

The Three Rs

When children become dysregulated, it means they have lost the ability to maintain balance and are incapable of achieving regulation without assistance. What many people consider “bratty” behavior is, in fact, a state of dysregulation and signals a child in need of gentle intervention. Parents can help children achieve self-regulation through use of the Three Rs:



Regulate. Parents co-regulate with their children through soothing techniques like hugging and deep breathing. Different children need different responses from their parents, so it's important for parents to pay attention to what helps their children find peace.

Relate. Once a child's body and mind are relaxed, parents can find ways to empathize with whatever the child may be experiencing. Simple statements like, “I understand how you feel. I've been there too and I'll stay with you until you feel better” validate the child's emotions and create a space of understanding.

Reason. Many parents try to reason with children when they are still in a place of dysregulation which results in even greater chaos. Children are reasonable people with brilliant human brains, but only when they are *able* to be reasonable. At this point, parents can set limits and explain the need for them and their children can understand.



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