty for hand-strengthening).
- Allow them to do a physical movement, such as walking/running (safely), bouncing on a therapy ball, swinging.
- Write a social narrative that explains how the child can use a calm-down strategy (see Appendix F for samples social narratives).

Calming is an Important Learning Strategy

One of the most difficult tasks of emotional literacy is controlling anger and impulses (Joseph and Strain 2010). It requires a child to remain calm in addition to recognizing the arousal that is occurring in his/her body and activating the cognitive process of thinking: *“I need to take a calm-down breath.”* However, children who are able to cope with their emotions in a positive way not only have an easier time with disappointments, frustrations, and hurt feelings that occur so frequently in the lives of preschoolers, but they also have an easier time relating to other children and adults at home, in school or child care, and on the playground (National Research Council and Institutes of Medicine 2000).



Lesson 2: Help Cloud® Use a Serious Face and Voice

Objective: Children will demonstrate how to use a Serious Face and Voice to express mad feelings in a positive, helpful way.

Character Principle: Be Respectful

SEL Competency: Self-Management

Vocabulary: Serious Face and Voice, serious

Materials: Cloud® with Mad Feeling tucked in pouch, all the Kimochis® Characters

1. Show Cloud's mad face. Pull the Mad Feeling from his pouch. Say, "Remember how Cloud® taught us to use a calm-down breath when we feel mad so we are not unkind? Let's all practice the calm-down breath."
2. Say, "Cloud® is going to teach us another tool to help us have mad feelings without being mean. It's called Serious Face and Voice. This tool tells people that what we are saying is very important."
3. Demonstrate a Serious Face (wide eyes that communicate what you are saying is important). Say, "We make a Serious Face by making our eyes big and wide. Look at me. You try it."
4. Say, "Now listen to my Serious Voice." Use slow, stretched speech that communicates that your message is important as you say, "I feel so mad."
5. Say, "Now you say it with me, 'I feel so mad.'" Practice other sentences with a Serious Face and Voice: "I feel mad because I ripped my picture." "I feel mad because I couldn't go on the swing."
6. Put all the Kimochis® Characters in the center of the circle. Say, "Now you can help Cloud® use his Serious Face and Voice with his friends."
7. Say, "When you know what Cloud® could say to his friend, raise your hand." Act out the following:
 - Huggs keeps tickling Cloud® and Cloud® nicely asks him to stop, but Huggs doesn't.
 - Cat is bossing Cloud®.
 - Bug invites all the Kimochis® to play, but he forgets to include Cloud®.
8. Call on a child with a raised hand. Have that child hold Cloud® and answer, "I feel so mad ..."
9. Tell children that when you see they need help expressing mad feelings, you will give them the Mad feeling pillow as a reminder to use a Serious Face and Voice.

Lesson 3: Plan for Mad Moments

Objective: Children will negotiate conflicts using words before seeking help.

Character Principle: Be Responsible

SEL Competency: Self-Management

Vocabulary: Express

Materials: Mad Feeling

1. Do this lesson on the playground or near a play area that frequently creates mad feelings. You can also do this at a central learning area in the classroom.
2. Show the Mad Feeling and say, "Remember that it is okay if you feel mad, but it is not okay to be mean. We're going to make a plan to help you express mad feelings wherever they happen, like on the playground."

3. Pass the Mad Feeling to a child who can name something that creates mad feelings. For example, *“In the dress-up area, I feel mad when I always have to be the baby.”*
4. Together, brainstorm helpful words the child can say next time this happens in real life: *“I feel mad because I want to be the daddy or mommy sometimes.”*
5. Create a role-play and have the child put you in this situation so you can model how to:
 - Call name and wait for eye contact.
 - Use Serious Face and Voice.
 - Use helpful words in this upsetting moment.
6. Reverse roles so children can practice this communication tool.
7. Remind children that mad feelings do happen. But now they have a helpful tool to make their mad feelings smaller or go away. As a result, they won't accidentally hurt others' feelings.

Coach How to Manage Mad Feelings During Daily Activities

- Prompt children to use the calm-down breath when needed in social situations.
- Guide children to remember to use the calm-down breath and their Serious Face and Voice at recess and at other times of the day when anger frequently flares. Ask them what could happen that might create mad feelings. Brainstorm helpful words to use in these moments to deescalate the situation.
- Some children might benefit from tucking the Mad Feeling in their pocket. They could hold it when they feel mad to be reminded to use their Serious Face and Voice.
- Acknowledge children when you observe them using the calm-down breath. At the end of the day, recognize children you noticed using this tool: *“Today, I saw Adam and Tammy using the calm-down breath, and it really helped!”*

Meltdowns and Children with Social-Emotional Challenges

If you have a child who is prone to meltdowns, create a special calm-down spot. If possible, enlist the help of the child. It might be a corner of the room furnished with a beanbag, big pillows to squeeze, a fuzzy blanket, and a favorite book. Rather than waiting for a meltdown, make it routine for the child to visit the spot throughout the day for enjoyable breaks. This will get him/her used to going there for a calm moment. When you see warning signs of a meltdown, ask the child to go to the spot and practice calm-down strategies. Be sure to reinforce this child with lots of positive feedback for using the calm-down spot and strategies!

Lesson 2: Play Cloud Says

Objective: Children will communicate various feelings through facial expressions and body language.

Character Principle: Be Responsible

Competency: Social Awareness

Vocabulary: “Cloud says ...”

Materials: Cloud

1. This game, which gives children a chance to practice different facial expressions and body language, is played just like Simon Says, but it is called “Cloud Says.”
2. Hold Cloud and make him give prompts, such as, “*Cloud says make a happy face. Cloud says make a happy body. Cloud says make a silly face.*”
3. Continue until you give a prompt without the words “Cloud says.” There are no “outs” in this game. Keep playing as children have fun practicing their attentiveness and nonverbal communication!

Lesson 3: Use a Talking Hand to Request Objects

Objective: Children will use a Talking Hand to request objects that have been grabbed.

Character Principle: Be Resilient

SEL Competency: Self-Management

Vocabulary: Fighting Hand, Talking Hand, grab, unkind

Materials: Cloud with a small toy tucked in pouch

1. Grab the toy from Cloud. Pretend he grabs it back. Ask, “*What did I do? What did Cloud do?*”
2. Say, “*When someone grabs from you, your body naturally wants to grab back. It’s unkind to grab back, and we call that the Fighting Hand. Watch what I do instead that is kind.*” Ask an adult to grab Cloud from you. Show the Talking Hand gesture: Put your hand out palm up, then use your other hand to tap your open palm as you patiently wait. Adult places Cloud back in your hand (do it yourself if another adult is not available).
3. Ask children to imitate your Talking Hand. Say, “*Please give it back.*” Have everyone put their hand out, tap palm, and say in unison, “*Please give it back.*”
4. Say, “*Watch and tell me if I use a Fighting Hand or a Talking Hand.*” Demonstrate several times with an adult. Prompt children to say “*Fighting Hand*” or “*Talking Hand*” as appropriate.
5. Pull a name stick. Give Cloud to the child and say, “*I will grab Cloud from you.*” Prompt the child to use a Talking Hand. When the child uses a Talking Hand, others can give a silent cheer—a thumbs-up. Pull more name sticks for children to have turns practicing the Talking Hand.

Lesson 3: Stop Hands

Objectives: Children will use self-regulation tools to manage excited feelings.

Character Principle: Be Responsible

SEL Competency: Relationship Skills

Vocabulary: By accident, Stop Hands

Materials: Huggtopus® with Silly and Excited Feelings tucked in pouch

1. Say, “Sometimes Huggtopus® can get really excited when she plays. What do you think can happen by accident when she gets like this?” Children will respond, “We get hurt ... It’s not fun.”
2. Say, “Remember the Kotowaza, ‘Fun has to be fun for everyone.’ Huggs is going to get too excited with me. Watch what I do with my face, voice, and words to let her know I like her, but she is acting too excited.”
3. Use Huggs as a puppet that’s acting overly excited and silly. Teach the children to use “Stop Hands”:
 - Take a step back to make space.
 - Put up one or both hands in a friendly way, close to your body, palms facing out, fingers spread to indicate, “Stop.”
 - Use a Talking Voice and Face and speak Huggtopus’s name.
 - Say, “Stop. Can we play something else?”
4. Go around the circle of children making Huggs be wild with them so they can imitate Stop Hands: the step back, hands up, verbal statement. Some children may need help keeping their hands close to their body and making sure their faces and voices remain friendly but firm.

Gender Differences

Steve Biddulph, author of *Raising Boys* (2008), suggests why rough-and-tumble play seems to be necessary for boys around age 4. At this time, they have an upward spike in testosterone levels for about a year. They are interested in “action, heroes, adventures, and spirited play” and will need to be taught how to keep this playful energy fun for everyone!

Stop Hands and Children with Social-Emotional Challenges

- Children who are socially challenged will need extra guidance to learn and generalize both the Talking Hand and Stop Hands.
- Don’t be afraid to coach these children to help them learn to use their hands in a way that really lets others know they are setting a limit. You may need to physically move their hands into the correct position for them. They may want to hold their hands out in front of their body, sending the wrong message.
- If you have a child who does not like others to get too close, help him/her learn how to use Stop Hands effectively. Make sure that the child uses a neutral or Serious Face when using Stop Hands. If a Fighting Face is used, this will send a negative message, rather than sending the intended message about setting a limit.



MAD



KOTOWAZA

It's okay to be mad,
but it's not okay to be mean.