

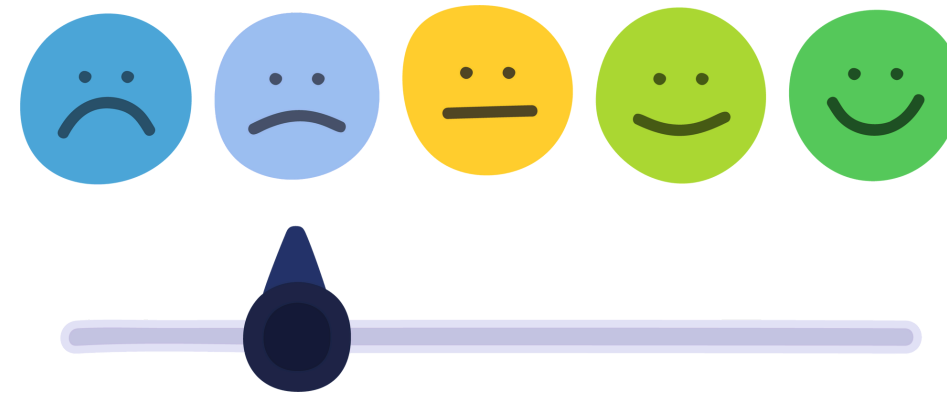
# Emotional Regulation

## What is emotional regulation?

Emotional regulation is the ability to identify and understand our emotions, in order to respond in ways that help us feel safe and connected.

### Foundational skills

- Co-regulation
- Interoception (body clues)
- Emotional words
- Safe sensory strategies



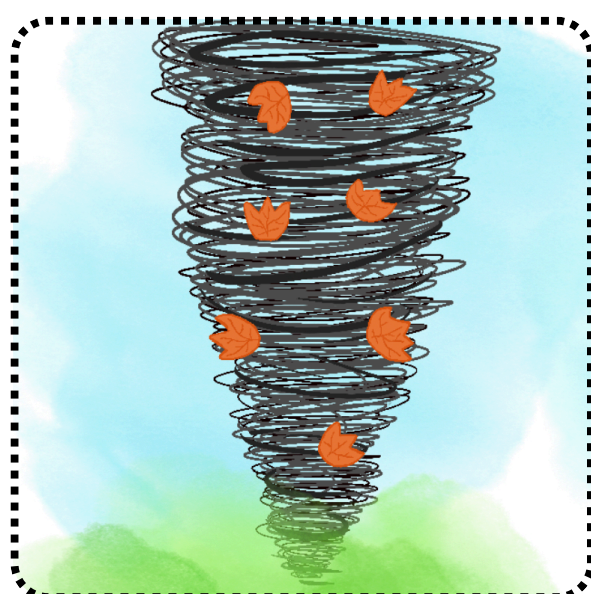
## Why children struggle with emotional regulation

- Emotional regulation is a skill that develops over time through a combination of biological foundations and environmental influences.
- The brain's 'self-regulation centre' (prefrontal cortex) doesn't fully mature until the mid-20s.
- Parents play an important role in the development of emotional regulation skills through explicitly teaching regulation, modelling and providing co-regulation.
- ADHD brains in particular can be more sensitive to emotions, stress, and rejection, which may make regulation harder.

## How to support emotional regulation development

- **Model emotions out loud:** "I feel frustrated, so I'm going to pause and take some deep breaths." Remember: there are no bad emotions!
- **Normalise all feelings:** "It's okay to feel jealous sometimes. Everyone does."
- **Teach words for feelings:** Use charts, books, or simple visuals. See the emotions chart resource on page 15.
- **Practice reflection:** When calm, discuss self regulation skills, i.e. what helps them feel better? What happened in X situation, and what could they do next time?
- **Embrace discomfort:** Our instinct is often to quickly resolve a child's distress, but sometimes, time is what they need most. Sitting with the discomfort of difficult emotions, before providing further support, demonstrates all emotions are safe.
- **Be their calm:** Emotional regulation can be a difficult skill for people of all ages, however, before we can effectively co-regulate with our child, we must regulate ourselves. **Your nervous system directly influences theirs, meaning your child will pick up on whether you are stressed and frustrated, or calm and collected.**

*When Their Storm*



*Meets Our Calm*



*Co-Regulation Occurs*

