

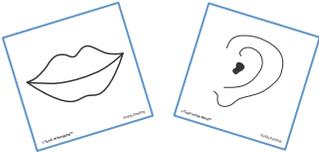
What is self-regulation and why does it matter?

Self-regulation is a set of underlying abilities that allow children to be successful in social interactions and learning. It's tied to brain development that occurs in the early childhood years and can be influenced by a child's early environment. **The good news:** Parents and teachers can support the development of children's self-regulation, which will have a long-term positive impact in children's lives.

What does self-regulation look like in young children?

<i>Without</i> Self-regulation	With Self-regulation
	
<p>Children have a hard time waiting, sharing materials and toys. They may know the 'rules' but can't yet inhibit behaviors like grabbing or pushing.</p>	<p>Children can take turns, share materials, and wait for their turn. They can use strategies like asking for something they want, or playing with something else while they wait.</p>
	
<p>Children have a difficult time with transitions like clean up or bedtime – ending something they want to do and doing something they don't want to do! They may 'melt down' and find it difficult to stop and transition.</p>	<p>Children can manage a transition like bedtime or clean up time, even when they are disappointed that a fun time is coming to an end. Young children may still need support—but self-regulation is what's needed to be successful at this.</p>
	
<p>Children without self-regulation may not be able to stay seated and listen to a story, sit through dinner or a game.</p>	<p>Children can control their attention enough to listen to a story, play a game, and sit through a meal. Their attention may wander, but they can bring it back to the task at hand.</p>
	
<p>When facing a difficult learning challenge, children without self-regulation can get easily discouraged and give up. Their minds and attention wander to other things.</p>	<p>With self-regulation, a child can persist at challenging learning tasks, focusing his attention and intentionally using strategies to be an independent self-regulated learner.</p>

What can I do to support my child's development of self-regulation?

<p>Visual Reminders</p> 	<p>A visual reminder makes it easier to remember a 'rule.' In Tools of the Mind, we use pictures of Lips and Ears to help children remember when it is their turn to talk or listen. You can use similar pictures to help children take turns when playing with siblings or friends.</p>
<p>Self-talk or Private Speech</p> 	<p>Talking aloud to yourself helps children stay on task and not get distracted. This works for adults too – we say aloud phone numbers we are trying to remember or repeat directions we will follow when driving. Next time you hear your child talking to herself when putting a puzzle together, you'll know that she is using an effective self-regulation strategy.</p>
<p>Self-regulation Recharging Activities</p>  <p><i>5 Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed . . .</i></p>	<p>Maintaining self-regulation is hard and young children cannot do it for long periods of time—they need breaks. When something demands a lot of self-regulation from your child, like waiting a long time in line at the grocery store, follow it with something fun and playful. You can skip to the car or walk to the car pretending to be a cat. You can sing a song or play a game like 'I spy' as an activity to recharge your child's self-regulation.</p>
<p>Planning and Decision-making</p> 	<p>At school, your child makes a plan before he or she plays – planning can happen at home, too. It's important that the plan truly be your child's—but you can guide your child so that a plan is reasonable. For example, before going to the zoo, your child can draw pictures of the animals she wants to see first.</p> <p>Your child will have a much easier time doing chores or going to bed when he decides what he will do (or when or how he will do it). For example, instead of telling your child it's bedtime, you can have the child set up an alarm clock or timer for a few minutes before bedtime. When the alarm goes off your child will know that it is time to go to bed!</p>
<p>Make-Believe Play</p> 	<p>The best way for young children to practice self-regulation is to engage in make-believe play. In Tools classrooms, children enjoy acting out pretend scenarios like eating in a restaurant or going to the doctor. You can help your child learn more about what people do in these places by turning errands into mini-field trips! Ask your teacher about the current play theme and when you and your child do an errand, you can talk about what the people are doing and saying. Turning recycled boxes and common household materials into 'props' for play and supporting make-believe play at home is another great activity you can do to support your child's self-regulation!</p>