

#	Age & Stage	Theme	Title
15	31-36 months	Helping your child cope	Did you know you can help your child develop self-regulation?

“Self-regulation” is an important skill for your child. Children are ready to learn when they are calm and focused. So it’s important to help children learn to adjust their emotions and behaviours, to cope with changing situations in a positive way. Self-regulation is being the boss of your behavior, emotions and attention. It develops when caring adults respond sensitively to a child.

- ◆ Parents can help their toddler observe the surroundings, listen, understand consequences, use words and actions to explain their needs, and problem solve. This will teach your toddler to deal with obstacles in life. It will also keep your toddler in the calm and alert state that is so important to learning.
- ◆ When you are with your child, minimize distractions such as texting and television. Focus your attention on your child.
- ◆ Set limits for your children and explain the limits. This will help them learn to set limits for themselves. Let them express their feelings while helping them understand other people’s feelings. For example, if your child takes a toy from another child, tell them that they would not like it if it happened to them. Explain that they should not do it to others if they would not like it themselves. Show them ways to ask for a toy or wait for a toy to be available. Show them another toy they could use while they are waiting. Show them a way where both children can play with the same toy.
- ◆ Try to be positive in stressful situations. Learn to identify the things that make you feel stressed. Manage your anger and other emotions. This will teach your child to cope with emotions. Your child will learn from your behaviour. Try to set a good example.
- ◆ Be consistent in your expectations. It is best if all caregivers have similar expectations. For example, “It is fun to climb, but you can’t climb on the table, whether you are with mommy, daddy or anybody else. You could get hurt if you fall. You could put germs or dog hairs on the table and we would be eating them. Let’s go to the playground later where we can climb.”
- ◆ Give children choices you can live with. Explain the consequences and be ready to help them work these out. Tell them that it is OK to make mistakes and to change their mind. That is how they can learn from experience.
- ◆ Use positive discipline techniques. Learn to understand your child’s temperament, needs and skills. Set clear expectations that are appropriate for the age of your child. Use distractions, provide choices and help your child solve problems.
- ◆ Avoid yelling, threatening, hitting and spanking. These are known to harm brain development. They will also raise your child’s stress level and prevent learning.
- ◆ It is important to understand your child’s development level. Very young children are not trying to be difficult. They have not reached a level where they can understand why you don’t want them to do something.
- ◆ Never physically hurt your child. Hitting, pinching or spanking your child will also teach your child that it’s okay to do the same to others. Never hurt your child physically or emotionally under any circumstances. If you need to, put the child in a safe place. Give yourself time to calm down in private. You can also ask for help from family or friends.

#15 Links

- ◆ *Building Resilience in Young Children*. Best Start Resource Centre.
www.beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/pdf/BSRC_Resilience_English_fnl.pdf
- ◆ *Resiliency Resources for Parents*. Reaching IN... Reaching OUT.
www.reachinginreachingout.com/resources-parents-selfcontrol.htm
- ◆ *Self-Regulation*. Dr. Stuart Shanker. www.self-regulation.ca