



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Early Years

Ready family

Ready child

Supporting emotions and behaviour





Supporting emotions and behaviour (self-regulation):

To help your child to begin to self-regulate you can

Rules and Routines:

You have already started teaching self-regulation by having clear routines at home as these provide your child with emotional warmth and stability. In other words, they feel safe, secure and happy in the knowledge of what is expected and why we do the things, we do. Once you do this, you have created an environment that is physically and emotionally safe for your child to explore and learn without causing any risks to their wellbeing. Those consistent and predictable routines support your child to have a sense of security, it also supports their independence and without these a child is likely to struggle to self-regulate.



Self-regulation in the Early Years:

In our Early Years, the adults who are supporting the child are co-regulators; and our role is to support children to begin to self-regulate. Some Early Years settings use the Birth to Five Matters guidance to support their practice. If you want to find out more about Self-regulation, then visit [Birth to Five Matters \(p20\)](#).

You might also want to explore [Keep Calm, let's talk about self-regulation](#) as the Professional Association for Childcare and the Early Years (PACEY) supports us further to understand self-regulation.

Self-regulation is like riding a bike:

Let us look at the role you will take on as your child's 'co regulator'. It might help you to think of it as helping your child to ride a bike.

- In the beginning, your child simply sits on the bike and you do all the work holding up the bike, making sure it is balanced and pushing it forward.
- Soon, your child gets used to balancing on the bike and they start pedalling and balancing on their own. At some point, you can let go.



Holding up the bike at the beginning is essential for children to learn to ride the bike. Without your help, children are likely to fall and hurt themselves. When it becomes too much, or you may not be there to hold the bike up, then they may give up and not bother to want to learn to ride the bike.

Self-regulation (riding the bike):

- In the beginning, you are supporting them to regulate their emotions, thoughts and behaviours. They will need lots of support and guidance from you to keep them balanced.
- Soon, your child will be confident to know who and when to ask for help, communicate their needs to others around them, know the language and communication skills needed to communicate to others how they are feeling, and know what helps them to feel safe, secure and happy again.

If you are consistent and available to support your child to self-regulate then they are likely to keep going and they will (begin to self-regulate).

You will need to be calm and composed when you are supporting your child to self-regulate, as it can sometimes be a challenge for families to support their child. Do not worry, your calming response will be translated to your child and they will eventually feel safe, secure and happy again. You are your child's role model, so they learn from you how to deal with their emotions thoughts and behaviours. If they see you lose your temper, shout, scream and have a (tantrum or outburst) then they are likely to act in the same way.

You can calm your nervous system by taking deep breaths, clearing your mind, and using positive self-talk. Sometimes it helps to wait before diving in to help your child, stand back, count mentally to ten and then approach and support your child.

If you need further support with self-regulation, you can contact your local [Children's Centre](#) who will be able to provide you with support.

Supporting feeling and emotions (self-regulation)

You can help by noticing and commenting on their feelings and behaviours. When you do this you are supporting your child to link their feelings to behaviours, helping them to connect with you and feel loved, it also raises their emotional intelligence.

- I can see you are cross with that car.
- You are feeling grumpy. Perhaps you are tired?
- You look sad. Is it because it is broken?
- You wanted the blue one and not the red one so you look frustrated.
- I can see you are frightened is it because you have never been here before?

Top tip: Comment on what they are doing, how they might be feeling, and what they might be thinking.

Once you support your child to name the emotion you can also provide them with praise and acknowledgement when they attempt to regulate their emotions and behaviours.

All children need our help to feel calm, safe, secure and happy again. Instead of chastising and getting cross yourself, find ways that help your child to calm their brains. You know your child best and sometimes it will take a few attempts to find out the strategy that your child responds to, so do not worry. When you find the best strategy, please share this with the Early Years setting your child attends, as this will support the keyperson to meet the needs of your unique child. Your child is unique

and likewise the calming strategy that works for them might not work for another child. So best not to compare with other families. Some strategies to try are;

First	Next direct them to an activity which supports them to feel happy, safe and secure and engage in a positive way e.g.
Create some space for yourself and the child to regulate.	Share a book with them. Listening to music. Use meditation. Lay down on some soft cushions, cuddle a teddy or blanket. Build a jigsaw. Sitting close and hug them. Get physical (go for a walk). Calm colouring. Squeezing squidgy stress toys. Putting on their headphones

To get more advice on self-regulation visit [how to talk to your child about feelings](#)

Where else can you get ideas and support?

If your child is not in a setting yet, you can search for suitable childcare (Early Years education) in the comfort of your own home by using our [Childcare Local Offer](#). If you need further support then our [Family Information Service](#) can help you to find suitable childcare.

To help you make an informed decision on the right childcare setting we have some questions that you might want to consider when you make contact with the Early Years Setting ([link here](#)).

If you want to know how to pay for the childcare (Early Years education) then visit the Governments website [Childcare Choices](#) that will provide you with choices on how to pay for the childcare (Early Years education).

Our Children Centre's can also provide you with a timetable of their play and stay sessions here [Children Centre](#).