

Let's Get Regulated!

Information for Parents



Developed by the NCSE Occupational Therapy Team

- Spending more time indoors due to social distancing measures will be challenging for children and parents.
- This resource pack aims to provide parents with activity ideas that can be included in your child's routine at home to help them stay calm, alert and learning.
- The wellbeing of families is important during these testing times. The following link offers some great advice:
<https://www.rcot.co.uk/staying-well-when-social-distancing>

This resource pack aims to share some information and ideas for parents on supporting self-regulation. It is hoped that some of these activities can be integrated into your child's play at home to support their self-regulation.

What is Self-Regulation?

Self-regulation is the ability of our brain to take in, organise and manage sensory information around us. We experience the world through our senses-sound, sight, taste, smell and physical sensation.

It includes being able to:

- Manage energy levels
- React to emotions like frustration or excitement.
- Calm down after something exciting or upsetting.
- Focus on a task.
- Control impulses.
- Learn behaviour that helps us get along with other people.

This resource pack will look at ways we can support our children to stay regulated under three different categories:

1. The Value of Routines
2. Sensory Motor Circuit
3. Cosy Corner/ Area at Home

What can I do to help my child self-regulate?

1. Provide structure and order.



Structure the environment to make self-regulation manageable, providing a buffer against environmental stressors. This means creating an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for children to explore and learn at their level of development without risk to their wellbeing. Two ideas that are discussed in this booklet are:

- a. Creating a daily family routine schedule and
- b. Creating a safe cosy corner/area in the home

2. Teach self-regulation skills through modelling, instruction and opportunities for practice.



Parents are always teaching skills like naming emotions, problem-solving, perspective-taking, and calm-down strategies to their children. If you notice your child during the day is unable to concentrate, lethargic or sleepy, distracted, emotional or overwhelmed, it might be a sign that they need a movement break. Why? Exercise helps our brain to:

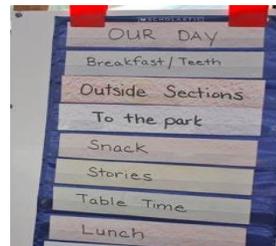
- maintain focus
- stretch our muscles
- reduce stress and the feeling of being overwhelmed
- re-set our posture and
- boost memory.

This booklet will provide you with some ideas for simple exercises at home to actively teach an effective way to help children to self-regulate their own sensory needs throughout the day.

The Value of Routines

Predictable and set routines can help reduce young peoples' worries/anxiety during this stressful time. Every family has its own unique routines. Routines help family members know who should do what, when, in what order and how often.

Creating a visual schedule together as a family is a nice way to ensure everyone is aware of the plan for the day, you can use pictures, drawings, writing the words or all of the above. Your daily planner can include times for work, free play, meal times, outdoor play, screen time, chores and could also include a sensory circuit and cosy corner times which are explained later in the booklet.



 **Tip:** RTE Daily School is set to run from 11am-12pm Monday to Friday- this could be added to your schedule.

 **Tip:** Get the kids involved in a 30 minute PE lesson with Joe Wicks The Body Coach weekdays at 9am on his YOUTUBE channel: The Body Coach TV
<https://www.youtube.com/user/thebodycoach1/featured>

Sensory Motor Circuit

Sensory Motor Circuit (Horwood, 2008) is a simple and effective way to help children to self-regulate their own sensory needs throughout the day which can lead to better concentration, fewer disruptions and improved education outcomes for all. It enables children to reach the level of alertness needed to concentrate.

This booklet will help you to create a sensory circuit at home. The order of the circuit is extremely important:

1. Alerting section
2. Organising section
3. Calming section.

The circuit ends on calming activities as we would like to end every session in a calm and alert state. Every person is different so try a few calming exercises to see what ones work best for your body.



USEFUL TIP



It is useful to play music during the circuit. At home, it can mark the beginning and the end of the circuit. The music could vary from fast paced during the alerting activities and soothing during the calming exercises.

1. Alerting activities:

Fast moving activities that require rapid changes of the body and head position will tend to be alerting. This prepares the brain for learning.

Alerting activities include skipping, running and jumping jacks. Please refer to the alerting dice resource and the link below for more ideas of alerting activities.

Jog on the spot



Jumping Jacks



Skipping



Hop on one leg



For more alerting activities please see:

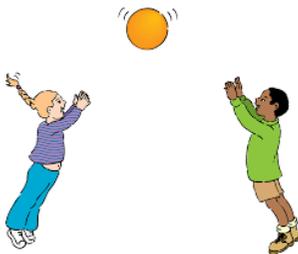
<https://www.gonoodle.com/>

2. Organising activities:

This includes activities that require the child to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time in a set sequential order. These are skills that may increase a child's focus, attention span and performance.

Organising activities include climbing, balancing, and throwing. Please refer to the organising dice resource and the link below for more ideas of organising activities.

Throwing and Catching Games



Walk in a straight line



Simon Says



Stand on one leg



For more organising activities please see:

<https://activeforlife.com/resource-intro/>

3. Calming activities:

The aim is to provide proprioceptive input which is sensations from joints, muscles and connective tissues that underlie body awareness. These calming activities provide input to ensure that as the children finish, they are calm and ready for the task ahead.

Calming activities include: press-ups, crawling exercises or a big hug. Please refer to the calming dice resource and the link below for more ideas of calming activities.

Wall Press



Palm Press



Give Yourself a Big Hug



Breathing Exercise

Breathe in the smell of the flowers and blow out the candles.



For more calming activities please see:

<https://www.cosmickids.com/category/watch/>

Making a Cosy Corner/Area in your home

Creating a Cosy Corner is a great way to ensure that children have somewhere to go when they need to have some quiet time to themselves. If a child is upset or simply overwhelmed they may not yet have the skills to regulate emotions on their own. Some children like to be soothed by an adult with some hugs or cuddles and others may prefer to go off to soothe themselves. Self-soothing is a great skill for young children to learn.

You can make your cosy area fit your home, working with whatever space you have available. Please see below a few examples of how it could look. However use your imagination and together create your own unique cosy area. Your cosy corner can incorporate all of the senses touch, see, hear, smell and taste so time to get creative. For more information on sensory processing and ideas on what to include in your cosy space, please see the parental booklet on sensory processing in the link below.

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Sensory-Processing-booklet-for-parents.pdf>



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