



Reset to Regulate

INTRO GUIDE

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What is Self-Regulation?

Self-regulation is a child's ability to notice what is happening inside their body and brain, manage emotional reactions, and respond in a way that fits the situation. This includes calming down when upset, staying focused, handling frustration, and recovering after stress.

Self-regulation is not something children are born knowing how to do. It develops slowly over time as the brain matures and through repeated experiences of support, practice, and safety.

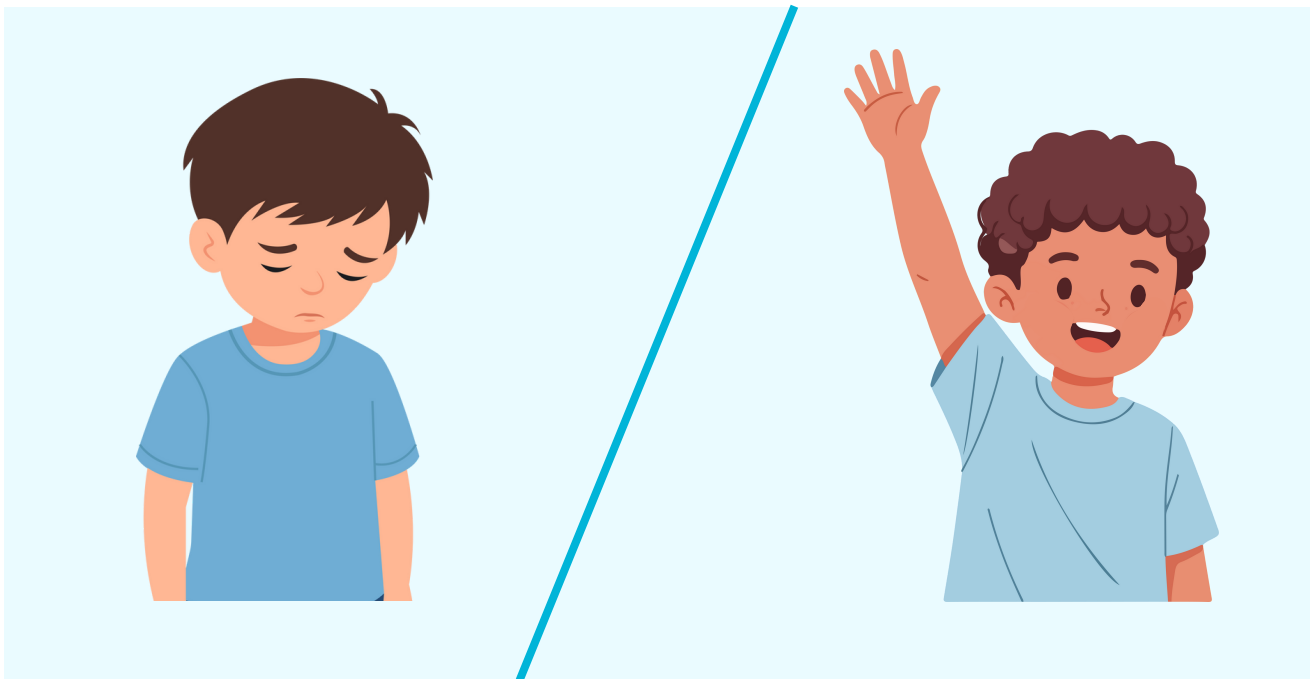


Why Self-Regulation Is Important

Strong self-regulation skills help children succeed at home, school, and in relationships. When a child can regulate, they are better able to listen, follow directions, tolerate frustration, and connect with others.

When self-regulation is weak, children may experience frequent meltdowns, anxiety, impulsive behavior, emotional shutdowns, or difficulty focusing. These behaviors are not intentional. They are signs of a nervous system that needs support, not punishment.

Supporting self-regulation builds emotional resilience, confidence, and long term mental health.



How Self-Regulation Develops and What is Co-Regulation

Self-regulation develops through co-regulation. Co-regulation happens when a calm adult helps a child feel safe during moments of stress. This might include staying close, speaking softly, offering reassurance, or guiding calming strategies.

When children repeatedly experience co-regulation, their nervous system learns what calm feels like. Over time, they begin to use those same strategies independently. Children cannot self regulate consistently without first being co-regulated.



Strategy 1:

Belly Breathing

What it is:

Belly breathing teaches children to take slow, deep breaths that fill the belly instead of quick breaths in the chest. This type of breathing signals safety to the nervous system and helps slow down stress responses.



How it helps:

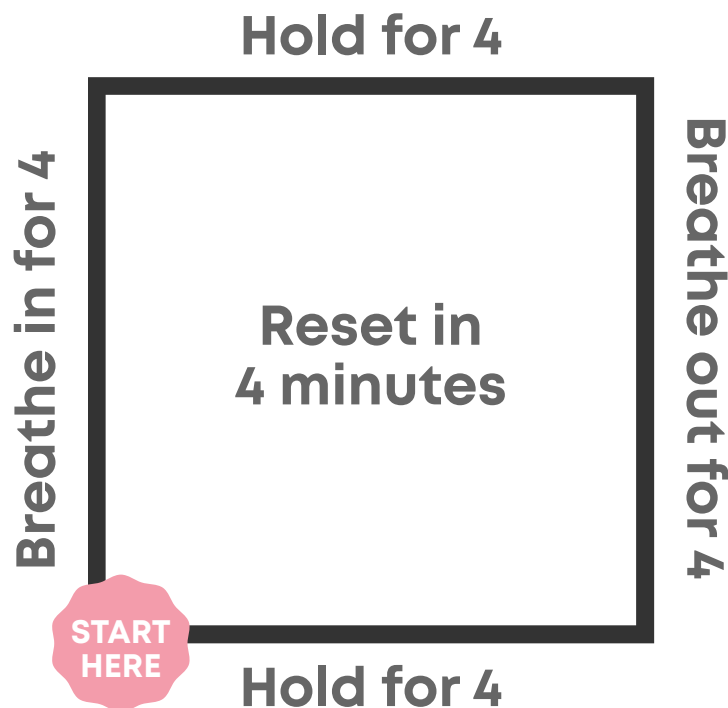
Belly breathing activates the calming part of the nervous system and helps reduce anxiety, emotional intensity, and physical tension.

Strategy 2:

Square Breathing

What it is:

Square breathing uses a simple pattern of breathing in, holding, breathing out, and holding again for equal counts. The structure gives the brain something predictable to focus on during emotional overwhelm.



How it helps:

This strategy slows racing thoughts, reduces panic responses, and helps children regain a sense of control.

Strategy 3:

Emotion Labeling

What it is:

Emotion labeling teaches children to name what they are feeling using clear and simple emotion words. This can be done verbally, with pictures, or by pointing to an emotion chart.



CALM



SAD



ANGRY



WORRIED

How it helps:

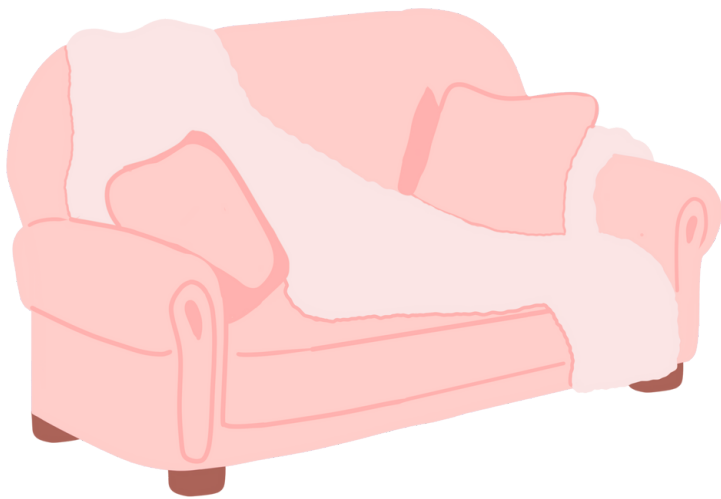
Naming emotions reduces emotional intensity and helps children feel understood instead of overwhelmed.

Strategy 4:

Calm Down Corner

What it is:

A calm down corner is a designated safe space where children can go to reset their emotions. It is not a punishment space. It should include comforting items and minimal stimulation.



How it helps:

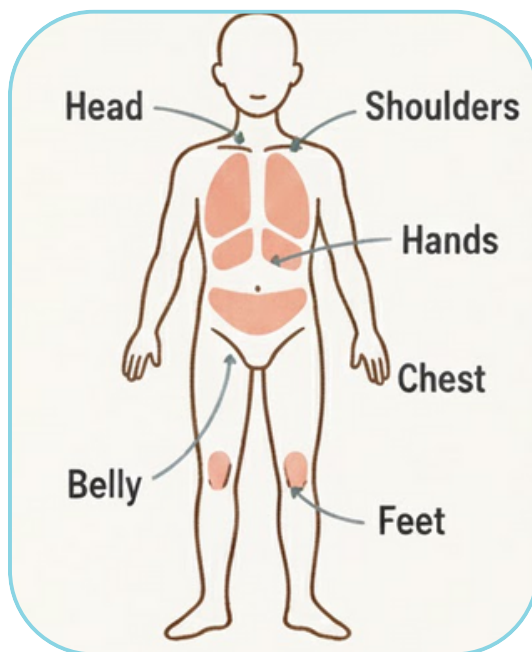
Provides a predictable and safe place for emotional recovery and nervous system regulation.

Strategy 5:

Body Check In

What it is:

A body check in helps children notice physical sensations like tight muscles, fast heartbeat, or shallow breathing. This builds awareness of early signs of dysregulation.



How it helps:

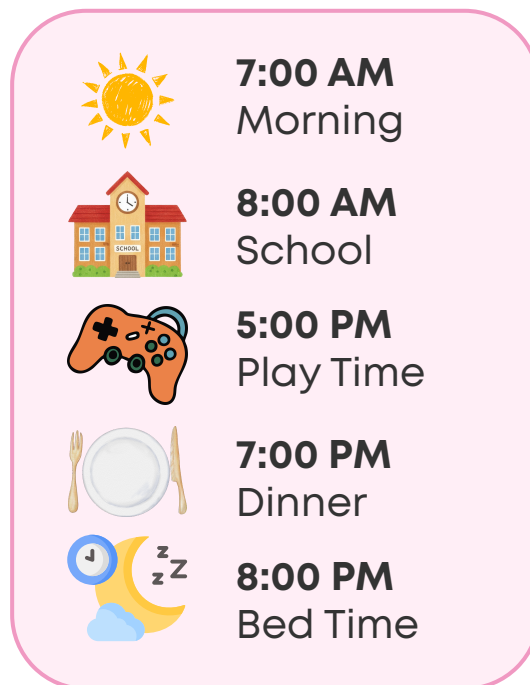
Recognizing early body signals allows children to use regulation strategies before emotions escalate.

Strategy 6:

Visual Schedules

What it is:

Visual schedules use pictures or icons to show the order of daily activities. They help children understand what is coming next without relying on memory or verbal instructions.



How it helps:

Predictability reduces anxiety and supports emotional and behavioral regulation.

Strategy 7:

Sensory Breaks

What it is:

Sensory breaks are planned activities that provide movement or sensory input such as jumping, stretching, or deep pressure. These breaks help regulate the nervous system before overload happens.



How it helps:

Sensory input helps release excess energy and improves focus and emotional balance.

Strategy 8:

Weighted Items

What it is:

Weighted blankets, lap pads, or vests provide gentle deep pressure input to the body. This pressure can feel grounding and calming for many children.



How it helps:

Deep pressure helps the body feel secure and can reduce restlessness and anxiety.

Strategy 9:

Fidget Tools

What it is:

Fidget tools are small objects that children can hold or manipulate with their hands. They allow movement without disrupting tasks or learning.



How it helps:

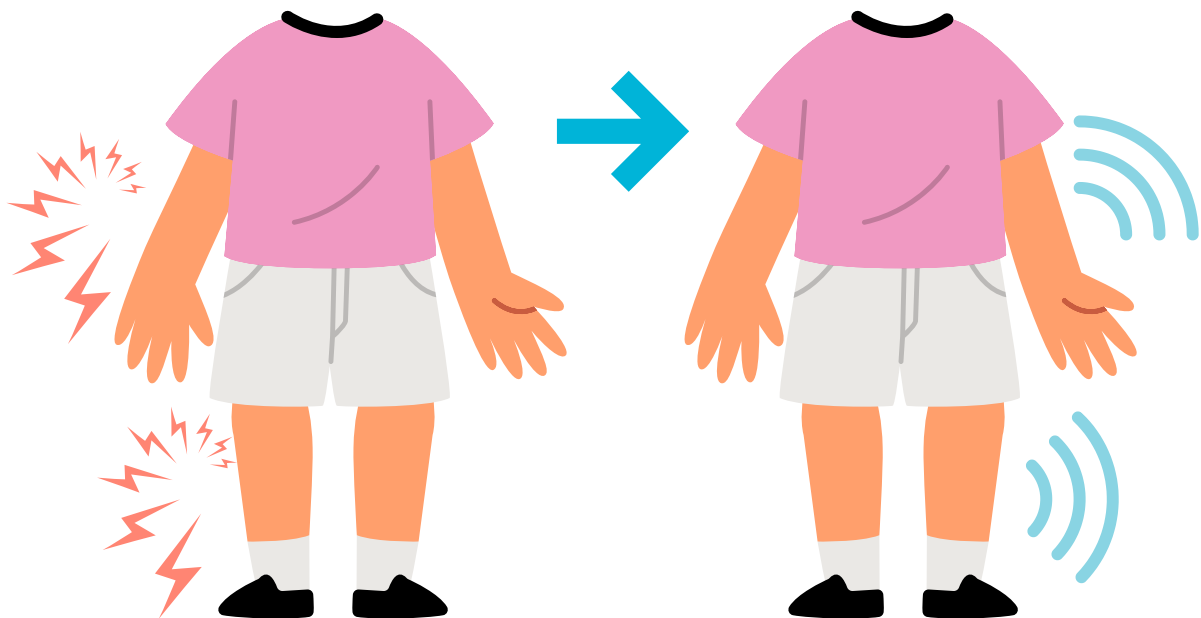
Fidgets support focus by giving sensory input that helps regulate energy levels.

Strategy 10:

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

What it is:

Progressive muscle relaxation teaches children to tighten and then relax different muscle groups. This helps them recognize tension and learn how to release it.



How it helps:

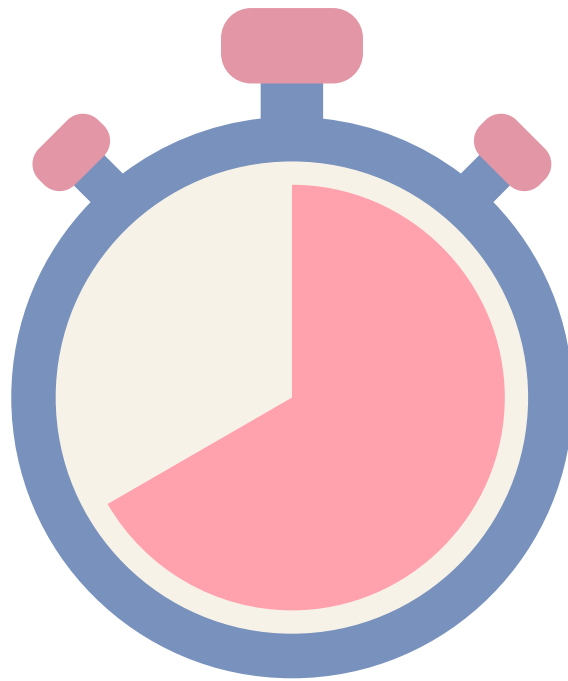
Releasing physical tension helps calm emotional stress and improves body awareness.

Strategy 11:

Visual Timers

What it is:

Visual timers show time passing in a concrete way using color, sand, or movement. This helps children understand how long an activity will last without relying on abstract concepts like minutes.



How it helps:

Reduces anxiety around transitions and helps children mentally prepare for change.

Strategy 12:

Music for Regulation

What it is:

Using calming, rhythmic, or familiar music to support emotional and sensory regulation. Music can be used during transitions, homework, or calm moments.



How it helps:

Music helps regulate mood, reduce stress, and provide predictable sensory input.

Strategy 13:

Movement Before Focus

What it is:

Engaging in physical movement before asking a child to sit, listen, or focus. This can include jumping, stretching, or walking.



How it helps:

Movement releases excess energy and prepares the brain for attention and learning.

Strategy 14:

Cold Water Reset

What it is:

Splashing cool water on the face or hands during moments of overwhelm. This activates the body's natural calming reflex.



How it helps:

Quickly resets the nervous system during emotional overload.

Strategy 15:

Time in Nature

What it is:

Spending intentional time outdoors in natural environments like parks, backyards, or nature trails.



How it helps:

Nature exposure lowers stress hormones and supports emotional balance.

Dr. Roseann Capanna-Hodge: Revolutionizing Children's Mental Health

Dr. Roseann Capanna-Hodge's podcast, Dysregulated Kids: Science-Backed Solutions for Children's Behavior and Mental Health, is in the top 2% globally. The podcast empowers parents with natural, science-backed solutions to improve children's self-regulation and calm their brains. Each episode delivers expert advice and practical strategies, making it indispensable for parents of neurodivergent children or those with behavioral or mental health challenges.

With her extensive experience, she provides families with hope and effective strategies to manage conditions like ADHD, anxiety, OCD, and PANS/PANDAS.

Forbes has called her "A thought leader in children's mental health," highlighting her revolutionary impact on mental health education and treatment.



WITH
Dr. Roseann

