



Co-Regulation

What is it and what are the benefits?

Jessica Getter, Occupational Therapist

Co-regulation is a process in which parents or caregivers step in to help a child regulate their emotions. Young children do not yet know how to understand, process, and respond to their emotions. Co-regulation is a tool to help children learn the skills needed to manage their emotions.

When you're upset, frustrated or mad do you have an easier time calming down when others around you also get upset? Or do you calm down much easier when those around you reassure you and help you through it? This is the same for our children. Some ways to co-regulate with your child might be:



EMOTIONAL MODELING Show them the calm way to handle the situation, model what you want them to do.



GIVE THEM A HUG Create a pause or break in the outburst with a calm hug. Not only will this make your child feel supported, but it will make you feel the love, too.



HELP THEM IDENTIFY THEIR FEELINGS Often, children may show big feelings but not have the word to name it. Helping them understand what feelings they are experiencing and letting them know that it's ok to have big feelings will make them feel more in control.



REMOVE THE TRIGGER Is the child in a space that is overwhelming? Bring them to a quiet space and stay with them to help them recover. When our senses are stressed emotional regulation is hard! Just because you don't think the environment is overwhelming doesn't mean your child experiences it in the same way.



MAKE SURE BASIC NEEDS ARE MET We can't expect children to regulate themselves if they are overly tired, hungry or need to use the bathroom. Be proactive in meeting those needs as a way of co-regulating. Give them grace during that time.



PRO TIP: Just remember, BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION. If your child is having a hard time ask yourself what factors are playing a role in that outburst. Help them regulate through it.

Not all adults can self-regulate 100% of the time so we can't expect children to. It's ok for children to have big, challenging emotions as long as the adults in their life can help them through it in effective ways.



Jessica Getter
Occupational Therapist

Undergraduate Degree
Occupational Therapy
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

Years of Experience
11 years

Specialty Interests
Sensory Integration Dysfunction, Neurodevelopmental Techniques, Brachial Plexus Injuries, Torticollis, Picky Eating, Posture and Breathing, Therapeutic Listening, Reflex Integration, Neurological Conditions, Developmental Delays and Splinting

Philosophy
It's important for me to help a family find ways for their child or family member to participate in all aspects of life, both in the home and community. I always incorporate the family into treatment sessions and support them in carrying over strategies into their home and daily routines.

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