

Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is your child's ability to attend to a task or situation with appropriate body control and awareness. This includes sitting to eat a meal, engaging with toys, peers and family, calming themselves when upset, or calming themselves to fall asleep. As an infant, your child relied on you, the caregiver, to soothe them, put them to sleep, and feed them so they would be able to remain regulated. As your infant grows and becomes a toddler it is important that they begin to take over and self-regulate. When your child is sick or there are other major schedule or daily changes it is okay to provide your child with additional support to regulate.

Why does my child need to self-regulate?

- Helps your child feel in control of their body to control impulses and emotions
- This helps your toddler to feel successful have positive interactions with others and begin to develop good self-esteem

What does dysregulation look like in my child?

- Inability to remain focused or an unusually short attention span
- Difficulty transitioning from one activity to another
- Lack of body awareness and your child frequently bumps into things or appears clumsy
- Inability to fall asleep independently or to calm themselves when upset

How to set your child up to be successful in self-regulation:

- Provide them with a consistent schedule for eating and sleeping
- Make sure they have regular bowel movements
- Let your child make mistakes, cry or fuss - they are still learning
- Avoid jumping in right away, your job is to give your child the opportunity to be successful on their own

Activities to help your child remain regulated:

Proprioceptive system

- Provide appropriate items for them to chew, such as a chew tube or gum
- Give them crunchy or chewy foods such as carrot sticks or dried fruit
- Drinking from a straw
- Carrying heavy items
- Pushing/pulling a weighted wagon or cart
- Rolling weighted medicine ball
- Animal walks/ wheelbarrow walks
- Providing pressure to your child with pillows or blankets
- Playing with play-doh

Vestibular System

- Riding a bike/tricycle or scooter board
- Swinging: can use blanket or laundry basket
- Jumping
- Yoga