



EASEYS for ASN

Encourage And Support Early Years Skills for Additional Support Needs

Highland Council
Pre-school Home
Teaching Service

'Self – Regulation'

Have you looked here first? [Bumps2Bairns](#), [Social & Emotional Development](#)

A Bit about Self-Regulation and Young Children

Some children struggle to manage their responses, emotions and behaviour. They may appear to be very spontaneous, perhaps have outbursts, and seem easily overstimulated. Alternatively they may present as being passive, perhaps too passive, and appear aloof or disinterested. If either of these presentations affects the child's ability to engage socially and in play on a regular basis perhaps they need some strategies to help keep them nicely alert and ready to play and learn.

We want to help the child:

- learn self-regulation activities
- build confidence and maintain friendships
- get ready to participate
- cope with change



Introducing Self-Regulation Strategies can be a very successful way to help children manage their feelings and behaviour but it requires careful implementation and close monitoring. We are trying to find out what strategies work best for the child and so it is best not to introduce too many all at once. Go at a measured pace and monitor how the child responds and if they favour the support being offered to them.

What can you do?

- Set aside time to **read** around the subject before putting any new strategies in place.
- **Discuss** what you already know about how the child is managing their behaviour with the parents/carers and with colleagues as you may find you already know what he/she responds best to and so needs more of!
- **Watch** them at play alone and with their relatives or peers.
 - What do they look like when they are at their best? What are they usually doing?
 - How do you know when they are struggling to engage? What might you see them doing then?
 - What are their own coping strategies when they are disengaged?
 - How do they get out of situations they are uncomfortable with?
- Establish an agreed **vocabulary** to use (use visual symbols if necessary) to help the child label the way they are feeling. What words are they already familiar with or perhaps their parents use with them; 'I can see you are tired, upset, angry, stressed...'
- **Introduce** or **trial** a strategy which you think may get a positive response; 'Let's try this, see if it helps...' It may be something as simple as distracting the child and remember to introduce them gradually as it's easier to measure impact that way.
- **Gather** a range of useful strategies which the child responds to best and step in each time you think he/she needs support – don't wait until they are in the "red zone"! Offer the child the option to pick which strategy they would like to use, if appropriate. Make up credit card cases personalised to them with strategy cards inside or give them a wheel of strategies to spin or even a personalised keyring of strategies.

See overleaf for photos of some examples of resources.

take note!

Every child is different and develops at different speeds. The ideas contained here might help quickly but, more often, they may need to be done consistently and regularly with close monitoring to notice changes in behaviour. If, after using relevant support strategies for a while, you still have concerns then seek advice from your local Occupational Therapy Service. They may also point you in the direction of other therapists or specialists for help. We do not recommend a "one size fits all" approach and we caution you to be considerate of any possible aversions the child may have to some sensory interventions.

Useful Websites, apps and publications

<https://bumps2bairns.com/>

<https://www.headspace.com/kids>

<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/headspace-guided-meditation/id493145008?mt=8>

Abraham, D., Heffron, C., Braley, P. & Drobnjak, L. 2015. Sensory Processing 101

NHS Health Scotland. 2013. Play@Home

Pinterest!





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Points to consider before you implement a new strategy in your learning environment:

- Movement is probably the most important sense as it acts as the “gatekeeper” to our fight or flight response. It is important to include plenty of movement opportunities and strategies throughout the day.
- Remember a child’s responses will change over time during the week and even during the day!
- As a staff, are you all clear on the purpose for intervention being put in place?
- Have you discussed this with parents/carers and shared with them ways in which they can help at home?
- Does it meet the needs of the parents as well as your setting’s needs?
- Have you asked the Occupational Therapist or Speech and Language Therapist for advice or input (where appropriate)?
- How will you manage time to allow for opportunities for the child to practice this new strategy with support?
- How will you monitor /measure the impact of this strategy?
- Working through emotional awareness is tough for everyone and we can take positive steps towards helping our very young children learn to manage their feelings. But, we also want you to consider your own wellbeing and so we hope you dip in to this resource from time to time and enjoy it for yourselves!



Credit card tin and visual symbols



Gathering info & trying out strategies



Emotion fan



Personalised chart



Building appropriate vocabulary



Personalised strategy wheel

Keep a note: What works best?

The ideas have been suggested or cribbed from a variety of sources and credit goes to colleagues, OT Services (Highland Council) and free online resources.