

SELF-REGULATION IDEAS FOR HOME

Many children stuck at home may be having trouble **SELF-REGULATING**. Without their usual routines, physical and social activities, it's normal that they might need more support to manage their emotions and behavior. Along with their most important relationships and routines at home, children benefit from specific sensory input to their bodies to help them regulate. Here's how you can figure out what support to give **YOUR CHILD**.



Is your child floppy, lethargic, slouchy? Try **alerting/organizing activities**.

Is your child's energy level too high, so that he/she can't focus on a specific task? Try **calming activities**.

You will know your child best. Consider using activities that go with what they seem to crave: physical, visually interesting, hands-on, oral. You can increase or decrease stimulation by changing the environment: amount of light, noise, temperature, size of the space.

Think about when your child might need some help to regulate.

- Is he super wiggly during those meetings with the teacher? Then try some heavy work, organizing activities just before that time.
- Is she fading by the afternoon? Then try some alerting activities sometime after lunch.
- Is he/she having trouble sleeping? Try out some of the calming ideas.

We all use different types of input to help organize and regulate our brains. Look for the clues listed above and start with the type of input that seems to be the one he/she benefits from the most.

See the next two pages for Alerting/Organizing and Calming activity ideas for home.

ALERTING AND ORGANIZING ACTIVITIES FOR HOME

- Run, bike or scooter around the block.
- Draw up a hopscotch pattern or other design to jump in, on the driveway or path outside.
- Skipping.
- Jumping jacks.
- Obstacle course indoors – use chairs, table, cushions. Encourage your child to move over/under/around items. To make it more challenging, have them follow a map. Your child might be able to help design the course or at least set it up and clean it up. These heavy work and thinking jobs will help improve alertness too.
- Walk up/down the stairs inside the house to meet a daily challenge (eg. aim for 5x). For more intensity, carry a box or backpack filled with toys.
- Catch and throw a ball together. Even use a big exercise ball for bigger heavy work.
- Bounce on an outdoor trampoline or an indoor rebounder. Count your bounces, spell words as you bounce, practice different moves and sequences (eg. 5xjumps, turn around, clap hands, bum drop)
- Animal walks from one point of the house to another.
- Draw chalk designs on the driveway.
- Listen to dance music, have a dance party!
- Make a “mountain of bubbles” by putting some water and dish soap in the sink. Your child can stand at the sink or kneel on a chair. Use a straw to blow bubbles in the mixture. Fill the whole sink – this takes a lot of blowing, which can be organizing to the nervous system.
- Snack on chewy or crunchy foods to make you feel more alert.
- Have a Lego challenge – challenge your child to build a specific item.





CALMING ACTIVITIES FOR HOME

You know your child best. Does he/she relax with cuddles and massage? Or watching a calming video? Maybe playing with a fidget and having a break to build some Lego? Look for clues and take their lead to find the most effective calming strategies that work for your child.

Some ideas:

- Build a cozy space together using pillows, blankets, maybe a spare duvet cover as a roof. Let your child keep a few special toys or books in there so he/she has something to do to help relax.
- Play quietly with a fidget toy.
- Make slime.
- Run your hands through a container of dried lentils or rice.
- Do a puzzle together.
- Listen to music or try a mindful exercise such as these apps: Smiling Minds or Headspace.
- Practice deep breathing.
- Give a massage if he/she likes cuddles and deep pressure.
- Sink into a beanbag chair or pile of pillows to look at a book.
- Have a drink with a water bottle or straw to suck. Sucking is very soothing. You can even suck Jello or yogurt through a straw for more intense input.
- Turn the lights off, close the blinds and play with a flashlight or finger lights (from the dollar store) on the ceiling. It's nice to lie down together and chase each other's lights over the ceiling.
- Colour in a picture. Make a painting. Draw chalk on the driveway. Hands-on and visually interesting activities can be calming.
- Try these calming scenes to watch: <https://www.district196.org/about/calm-room/visual-relaxation>
- Have a warm bath.