

# General Parenting Resource

**Regulating yourself FIRST-** be sure you do something to relax your mind and your body as much as possible throughout the day and before approaching situations that cause anxiety.

**Prioritize stress management and self-care** in your own life and as a family.

**Coregulating-** is your superpower: 1. Become aware of your child's emotion(s), 2. Recognize emotion as an opportunity for intimacy and teaching, 3. Listen empathetically and validate your child's emotions, 4. Help the child verbalize and label emotions, and 5. Set limits while helping them to problem solve.

**Visual Aids** help to provide children with structure and routine, helps them with time-management, understanding, to avoid frustration, to assist with transitions, and so much more. This is just one example of what it could look like:

DAILY ROUTINE		
8:00	Breakfast	
8:30	Get ready	
9:00	Chores	
10:00	School Work	
11:00	Free Time	
12:00	Lunch	
1:00	Reading	
1:30	School Work	
2:00	Snack	
3:00	Free Time	

Other visual aids could also include circle of control, coping skill ideas, expectations/rules for behavior, reward reminders, consequence reminders, chores, their weekly schedule, and anything else your family finds useful.

**Timer system** for warnings. Visual aids help here too, like an actual timer or sand timer. We don't want to give too many warnings because that can cause anxiety, but we want to give enough (about 2) where they have time to process and at the same time practice time-management skills. Sticking to the boundaries is important here (i.e., I understand that you are mad, but it is not okay to hit other people." Or "I understand that you are upset but the consequences/rules stay and that's that.")

**Consequences not punishments.** Consequences need to be tied to a specific behavior and are sort of a combination of encouragement and consequence. They are meant to be set up as learning experiences (e.g., show me your improvement, and you earn something you want). Give consequences day by day and avoid stacking them.

It helps to make them task-oriented and time-specific. For example, no hitting/yelling for 3 consecutive days (just long enough he has to work at it, but not so long it feels impossible) and the reward would be 10 extra minutes of screen time on the fourth day.

Consequences are also about learning, so encouraging apologies, self-reflection, and problem-solving in conversation afterward can help them gain something meaningful from the experience. Keep these conversations appropriate for your child’s developmental stage (i.e., how long you talk to them, their level of understanding, etc.)

It is not recommended to take special days, important celebrations, or sport activities away as a consequence. When giving consequences, be brief and clear, and try to deliver it in a matter-of-fact manner. Do not get sucked into negotiating or arguing with your child. Be firm and warm, but not rigid. **Research shows reinforcement is more effective in the long-term when compared to punishment!**

**Rewards** are just as important! The smaller the rewards for minor achievements and bigger rewards for major achievements. Same goes for consequences. **The point here is not to punish but to encourage improved behavior, it is to connect rather than “correctly respond.”** And consistency is key!

- Creating a visual board/menu for both rewards and consequence options can be helpful.

<p><b>POSITIVE PUNISHMENT = PAIN</b> Decreases the target behavior. Example: An extra chore/ corporal punishment</p>	<p><b>NEGATIVE PUNISHMENT = LOSS</b> Decreases the target behavior. Example: take away electronic privileges for two days</p>
<p><b>POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT = REWARD</b> Increases the target behavior. Example: verbal praise/ get a new toy</p>	<p><b>NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT = RELIEF</b> Increases the target behavior. Example: You get one chore free day</p>

**Reinforcement system:** Has to include rewards that are motivating and interesting enough ... helps to think about the function of their bx.

- Start with continuous reinforcement meaning for example if he gets 3 days of good behavior in a week then he gets a reward/point and do it this way for a month or two. Then eventually switch to intermittent reinforcement where it will be more random, and he may not know exactly when rewards/points will be given out.

**\*\* Allow your child to lead and ask them for ideas to include, *this should be a collaborative process if it lends itself to be and could help increase their engagement in the process.***

**Function of Behavior:** Determining the function of their behavior helps you to determine how best to approach the situation. **\*\* regardless reinforce all effort and positive progress, small and big\*\*** S.E.A.T.

- Sensory- these may not require external rewards because they are intrinsic. If sensory seeking is a behavioral concern, seek ways to replace sensory seeking with a more adaptive bx.

- c. Escape- If/then statements are a good start “If you do \_\_\_\_, then you can \_\_\_\_.” Help him to verbalize what it is he may be feeling... ask him, see if he can identify it in their body or rate how intense it is.
  - i. NOTE: Escape-maintained behaviors may be due to lack of motivation to perform the task (they don’t want to) or lack of skill (it is too difficult). Intervention should focus on increasing compliance as well as providing enough prompts for difficult tasks or taking a step back on tasks that are too difficult by providing tasks that are easier to accomplish and increasing the difficulty of the task more slowly.
- d. Attention- Increase positive attention given throughout the day (i.e., verbal reinforcement, affection, play dates with friends, family quality time, asking about their interests etc.) and trying to reduce the amount of negative attention you do give (i.e., when emotional dysregulation occurs focus on reflecting, connecting, co-regulating, and setting limits if necessary.)
  - i. NOTE: Attention doesn’t have to simply be positive attention. The behavior may be maintained by attention that doesn’t even appear to be that pleasant, such as the caregiver talking in a stern voice or trying to explain reasons why the child should engage in appropriate behavior.
- e. Tangible- They get their privileges taken away or time reduced on video games/preferred activities.

**Calm corner/box for bedroom:** include sensory items, a stress ball, emotion wheel or faces, coping skills reminders, circle of control reminder, books, something that smells good, pictures of things that make your child happy, music or iPod, etc. (create this with your child for them).

**Tracking Practice (doing this practice at the end of every day or throughout the day could help you identify patterns of behavior)**

1. Day and time of outburst
2. What was happening right before the outburst. What might have triggered it?
3. What were the specific behaviors that occurred? (i.e., hitting, yelling, etc.)
4. Approximately how long did it last?
5. Try to identify the function of his or her behavior by using the acronym- **S.E.A.T** (sensory, escape, attention, and tangible)
  - a. Sensory: things that are automatically reinforced. Can happen anytime, and is innate, but happens especially when anxious. (self-soothing behaviors)
  - b. Escape: wanting to avoid something- trigger can entail having been told to do something they don’t want to do. Sometimes happens when something is too boring, easy, scary, or difficult.
  - c. Attention: needing attention- trigger can be lack of positive attention. Can happen when they want more social interaction and are lacking a feeling of connection to others.
  - d. Tangible: wanting something – trigger for this one is usually being denied access to something, being told no, or having something taken away.

6. Who handled it and how? What was said/done by everyone?
7. What happened right after? Was there a consequence or outcome?
8. Rate on a scale of 1-10 how intense the outburst was.
9. Add any other notes at the end, including positive efforts and progress observed throughout the week.

### **Resource Recommendations:**

#### **Games**

These help to Build/Strengthen Connection and Trust with your Child: cotton ball toss, peanut butter jelly, slippery hands, cotton ball hide, how to make a pizza, imaginary toss, how animals hug, balloon bop, crawling green-light red-light, fruit by the foot. (if you are interested in learning more about these let me know).

#### **Videos:**

Mental Health Center Kids on YouTube is a great site for psychoeducation videos for children, these are two of my favorites.

- [Coping Skills For Kids - Managing Feelings & Emotions For Elementary-Middle School Self-Regulation - YouTube](#)
- [Circle Of Control Activity For Kids - Good Mental Health And Stress Management - YouTube](#)
- [Zones Of Regulation For Kids - Secrets to a Growth Mindset: Episode 1 - YouTube](#)

#### **For Parents:**

1. Very short example of a PMR exercise (for parents but can be adapted for kids as well): [Progressive Muscle Relaxation - Simple Guided Calming Exercise for Beginners | Hands-On Meditation - YouTube](#)
2. [Co-regulation: What It Is and Why it Matters - YouTube](#)
3. [The Attachment Project | Relationship Structures](#) (find out our attachment style by taking a short quiz which provides you with information after- we can process in a parent-check in meeting.)

#### **Books:**

1. How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen so Kids will Talk by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish
2. The five love languages of children by Gary Chapman, Ph.D. and Ross Campbell, M.D. (they have an adult version as well)
3. No-Drama Discipline by Daniel Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.
4. The Whole-Brainchild by Dan Siegel, M.D. and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.
5. Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child The Heart of Parenting by John Gottman, Ph.D.