

22/02/2024



# *A focus on emotional regulation*

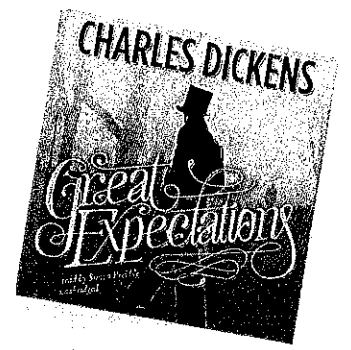
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Annabel Stenning,  
Trainee Educational Psychologist

Jen Surguy  
Assistant Educational Psychologist



## Before we start...



This session is for you...!

Have you got any expectations or hopes for this session?

*Please put any thoughts you have on a sticky note and bring it up to the front*

## Session aims:

- Understanding what is emotional regulation
- Typical development versus possible signs of atypical development
- Practical strategies to promote and support emotional regulation
- Further support information

## What is emotional regulation?

- Managing your own thoughts and feelings, being aware of your own behaviour to enable you to reach a certain goal.
- A vital skill but something we do without much thought, particularly as an adult.
- To promote wellbeing including physical, social, emotional, educational achievement.
- Sets a child up for later in life as they will be more resilient and able to manage their emotions better.
- If a child is regulated, they are more likely to be motivated and therefore engage in learning.

# Signs a child is emotionally dysregulated

- Stomping feet
- Screaming
- Throwing things
- Refusing to speak
- Inability to be flexible
- Anger
- Lack of eye contact
- Crying
- Running away
- Difficulty following instructions / listening

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## Discussion time...

*What factors do you think affect a child's ability to emotionally regulate?*

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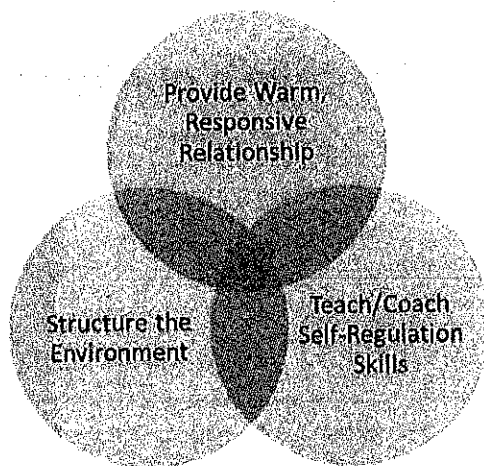
# Some factors for emotional regulation...

- Age
  - Trauma
  - SEND
  - Parents/ carers, teachers or support staff who demonstrate good self regulation skills themselves
- Children can sense and know when an adult is not regulated.
- If adults around children are not regulated and calm, then it will be almost impossible for a child to be able to regulate

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## Co-regulation

### How to Co-Regulate



• We are not born knowing how to soothe ourselves.

- Children need to learn the felt sense of being soothed from someone who can bear their distress and stay regulated in their own nervous system.
- So co-regulation is essential, as an initial step.
- Children who have experienced trauma will require this considerably more than those who haven't witnessed trauma.

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# Behaviour is communication

- There are so many factors that impact our behaviour, it could be something at home, it could be that a lesson is inaccessible, it could be bullying there are a whole host of issues.
- We often try and change childrens' behaviours through the use of rewards and punishments.

[Behaviour is communication / #02 \(youtube.com\)](#)

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## Typical development



### Sensorimotor Stage

The infant constructs an understanding of the world by coordinating sensory experiences with physical actions. An infant progresses from reflexive, instinctual action at birth to the beginning of symbolic thought toward the end of the stage.

Birth to 2 Years of Age



### Preoperational Stage

The child begins to represent the world with words and images. These words and images reflect increased symbolic thinking and go beyond the connection of sensory information and physical action.

2 to 7 Years of Age



### Concrete Operational Stage

The child can now reason logically about concrete events and classify objects into different sets.

7 to 11 Years of Age

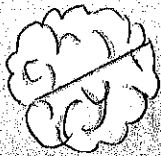


### Formal Operational Stage

The adolescent reasons in more abstract, idealistic, and logical ways.

11 Years of Age Through Adulthood

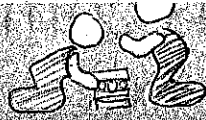
**FIGURE 9.6** Piaget's Four Stages of Cognitive Development Jean Piaget described how human beings, through development, become ever more sophisticated thinkers about the world.



### COGNITIVE DELAYS

- Lack of interest in playtime
- Disinterest in the environment
- Slow to respond
- Lack of curiosity

Cognitive delays affect all other areas of a child's development, including childhood speech, language skills, and social and emotional development.



### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DELAYS

- Social awkwardness
- Inability or difficulty initiating conversation
- Difficulty coping
- Prolonged temper tantrums or outbursts

### Possible signs of atypical development



### SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DELAYS

- Childhood apraxia of speech – a childhood speech disorder relating to the inability or difficulty of executing speech movements in sequence
- Expressive language delays – difficulty using words to communicate
- Late talkers – Used to describe a limited spoken vocabulary in comparison to peers
- Learning disabilities – difficulty with reading, writing, and spelling
- Dysarthria – A motor speech disorder caused by weakened vocal muscles

*But with any behaviour – response to intervention, length of time, frequency and impact on life are the main causes for concern*



## Strategy 1: Language

### • The Importance of Language:

#### Imperative Language

"Stop snatching"

▶ Direct

#### Declarative Language

"I've noticed that you're feeling angry, let's do some breathing together"

▶ Indirect

- Use language to explore the feeling 'I'm wondering...' 'I notice that...'
- Use language to reinforce the behaviours you want to see

## Strategy 2: Modelling and 'wondering aloud'

- Social learning theory – Psychology we learn by watching other people.
- Examples: "It makes me really happy that you are using your kind hands and sharing nicely."

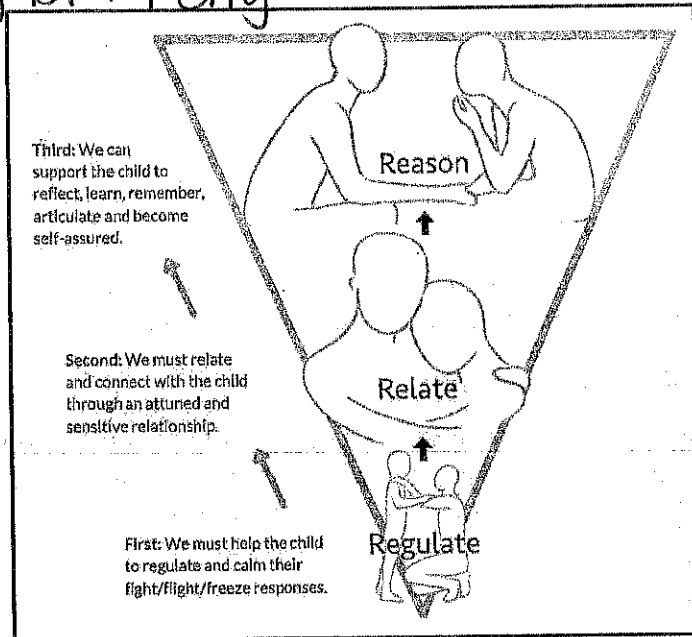
### Tips:

- Name emotions aloud both in yourself and / or your child. Verbalise how it feels: 'I worry when you run off, my heart is beating very fast'
- Say 'it makes me feel... when you...'
- Ask curious questions and be open to being wrong about the feelings your child is having, this will help them recognise and name their feelings and practice communicating this to you. 'I notice that... maybe you are feeling...because you did (behaviour)... is that right?'
- Sometimes called **Sustained Shared Thinking**

## Strategy 3: Consistency and boundaries

- I DO, WE DO, YOU DO and reflect
- Worry corner/ first aid kit.
- Get a breathing square when they feel worried or anxious.
- Transitional object
- Rewards can help to reinforce behaviours that we want to see, these don't have to be tangible, often the most rewarding things can be based around connection or special time.
- Praise for noticing good behaviour as it happens is also very rewarding, rather than only noticing the 'bad' behaviours.
- Helpful when children need attention, otherwise they will resort to the behaviours that get the most attention.

# The 3 R's... <sup>Bruce</sup> by Dr. Perry



- Impossible to engage if not regulated.

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## Strategy 4: Making moments for connection

Following Bruce Perry's 3R's hierarchy, after regulation comes **relating / relationship building**.

Remember Social Learning Theory?

➤ Children learn through observing and interacting with others and adults.

Therefore, the more moments for connection you can build into your child's routines the better!

- *E.g. games, creating things together, cooking or baking.*

If children prefer technology-based activities... how can you build in moments for connection?

- *E.g. getting them to show you how an online game works, being curious, playing alongside them.*

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## General strategies

- A day at school can be tiring for your child and can lead to some grumpy behaviour. Giving your child lots of cuddles, individual attention and encouraging quiet, calming activities may help. You may also want to consider setting consequences if they are not behaving as you would like them to.
- Show an interest in what your child has to say. This will let your child know they are important to you. Encourage them to talk by using open questions like "Tell me the best thing about your day?"
- Ask them to make up new endings to their favourite stories to help with their creative thinking.
- Try to stick to routines and visit familiar places which give your child security. They will be introduced to so many new challenges and will take comfort in the safety of things they feel familiar with.
- Encourage them to be more active by taking part in an activity they enjoy such as football or swimming. This will help them to keep healthy, to sleep better and to enjoy being active from a young age which will help them as they get older.
- They are still developing and learning how to fit in. **Tantrums, anger and frustration will still happen; this is completely normal.**
- **Talk to your child about their feelings. This helps them put words to these feelings.**
- Try to set aside some time for play as it is still very important at this age. Let your child choose how they want to spend this time and take the time to join in. This will give you the chance to enter their world and find out what they are thinking and feeling.
- Try to make play time work for you when things get busy. Get them to help you with simple tasks like tidying up, putting away clothes, or laying the table, maybe do this to music or when singing. Getting them to help out around the house will help them to feel grown up and can support positive behaviour.
- Try to reduce the amount of time spent in front of the television or on tablets and phones. You can spend time with your child by using Apps that develop their skills. The National Literacy Trust have a wide range of free Apps to download <http://literacyapps.literacytrust.org.uk/>

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## P.A.C.E approach

- Playfulness
- Acceptance (of emotion)
- Curiosity (about behaviour)
- Empathy – perspective taking, staying out of judgement, recognising emotion in others and then communicating that, feeling with others

*"Connection is neurobiologically why we are here"*

*"Rarely can a response make something better, what helps is connection"*

– Brené Browne

**P** **Playfulness**  
 • Playfulness in interactions can diffuse conflicts and promote connection  
 E.g. Maintaining a relaxed 'lightness' and cohesiveness making a joke through whilst to be done carefully

**A** **Acceptance**  
 • Accepting needs and emotions that drive behaviour (not necessarily the behaviour) without judgement

**C** **Curiosity**  
 • Being curious to where a behaviour has come from (in your head to out loud)

**E** **Empathy**  
 • Really connecting with how they are feeling and showing compassion

















P.A.C.E is an approach developed by Dr Dan Hughes aimed at supporting recovery from developmental trauma. However, it can be a useful attitude to adopt with anyone who is emotionally dysregulated.

Illustration by [unreadable]

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# BONUS strategy: Zones of regulation

## The ZONES of Regulation®

															
<b>BLUE ZONE</b>				<b>GREEN ZONE</b>				<b>YELLOW ZONE</b>				<b>RED ZONE</b>			
Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly				Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn				Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Spine Control				Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control			

*A school approach to supporting emotional literacy but can also be useful at home!  
Colours represent different emotions and can be a tool for getting a child to talk about / express how they are feeling and practice emotional vocabulary.*

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## Further support:

### Parenting programmes

Buckinghamshire's Family Support Service run a variety of parenting programmes for a range of ages. From toddlers to teens they can give you advice, support and confidence to meet your child's needs and reduce anxiety, stress and arguments at home.

Our programmes are:

- Little Talkers (for parents of 18 months to 3-year-olds)
- The Nurturing Programme (for parents of 3 to 11s)
- Talking Teens (for parents of 11 to 18s)
- Keeping your child in mind (all ages)



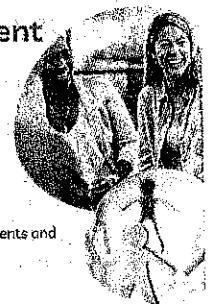
### SEND Parent to Parent Support Group

A monthly drop-in support session for parents of children with SEND.

The aim of the session is to:

- Meet other parents and carers
- Give and receive support from other parents and carers

No need to book, just turn up.



**Aylesbury**  
First Thursday of every month  
Southcourt Family Centre Plus



**Beaconsfield**  
Third Thursday of every month  
Beaconsfield Family Centre



**Wycombe**  
Fourth Thursday of every month  
Mapledean Family Centre Plus

All sessions run 1pm to 2pm

Contact us:  
01296 383293  
familyinfo@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

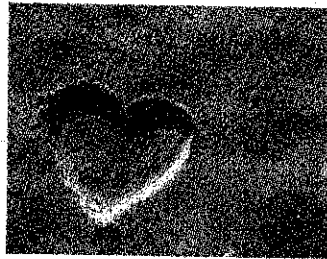


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And finally...

Be Kind to Yourself!

*Perfect isn't possible, you only need to be 'good  
enough'*



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