

Slide 1 - Self Regulation and Resilience

The children have had a very disrupted 18mths+ - and we have recognised that some children are finding it hard to regulate their emotions or have resilience when faced with a challenge. As part of our "getting back on track plan", in school we are focusing on how to support children with these 2 skills. Getting this right, will in turn support the children as learners - you cannot be in the right place for learning when you are not emotionally ready.

Slide 2

Slide 3

Slide 4 -What is self-regulation?

This includes being able to resist highly emotional reactions to upsetting stimuli, to calm yourself down when you get upset, to adjust to a change in expectations, and to handle frustration without an outburst. It is a set of skills that enables children, as they mature, to direct their own behaviour towards a goal, despite the unpredictability of the world and our own feelings.

The trick is not to avoid hard situations. Instead, as parents you can coach your children through tough situations. Breaking an activity into smaller, more doable parts can help. For instance, if your child has a hard time brushing their teeth, start with just putting toothpaste on the brush. Praise them a lot when they do it and slowly add steps.

Slide 5 -Self regulation and resilience are important life skills for children

Whilst as parents, you want your children to be happy, this is not possible at all points in life. In your child's life time, they will be faced, at some point by someone who says something unkind, the disappointment of not doing well e.g. at school or in a driving test etc., someone they care about becoming ill or passing away etc.

Slide 6 - 10 tips for building resilience in children

Teach your child the importance of engaging and connecting with their peers, including the skill of empathy and listening to others. We all learn so much about social skills through our interaction with one another.

It's also important to build a strong family network. Connecting with others provides social support and strengthens resilience. It feels good to know you have a network of support around you for when you need it too!

Slide 7 - Help your child by having them help others

Children who may feel helpless can feel empowered by helping others. Ask for their help with tasks that they can master. Perhaps get them to list ways they can help others. Getting them to do jobs at home that they have to take responsibility for.

Slide 8 - Maintain a daily routine

Sticking to a routine can be comforting to children, especially younger children who crave structure in their lives.

Work with your child to develop a routine, and highlight times that are for school work and play. Particularly during times of distress or transition, you might need to be flexible with some routines. At the same time, schedules and consistency are important to maintain.

It is also important not to be too rigid with a routine as a child will then struggle when there is a change. You can always prepare a child for a change and give them a heads up before it happens.

Slide 9 – Take a break

While some anxiety can motivate us to take positive action, we also need to validate all feelings. Teach your child how to focus on something that they can control or can act on. Help by challenging unrealistic thinking by asking them to examine the chances of the worst case scenario and what they might tell a friend who has those worries.

Be aware of what your child is exposed to that can be troubling, whether it's through the news, online, or overheard conversations.

Slide 10 - Teach your child self-care

Teach your child the importance of basic self-care. This may be making more time to eat properly, exercise, and get sufficient sleep. Make sure your child has time to have fun, and participate in activities they enjoy. Caring for oneself and even having fun will help children stay balanced and better deal with stressful times. Also talk about the importance of not having too much screen time - particularly near bed time!

Slide 11 - Move toward your goals

Teach your child to set reasonable goals and help them to move toward them one step at a time.

Establishing goals will help children focus on a specific task and can help build the resilience to move forward in the face of challenges.

Slide 12 - Nurture a positive self-view

Help your child remember ways they have successfully handled hardships in the past and help them understand that these past challenges help build the strength to handle future challenges.

Help your child learn to trust themselves to solve problems and make appropriate decisions.

Slide 13 - Keep things in perspective and maintain a hopeful outlook

Even when your child is facing very painful events, help them look at the situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective.

Although your child may be too young to consider a long-term look on their own, help them see that there is a future beyond the current situation and that the future can be good. An optimistic and positive outlook can enable children to see the good things in life and keep going even in the hardest times.

Slide 14 - Look for opportunities for self-discovery

Tough times are often when children learn the most about themselves. Help your child take a look at how whatever they're facing can teach them "what am I made of."

Slide 15 - Accept change

Change often can be scary for children and teens. Help your child see that change is part of life and new goals can replace goals that have become unattainable. It is important to examine what is going well, and to have a plan of action for what is not going well.

This includes transition points such as starting a new school, moving year groups, starting a new club - help your child to see the positives in these changes.

Slide 16 - What does emotional dysregulation look like?

Problems with self-regulation manifest in different ways depending on the child.

Some children are instantaneous — they have a huge, strong reaction and there's no lead-in or build-up. They can't inhibit that immediate behaviour response." It can be hard to predict or anticipate their reactions.

For other children, distress seems to build up and they can only take it for so long. Eventually it leads to some sort of behavioural outburst.

The key for both kinds of child is to learn to handle those strong reactions and find ways to express their emotions that are more effective (and less disruptive) than having a meltdown.

Slide 17

Slide 18 - How do we teach self-regulation skills?

"When you think of it as a skill to be taught — rather than, say, just bad behaviour — it changes the tone and content of the feedback you give kids."

Imagine a situation that can produce strong negative emotions, like frustrating maths homework. If a parent hovers too much, they risk taking over the regulation role.

Instead of the child recognizing that the work is frustrating and figuring out how to handle it, what they feel is that the parent is frustrating them by making them do it."

Scaffolding in this situation might be helping the child with one problem, and then expecting them to try the rest. If they feel frustrated, they might get up and get a drink. They might use a timer to give themselves periodic breaks. The parent would check in on them at intervals, and offer praise for their efforts.

Slide 19 - Practice runs

1. For instance, if you've had trouble with a child reacting impulsively or [having a tantrum in a store](#), make a short visit when you don't need to do serious shopping. Have them practise walking with you, keeping their hands to themselves. They get points towards some goal every time they are successful.
2. For instance, if brushing their teeth is a problem for your child, you might start by focusing just on putting toothpaste on the brush, and respond with positive feedback and rewards when they do it. Once they've practised that a few times, add the next step in the chain. Similarly, if getting out the door in the morning is causing meltdowns, target one step at a time. First, say, getting dressed by 7:15. Once they've mastered that, set a target time for breakfast, and add that. Breaking the chain into small steps allows them to build self-regulation skills in manageable increments.

Slide 20 - Help your child recognize the higher-goal

Why don't we grab the toy away from our friend? Because we want to get along with our friends:

"When Sarah comes over to play we can pick out a few toys you can take turns with. That is being a good friend. You can play some games together too. Then, this afternoon, you will have all your toys to yourself again."

Why don't we yell while the librarian is reading the story? Because we want to hear the story:

"When the librarian reads the book, all the children are quiet so we can hear the story. There will be a time you can sing and dance too."

Why don't we eat the birthday cake on the table? Because it's our friend's cake and we don't want her to be disappointed when it's time to blow out the candles:

"This is Sam's birthday cake. Keep your fingers away from the cake. He will blow out the candles after we sing "Happy Birthday!" Won't he be excited! And then won't you be excited to get a whole piece of cake for yourself!"

Slide 21

Slide 22 - Acknowledge the challenge of regulation

"Sometimes it feels hard to wait. When you are waiting you can do something else." When I tell my son he has to wait for a special treat, he might say: "But can I just look at it, can I just touch it?" I say, "Let's take a quick look and then let's do something else, it is harder to wait when you are looking at it." I acknowledge that it is hard, I also acknowledge his desire (impulse), and offer a strategy to help him regulate.

Slide 23 - Have your child make a choice and a plan

No child is ever too young to make a choice. Does your 7-month-old want carrots or peas? Well, you know by which one they spit out the least.

Give you child choices throughout the day.

Do you want to walk to the playground or play in the garden? Will you have milk or water? Which pair of shoes will you wear today?

This morning we are staying at home and we can do any of these things- what would you like to do first, second and third?

Slide 24 - Play games that focus on self-regulation skills

Any game that asks kids to control something is fostering self-regulation. Like a whispering game, slow down speed up, the freeze game/dance, Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes, Simon Says, Red Light Green Light, and similar.

Slide 25 - Remember self-regulation skills develop over a lifetime

The organization of the brain system that underlies self-regulation occurs around the age of three. And that's why we see toddler defiance.

Rapid development occurs in the system until the age of five.

The system matures between the ages of 5 to 7, with girls being a little ahead of boys. Development continues at a slower pace until puberty when a second brain growth spurt means a whole new level of regulation skills will need to be organized and learned in adolescence.

Development in the self-regulation of the brain is thought to be complete sometime in your mid-30s.

All those teachable moments will add up over the years. There may be times when you feel like you don't see any progress — it develops slowly and gradually. It is one of those things where you'll see effects much later. This is where it is important to teach your child that it takes time for a brain to grow and they will have to try and try again to master things they want to learn, games they want to play, and more.

Slide 26 - Ways to practise self-regulation

Practise deep belly breathing. Take a deep inhale through your nose, pause at the top, before releasing a slow exhale through your mouth. Repeat 3-4 times or more as needed.

Listen to upbeat music when you are feeling down, or calming music when you are feeling tense.

When unhelpful or negative thoughts enter your mind, acknowledge them, then move on. Think of it as changing your thought pattern. Search for a positive spin you can take on the situation or something encouraging you can say to yourself: "I don't like the tone I used with Hunter when he spilled his cereal bowl on the floor. Next time, I will take a deep breath and use a calm voice to help him learn to clean up his messes."

Think before acting. This involves taking a pause between your feelings and an action. Feel your feelings and name them. Are you angry, frustrated? Once you can name the feeling, you can tame it. This will help you access the thinking part of your brain. Ask yourself: Could there be any negative consequences to my action or reaction?

See if you can find the humour in the situation. Messes can be really funny.

Spend some time thinking about what happens in your body when you start to feel upset. Does your heart pound faster or your stomach churn? What helps you notice those feelings and remain calm? There are as many techniques as there are parents, so it is important that you have a "go to" strategy or two.

Slide 27 - Modelling self-regulation

We learn self-regulation techniques as early as infancy. It's the reason we no longer have meltdowns in the middle of the supermarket when our favourite food is out of stock. When babies are infants, picking them up and holding them when they are upset is the first step in teaching regulation. They learn that the world is a safe place, and their parents will help them contain and work through their feelings.

As a toddler, your child learnt to manage big feelings. Naming feelings is important in teaching your child to identify and calm. If you can name it, you can tame it. When toddlers are given words for feelings, they can eventually learn to recognize them, and cope with them. By holding your infant and toddler and supporting them through tough feelings, you are building social emotional competence.

Share your feelings with your child. If someone cuts you off in traffic, you may say that it made you scared. When you need to wait to see the doctor, you may tell your child it is frustrating to have to wait, and then talk about what we can do to help us wait patiently.

Keep in mind that our children learn self-regulation techniques through the way you parent and how you manage your feelings. You will see your child act like you do, and say what they hear you say. Let's strive to be the best role models we can be!

For example, if you say within earshot of your child "I'm really worried about them going on the residential trip, they will take on your worry or think they should be worried about it."

Slide 28 - Zones of Regulation

As a school, we are in the early stages of introducing the zones of regulations as a whole school strategy. It is a strategy that can easily be used at home too.

Slide 29

Slide 30

Slide 31

Slide 32

Slide 33

Slide 34 – The Zones of Regulation

Poster for explaining the zones and the feelings in each zone - downloadable from the Zones of Regulation website - links on last 2 slides.

Slide 35 – Zones of Regulations – What to do when I am in the zone

Possible strategies for the different zones.

Slide 36 - The Zones of Regulation Toolbox

An example of strategies for an individual child for each zone.

Slide 37

Slide 38

Slide 39