

REGULATION 101: HELPING OURSELVES & OUR HEROES

STAY GROUNDED

Growth, curiosity, and independence flourish best when our nervous systems feel *safe and steady*. “Regulation” is the ability to notice and adjust our energy, emotions, and attention so that we can engage, learn, and connect.

1. REGULATING OURSELVES

Children borrow our calm. When we model regulation, they learn what safety feels like.

You Could Try:

- **Breathing intentionally.** Try a slow exhale (box breathing).
- **Ground in the senses.** Notice five things you see, four you feel, three you hear...
- **Move before you manage.** Take a stretch, walk, or shake-off before problem-solving.
- **Name it to tame it.** Quietly label your feeling (“I’m feeling rushed right now”) to reduce intensity.

2. CO-REGULATING OUR HEROES

Before logic or lessons can land, connection must come first.

You Could Try:

- **Meet their state before their story.** Match energy, but show them you can regulate yourself first (“You’re really frustrated right now—I’m here”).
- **Use proximity and tone.** Lower your voice, move slowly, get to their level.
- **Offer regulation through rhythm.** Rocking, humming, drumming fingers, or rhythmic walking.
- **Create micro-rituals of safety.** A consistent phrase, touch, or routine (“hand on heart check-in”) - which builds trust.

3. EMPOWERING SELF-REGULATION

As children mature, they can learn to recognize and manage their own states.

You Could Try:

- **Using visuals or metaphors.** “Is your engine running too high, too low, or just right?”
- **Create a calm-down menu.** Options might include breathing tools, doodling, stretching, or a quiet spot.
- **Model reflection.** After regulation, wonder aloud: “What helped your body settle?”

- **Celebrate noticing.** Praise awareness, not just composure: “You noticed you were getting overwhelmed—great job!”

KEY TAKEAWAY

REGULATION GROWS THROUGH CONNECTION,
PRACTICE, AND COMPASSION—NOT PERFECTION.