

SOLUTION.

EMOTIONAL REGULATION SKILLS

Helping your child regulate their emotions at home



Emotional regulation is the way that we monitor how we experience our emotions. Some children need some extra support to develop their emotional regulation skills. Children sometimes communicate their needs through behaviour. Sometimes these behaviours can be expressed through big emotions such as intense crying, or engagement in impulsive or aggressive behaviours. Here are some tips to support your child's emotional regulation at home:

'ZONES OF REGULATION'

'The Zones of Regulation' is an evidence-based program created by Leah Kuypers which aims to help children learn to regulate their own emotions by teaching them to recognise and name the feelings they are experiencing. This visual tool involves use of worksheets which show different colour-coded zones which represent various emotions (for instance, the 'green zone' corresponds to feeling 'happy, focused, calm and okay'). The idea is to get children to indicate on the worksheet how they are feeling at intervals throughout the day to teach them how to become more in tune with their feelings and better manage their emotions and their level of alertness. For tools and more information, download "The Zones of Regulation" app, or have a look at their website: 'www.ZonesofRegulation.com'. The website offers various free resources available for download.

CALM BOX

Many children benefit from having a calm box. The box would contain a collection of treasured objects and images that help your child to calm down. Include items in the calm box that will engage several of your child's senses. Scented putty could be put in there as well as toys which make sounds or have textures your child enjoys. Colouring supplies, rubber toys to squeeze, bubbles, or safe items your child could chew on could be included to soothe your child and help them to become calm again. What works best in a calm box for one child will not necessarily work for another so it's important to make sure the items you select are useful for your child. You and your child could choose the items for the box together. Practise using the calm box with your child when they are already calm, and teach them that it can be used when they are feeling dysregulated. When your child shows the early signs that they may be becoming emotionally dysregulated, present their calm box to support them through this tricky time.

CALM CORNER

Create a designated space where your child can go to be alone for a few minutes to help them calm down. This space can be filled with calming items your child finds soothing, such as a comfy bean bag or a favourite book or toy. Sensory items can also be helpful to support your child's return to an emotionally regulated state. This might include putty, or items that your child can squish between their fingers or fidget with in their hands. Include a timer in the kit so that your child can see how long they have left in their calming area. Try to limit time in the corner to a few minutes. After this time welcome the child back.

OTHER HELPFUL TIPS

- Model emotional self-regulation in your words and actions when you are feeling emotionally dysregulated in front of your child.
- Teach your child strategies to use when they feel angry, sad, or frustrated. Strategies might be: taking in a deep breath, asking an adult for help, describing the emotion they are feeling, and asking to have a turn when others aren't sharing.
- Provide positive reinforcement in the form of praise when your child talks about the feelings they are experiencing, and continue to emphasise that it is okay to talk about feelings.

