

13 Things That Can Make Regulation Harder for Kids

Calmer
Kids
Brighter
Tomorrows

Understanding the challenges can help us offer more empathy, support, and the right kind of help.

1 SLEEP



When kids are tired, their brains have a harder time coping, focusing, and managing emotions.

2 HUNGER & THIRST



Not enough food or water can make kids feel cranky, unfocused, or overwhelmed more quickly.

3 SENSORY OVERLOAD



Too much noise, light, movement, touch, or screen time can overload the nervous system.

4 TRANSITIONS & CHANGE



Stopping one activity, starting another, or dealing with surprises can feel especially hard.

5 MOVEMENT NEEDS



Bodies often need movement breaks. Sitting still too long can make regulation harder.

6 SOCIAL STRESS



Conflict, rejection, bullying, or feeling left out can strongly affect behaviour and emotions.

7 CONNECTION NEEDS



Kids regulate better when they feel safe, seen, understood, and connected to caring adults.

8 UNCLEAR EXPECTATIONS



Too many directions, vague instructions, or changing rules can overwhelm executive functioning.

9 STRESS & WORRY



School pressure, family stress, and anxiety can shrink a child's coping capacity.

10 ILLNESS OR PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT



Pain, headaches, constipation, or not feeling well can show up as irritability or behaviour.

11 TOO MANY DEMANDS AT ONCE



Rushed mornings, back to back tasks, or too much language can overload coping quickly.

12 MASKING OR HOLDING IT TOGETHER ALL DAY



Some kids use a lot of energy to cope at school and fall apart once they feel safe.

13 BUSY SCHEDULES & NOT ENOUGH DOWNTIME



Overscheduling and constant stimulation can leave little room for recovery.

Dysregulation is a signal, not a choice.

Support first. Skills second.

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Kind
Brave
Capable
You Got This