

# WHEN KIDS CAN'T CONTROL LOUD VOICES

If you've ever wondered how to support children who struggle with regulating volume, tone, or impulsive blurting, here are some strategies that might help!

## Whole Group Activities

### 1 || Developing Self-Regulation Strategies

Children with sensory processing difficulties may have a hard time realizing when their voice is too loud, too intense, or even too repetitive. One way to help support this is to develop self-regulation strategies.

### 2 || Books

A great way to promote literacy, expand vocabulary, build language concept, and decrease some screen-time!

**-My Mouth is a Volcano** by Julia Cook.

Discuss other strategies the main character could have used instead of interrupting. Maybe he could have waited his turn? A gentle tap on the shoulder? Raised a quiet hand?

**-How Do Dinosaurs Say I'm Mad** by Jane Yolen

Ask kids how they would feel if they were with that naughty dinosaur? Would they be confused? Nervous? This is a nice bridge to teach children that our actions can affect other people.

Can kids come up with any better solutions for the dinosaurs?

### 3 || Visual Schedules

Visual schedules provide a multi-sensory approach – visual supports are provided by the schedule icons and the sign language, verbal/auditory supports are provided by the choral response, and tactile supports are provided by removing the icon and placing it in an “all done” pocket.

### 4 || Firm, Fair Expectations

Set firm, but fair, expectations and review. Can a child be the leader each session and review the expectations for the group? Being the leader can be such an engaging reward for children. Put a visual on the wall for the entire group and remind them when it is time for a whisper voice, classroom voice, or outside/play voice.

# WHEN KIDS CAN'T CONTROL LOUD VOICES (CONTINUED)

## Individualized Support

### 1 || Marker Board

Sit with a whiteboard and a marker. Say a sentence with loud volume and inflection and draw a squiggly line that matches the way you are speaking. Have the child do the same. Then, say the same sentence in a calmer manner while drawing a flat line, or a line that is slightly angled (indicating a reduced change in the child's voice while talking). Once they have mastered the marker board, you can fade it out.

Instead, draw a line in the air with a finger during any activity when the situation arises.

### 2 || Non-Verbal Cues

Develop a special non-verbal cue/sign with the student. It could be a touch on the shoulder, tap on a desk, etc. Something discreet that reminds the child he needs to monitor his voice. Try your best to use non-verbal prompts whenever possible, as verbal prompting is usually the hardest to fade.

### 3 || Sorting Activities

Use pictures of various activities, locations, games. Let children decide when it is appropriate to use a classroom voice, or when they can act silly. For example, a picture of a desk or classroom would be a time for a child to use his classroom/indoor voice. A picture of a playground or video game might be an example of a time when a child can be sillier and/or louder. We want to help children regulate their voices, but still teach them that it's okay to be silly – just not when its disrupting learning or therapy!

### 4 || Video Learning

You can use video models of other children or record yourself and your students (with parent permission of course!). Let the children rate how they think their voice was – too loud? Too silly? Just right? Give them scenarios or sentences to read and record! Email videos to parents and caregivers so they can see how you are supporting their child.

### 5 || Perspective Taking

Let children know how certain behaviors affect other people. Some children have more difficulties picking up on subtle social cues. They may not be able to read non-verbal body language. Some young friends may not realize that their voices may be causing other students to become nervous, or even avoid interacting with them.