

The journey towards self-regulation (Part 2 of 2)

Part 1

We:

- *Explored the meaning of self-regulation in the early years*
- *Considered how it relates to child development*
- *Reflected on the role of the adult in co-regulation*

Part 2

We will:

- Focus on how the following can contribute to the journey towards self-regulation:
 - the role of the adult
 - routines
 - environment



What did we learn in part 1?

- What is self-regulation?
- Attachment
- Co – regulation
- How brains are built
- Support strategies – Task



Receive and name the feeling

What are they 'telling' me?

- Recognise the child's behaviour as communication
- Look and listen for physical and verbal signs of emotions

What can I do to help/co-regulate?

- Name the feeling

"I can see you're really worried, fingers."

"I think you might be feeling angry, your fists."



Acknowledge that it is real

What are they 'telling' me?

- Try and see things from the child's point of view
- "Oh dear"
- "Poor you"
- "I feel sad when I miss my friend too"

What can I do to help/co-regulate?

- Offer a cuddle
- Stroke, rock them gently
- Wipe their tears
- Stay close by



When children become overwhelmed, it is not necessary to 'fix' the distress. Educators can sit with the child and just listen and (often with non-verbal sounds) provide empathy, love and support.

Take some time

- Give the child a safe space to express their feelings.
- Remember it's okay to not be okay.
- Emotions are natural and normal.
- We can't always choose the way we feel.
- Spend some time together....don't rush.
- Help children to know that this will pass.



Model strategies

- Breathing exercises – balloon breath, finger breathing
- Squeezing a toy
- Spending time in a quiet cosy corner
- Jumping or other rhythmical play
- Exploring emotions through books, small world or role play



Self-regulation



Provide an environment of emotional warmth
Opportunities for cognitive challenge
Give a sense of autonomy and feelings of control
Support to reflect and plan

David Whitebread - How can you support the development of self-regulation?
— Siren Films



Executive function



[Our Brain's Air Traffic Control \(Executive Function\) | NSPCC](#)



Self-regulation

Self-Regulation and Executive Function

Approaches and practices to support self-regulation and executive function in the early years.



1. Creating and Navigating Challenge

2. Teaching Self-monitoring and Self-awareness

3. Creating a Community of Collaborative Learners

4. Promoting Physical Activity

5. Promoting Talk About Learning

[EEF | Self-Regulation and Executive Function](#)

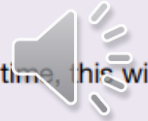


The characteristics of effective learning

- **playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- **active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things



Realise that their actions have an effect on the world, so they want to keep repeating them.	Encourage babies' exploration of the world around them. Suggestions: investigating the feel of their key person's hair or reaching for a blanket in their cot. Offer open-ended resources like large smooth shells and pebbles, blocks and lengths of fabric for babies and toddlers to play freely with, outdoors and inside.
Plan and think ahead about how they will explore or play with objects.	When playing with blocks: encourage children to discuss what they will make before and while making it, or draw a picture before building.
Guide their own thinking and actions by referring to visual aids or by talking to themselves while playing. For example, a child doing a jigsaw might whisper under their breath: "Where does that one go? – I need to find the big horse next."	Visual aids can help children to keep track of what they need to do next, for example counting on their fingers or referring to a series of pictures on the wall to remind them what they must do before lunch. Verbal mental aids include providing a sensitive commentary on what a child is doing. You might comment: "I see you are looking for the biggest pieces first" or ask "how well do you think that's going?" Children may copy your commentary by talking out loud to themselves first. In time, this will develop into their 'inner voice'.



The role of the adult

Warm
relationships

Understanding
and naming
emotions

Supporting
social play

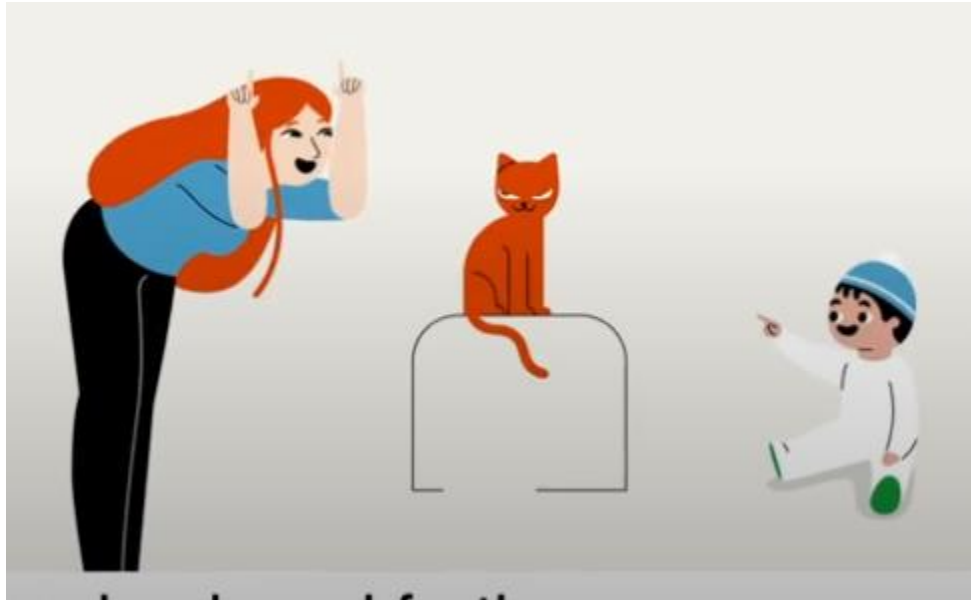
Talking about
learning

Scaffolding



The role of the adult

- Developing warm relationships



Responsive relationships builds strong brains | Serve & Return | NSPCC



The role of the adult

Understanding and naming emotions



EEF | Self-Regulation and Executive Function

Supporting Dysregulated Children: 10 Self-Regulation Strategies For Children



The role of the adult

- Supporting social negotiation and collaboration



Turn-taking difficulties? Why 'fun' might have more solutions than 'formality'. —

Siren Films

EEF | Self-Regulation and Executive Function



The role of the adult

Promoting talk about learning- Metacognition

- Model thinking out loud
- Plan how to do something
- Reflect and evaluate

I wonder what
will happen...?

What else do you
think you need?

That was a good
idea to use the...



Underwater Volcano

Watch Dini promoting talk about learning with a group of children (two-year-olds) as they explore with play dough.

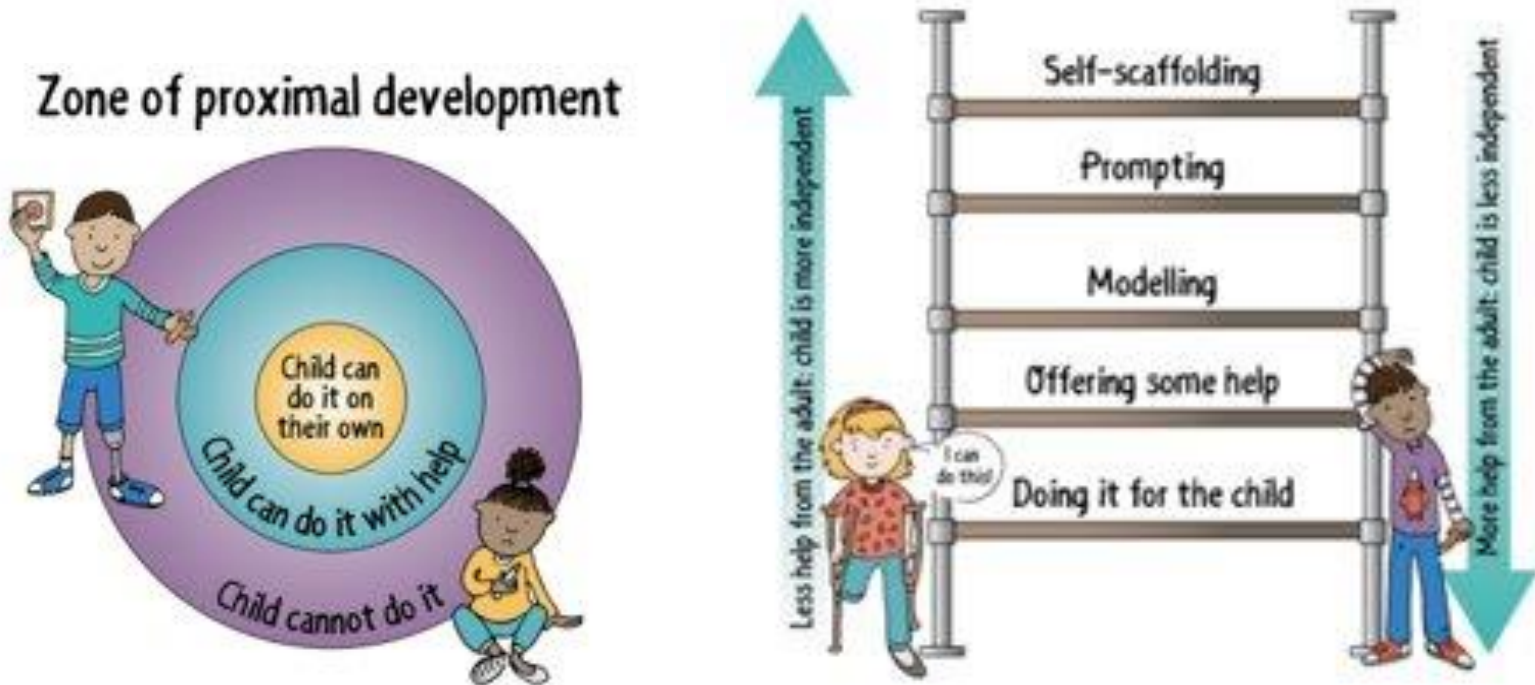
EEF | Self-Regulation and
Executive Function

Promoting talk about
learning



The role of the adult

Scaffolding



Promoting children's self-regulation skills through play - Anna Freud



The adult as play partner and co-regulator

Child-led play, supported by attentive adults, is where children learn the skills needed.

Babies and toddlers: Amazing learners - Video 3

See: 5 minutes 14 – 5 minutes 58

EEF | Early Mathematics (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)

Click on: 4. Teaching and modelling how to make comparisons and connections
Scroll to the bottom of the page: Connecting Shapes

sirenfilms.co.uk/library/adam-and-the-trampoline/

EEF | Self-Regulation and Executive Function (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)

Click on: 3. Creating a community of collaborative learners
Scroll to the bottom of the page: But that wouldn't be fair

[I'm angry! I'm sad. — Siren Films](#)

[Observing Practice Series NQS PLP - They won't let me play - YouTube](#)



The environment

Safe and
secure spaces

Calm area

Opportunities
for challenge

Physical
challenge

Stories



The environment

- Safe and secure spaces



A Froebelian approach

Creating environments for children to play and learn

by Helen Adams
and Emma Short

Creating environments for children to play and learn – A Froebelian approach

- Create a calm corner



The environment

- **Challenge and problem solving**

- Challenging resources
- Open ended resources
- Safe exploration areas
- Outdoors - nature based exploration.
- Child led



Creating and thinking critically - choosing ways to do things — Siren Films



The environment

- Physical activities



Developing self-regulation through physical play — Siren Films



The environment

- **Stories to support self-regulation**

[Sometimes Happy, Sometimes Sad: An Early Years in Mind story and guide | Anna Freud](#)

[Top Eleven books to support children to understand relationships and regulate their emotions and behaviour.](#)

[What do nursery songs and self-regulation have in common? | EEF](#)



Routines

Predictable
routines and
transitions

Opportunities
to plan and set
own challenges



Routines

- Predictable routines and transitions
 - Consistent daily routines
 - Careful transitions
 - Independence and control



Filip - snack time — Siren Films



Routines

- Opportunities to plan and set own challenges.



[Agency in Play: Making Space for Children's Agency With Learning Through Play - YouTube](#)



[Froebel Trust | Elinor Goldschmied & treasure baskets](#)



Reflection

Role of the adult

Warm relationships
Understanding and naming emotions
Supporting social play
Talking about learning
Scaffolding

Environment

Safe secure spaces
Calm area
Opportunities for challenge
Physical challenge
Stories

Routines

Predictable routines
Opportunities to plan, play and set own challenges

- Reflect on one of the areas; what might this look like in the baby room/toddler room/pre-school room?
- What have you already got in place that supports self-regulation, what do you need to work on?



Reflection - Parents

- Share techniques, insights and observations with parents.
- “What is happening at home?”
- Create a partnership that is supportive to the child’s development.



Reflection - Look after yourself

- Emotions are powerful.
- Working with children can provoke emotions.
- Professional reflection is important to talk things through and understand your own responses.
- It's okay to struggle; everyone needs back up sometimes.
- Demonstrate healthy emotional regulation: negotiate problems, apologise for behaviours, use self-calming strategies.

