

The Early Educator Spiky Profile

Being an early years educator is one of the most rewarding and most demanding roles there is. There is often an expectation that educators should be “all-rounders,” excelling across every aspect of pedagogy and practice. Yet this role, with all its depth and complexity, remains one of the most undervalued, underpaid, and underappreciated in our society.

Early years educators are expected to span multiple professions at once: education, caregiving, health, social care, development, safeguarding, administration, partnership, and pedagogy, often without recognition or adequate support. They do this amidst chronic time constraints and limited access to professional development. And still, educators show up every day, often dedicating their lifetimes to a career that continues to be shaped by patriarchal assumptions...that “women’s work” is innate rather than a skilled practice, and therefore easily taken for granted in our infrastructures.



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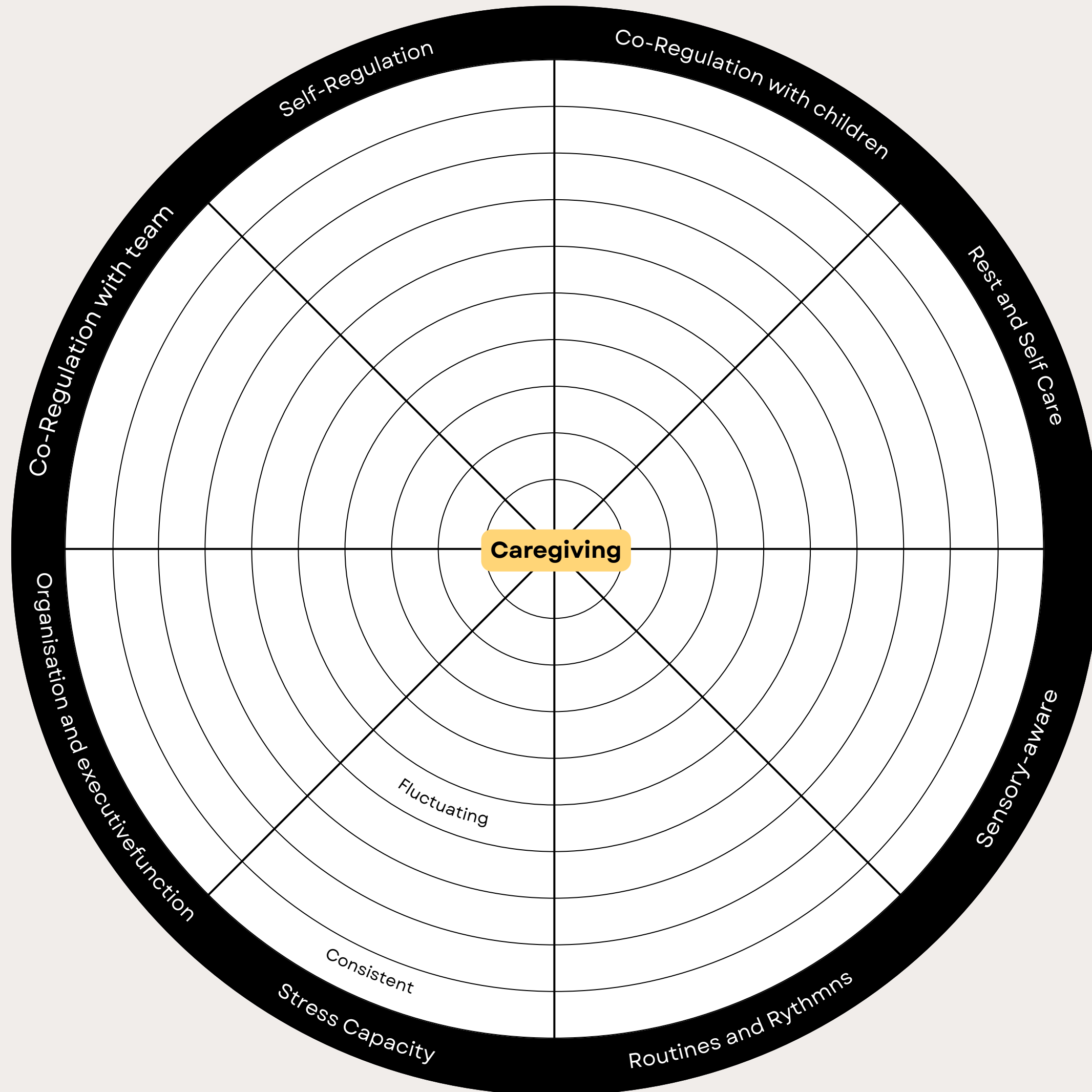
The Spiky Profile explores the inevitable unevenness in our skill sets as early educators. There is often an expectation that an early educator should be a universal **“all-rounder,”** excelling in every aspect of the role in order to be considered a “good” practitioner (who also leaves their baggage at the door). In reality, professional skills and dispositions are **rarely even**. Each of us holds areas of distinct strength alongside areas of allowable weakness. Weaknesses do not diminish professional worth and they can be developed, but we also need to hold space for early educators to openly not be good at everything.

While early educators may engage with all aspects of their role, we need to move beyond the myth of the all-rounder and instead recognise, cultivate, and celebrate our specialisms and passions.



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Early educators do not only engage in conventional teaching or providing educational experiences; they are also deeply involved in supporting the social and emotional development of children. This means they need to be effective in their own repertoire of self-regulation to be able to co-regulate. This means providing safety, routines, and rhythms, and holding steady in stress-sensitive environments. Explore the caregiving aspect of the role here!





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