


CHILDREN LEARN TO CALM DOWN BY BEING CALMED

REGULATION STARTS WITH US


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Children are not born knowing how to manage big feelings. Their brains are still developing. When a child is overwhelmed, they cannot simply "calm down". They first need a calm adult who stays close, steady, and supportive. Before children can regulate themselves, they need many experiences of being regulated with a safe adult.




WHAT CO-REGULATION LOOKS LIKE



Co-regulation is how adults help children settle in everyday moments. This might include staying close when a child is upset; speaking slowly and calmly; helping the child name the feeling; offering comfort or reassurance; slowing the situation down; helping the child pause, breathe, or take a break. Your calm helps the child's body settle.

YOUNG CHILDREN REGULATE THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS




Early emotional regulation is not something children do alone. Young children rely on adults for calm facial expressions, a gentle tone of voice, predictable responses, reassurance, and comfort. When adults stay emotionally available, children feel safer and their nervous system can settle.



UNDERSTANDING FEELINGS HELPS CHILDREN MANAGE THEM


Children cannot control feelings they do not understand. Adults help by putting feelings into words such as: "You are really frustrated."; "That felt scary."; "You are upset because it stopped." This helps children connect body sensations, emotions, and coping strategies. Over time, feelings become less overwhelming.

SELF-REGULATION DEVELOPS SLOWLY




Self-regulation grows from thousands of small moments of co-regulation. Over time children begin to use the adult's words in their own mind, pause before reacting, and try calming strategies themselves. This is how children gradually learn to calm themselves.

SAFETY CHANGES BEHAVIOUR



Children learn best when they feel safe, understood, and supported. Pressure, punishment, or fear may stop behaviour for a moment, but they do not teach emotional regulation. Real emotional regulation develops through safety, connection, and guidance.



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