



## A Delicate Dance

# The Art of Co-regulation

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# What is Self-Regulation?

Process of managing yourself:

1. Manage your bodily needs  
(hunger, thirst, fatigue, need to move...)
2. Manage your emotions- Big and Small

When we have trouble self-regulating:

1. Have meltdowns when upset
2. Impulse control problems
3. Become paralyzed with worry in some situations

**Managing Self**



**Being in Sync**

# What is Co-Regulation?

Co-regulation is an act of **constantly making adjustments** to stay in sync with your partner.

Co-regulation help kids Self-Regulate when they are challenged with Self-Regulation.

Coregulation helps kids feel safe, competent and challenged at a manageable pace.

# Why do we need to Co-regulate?





**“I’m Safe”**

# Co-Regulation is Calming

Parents instinctively create a coregulatory pattern of rocking their babies when they are young as it’s calming for the baby.

Lots of older kids with autism rock themselves to self regulate.

Moving in synchrony with someone else creates a feeling of **predictability** and **safety**.



**Shared Focus**

# Co-Regulation creates Joint Attention

Co-regulation helps kids practice being in sync while they attend to an external object or idea.

It helps establish a reciprocal flow between communication partners.

# Co-Regulation Builds Competence





**Co-Regulation Deepens our  
Relationships**  
by creating  
**Memories of shared joy.**

**Enhances Emotional Connection**



# Playing together requires Co-Regulation



**Coordinating your Actions to your Partner**

# Collaboration requires Co-Regulation



**Making constant changes to accommodate your partner**



## Evaluating the “WE” state

# Conversation requires Co-Regulation

Having a conversation is a dynamic process that requires making constant adjustments based on the state of the partner.

While having a conversation we are not constantly thinking what you are thinking but we are evaluating the “WE” state. Are we in sync or do I need to make adjustments.

# Co-regulation Basics





**Sharing Responsibility**

## Co-regulation means working as a TEAM

If one person does not do their job, then it does not get done.

It communicates to the child that they are important and needed.



## Experience Breakdowns and Repairs

Co-regulation gives a child a chance to experience breakdowns in the flow and take responsibility to repair them.



## Coregulation builds Competence

Guides learn how to transfer more responsibility to the child as he becomes competent.

# Frameworks for Co-regulation

# Framework 1: Assembly Line

You, Me, Place



***I give to you, you put:***

- Ice cubes into cups
- Laundry into washer
- Blocks in a basket
- Sticks into wheel barrow
- Socks into drawers
- Cutlery into drawers
- Toys into toy box
- Popcorn into mouth
- Rocks into puddle
- CD's into cases
- Cans of drink into refrigerator
- Books onto shelf
- Laundry into dryer/washer
- Dirty dishes into dishwasher



# Framework 4: Demonstration

I do, then you do the same thing or “my turn, your turn”



## Examples:

(Try to create many turns within an activity. It will be a slower way of doing, but it will create more moments of shared attention, and a spotlighted “we did it together” experience.)

- Sharing food by eating from one spoon, or drinking from the same cup. I take a bite, hand the spoon/cup to you and then you take a bite/drink - until it's "all gone!"
- I stir the batter, then give you the spoon and you stir the batter, then you give me the spoon and I stir the batter, etc.
- I pour, then you pour
- I water the plant, then you water the plant
- I rinse a dish, then you rinse a dish
- I pull wet laundry out of the washer and put it in the basket, then you pull wet laundry and put it in the basket
- I put a toy (dirty laundry) in the box (basket/hamper), then you put another toy(dirty laundry) in the box (basket/hamper)
- I take/put a pillow off/on the bed, then you take/put a pillow off/on the bed
- I pull a little bit of the wrapper off the food, then you pull a little bit of wrapper off, then me, then you.....until “we unwrapped it together”



# Framework 2: Complementary Roles

My role complements yours, or my role adds to yours in a slightly different way.  
Our roles are different actions that are connected to each other.



*I do something - you do the next  
part of the something, within the  
frame of the activity*

**Examples:**

(observe: Can the child pay attention to my role and actions, and base his own actions on what he observes?)

- I pour in an ingredient as you are stirring the batter
- I hold the plant while you are watering it
- You or I hold the container, while the other person puts the pieces in
- You hold the bag, while I put the clothes in
- You hold your side of the box/table/grocery bag handle while we move the thing together (when you let go, the action stops. If I let go, you stop. Then we resume)
- I hold the bottom of your zipper while you pull it up
- I hold your shoe, while you put your foot in

# Framework 3: Parallel, Simultaneous

We are doing the same thing at the same time, alongside each other.



*We do the same thing at the same time*

**Examples:**

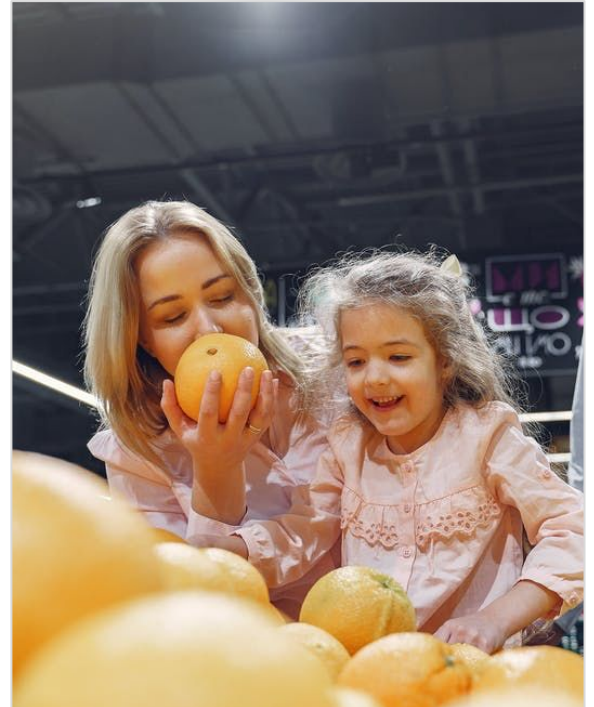
(observe: Can the child be in motion WITH me?)

- We each have a spoon. We're stirring the same batter at the same time
- We each have a watering can and we're watering the same plant at the same time
- We're both putting the same kind of things (toys/rocks/popcorn) into the same place (box/wheelbarrow/mouth) at about the same time.
- We hold different corners of a blanket and spread it on the floor, or fold it together.
- We pull the covers up together to make the bed.
- We spread a beach towel down on the ground.



# Framework 4: Turn Taking

I take a turn and then you take the same turn. Modeling and Imitation.



# Things to Remember

1. Need to **balance** co-regulation (dependent state) along with fostering independence.
2. Be **creative in assigning roles** each time. Don't make the roles repetitive and boring.
3. Build his competence by **acting in a naïve manner**, making mistakes, forgetting things (so how many tbsp. was it? Mom is getting old) and helping him fix it and feeling competent.
4. Enrich the interaction with **experience sharing language**. Involve all your senses (Hmmm... I love how this smells. It looks nice and ripe. I wonder how this would taste.)
5. **Involve emotions and feelings** (Smells so delicious. It makes me feel hungry... This makes my eyes water. I'm not too fond of it.)
6. **Integrating our thoughts and ideas**. (This is what I see + this is what you see, This is how feel + this is what you feel)

# Coregulation Ideas...

















































































Let's go try it out... :)