

# WAYS TO CO-REGULATE WITH YOUR KIDS



## Co-Regulation & Self-Regulation

- Co-regulation is when a calm, supportive adult helps a child or another person feel safe enough to settle their emotions.
- Over time, consistent co-regulation teaches the skills for self-regulation—the ability to recognise and manage feelings, thoughts, and actions independently.
- This is a developmental process; children need many experiences of co-regulation before they can self-regulate.

## Tip for Parents/Carers:

- Stay calm and grounded yourself—your calm nervous system helps the child’s nervous system settle.
- Use soft tone, slow breathing, and gentle touch if welcome.
- Praise small steps when the child begins to calm themselves.

Parenting That Connects is your moment to pause, reflect, and reconnect — with yourself, your child, and what really matters at home. It brings simple tools, reflections, and encouragement to help you understand your child’s emotions, support their growth, and nurture a peaceful, connected home.

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Co-regulation means helping your child calm their body and emotions by being their safe, steady presence.

Before kids can self-regulate (calm themselves), they need to experience co-regulation with an adult who helps them feel safe and understood.

## Stay Calm Yourself

Children borrow our calm — not our chaos.

Take a slow breath before you respond.

Keep your voice gentle and steady.

Remind yourself: "My child's behaviour is communication, not defiance."

When you stay grounded, you become the anchor your child needs.

## Get to Their Level

Kneel, sit, or crouch so you're face-to-face.

Use soft eye contact or stay nearby if they don't want to be touched.

This helps your child feel seen,  
not confronted.

## Offer Connection Before Correction

In moments of big feelings, focus on comfort first, teaching later.

Try: "You're really upset right now. I'm here with you."

Once they're calm, you can talk about what happened and what to do next time.

## Validate Their Feelings

Use phrases that show understanding, like:

"That was really disappointing."

"You were scared when that happened."

Validation doesn't mean agreeing — it means showing empathy.

## Use Calming Tools Together

Take slow breaths and invite your child to join.

Try grounding: "Can you name five things you see?"

Rock gently, hum, or hold their hand if they seek closeness.

Some kids regulate better through movement — a short walk or squeeze ball can help.

## Essential Tips

### Offer Connection Before Correction

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### Keep It Consistent

**Co-regulation takes practice and patience.**

- *Over time, your child learns from your tone, body language, and presence.*
- *Each calm moment helps build their ability to self-regulate later.*

### Remember

*When your child is overwhelmed, they don't need you to fix their emotions — they need you to feel safe enough to experience them.*

*Your calm presence teaches their brain:*

*"When I have big feelings, I am safe. I can come back to calm."*