

Parenting for Emotional Regulation

10 Key Concepts

1) **God designed babies with the capacity to shift from a state of stress back to a state of calm in *only one way*- through the parent/child relationship.** Every need is met by the parent until the child can transition into meeting some of those needs on his own. **Relationship is essential!**

2) With the recognition that all behaviors come from stress, parenting needs to emphasize emotional regulation to decrease the stress and build relationship to increase love, commitment, empathy and compassion. **Calming the brain is far more effective than “behavioral control” and is the best support for long term development.**

3) **Typical parenting strategies, such as consequences and rewards, do not work to change behavior in children who are in a state of persistent/heightened stress and arousal.** The areas of the brain responsible for cause & effect and abstract & logical thinking are “hijacked” in this state. A dysregulated brain leads to dysregulated behavior, while a regulated brain leads to regulation.

4) **Regulation needs to start with the parent (or professional)-** noting what regulates and dysregulates them personally. Learning to stay regulated gives great insight in developing strategies to help your child, as well. Staying calm during stressful moments shows your child that you can help him through this moment, and that the problem isn't too big to be fixed.

5) **Because regulation happens in the context of relationship, a parent needs to assist in calming the child's brain(decreasing the stress) to calm his behaviors.** Teaching your child to replace a negative thought with a positive one is a great life skill. It teaches that solutions exist, and your first reaction is not always the *best* solution.

6) **When regulation increases (parent and child), so does attachment, as well as a reduction in difficult/negative behaviors, with little attention paid to the behaviors, but loving attention paid consistently to the child.** Validating both physical pain and the emotional reaction helps your child understand that it's ok to feel that way.

7) **Avoid over-stimulation.** Overly emotional children tend to get overly stimulated quickly. Keep parties and big outings short, and always balance it with quiet time at home. Frequent breaks to regroup are needed. **Regularly practice “slow and low” with the child.** Slow the relationship down to a calm state (low voice, both volume& pitch and slow gestures)

8) The brain learns through repetition. The more often we practice regulation, the more it will be a natural response to our child's dysregulation. **Children under stress do not have the words to express what they are feeling. To help your child understand his feelings label them for him.** Use feeling words throughout the day to label your child's feelings and your own. Eventually it will help your child understand what he is going through.

9) **Emotionally intense children tend to be more affected by hunger and exhaustion.** Explain to your children that sometimes our bodies just need extra food or a little rest to calm down.

10) **The vestibular system is responsible for balance, focus, and even plays a role in emotional regulation.** But the best way to activate the vestibular system is by moving through space. **So, if your child is having trouble with focus or emotional regulation, try encouraging movements like spinning and swinging regularly and you will soon notice a huge shift in behavior!**

Unlocking the mystery of your child's *REGULATION* could be a piece to your Parenting Puzzle!

To learn about parent coaching or for more training on this topic,
contact Erin Blain at erin@solvingparentingpuzzles.com