

10 WAYS TO PROMOTE SELF-REGULATION EVERY DAY

1. Let your child know what you expect. Explain in simple, positive words what you want him to do in certain situations. The clearer and simpler the rules and guidelines are, the better for both of you.
2. Make sure your child understands the usefulness and/or importance what you are asking him to do. For example, you can explain why it's important to listen when Mommy talks to him (that way he won't miss anything) or to use gentle hands with the puppy (the puppy will want to be with him).
3. Help your child look for and understand signals and clues for when self-regulation is needed. These might be 'secret signals' that you develop with your child and/or clues in certain situations, like when outdoors, a louder voice can be used.
4. Make sure he CAN exercise self-regulation. That means he is Calm, Alert and Nourished. If he is calm, he will be more able to keep himself regulated. If he is alert and able to pay attention, he will be more likely to self-regulate than if he is tired or not feeling well. Preschool children need to eat every 2 to 2 ½ hours so, if he hasn't had a snack recently, don't expect him to be able to control his behavior, thinking or emotions.
5. Try not to TELL him what to do. Once you've explained expectations and clues clearly, calmly and simply to your child, try your best to prompt him. For example, say "What could you do to help yourself?" or "Remember what we are supposed to do here?" That way you can understand more about how he thinks and sees things. It will also prompt him to think more for himself rather than waiting for you tell him. Offer hints if your child seems stuck.
6. Give your child honest feedback. Always be as positive and calm as possible but also be honest when giving him feedback on how he did. Let him know when he is improving and how he can do it better. This will help him understand the amount of effort it takes to learn and do something well.
7. Give the child chances to try things on his own. Let him make **small** mistakes. Remember, making mistakes is part of learning.
8. Offer your child choices about what to do, how and/or when. These can be fairly minor choices, for example, "Do you want to do this one right now or do it second?" or "Do you want to have orange juice or apple juice?" Even these small choices can give your child a sense of control.
9. Allow your child times and places where he can let loose. Don't expect him to self-regulate all the time. He needs chances to feel free to do whatever he wants – just help him find appropriate times and settings.
10. Be patient. Learning self-regulation takes time and progress comes in small steps. Rejoice in the small gains and stay positive.