

# Supporting Your Child Experiencing Strong Emotions



Children learn from what they see around them and experience. We as parents and caregivers can help children learn how to understand and deal with stress, and process both negative and positive feelings (co-regulate).

## Steps to take before supporting your child in handling strong emotions:

- Take care of any strong emotions you may be having - *self regulate*
- Support your child's emotions, talk with your child about their feelings, and show that you understand those feelings
- Be responsive, warm and supportive - *make eye contact, get down to their level, show affection*
- Be patient and listen to your child
- Recognize that different ages and stages will require different levels and forms of co-regulation support

## How to help your child as they experience strong emotions:

- Model breathing techniques such as “dragon breaths” - *Dragon Breath (Yogic Breathing) | Kids Yoga, Music and Mindfulness with Yo Re Mi* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djJNgTTPQyc>)
- Sit quietly somewhere together
- Colour or draw together
- Get outside and run, jump, skip together
- Offer a calming jar - *How to make a calming jar* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ayi0TYcoMTI&t=25s>)
- Try settling into a warm or weighted blanket
- Cuddle up with a pet or a favourite stuffed animal
- Have a dance party together
- Listen to music
- Try calming phrases - “*I see your face is red and your hands are closed tight. Your body is showing me you are angry.*” or “*I can see this is bugging you, let's talk about it while we have a snack*”

## Videos:



**City of Hamilton** – A quick video to let parents and caregivers know that their own self regulation is important too. When you self regulate as an adult you are modelling for your children.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBfsqQ9nMmA>



**Best Start** – A video to explain the importance of promoting and supporting self regulation with many tips for parents and caregivers when engaged with their children.

[https://www.healthybabyhealthybrain.ca/?page\\_id=600](https://www.healthybabyhealthybrain.ca/?page_id=600)

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## Articles:



**ConnectABILITY** – This article helps us to understand what self regulation and co-regulation are and the different states of regulation. It recognizes the important role parents, caregivers and educators play in supporting children to self regulate.

<https://connectability.ca/2021/01/05/understanding-self-regulation-in-young-children/>



**ConnectABILITY** – This resource is a chart by age of simple tips and activities to try to aid in the promotion of self regulation. It also provides some resources such as books to read and songs.

<chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://connectability.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/self-regulation-21.pdf>



**The MEHRIT Centre** – This article speaks to the stress system in the brain and the signs of stress in children. Also how parents and caregivers need to be detectives to find where the stress is coming from in order to find ways to help the child learn to self regulate.

<https://self-reg.ca/a-parents-guide/>



**Parenting In Ottawa** – Ottawa Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative – This resource shares information on self regulation including stressors and how parents and caregivers can support a child's self regulation keeping in mind their age and developmental level.

<https://www.parentinginottawa.ca/en/babies-and-toddlers/self-regulation.aspx>



**Heart-Mind Online** – In this article, we are shown the process of Dan Siegel's "Name it to tame it" process. We are also given 12 strategies for children to self regulate including rainbow breaths, singing, movement activities, mindful games and reflecting together.

<https://heartmindonline.org/resources/12-self-regulation-strategies-for-young-children>