



# REGULATION

In times of stress or high anxiety the body may feel anxious, and the brain may feel overwhelmed or scattered. Regulating our bodies through positive self-talk, deep breathing and an awareness of one's surroundings can lead to increased feelings of calm, peace and ability to move from chaos to security.



## Infants and Toddlers: 0-2 years

- **Rhythmic movement:** Holding and rocking your baby back and forth or using a baby swing or bouncer to create a consistent motion helps to regulate the heartbeat, body temperature and movement.
- **Songs:** Singing a lullaby or playful song to your baby can help calm them when upset or just have some fun when under stress. Singing with your baby also supports the connection between baby and loved one.
- **Gentle stroking and massage:** Rhythmic stroking across a baby's forehead, gently stroking of hands and feet helps to regulate a baby's heartbeat, body temperature and movement.



## Early Childhood: 3-6 years

- **Breathe:** Encourage your young child to practice deep breaths. You can do this using pinwheels, party blowers, or bubbles. Breathing helps your child calm down and regulate their own body.
- **Empathic Responses:** Name your child's feelings. This will help to develop the language they need to name their feelings, giving them the tools to regulate their own emotions.
- **Ride the Emotional Wave:** When big feelings occur, you may need to hold, love, and support your child as they cry or tantrum it out of their body. Try to resist the urge to tell your child it will be okay. Being quiet or gently humming, your child will feel supported while gaining control of their own body and feelings.



## Middle Childhood: 7-12 years

- **Create a Safe Space:** Create a safe space where children can go to express emotions freely. Provide pillows for punching or yelling into, art and writing materials for drawing or writing about feelings, as well as space for music and movement.
- **Validate children's feelings don't try to change them:** By validating children's feelings you are acknowledging their experience. Let children be upset before moving towards "fixing" the problem. This will help you child learn to regulate their own emotions and discover their own silver linings.
- **Prepare children for changes:** Talk about changes that are happening or may happen. Help them create their own strategies for managing changes, preparing for them, and finding ways to cope.



## Adolescence: 13+ years

- **Grounding:** When upset grounding helps the body/brain regulate itself back to baseline, by focusing on the sensations of leaning against a wall, reciting a poem, or taking a short walk.
- **Mantras and Self Talk:** Encourage your teen to develop a mantra and/or positive self talk. When the brain gets into a negative loop, having a go to phrase to repeat helps to break the cycle of negativity, anxiety, and stress.
- **Music and Movement:** Getting the body up and moving helps to release tension anxiety and stress we might be holding or storing. Listening to music uses a different part of the brain and can help override negative thoughts and feelings.