

Self Regulation



What is Self Regulation?

Self regulation is the way all people manage themselves. It is what allows people to stay calm, even when they have to do things they don't want to do. It is what allows people to stop one activity and transition to something else. Self regulation is a skill that begins to develop in infancy and is linked to our emotional maturity. Without self regulation, people show every emotion the moment they feel it and then struggle to return to a neutral point without outside interference. Self regulation is crucial to social interaction and task completion. It is also necessary when faced with sensory stimuli. Although some individuals struggle with self regulation, there are strategies that can be used to teach these skills.

What does difficulty with self regulation look like?

Individuals who show any behaviors like the ones described below, may benefit from self regulation strategies:

- 1) Chris hits himself, flaps his hands and screams whenever he's asked to put away preferred toys.
- 2) Layla cries and says her stomach hurts whenever she has to go on a field trip or when there is a substitute teacher.
- 3) Will yells at his classmates and says they're cheaters whenever he loses.
- 4) Grace is wiggly and giggly whenever she comes in from PE and can take awhile to calm down.

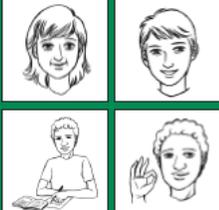
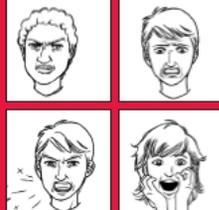
Activities to Teach Self Regulation

1. Practice games that require the child to stop and change behaviors quickly, for example, Simon Says or red light-green light. It can also help to practice moving to the beat of music with varying slow and fast songs.
2. Play board games where the child must wait his/her turn, handle being ahead and being behind, and react appropriately to losing.
3. Try problem-solving activities and games in which the child must manage his/her frustration to be successful. Rush Hour®, Tower of Hanoi, and Jenga® are all examples of frustration-tolerance games.
4. Teach and practice relaxation strategies. Have the child learn the strategies when calm. Begin using them during calm times, then mildly frustrated times, and eventually when actually distressed. Be sure to use rewards for successful use of the strategies.
5. Increase emotion understanding by building an emotional vocabulary, helping children identify their common triggers, and creating a calming plan in advance.

Zones of Regulation®

Many people use a strategy called the Zones of Regulation® to help students identify how they are feeling. Then, they link each zone to a list of strategies on what to do to handle the feeling.

The ZONES of Regulation®

			
<p>BLUE ZONE</p> <p>Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly</p>	<p>GREEN ZONE</p> <p>Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn</p>	<p>YELLOW ZONE</p> <p>Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control</p>	<p>RED ZONE</p> <p>Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control</p>

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How Can I Learn More?

Books

- Baker, J. (2007) *Social Skills Training and Frustration Management*. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons
- Buron, K.D.. (2012) *Social Behavior and Self-Management: 5-Point Scales for Adolescents and Adults*. Lenexa, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company
- Schab, L.M. (2009). *Cool, Calm, and Confident: A Workbook to Help Kids Learn Assertiveness Skills*. Oakland, CA: Instant Help.

Websites

- <http://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html>
- http://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/section_5.pdf
- <http://www.5pointscale.com/>



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