



Supporting Your Child with Emotion Regulation

(Co-regulation Strategies)

Be Proactive



Structure and Routine:

We all feel more calm when we know what our day is going to look like.

Set Reasonable and Consistent Expectations:

Make sure your expectations match what your child is able to do. Be clear and consistent. Tell your child what you expect (e.g., what you want them to do) instead of what not to do.

Keep it Positive:

Catch your child being "good" - give specific positive attention to the behaviour you want to see happen again (see 'Using Positive Language' and 'Rewarding Positive Behaviour')

Offer Reasonable Choices

Everyone likes to have choice in their day. Giving your child choice throughout the day gives them a sense of control and increases the likelihood your child will follow through on expectations (e.g., "It's time to read. Do you want to read 'Pete the Cat' or 'Scaredy Squirrel?'").

Early Signs



What are the signs you notice early on that happen before your child gets upset (e.g., complaining more, bickering with siblings, complaining they are bored. etc.). Try to offer breaks, alternatives or use a distraction when you notice these signs before more challenging behaviour starts.

Offer Breaks

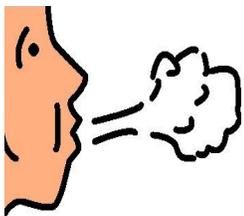
When I Need a Break:
I can ...

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Figure out what helps your child calm down - pick 1-2 strategies to try - you may need to help them practice by modelling the strategy (e.g., doing the strategy along with them).

- Ask your child for **input** - what will help them calm down?
- **Practice** taking breaks when your child is calm.
- Offer breaks when you notice 'early signs'
- Examples: look at a book, squeeze something squishy, colouring, deep breathing, listening to music, etc.

Calming Down



When your child becomes upset or loses control:

- Focus on keeping your child **safe** and **staying calm**
- **Talk less.** Use simple/clear language
- You may need to give brief reminders (e.g., "Take a deep breath. We can talk when you're calm") or if safe, you may need leave the room and return when your child is calm.
- Listen for emotions and feelings
- Give your child **as much time as they need** to calm down



Supporting Your Child with Emotion Regulation

(Strategies for After Upset Happens)

Remember ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always try to be proactive (see <i>Proactive Strategies</i> and <i>Co-Regulation Strategies</i> handouts)• When your child is upset, the part of the brain that controls thinking & problem-solving is not working as efficiently. Wait until your child is calm before re-establishing communication.• If you need to talk - use simple & clear language. Keep it brief.
Attend to the Emotion	Approaching the situation calmly and acknowledge the presence of emotion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"I can see something's wrong What's up?"</i>• <i>"It looks like somethings up .. what's going on?"</i>
Name the Emotion	If your child can't describe feelings, give them the words to use. Help them identify and describe how their body felt. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"You look sad/angry/tired"</i>• <i>"I can see you're crying/breathing heavy/clenching your fists"</i>• <i>"Your face turned really red when you were mad... did you feel hot?"</i>
Validate	Youth need to feel that the adults understand WHY they are feeling a certain way and that it's OK and safe for them to feel this way. This involves putting yourself in your child's shoes and trying to imagine what this situation must be like for them. Try to resist looking on the "bright side" and seeing things from your perspective. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"I hear you - You have every right to be mad/sad/stressed/frustrated....."</i>• <i>"You're right. That's NOT fair....."</i>• <i>"You've got a really good point....."</i>• <i>"I had no idea this was so hard for you..."</i>• <i>"I'm not mad at you - I'm just trying to understand and help"</i>
Problem-Solve	Help your child problem-solve what they can do next time they are faced with a problem or feel emotions that can lead to upset. The parent may 1) share ideas with the child, or 2) include them in the problem solving process. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"Next time you're feeling ____, why don't we try ____ together"</i>• <i>"How could we sort this out together?"</i>• <i>"What can we do together to make this right again?"</i>• <i>"If it's a BIG FEELING maybe you can show me this (card, picture, etc), and you can go to your quiet space and just sit."</i>
Practice Role-Play Review	Practice the strategies identified through the Problem-Solving stage with your child so they know what to do when they experience upset or the feelings that lead to upset. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>"When you're mad, you can go to your room, or go to the calm chair to get some space. Then you can let me know when you're ready to talk by calling out to me [or other strategy] and we can talk".</i>• <i>"Let me know when you're [name the feeling] and that you need to talk or be by yourself. Then I can help you problem-solve when you're ready"</i>• <i>"You got this! We can practice together and take turns being (mad/sad/frustrated/tired) and you can tell me what it looks like and what I can do to make it right and feel good again!"</i>