10 Top Tips on Supporting Children with SELF-REGULATION

Children need to learn to understand and recognise their emotions, while finding healthy ways to process them.

Emotional self-regulation, however, depends heavily on age and development. While very young ones or children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it particularly challenging to self-regulate, nurturing these important skills can be hugely beneficial. Here are ten top tips for supporting children with their self-regulation.

1. DESIGNATE A TRUSTED ADULT



It's vital that children feel safe and know that there's comeane they can always go to for help if they need it. Schedule consistent times for the child to develop a relationship with this person – ideally through play and games – allowing trust to grow and ensuring that the child is more likely to come forward if anything is wrong, rather than hiding their emotions.

2. MEET CHILDREN HALFWAY

Unless you know where a child is developmentally and tailor your approach to their needs, you're less fittely to have an impact in particular, younger ones and children with SEND can struggle to self-regulate and instead rely on others to help them. We call this 'co-regulation'. Rather than offering strategies for self-regulation, it could be better to start co-regulating with a trusted adult first.

3. FACTOR IN THEIR THEIR BASIC NEEDS

Remember that for a child to develop emotional regulation skills, their basic needs must be met first. Children who are hungry, fired, cold and so on - as well as those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences - may struggle to self-regulate. Sefore you develop strategies with any child, make sure they feel safe, secure and comfortable in themselves.

4. REMAIN PATIENT

If a child is struggling with their emotions, it can often become difficult to stay calm. Remember that dysregulation is beyond their control, so a display of frustration or anger could negatively impact the situation, instead, children need to be met with comfort and understanding to help them manage these problematic feelings.

5. BE 'A DYSREGULATION DETECTIVE'

While some children can tell you why they became dycregulated, many others can't. You could investigate potential triggers by observing the child and talking to their tanily. When the child becomes dysregulated, note down details like the time, what they're doing and who they're with - the trigger may be someone they sit near, an unmet sensory need or something else entirely. Once we identify some triggers, we can help to avoid or overcome them.

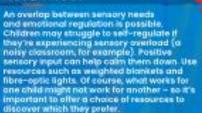
Meet Our Expert

Georgina bumant is an author, former teacher, Special Salucational Reads Coordinates and the founder of the award-winning SEH Resources Blog, where she shares activities, addice and recommendations for parents and teachers of children with SEHD.

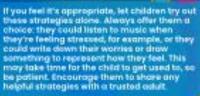


There are some wonderful books that can help you teach self-regulation to children. Reading these with a child can be expecially powerful. Take time to discuss the content, ask questions about what feelings the characters had, why they felt that way and what strategies helped them. It can also be useful to refer back to snippets of these books at appropriate moments.

7. TRY SENSORY RESOURCES



8. NURTURE INDEPENDENCE



9. MODEL GENUINE



Children learn a lot just from watching grown-ups. Don't be ofraid to show your own emotions and self-regulation strategies. While you'll obviously want to avoid sharing anything too parsonal with children, they should still see us experiencing and handling our own feelings. Tell them how you are feeling, then show them how to respond in a healthy manner.

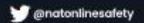
10. FORMULATE A PLAN



As much as we try to prevent children from experiencing dysregulation, it's always wise to have an appropriate plan for when it does happen. Discuss this strategy with the child (if appropriate) and their family. The best approach for an individual shild is often a bespoke one, it's hugely important to know in advance what might help and what could warsen the situation.

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