

# CAREGIVER'S CORNER NEWSLETTER

**TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS TO SUPPORT THE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF SPF FAMILIES**

## BUZZ WORD: Co-Regulation

**Big feelings can be overwhelming, not just for your children, but for you to help support. Whether your child needs support regulating their emotions often or just at times, finding ways for you to *co-regulate* with them will help you both during these difficult moments. With the holiday season approaching, many changes can occur. Children may experience disruptions to their normal routines, which can impact their behaviors and emotions. It's important to help children navigate these feelings and develop strategies for emotional regulation during times of tantrums, meltdowns, and dysregulation.**

**To help children return to a calm state, it starts with us and how we handle these situations. Co-regulation with your child involves actively engaging with them to help manage emotions and behaviors together. This newsletter will provide insights and tips for helping caregivers regulate themselves and manage co-regulation with their child.**

## Take a Peek Inside this Issue:

- Regulation for Caregivers
- Practicing Co-Regulation with your Child
- Book Recommendations & Online Resources

### A Dozen Ways to Co-Regulate with your Child



## How can holiday celebrations affect children?

- 1. Impacts Children's Choices:** Holiday celebrations can influence the decisions children make, including their priorities and activities.
- 2. Alters Actions or Behaviors:** The excitement or stress of the holidays can lead to changes in children's behavior, both positively and negatively.
- 3. Causes Shifts in Emotions:** Celebrations can evoke a range of emotions, potentially leading to heightened feelings of joy, anxiety, overwhelm or sadness.

# Regulation for the Caregiver

**Model Your Own Calmness:** The acronym S.T.O.P. can be a helpful way to quickly check in and calm yourself in the moment:

- **S**top what you're doing. (It can even be helpful to picture a stop sign in your mind). We are often juggling many things at once. When your child's emotions are heightened, stop and focus your attention on one thing as to not overwhelm yourself as well.
- **T**ake a few breaths. This pause can help you relax and allow you to think before reacting.
- **O**bserve your experience. Notice your thoughts, feelings, and emotions, as well as any sensations in your body.
- **P**roceed. Now approach your child.

**Self talk:** The messages you say to yourself are powerful and impacts either calming your nervous system or rewiring it up. Pay attention to the things you are saying to yourself when your child is becoming dysregulated.

Thoughts that can lead to dysregulation:

"not this again", "can't we just have one good day"

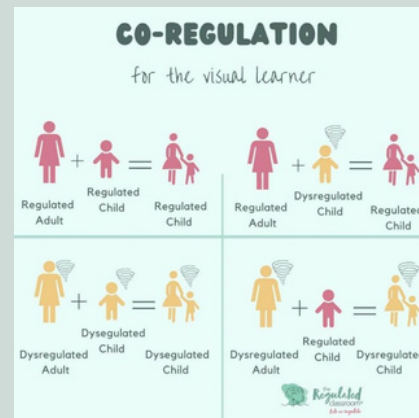
Thoughts that can lead to regulation:

"I don't have to fix things, I just have to listen",

"Everyone feels this way sometimes".

**Grounding skills:** This 5 senses approach is helpful for staying in the here and now. It allows us to be present and regulate ourselves by bringing our mind and body back to the present.

## Try This Together



## Co-Regulation with your Child

**Give Nonverbal Cues of Safety:** We can use various nonverbal cues to communicate safety to children when they are dysregulated. Some examples include getting down on their level, gentle eye contact with a soft gaze, slight tilts of the head, and using soft facial expressions, such as a sympathetic smile.

**Intentional Verbal Interaction:** Being intentional about your tone, pace, and pitch when speaking can help children effectively regulate their emotions. Keeping your voice low, while saying things that are slow, clear, and concise as possible. It is our nature to try to mirror intensity (and why we are inclined to get loud when they get loud), so keeping your voice low and steady, regardless of theirs, helps set the intentions for them.

**Give Empathy and Validation:** Regardless of whether you agree or disagree with the trigger for a child's dysregulation, it's important to acknowledge that what they are experiencing in that moment may be one of the hardest things in their young life. Showing empathy and validating their feelings by being present with them allows healing and regulation to occur.

### Creating a Routine of Clear Expectations and

**Boundaries:** Knowing what to expect helps in many moments of big feelings (for adults and children). Boundaries look different in each family, but establishing them will help when your child is upset. Letting them know the expectations and boundaries before times that might cause your child to be upset, can help to have to reference during co-regulation.

### Show Them You Can Handle Their Big Feelings:

Holding firm to your boundaries, staying calm and validating their feelings teaches them that it's ok to have the feelings but also that the challenging behaviors (like screaming and hitting) are not effective in getting their way.

# RESOURCES

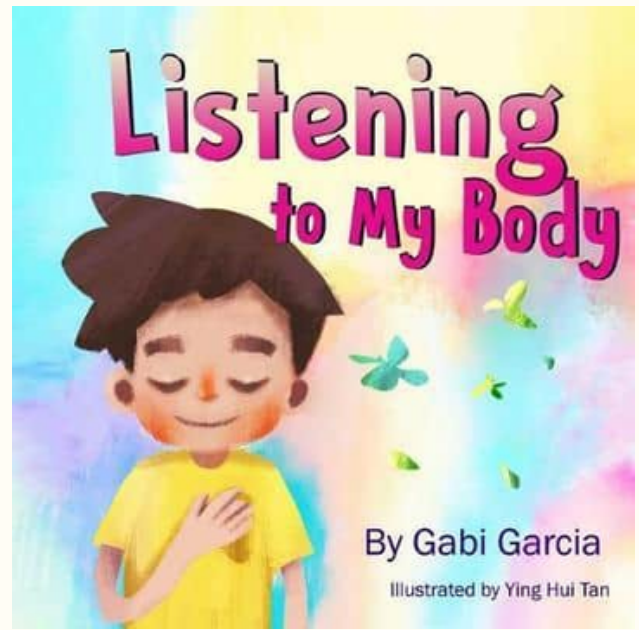
## Book Recommendations:

*"Right Now I'm Fine" --- Daniela Owen*



Click [here](#) for read aloud on Youtube.

*"Listening to My Body" --- Gabi Garcia*



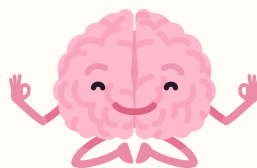
Click [here](#) for the read aloud on Youtube.

## Online Resource:



### Nurtured First

Nurtured First offers resources to help caregivers understand and nurture their children and themselves created by a psychotherapist/mom. They strive to give strategies to help stop the challenging behaviors, understand the emotions, find joy in your children, and create safe and loving homes. Click the icon for their blog, listen to their podcast or follow along with them on social media.





## Caregiver's Corner Newsletter

### MEET THE STUDENT ASSISTANCE SPECIALISTS



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