**Co-Regulation**

Self-regulation is a difficult skill for anyone, especially children and youth. Children learn the skill of self-regulation through co-regulation with a trusted adult, such as parent/guardian. Self-regulation is a skill, just like learning to ride a bike and young people need support and practice in learning this skill. Co-regulation is best practiced regularly, for at least **5 minutes a day** of **uninterrupted time** with parent/guardian. Co-regulation can include a variety of activities, including singing, read-a-loud, playing games, sports, nature time, as long as its child-led (and without screens). By allowing your child to take the lead in play, they get to experience a sense of control, which allows them to take risks, build confidence, and explore the full range of emotions with the support of their parent/guardian.

**Play based co-regulation activities:**

**Level 1** activities are low risk, cooperative play, where parent/guardian and child work together on an activity. In Level 1 activities, the goal is for the child’s nervous system to be supported by the calm nervous system of their parent/guardian. Use Level 1 activities when your child is tired, low energy, or as a calming activity before bed. Level 1 is also a great starting place for introducing co-regulation activities.

**Level 2** involves greater risk, more competitive type play that is meant to combine the elements of fun and risk of win/loss. The emotions will be higher in level 2 play. As the emotions are higher in level 2, it is important for parent/guardian to start/finish the game, yet, allowing your child to take the lead during gameplay. This provides your child the opportunity to take risks in a safe, supportive and structured space. Finish the activity when you are both still having fun, and finish with loving contact, ie: high five, tickling, or a hug.

**Level 3** involves higher risk and competitive type play. The higher the risk in play, the more potential for emotionality. Level 3 type of activities are best played after connection between parent/guardian and child has already been established and you are ready to try riskier play. The child takes the lead in play-based co-regulation activity; however, it is important that the parent/guardian is the one to start and finish the activity. Finish the activity when you are both still having fun, and finish with loving contact, ie: high five, tickling, or a hug.

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| **LEVEL 1** | **LEVEL 2** | **LEVEL 3** |
| Puzzles  | Snakes and Ladders | Jenga |
| Lego  | Go Fish (card game) |  “War” (card game) |
| Building blocks | Memory  | Pick Up Sticks |
| Nature walk | UNO | Trouble |
| Cooking / Baking | Crazy Eights | Hungry Hungry Hippo |
| Crafts / Art | Connect 4 | KerPlunk |
| Science Play | Tic Tac Toe | Chess |
| Play-do/Kinetic Sand/Slime | Checkers | Arm/Thumb wrestle |
| Read aloud | Rock, Paper, Scissors | Pillow fights |
| Colouring | Hide and go seek | King/ Queen of the mountain |
| Handstack Game | Dominoes | Rough & tumble play |
| Singing | Balloon Toss |  |
| Back/hand massage  |  |  |
| Playing musical instruments |  |  |
| Tinfoil game |  |  |