

Building Self Regulation

For Parents

From the time you responded to your baby's cry, you began developing your child's self-regulation ability. Your strongest tools for further development of self-regulation are consistency and a calm, peaceful environment.

For Very Young Children

- ❖ Model self-regulation by using a calm tone and matter-of-fact manner when it is necessary to correct your young child.
- ❖ Be alert to a rising level of impulsive activity and re-direct your child to a quiet activity such as reading a story together.
- ❖ Remember that play time is learning time for the very young and expect that children will play side-by-side in the early years.
- ❖ Play "going to the store" or "going to the park" before you leave home in order to show your child appropriate behavior.
- ❖ Provide a calm and predictable environment.

For Older Elementary School Children

- ❖ Continue to be a role model for self-regulated behavior.
- ❖ Maintain a regular schedule, assuring that your child gets adequate rest every day.
- ❖ Take steps to make the environment calmer if you sense your child is having difficulty. Turn down the volume on the TV or radio, dim the lights, find a different, quiet activity.
- ❖ Provide structure for your child's free time. You do not need to schedule every minute, but a weekly trip to the library, to visit relatives, to church, caring for a pet, etc., all enhance your child's ability to self-regulate.

For Middle Schoolers

- ❖ Develop a weekly schedule together, allowing sufficient time for schoolwork and for sleep.
- ❖ Give appropriate rewards for sticking to the schedule that you have developed together.
- ❖ Discuss what is expected in new, unfamiliar situations, such as how to behave at a wedding or a funeral.
- ❖ Let them see you stop and think before you act. If the situation is appropriate, talk about the factors you are considering before taking action.

For Teens

- ❖ Encourage the use of a personal calendar for keeping a record of their schedule.
- ❖ Maintain high standards for appropriate and calm behavior in your home.
- ❖ Support their participation in regularly scheduled community activities such as visiting the elderly, assisting at a pre-school, singing in a choir, or helping at an animal shelter.
- ❖ Have serious discussions about the qualities of self-regulation, such as promptness, honesty and fairness that promote success in adult life.