

Regulation for Calming

Regulation

Regulation for very young children is the ability to return to a state of calm. Babies and toddlers can become dysregulated through over-stimulation, stress and strong emotions.

Young children need the support of loving, connected adults to help them to regulate.

Sensory Experiences and Regulation

Through rich and diverse sensory exploration, babies can learn:

- more about the world around them - an increased understanding of the world and their place can lead to a sense of safety and 'orientation';
- confidence and confidence in themselves as capable;
- power and control over their own choices and needs for engagement, disengagement, what to explore, when to explore, the pace at which to do so, and the approach they will take;
- a sense and order to the world around them and their place in it;
- and the ability to engage and disengage and regulate their own levels of stimulation and rest.

The Role of the Adult

For sensory exploration to be calming, provision needs to be tailored to the knowledge of the baby or toddler. Knowing each child's approach and reaction to the world enables thoughtful choices in sensory provision.

The atmosphere needs to be loving, safe, unrushed and peaceful.

The child needs someone with whom they have a secure attachment and who is accessible and attentive. The adult needs to be responsive and patient and have knowledge in practices that soothe the child.

Shared pleasure is achieved through largely non-verbal communication, glances, smiles and gestures.

An adult needs to know the child well to provide for items that:

- will represent this child's existing world;
- smell, look and feel like those familiar to this child;
- may inspire a new and novel experience for this child;
- reflect the interests and preferences of this child or elicit new ones.

Provision can be made through the use of treasure baskets and heuristic play opportunities.

These play opportunities provide sensory stimulation that is directed by the child in the presence of a connected adult.

Young children can direct when they interact, how they interact, what they interact with and for how long. This can help children to determine for themselves which actions and items stimulate their curiosity and joy and which ones help them to feel soothed and relaxed.

For ideas to support regulation through the use of treasure baskets and heuristic play opportunities, take a look at our supporting resource: Sensory Resources for Regulation.