



Welcome to the *Regulation Toolkit*.

Regulation is the ability to understand, influence, and appropriately communicate emotional experiences, thereby allowing a person to respond to the experience appropriately. Therefore when a person is responding to a situation in a manner that is disproportionate, over the top, or inappropriate, that is called dysregulation. A person that is capable of understanding emotional experiences accurately and thereby responding appropriately- that's called regulation or the ability to regulate.

In this toolkit, we look at a variety of techniques that allow both you and your child to reach and maintain a regulated state.

PARENTAL SELF-REGULATION

As a parent, when you are regulated, it gives you the power to be self-aware, engage in self-reflection and ultimately take conscious action- a response to your child that is calculated and thought through. On the flip side, when your child is dysregulated, and you respond with dysregulation, it short-circuits your ability to respond, and instead, you just react.

CO-REGULATION AND SELF-REGULATION

When you are regulated, you also provide your child with the opportunity to 'feed off' of your regulation, and you can begin your child's process of regulation. This is what we call co-regulation.

Self-regulation is the ability to regulate alone or initiate and ask someone for help regulating. This is what we are ultimately aiming for. We want your child, and you to be able to self-soothe. We want the regulation process to begin when the dysregulated person is able to identify that feeling in themselves and is capable of then reaching out to someone to help them come to a more regulated state.

REGULATION TECHNIQUES

Relationships: Healthy, trusting relationships are a source of comfort and security to both children and adults. And when there is warmth and closeness between you and your child, it builds strength to counteract negative emotions

Play: There may be nothing more pleasurable to a child than seeing a parent take interest in what he is interested in, and get involved in activities that allow your child to experience a very light non-authoritative side of you. Keep in mind that we want to be engaging rather than entertaining. Before doing an activity, perhaps ask yourself, is this engaging- are my child and I interacting? or am I simply entertaining?

Touch: For children of all ages, safe, loving physical touch is crucial to growth and development. Particularly in younger children under the age of ten, but even in teens, at the onset of puberty, teenagers need more touch to organize the brain

- Milking, or chills
- Swedish Massage
- Myofascial Release
- Infant Massage
- Deep pressure
- Hugs, or even a hand on your child's shoulder

Movement: Movement produces a hormone called endorphins which decrease anxiety. This is particularly good when engaged in movements that engage and strengthen the core. Balancing scales. Bear walking or even walking outside along a narrow surface holding your child's hand are all great ideas.

Rhythm: Rhythm helps decrease dysregulation and anxiety because it creates a sense of predictability. Try and incorporate rhythm into your day where possible. I.e:

- Hoola hoop to a rhythm.
- Rocking back and forth on a rocking chair.

- Jumping on a trampoline to a rhythm.
- Singing an easy rhythm as you help your child through a routine or a chore.

Oral Regulation: Interestingly, the mouth is one of the strongest and most commonly used regulators. This is because an exhale is a natural, automatic regulator, so sucking or chewing and swallowing on particular foods bring a deeper, and more frequent exhale-making them a more effective regulator. For example;

- Sucking on ice cubes or fruit juice cubes. Sour juices like cranberry juice is excellent.
- Chewing on frozen gum- a strong flavor works best.
- Sucking thick liquids through a straw-thick smoothies and milkshakes, yoghurt, and apple sauce are all great options.
- Chewing on big crunchy pretzels, or chewy pieces of dried fruit.
- Chewing on strongly flavored foods like pickles or hot peppers.
- Using a water bottle with a sports cap. Balloon blowing.
- 'Knock em down n roll em' activity.

Other Techniques:

- Acupressure
- DBT
- Calm press
- Ice
- Professor
- Singing/Breathing
- Tart
- Deep Pressure