

Building Self-Regulation in Young Children

Provide a structured and predictable daily routine and schedule.

Eliminate distractions in the environment by turning off the TV, dimming lights, or providing a soothing object (like a teddy bear or photo of Mom) when you sense a child is becoming upset.

Teach young children what to do to calm down when they are upset (e.g. taking deep breaths, asking for a hug, etc.) and model this for them (e.g. show them when you are taking a 'time in' to breathe or calm down).

Set clear expectations and review home or classroom rules regularly.

Allow children to let off steam by creating a quiet corner with a small tent or pile of pillows.

Encourage pretend play scenarios among preschoolers.

Stay calm and firm in your voice and actions even when a child is "out of control".

Anticipate transitions and provide ample warning to the child or use picture schedules or a timer to indicate transitions.

Re-direct inappropriate words or actions when needed (Try again...).

When there are multiple children in your care, pair children with limited self regulation skills with those who have good self-regulation skills.

Validate children's emotions by labelling them correctly ("You are feeling frustrated with this puzzle").

Teach the children appropriate ways to show excitement, anger, jealousy, etc.

Presented by the York Region Early Literacy Specialists

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