

### **Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Guide for Professionals: Self-Regulation**

#### **Here is what we know about self-regulation:**

- It is the ability to deal with stressors and recover from them.
  - Challenging behavior can be reframed as: The child is not coping due to stressors, skill deficits or unmet needs.
- It is closely linked to brain maturation and develops over time with support from nurturing and responsive parents and caregivers.
- Is the ability to adjust our bodies, emotions, thinking, attention and behaviour so we can be in a calm, focused, alert state for learning and responding to our environment.

#### **Within your professional role and considering the social determinants of health, how do you:**

- Explore with the parent or caregiver how to:
  - provide environments that reduce stressors while supporting the child's effort to learn how to self-regulate.
  - Help children understand, identify and label their feelings and responses to stressors. Support them while they release emotions using "[time ins](#)".
  - Model and practice learning social skills and problem solving abilities through the use of songs, stories and unstructured play.
- Discuss how the parent or caregiver is coping and their support system.
- Explore opportunities for connecting to informal and formal supports (community, neighbourhood, resources, groups).
- Support the parent or caregiver to have realistic, age appropriate expectations for their child.
- Administer an appropriate screening tool to ensure that the child is meeting their expected developmental milestones and refer if applicable.

## Where can you find more information?

- [Parenting in Ottawa](#)
- [Parent Resource Centre](#)
- [211 Ontario](#)
- [Community Navigation of Eastern Ontario](#)
- [Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development: Executive Function](#)
- [Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child: Executive Function & Self-Regulation](#)
- [The Mehrit Centre](#)
- [Beyond Blue: Self-regulation](#)
- [Families Canada](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada: Social Determinants of Health](#)

## References:

- [Calm, Alert and Happy by Dr. Stuart Shanker](#)
- [How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years](#)
- [Best Start, Frequently Asked Questions about Time-outs](#)