

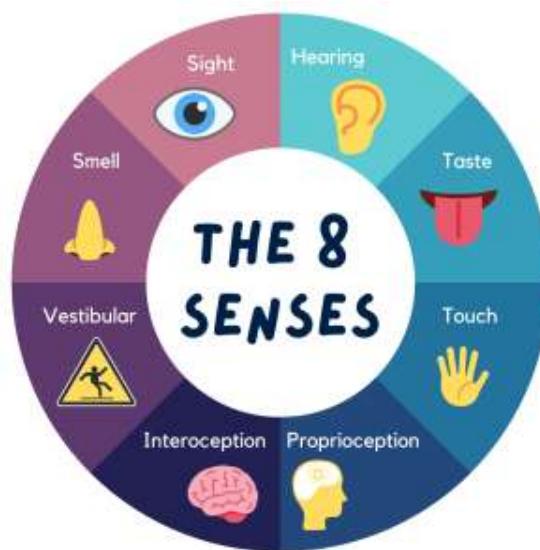


Autism Outreach
for Schools

Sensory Regulation

Elizabeth Stockwell – Outreach Teacher

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The Vestibular Sense

The sense that detects movement through sensory receptors in the inner ear.



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The Proprioceptive Sense

Proprioception is the **body awareness** sense. It helps with:

Knowing where our body parts are



Scratching an itch and knowing where to scratch without looking



Touching hands to feet, also known as "finding your feet"

Understanding how much force to use



Using a pencil with the proper amount of force



Holding a delicate item without breaking it

Coordination between body parts and senses



Riding a bike and coordinating the movements to stay on track



Using hand-eye coordination to catch a ball



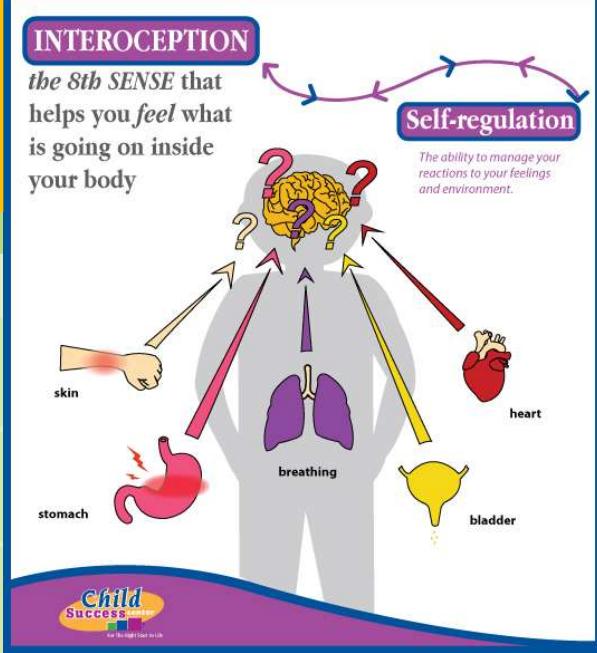
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The Interoceptive Sense

What is Interoception?

Interoception is the **internal sense**. It helps with:

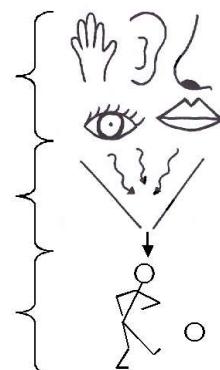
Understanding our body's needs	Recognizing feelings of hunger	During potty training, knowing when to use the bathroom
Knowing how to appropriately address needs	Sensing pain and looking for ways to relieve it	Scratching an itch with the proper amount of force
Regulating emotions and controlling behavior	Feeling sensations of anxiety and calming self	Avoiding temper tantrums by meeting basic needs



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Sensory Processing

1. The body receives sensation.
2. The brain works out what it is.
3. Message sent to respond.



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Sensory Sensitivities

Hypersensitivity	Hyposensitivity
Heightened sensitivity to input	Seeks out sensory input
AVOIDS:	SEEKS:
Loud Noises	Jumping
Crowded spaces	Tight squeezes or hugs
Smells	Loud, repetitive noises
Bright or flashing lights	Swinging or crashing into objects
Textures of clothes or food	Lack of pain response

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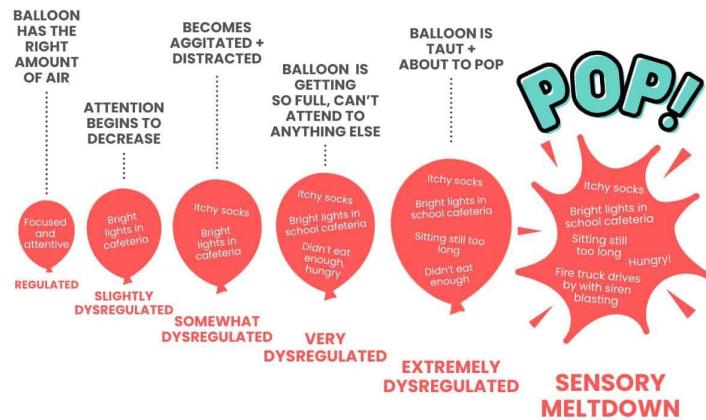
Sensory Dysregulation

Sensory dysregulation occurs when the body's sensory processing system struggles to manage and respond to sensory stimuli effectively.



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When dysregulation begins and is left unchecked it will get bigger, which makes it more difficult to regulate. This can lead to “meltdowns”.



@YourKidsTable

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Why is sensory regulation important?

Sensory regulation is fundamental to all other forms of self-regulation. Without sensory regulation,



- Our ability to manage and regulate our emotions is reduced.



- Our capacity to regulate our actions and behaviour is hindered.



- Regulating our focus, attention and executive functioning becomes difficult.

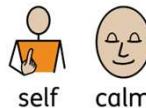
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Sensory Regulation

- Co-regulation is the ability to regulate emotions and behaviours, manage stress (internal or external), and return to a calm state, with the support and direction of a connecting person



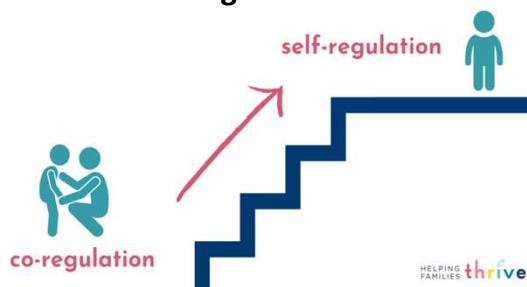
- Self-regulation is the ability to
 - recognise, manage, and respond to our own emotions
 - monitor and control our thoughts, feelings and behaviours
 - use personal strategies to return to a calm state



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Sensory Regulation

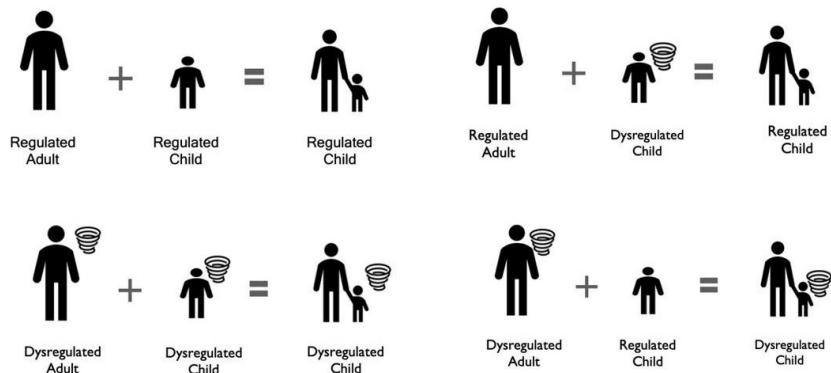
- Self-regulation skills develop through interactions with others; children first learn to regulate with support from others and then they become gradually more able to use these tools independently as they experience them.
- **Even as adults we can still benefit from co-regulation from others when we become overwhelmed!**



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Co-regulation

The importance of regulated adults...



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Ways to co-regulate with your child



Think sensory – think about their sensory needs and have a plan to tackle overstimulating environments.

SENSORY CHECKLIST



		✓ Tick where appropriate
		Visual/Sight
Visual Seeking		Visual Avoiding
Looks for bright/flashing lights		Sensitive to bright lights (may complain or close eyes)
Enjoys lining up items in rows or by colour		Easily distracted by bright displays
Enjoys playing with toys that spin		Finds 'busy' rooms challenging
Loves to play with shiny objects		Seeks out dark spaces
Appears to enjoy games which involve bumping and crashing different toys		Often rubs eyes when focusing on work
Enjoys close contact to interactive whiteboard/screen		Avoids eye contact with others

How to support:

- Allow the child to play with visually stimulating equipment (such as a torch). Ensure this time is carefully managed and structured.

		How to support:
		Touch/Tactile
Tactile Seeking		Tactile Avoiding
Enjoys touching everyone/everything		Hates being touched unexpectedly
May not recognise when they have been touched (unless forcefully)		Avoids having their hair brushed
Unaware when they have dirty hands/unnhygienic pose		Hates being close to others (hugging up)
Wants messy play...		Enjoys touch in certain areas of the body or fabrics...

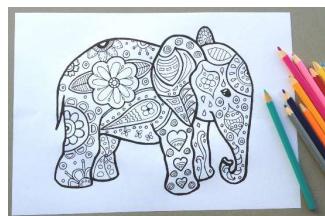
How to support:

- Schedule regular visual breaks into their day. Use a blackout tent (if possible) or create a bespoke low-stimulating area for them to use.



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Allow some down-time after school



Energy Accounting



Too much energy out and not enough in is bad. It leads to overload, and exhaustion.



Balancing your energy using energy accounting is good. It leads to feeling regulated, calm and happy.

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We all make mistakes!

Model Emotions

Show children that it is normal to feel different emotions – the key bit is how we deal with them and get back to calm.

Model specific regulation strategies, then encourage them to use them too.

You can practise when calm!

GREEN ZONE
Happy, Calm, Focused, Ready

BLUE ZONE
Sick, Tired, Sad, Moving Slowly

YELLOW ZONE
Excited, Worried, Wiggly, Silly

RED ZONE
Mad, Angry, Upset, Violent, Disgusted

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Regulating Activities



Jump, run, roll on the trampoline



Snuggle up in a weighted blanket



Get involved in outdoor play



Listen to Music to block extended noise



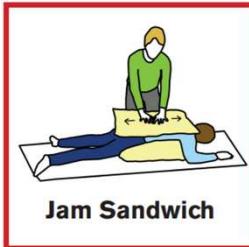
Rewind and relax in a bath



Do some Yoga for muscle relaxing

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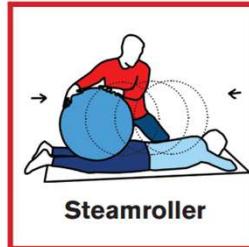
Regulating Movements



Jam Sandwich



Stretchy Band



Steamroller



Chair Push Ups

Lay on a pillow belly facing down. Get your teacher to put another pillow on your back and squeeze you gently.

Pull and release at least 10 times then take a break.

Get on the floor belly down and ask your teacher to roll a big stability ball over you.

Place hands palms down on each side of chair seat under your legs. Straighten arms to lift yourself off the chair. Repeat 10 times.

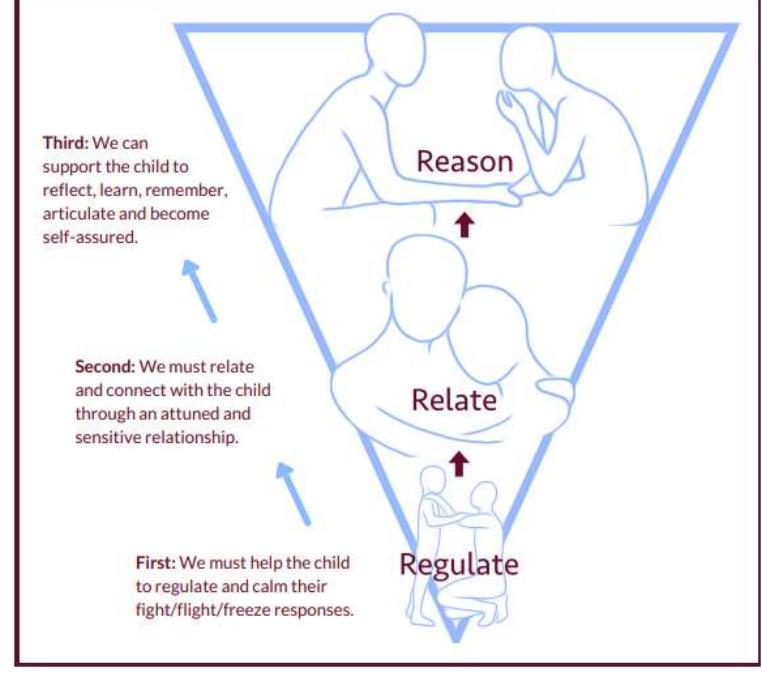
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Heavy Work



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Managing Meltdowns



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Look after yourself

YOU'LL HAVE
GOOD DAYS,
BAD DAYS,
OVERWHELMING DAYS,
TOO TIRED DAYS,
I'M AWESOME DAYS,
I CAN'T GO ON DAYS.
AND EVERY DAY YOU'LL
STILL SHOW UP.



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Don't be afraid to ask for support

- Surrey Branch of the National Autistic Society: www.nassurreybranch.org
- BRAAIN (Be ready ADHD ASD Information Network): www.braain.co.uk
- APPEER (Support for autistic girls): <https://www.appeer.org.uk/>
- Send Advice Surrey: <https://www.sendadvicesurrey.org.uk/>
- Family Voice Surrey: <https://www.familyvoicesurrey.org/>
- Autism Outreach for Schools: <https://www.autismoutreachforschools.uk/>
- Mindworks: <https://www.mindworks-surrey.org/>
- YMCA East Surrey: <https://www.ymcaeastssurrey.org.uk/>

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Find help sheets, FAQs, videos and more at:

www.autismoutreachforschools.uk



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