



Co-regulation and Self-regulation Skills

Why is it important for children to have these skills?

Well, here are a few reasons:

- Improves emotional intelligence
- Able to cope better with stress
- Improves learning outcomes at school
- Becomes more independent
- Better relationships with others
- Develops self-discipline skills
- Ability to control impulses
- Stays focused on goals
- Adapts to changes in their environment

It's important to remember that this skill is not something that your child will magically master one day. Instead, it is a journey and a skill that we all need to work on daily.

A large part of self-regulation development starts with co-regulation.

Co-regulation continues through a child's life and is a building block for future self-regulation skills. However, co-regulation is a two-way street. So how can we co-regulate with our children? First, be with and respond to their emotions by being at eye level with them, hearing and validating their feelings, naming what you are seeing, and providing a calming strategy or tool.

When you think about a baby during their infant years, they are filled with co-regulation. For example, a baby is crying and upset. So you try to calm their fears by holding them, talking to them, swaying back and forth, and working through why they are upset.

Self-regulation is the ability to manage, monitor, and react through behavior, emotions, thoughts, and energy positively for ourselves and those around us. Self-regulation is higher-level thinking that develops over time. Young children are still learning how to self-regulate through co-regulation.

As parents, we are human too. Being human does NOT mean we will respond ideally in every emotional situation. Perfection is not the end goal here. But it does mean we can be more aware of our emotional state, work through our emotions, model that for our children and help provide co-regulation with them as best we can.