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What is Emotional Regulation? How to Support It at Home

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Emotional regulation is the ability to manage and respond to one's OWN emotions in a healthy way. This includes controlling the intensity and response to the emotion. Healthy emotional regulation will help strengthen relationships, reduce conflict, create a calmer home, improve mental health, enhance decision making skills, and increase resiliency. Supporting emotional regulation at home can be a turning point for most parents.

Supporting Emotional Regulation at Home

Identify the emotion. All emotions are important and healthy. Have your child label what emotion they are experiencing in the moment. For example: "Good and Bad" are NOT emotions.

Establish healthy coping skills. Create a list of effective coping strategies with your child and have a copy posted where they can see it when they need a reminder.

Lead by example. Reflect on how you react based on what emotion you are feeling. If you tend to yell and use aggression when angry, your child will pick up on those habits. Demonstrate healthy emotional regulation to your children.

Celebrate emotional wins. Praise your child when they successfully manage a tough feeling. Highlight progress, no matter how small, to build confidence.

Create a safe space for emotions. Encourage your child to talk about feelings without judgment. Use phrases like, "It's okay to feel sad/angry/scared." Listen actively using nonverbal communication.

Avoid judgement. It can be difficult to slow down and hold space for our child when they are in the middle of a tantrum or meltdown on a busy morning. Expressing shameful or guilt ridden comments like "oh get over it," "we don't have time for this," or "I will give you something to cry about" are unhelpful and show that their emotions are not important to work through. Try to remain calm and identify the trigger to find a solution.