

Calming & Organizing Strategies



Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is our body's ability to adapt to a *stressful situation*, assisting us in remaining in a calm and regulated state. All children can have difficulty adapting to stressors from outside and inside their own bodies. The following strategies may help your dysregulated child achieve a calm, organized state.



Muscle Work

- Muscle work or "heavy work" has been shown to calm and organize our bodies.
- Activities to incorporate muscle work include: having your child stack couch pillows up like a tall mountain, games where they are required to pull or push like tug-o-war, having them do animal walks or wheelbarrow walking.



Rhythmic Movement

- A rocking motion can be calming to some children.
- Rocking in a rocking chair, swinging on a swing, or lying in a hammock can provide organizing movement that can help your child become more regulated.
- Be sure movement is provided in a forward to backward or right to left motion. Direction matters as spinning can disorganize a child.



Guided Imagery

- Guided imagery can help take our minds off of a stressful situation and allows us to regroup safely.
- Help them find a comfy place to sit down and close their eyes.
- Identify your child's "happy" place. Ask your child to describe the environment (i.e., what it looks like, what it sounds like, what it feels like) and aid them in the description as needed.



At Home Safe Zone

- Create a safe zone in your home with soothing and calming items for your child. Items such as a cozy blanket, fluffy pillows, stuffed animals, soft music, dim lights, and a favorite book can be all a child needs for their safe zone.
- When a situation is too much to handle, taking a break can help. This cozy nook or safe zone provides the child with a designated space for them to access when stressed or disorganized so that they can decompress.



Slow Belly-Breathing

- Breathing is one of the most common ways our body tries to regulate itself when placed in a difficult situation.
- Guide your child to breathe in through their nose, make their belly big with air, hold it for 5 seconds, and breathe out slowly through their mouth. Repeat at least 3 times. Give your child the cue of blowing out a birthday candle.



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