

8 Key points to help you support your child's dysregulated behaviours

Children's behaviour is often more than what we see on the surface. It can be a signal, a form of communication, or an expression of an unmet need or skill still learning. It is important for adults to recognise that behaviour may be linked to underlying challenges such as sensory sensitivities, emotional regulation difficulties, anxiety, fears, trauma, or medical needs. By better understanding these signals, parents/caregivers can respond with compassion and support rather than frustration.

What is dysregulation?

Dysregulation is when a child's nervous system becomes overloaded, and they are unable to regulate their emotions or control their thoughts and reactions. During this state, the child feels extremely unsettled, and scared which often lead to unwanted behaviours.



Below are tips to help you successfully regulate your child:

1 The behaviour is not personal

Your child is not deliberately provoking you. Try to temper any personal reaction you may have in that moment.



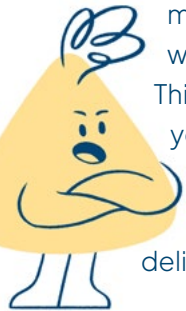
2 Behaviour is communication

All behaviours mean something, and all behaviours are there to be understood! Addressing behaviour should be approached with exploration, curiosity and a genuine desire to better understand the child. Explore what is creating the behaviour.



5 Avoid responding with punishment

Do not try to force the child out of the behaviour or to stop by making threats, giving warnings, or punishments. This often exacerbates your child's dysregulation. Dysregulated behaviour will never be resolved by delivering consequences.



6 The goal is not educating them, but to create safety

Remember that the goal in the moment is not education but ensuring everyone's safety and managing the dysregulation effectively. Navigate through dysregulated behaviour as smoothly as possible.



3 The child is dysregulated and not in control...

and they need support from an adult. Their behaviour is neither intentional nor planned. Try to manage thoughts and feelings that the child is "mean" or "defiant" or doing this to gain or get something they want.



4 Try to stay calm

Try to react to the child in a calm manner. Consider it your goal to keep yourself regulated when working with a dysregulated child.



7 Give the child space and time

The most effective response is to provide the child with a quiet space and time to reset or relax. Safely guide them to low stimulation space or room where their system can naturally regulate.



8 Revisit the situation when calm

Once the dysregulated behaviour has passed, assess what created the behaviour and implement preventative measures to help your child.



Remember !!

Your child can only learn how to regulate their emotions through being co-regulated by you.

Just like children need training wheels before they can ride a bike on their own, they also need your calm support before they can handle big feelings by themselves.



Together, we'll
Find a way
to support children
and families

1300 458 600
rantreception@ra-nt.org.au
nt.relationships.org.au

Darwin
5 Shepherd Street
Darwin 0800

Sunny's Nest
82 Woods Street
Darwin 0800

