

**Developing Brains-
Ideas for Parenting and Education
From the New Brain Science**
www.developingbrains.org

Training Module 2:

Self-Regulation: Recognizing, supporting, and promoting

Learning Objective:

To increase understanding of the central role that self-regulation plays in all areas of development and learning.

To stimulate thinking of new ways to embed the learning of self-regulation skills into classroom activities and daily routines for children.

For a group, (such as the staff of a Child Care Center, Part-day Preschool, or Before and After School Program) try to do this in a staff training where you have a total of about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours for the whole training.

For an individual (such as a Family Home Child Care teacher/caregiver or a parent), try to find someone else who is interested in doing this training so you can have dialog with someone else for the application of the concepts.

Reading:

All participants will read the following article under "Supporting Developing Brains" prior to doing the application activity:

"Self-Regulation and the Developing Brain:
One of the essential skills for living and learning"

Application Activity:

Print out the following four pages as a handout to participants.

Start by reviewing the handout and the types of self-regulation behaviors the participants will be addressing. Then follow the directions as stated in handout.

Self-Regulation Skills in Early Childhood: Supporting their Development

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Reviewing the concepts:

Definition:

Self-regulation is "children's ability to act in a deliberate, planned manner in governing much of their own behavior. (Bodrova and Leong,2007)

Trends in Self-regulation:

1. Other-Regulation develops before Self-Regulation.
2. Doing Something on command develops before Stopping Doing Something on command.
3. Voluntary Purposeful Attention is basic to all learning and develops first.

Role of Play in Self-Regulation:

Constructive and Dramatic Play teach children goal directed behavior, which is essential to school, career, and general life success.

Goal Directed Behavior	Goal Directed Play
1. Form goals and objectives	1. Decide what you want to do or play
2. Devise plans of action required to attain these goals	2. Decide how you will play this and with whom
3. Select the cognitive skills required to implement the plans	3. What do you know that applies to this? Figure out what you'll need and what you'll have to do to it or with it, and what the people will do.
4. Coordinate these skills.	4. Start to organize and set it up.
5. Apply the skills in the correct order.	5. Play in a way that supports or fits with the theme or game.
6. Evaluate your actions as success or failure relative to your intentions.	6. Sustain the play in accord with the intent. -or- Have it end early due to it not coming together as intended.

Reflections: (Do this individually or in a small group)

Make a brief list of where you have seen children in your care practicing self-regulation. Try to match the observation with what the skill is that they are learning, using the list below.

Self-regulation Skill	What you've observed
Move or act in a deliberate or purposeful fashion	
Adapt successfully to familiar settings	
Focus and maintain attention on something	
Ignore distractions	
Follow requests or instructions	
Attempt to regulate others	
Create "rules" for a game or play sequence	
Inhibit an inappropriate response	
Alternately shift your attention and re-focus it	
Inhibit movement or speech when appropriate	

Regulation of emotions in appropriate social interaction	
Regulation of attention	
"Use of strategies in the execution of cognitive tasks" (Blair)	
Ability to communicate needs, wants, and thoughts in language	
Ability to sustain attention	
Ability to be curious and enthusiastic when doing new activities	
Can inhibit impulsivity and follow directions	
Can take turns in speech and/or behavior	
Shows sensitivity to other's feelings, particularly other children	
Can keep information in his/her mind when trying to solve a problem	
Able to inhibit impulsive responses when "formulating and executing a response" (Blair)	

Group Discussion: (do this in a small group - it can be done individually also)

Share some of your observations from the above list with the group. Note any similarities between observations.

Then, brainstorm some additional ways you might be able to support children's development of self-regulation. This could be through activities, games, the environment, guidance, etc. Try to identify what skill it is that they are learning with items on the above list.

Notice skills that you are not seeing in children or see less often. Think of how you could teach and strengthen those skills with the children in your group.

You might think of some additional self-regulation skills.

Wrap-up Sharing with the Whole Group:

Bring the session to a close by doing some brief summaries of what each small group came up with:

- Self-regulation behavior they have observed already happening
- New ideas for supporting, encouraging, and practicing self-regulation skills

Follow-up at a later date:

Participants could come back together periodically to revisit self-regulation. This could be a focus that is brought into many discussions of curriculum and problem solving.