Intro: Evidence suggests that children with depression experience high levels of distress, or negative affect (NA) and low levels of excitement and happiness, or positive affect (PA). Poor emotion regulation (ER) may help explain why some children are more prone to these problematic patterns of affect. Several researchers have identified emotion regulation problems related to children's depression. This research suggests that one reason depressed youth have high NA is that they lack effective skills for managing (i.e., minimizing or down regulating) NA. One largely unexplored question is the extent to which PA and its regulation (e.g., savoring or maximizing) contribute to risk for internalizing disorders. The current study investigates the development of depression symptoms over time. More specifically we predict Regulation of Positive Emotions (RPE) will predict later levels of PA, while Regulation of Negative Emotions (RNE) will predict concurrent and later levels of NA. We also expect RNE and RPE to predict children's depression symptoms both concurrently and at 6-month follow-up.

Method: Participants for Study 1 were 256 5-8th grade students recruited from two midwestern school districts. During 2 group administrations 6-months apart, youth were administered the newly developed Youth Regulation of Positive Emotions Scale (YRPES) as well as other measures of emotion regulation, affect, and internalizing problems.

Results: Analyses support study hypothesis. Both RPE, RNE, PA, and NA were found to predict depression symptoms in children both concurrently and at a 6-month follow up.

Implications: Overall, this study suggests that is helpful to not only consider children's symptoms of distress, but also their experience of positive emotions as well. Further study is indicated in order to understand how regulation of positive emotions influences the development of depression as well as how teaching skills aimed at improving emotion regulation can be incorporated into interventions for children at risk for developing depression.