

HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH THEIR EMOTIONS

PART TWO

it's okay to feel your feelings

BUILDING REGULATION TOOLS

When we emotionally react to a challenging situation, we may express our emotions in ways that affect our connection with our family, friends, health, or selves.

Emotional regulation is a practice of responding appropriately as we find healthy coping strategies that work best to manage our emotions in challenging situations. Our ability to effectively self-regulate (or co-regulate with a safe person) can help to improve focus, self-awareness, problem-solving, and the ability to be able to bounce back from challenging things.

STRUCTURE AND ROUTINE

Most families will have a set day to day routine or structure for their school days. This might include a morning routine of getting ready for school, an after school routine and a bed time routine. Routines can help to reduce stress and anxiety as children know what to expect, this can make them feel secure and this can free their brain up to focus on other things like learning and building social connections.

Some tips for routines at home:

- Have a visual weekly planner, so that children can see what is coming up both at school and outside of school (such as which days they may have extracurricular activities)
- Create visuals of your child's routine so they know what needs to be done within each routine, such as bedtime routine of brushing teeth etc.
- Keep the same bedtime and wake times even on weekends and in the holidays as this makes it easier to settle back into school routines.
- For children in separated families, keeping their routine/rules/expectations at each house as similar as possible, can help them cope with change and reduce stress.

Co-regulation

Co-regulation involves supporting your child to be able to regulate their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Children can learn from safe adults about how to calm, through their safe adult role modelling.

Co-regulation can also include:

- Supportive silence.
- Asking 'What would be helpful right now?'
- Staying close, calm, available.
- Acknowledging and naming the feeling
- Validating their experience and emotion
- Take deep breaths together.
- Share a deep squeeze hug.

PARENTAL REFLECTION

- Don't forget to check in with your own body, mind and emotions, create a deliberate practice of pausing to check in with how you are feeling.
- Emotions can be "contagious" mirror neurons in our brain help us to observe emotions of others, if you're feeling anxious or stressed, your child might be too.
- Observe how you are feeling, make sense of why you're feeling that way and adjust your responses/meet your needs/ask for help.