

Self-Regulation in the Kindergarten Classroom A Fact Sheet For Parents and Caregivers

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When you visited our Kindergarten classroom, you may have noticed that it looks very different from when you were in Kindergarten. Today's play and inquiry based Kindergarten Program encourages children to develop independence and confidence by exploring and interacting with their classmates. The educators create a learning environment that promotes calmness by limiting clutter and including areas that the children can go to when they are feeling overstimulated or stressed. This environment is designed to promote *Self-Regulation*, which is the ability to cope with stimuli in a way that supports rather than limits learning. Calming strategies are incorporated throughout the day and students are provided with choice and a variety of activities (whole group, small group, movement, mindfulness) as well as large blocks of uninterrupted play. Self-regulation skills help children recognize their emotional state, and use strategies to help control impulses, set boundaries, make good choices and solve problems.

We use [The Zones of Regulation](#) to help students develop an awareness of their emotions and learn the vocabulary needed to talk about how they are feeling. When children are in "The Green Zone", they are calm and ready to learn. We teach students to recognize what calm feels like, and give them strategies, such as deep breathing, to calm their bodies. In his book, [Calm, Alert and Learning: Classroom Strategies for Self-Regulation](#), Dr. Stuart Shanker outlines the ways that educators and parents can help children to develop self-regulation skills. He divides Self-Regulation into five domains:

Biological Domain:

- Physical health and energy levels
- Ability to remain calm amid distractions and recoup after difficulty
- Healthy daily routines and enjoyment of physical activities

Emotional Domain:

- Ability to modulate strong emotions
- Willingness to experiment, learn, create and innovate
- Healthy self-esteem

Cognitive Domain:

- Ability to focus and switch focus
- Considering others' perspectives
- Plan and execute several steps in a row
- Understand cause and effect
- See that failure provides opportunity to learn
- Manage time
- Develop self-awareness

The Social Domain:

- Understand one's feelings and intentions, and those of others
- Respond to the feelings and intentions of others appropriately
- Monitor the effects of one's responses on others
- Be an effective communicator- listener and speaker
- Recover from and repair breakdowns in interactions (compromise)

The Prosocial Domain:

- Help regulate others and co-regulate
- Honesty with self and others
- Empathy
- Desire to do the right thing and act on convictions

As a parent/caregiver, you can help your child develop self-regulation skills by:

- Keeping routines (meal times, bed times)
- Talking about transitions and changes
- Giving as much notice as possible when there is a change in routines
- Counting down to transition times (5 minute warning)
- Helping to develop optimism that he/she can and will be successful
- Focusing on your child's strengths
- Encouraging accountability and sharing in their pride
- Helping your child with time management
- Modeling self-regulation
- Paying attention to sleep, diet and exercise
- Using the strategies used in class, and finding other ones that work at home
- Talking about feelings and drawing attention to how other people are feeling in certain situations (stories, books or real life)
- Having conversations about the best and worst parts of their day.
- Asking them to describe not only what happened at school, but how did they feel when it happened? What did they do? What can they say to themselves when they feel this way? What plan did they make? What could they do next time?
- Sharing with your child examples of times that you also had similar emotions.

Together, educators, caregivers and parents can help children develop the ability to self-regulate by teaching them strategies for coping with the stressors they face throughout the day. For more information, please see the resources listed below.

Resources:

- The Zones of Regulation:
<https://www.zonesofregulation.com/learn-more-about-the-zones.html>
- Canadian Self-Regulation Initiative (CSRI): <http://www.self-regulation.ca/>
- Stuart Shanker
 - ❖ [Calm, Alert and Learning: Classroom Strategies for Self-Regulation](#)
 - ❖ <https://self-reg.ca/parent-resources/>