

HOW CAN I HELP?

When children are quite young, they need an adult to help them to 'self-regulate'. We call this 'co-regulation'. This is a supportive process, involving two individuals – you (the care-giver) and the child. Your job is to help your child to regulate their emotional responses and build strategies to help them to make 'good choices' in the future. To do this you need to show them right from birth that they matter. Self-regulation can't happen without 'co-regulation' happening first.

Co-regulation helps your child to:

- Overcome stress;
- Return to a state of calm;
- Develop ways to self-regulate in the future.

WHAT DOES CO-REGULATION LOOK LIKE?

First of all – take a deep breath and stay calm..... model the behavior you want to see

The adult needs to give continuous reassurance, cuddles, eye contact and a calm tone of voice to support children in their time of need

'Name it to tame it' – encourage your child to talk through their emotions and how they are feeling

Help your child to develop an 'emotional vocabulary' - talk about feeling: angry, sad, worried etc

Praise your child for the attempts they make at managing their overwhelming emotions

Allow your child to make decisions

“WE CAN CO-REGULATE BY BEING CONSISTENT, POSITIVE AND REFLECTIVE... ACTIVELY LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO A CHILD'S NEEDS” CITED IN CONKBAYIR 2019



ST. EDMUNDS CATHOLIC PRE-SCHOOL

Guide to Self-Regulation in Young Children



WHAT IS 'SELF-REGULATION'?

SELF-REGULATION IS:

- The ability to choose how we respond to a range of situations;
- Choosing how we react to the behavior of others, especially when they are doing something we don't want them to do;
- Making decisions about what we're going to do next;
- The ability to 'bounce back' after something unsettling or unexpected happens.

"TUNING IN TO THE CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE...ASK OURSELVES, WHAT IS THE CHILD...THINKING, FEELING, IMAGINING...IN THIS MOMENT?" Conkbayir 2019

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT:

The period between birth and 5 years old is a time during when the brain is growing at an outstanding rate. Everything your child does, sees, hears or encounters stimulate brain activity and cause brain growth and function. This time is crucial for developing physical skills, language and making secure attachments to others. We talk about the 'Terrible Twos'. The tantrums that 2 year olds display are perfectly natural for a child who is experiencing more and more challenges, without the language or emotional ability to explain how they feel about situations.

The child's state of 'dysregulation' occurs when they are in a situation of stress, anxiety or fear. The emotionally reactive brain takes control and the child 'flips their lid' as they enter 'fight, flight or freeze' mode. Shouting, hitting, losing control or becoming inconsolable.

The part of the child's brain that helps them regulate their behavior and their responses to situations is not yet developed. Ninety percent of a child's brain growth takes place before they are 5 years old, but much of this growth is of a physical nature (walking, talking, doing stuff). The work you do with your child at home to help them build solid, trusting relationships; understand 'right' from 'wrong'; and sharing and taking turns, all helps to build their emotional brain.

You are a 'brain architect' – a 'co-regulator' helping your child to 'self-regulate' so that they are ready for school.

WHAT DOES SELF-REGULATION LOOK LIKE?

- Controlling our own feelings and behavior;
- Being able to calm and sooth ourselves when things go wrong;
- The ability to curb impulsive behavior;
- Concentrating and staying on task;
- Being able to ignore distractions;
- Making friends and getting along with others;
- Planning and thinking about what to do next;
- Thinking before acting – deciding on the best course of action;
- Being able to wait for something we want;
- Persisting when things get tricky;
- Bouncing back when things go wrong.

Self-regulation is having the ability to choose how we respond.

