

Co-regulation



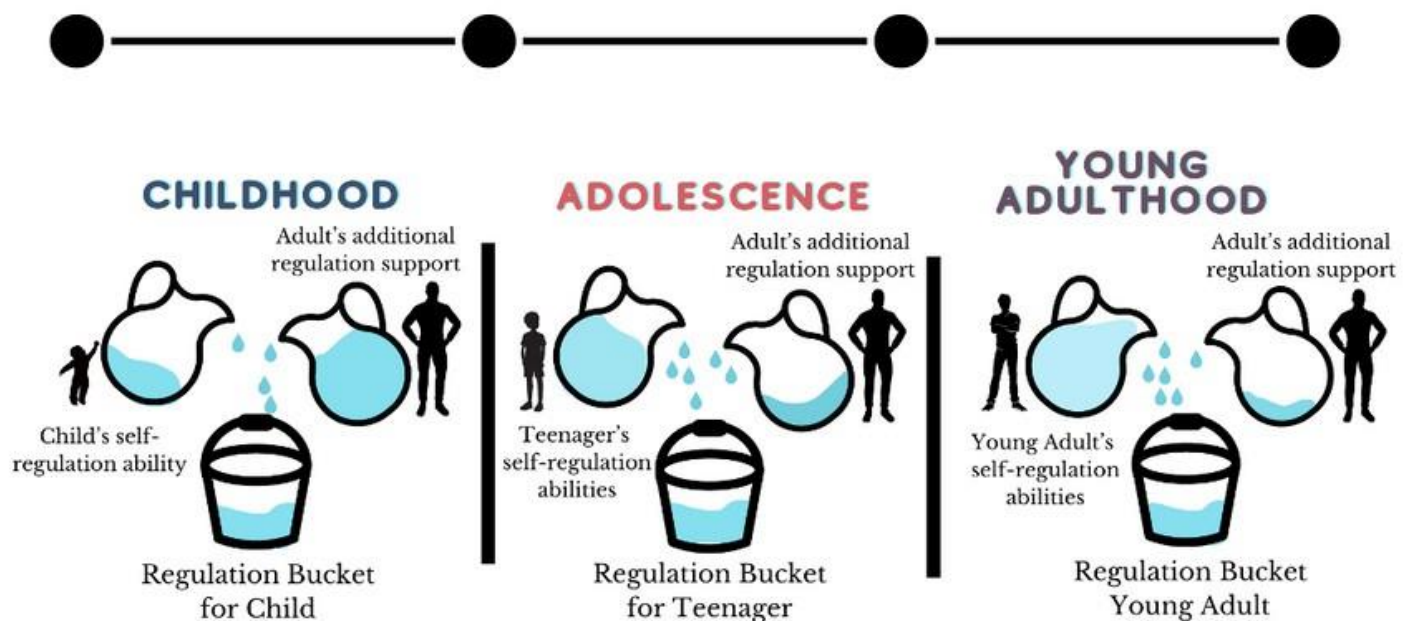
What's the difference between self-regulation & co-regulation?

Self-regulation is an individual's ability to manage their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours in everyday situations. As put by Andrea Bell, 'It is the control (of oneself) by oneself.'

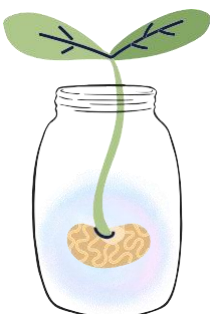
Co-regulation is the supportive, interactive process between a caring adult and children, youth or young adults that support self-regulation development.

In other words, co-regulation needs to happen so that self-regulation skills can develop.

How long will it take?



It develops throughout the lifespan.



This is what is typically seen:

In childhood, the child has some strategies for self-regulation but it is not enough to keep them regulated throughout the day. They need and rely on lots of hands-on adult regulation support (e.g. hugs, deep breathing, rocking, choices, if/then language, consistency).

By adolescence, the child has built a good repertoire of self-regulation strategies. They may have the ability to identify the problem, come up with and weigh the solutions, execute the solution and reassess if it worked or not. They start to take risks too. But they still need some adult co-regulation support to guide their thinking and decisions to support their regulation from time to time.

In young adulthood, the individual now has a bulk of the self-regulation strategies to carry them through difficult situations. But again, some check ins with their parent, or other adult might still be helpful.

Co-regulation

Key Components to Co-Regulation

1. It starts with you (the adult)

- Understand your own sensory triggers
- What tools do you have that help you calm down or wake your body up
- What areas of regulation do you struggle with that you might need more strategies for?

2. Connection is key. Create warm, supportive and responsive relationships

- Get down to their level
- Provide eye contact and an open body stance
- Watch and understand their body cues
- Validate what their body cues tell you about how they feel through verbal referencing
- Give opportunity to try and make mistakes
- Give clear choices (no more than 2)

3. Create nurturing and supportive spaces

- Routines are key! Make sure they are predictable and consistent
- Set clear expectations. Give your children 'jobs' to do
- Use meaningful motivators
- Provide a safe environment to support their regulation
- We all learn differently. Figure out how your child learns (visuals, hearing, physically helping them)

4. Find Teaching Moments

- Respond to every emotion with kindness and understanding. There is no good or bad emotion. All emotions are important
- Model to teach regulation strategies. Model what works for you (e.g. deep breaths, asking for a break)
- Create visuals to support your child's learning



If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to learn more about co-regulation/self-regulation for you or your child, please contact us at fromplaytowords.com.