



We all need to be comforted and encouraged sometimes. Young children are not yet able to calm or regulate themselves when they are having big, difficult feelings. Your child needs to share your calm to get through these big feelings. This is called co-regulation.



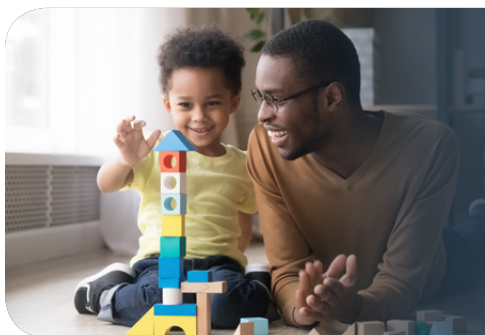
Co-regulation can look like:

- slowing down
- having a soft face and warm gaze
- lowering yourself to your child's level
- pausing, and using fewer words
- rocking, drumming, holding, breathing in sync

Co-regulation can sound like:

- "I see you"
- "I'm here"
- "You've got this"
- "We'll get through this"
- Singing, humming, drumming

A regulated child:



- is able to communicate and think clearly
- makes eye contact (if they are comfortable with it)
- breathes slow and steady
- feels settled and poised
- is able to express a wide range of emotions
- has a relaxed and loose body posture
- is able to laugh or be silly

When your child is upset or afraid, it is natural to be affected by their big feelings. If you can connect with yourself and soothe your own upset, frustration or worry first, you'll be able to respond to your child with more calm and patience. Your child will calm along with you as your emotions, voice and facial expressions soften. And you are modelling how to cope with big feelings.

Over time, and with lots of practice, young children who regularly experience co-regulation will be more able to regulate on their own.