

4 Body Self-Regulation

The Body Self-Regulation unit comes first because it forms a foundation for Cognitive and Emotional Self-Regulation.

In the Body Self-Regulation unit, our goals are to help your child:

1. learn that he can control when, where and how he moves his body,
2. practice self-regulating his body even in challenging situations,
3. help himself if he feels he's becoming un-regulated or stressed, and
4. begin using slow breathing to calm and center himself.

In the information that follows, you'll find out more about each goal, where and when you might practice the skills with your child, activities you can do with him to improve his self-regulation skills, and resources that you can use for practicing. Remember that you can move on to another area but still practice things you've done before.

Practice times center around everyday situations, like while you're driving in the car or going for a walk. It's more fun to include other children and adults whenever you can – the more the merrier! We try to keep special materials to a minimum – any extras you might need will be on the spark* website (<http://spark-kids.ca>). We also

try to keep expenses to a minimum - suggested storybooks can be borrowed from your local library.

Order of skills

1. Start by helping your child learn to control his **body and body parts** at different speeds, intensities (lightly or with a lot of force) and in different manners (for example, like a butterfly or an angry bear).
2. Our next area is learning to use slow steady **breathing** to calm and center himself. You and your child will work on using Turtle Breathing. That is breathing slowly in and out of your nose or mouth. Some children have a difficult time figuring out how to breathe just through their noses so we will accept breathing through his mouth at least for a while.
3. Next we focus on self-regulation of **voice** volume. You and your child will have fun singing songs and rhymes loudly, softly and in between.

Self-Regulation of the hands, feet and whole body

Stage 1 – I can do it!

The goal of the activities is to help your child learn that he can control his hands, feet and whole body and move them at different speeds and intensities and manners all by himself. The main executive function practiced at this stage is inhibitory control where your child has to change speed, intensity and manner of movement. We will increasingly focus on his self-monitoring, asking him what he thinks about his actions (for example, "How did your hands do that time?").

For Stage 1, introduce and practice self-regulation in activities your child enjoys. Check back to page 21 where you wrote out your child's likes and dislikes. Use songs, rhythm and music as much as possible. Music tends to engage children and help them be more willing to participate.

Activities

Choose a place for practicing that is safe. That means, that if your child is running around, he can't run into the street or isn't likely to fall. Some children are very conscious of other people watching them so choose a private space so just the two of you can practice. You can practice in the car when driving place to place, in the bathtub, while standing in line waiting to get service, when moving from one location to another in your home or just about anywhere you can.

Different speeds: Tell your child that sometimes you can do actions to songs really slowly and sometimes really fast. Ask your child which way he wants to do the song and actions: fast or slow. Let him decide and sing the song at that rate. Part way through that song, change the speed. Take turns with your child deciding on the speed and introduce "stop!" Have fun with this and keep it playful.

Different intensities: Tell your child that sometimes you can do actions to songs really hard and sometimes really soft. Ask your child which way he wants to do the song and actions: hard or soft. Let him decide and sing the song at that intensity. Part way through that song, change the intensity. Take turns with your child deciding on the intensity and mix in some changes of speed as well.

Different manners: Tell your child that sometimes you can do actions to songs just like different creatures. You can move like a bunny, a butterfly or a bear. Ask your child which way he wants to do the song and actions. You may have to show pictures of some creatures in the beginning, particularly with younger children. An assortment of pictures are in the resources on the spark* website (spark-kids.ca). Let him decide and do actions to the song like that creature. Part way through that song, change the creature. Take turns with your child deciding on the creature and mix in some changes of speed and intensity also.

Language of spark*

Introduce the activity with "Let's .." or "How about we ...?" These emphasize shared participation.

Give feelings of competence by telling your child, "You really know how to control your"

Increase your child's sense of control by letting him decide the speed, intensity or manner of action.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands (clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands. (clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet (stomp stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet (stomp stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet. (stomp stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, do them both (clap-clap, stomp-stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, do them both (clap-clap, stomp-stomp)

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you're happy and you know it, do them both (clap-clap, stomp-stomp)

EXAMPLE: (in the car) "Let's sing *If You're Happy and You Know It*. Are you ready?" Sing one round of the song with your child. "How about we do that again but clap really loudly?" Sing the round again. "Okay, let's do the next part really fast. Are you ready?" Sing the next round. "Wow, you really controlled your hands and told them what to do. Well done! (OR "It looks like you have to tell your hands to do what you want. Let's tell them now, hands you need to clap fast") Now, how do you want to do the actions for the next one, stomping your feet quietly, loudly, slowly or fast?" Sing the next round doing the actions the way your child chose. "Nice job! You really told your feet what to do. (OR "Keep trying. Those silly feet need to listen better. You tell them.") Okay, let's do one more round. How should we do the actions this time?" After the next round, ask "How did your feet and hands do this time?" If his judgement of his performance was accurate, praise him. If it wasn't very well done, say, "Hmm, it didn't look like the best you can do. Let's try again and really watch how your feet/hands work."

EXAMPLE: (walking to the park) "Let's walk like rabbits. How about we do it five times? Let's try." Hop five times, counting each hop with your child. "How should we walk this time, like a dinosaur, a fairy, a kangaroo, a bear? How many steps should we take?" Move in the way your child suggested for the number of steps he said. "Let's walk really fast until I say to stop." Walk quickly, saying "stop" after a while. "ha-ha, I caught you! Tell your feet to stop as soon as you hear stop. Now you can tell us how to walk and when to stop. Are you ready? How do you want to walk, fast, slow, tiptoeing, stomping?" Once he decides how to walk, start off and wait for him to say "stop". If he forgets, pretend you're exhausted and remind him to say "stop". Praise him for controlling his feet and body. As you practice more, ask your child, "How did your body do that time?" If he's accurate in his evaluation, say, "I agree, I think you did a wonderful job of telling your body what to do." If his judgement isn't accurate, say, "Well, I'm not sure. I think you could probably do better. Let's give it another try and be sure to watch your body really carefully."

Stage 2 – I can do it here and here

Move on to this stage when your child shows that he can easily move his hands, feet and body at different speeds, with different intensities and in different manners. Continue practicing like you did in Stage 1 whenever you can – it's fun and good for everyone.

The goal of this stage is to help your child understand where and when he can use different speeds, intensities and manners of movement. The main executive functions focused on at this stage are inhibitory control (varying movements), planning and organization (thinking ahead), working memory (comparing the present situation to rules about how to move) and cognitive flexibility (changing for different situations).

Activities

Talk to your child about what he thinks: when can he run? when should he walk? when should he move slowly? when should he tiptoe? when can he move like a bunny? Think of all sorts of places and situations at home and in the community.

EXAMPLE: "I'm trying to think about what we need to do with our bodies in different places. How about if _____ is having a nap? What should we tell our bodies to do?" Act out the situation as needed. Let your child take a turn being the sleeping person. You stomp your feet as you walk by. Then ask him, "Hmm, do you think that would be a good idea? What should I tell my feet to do?" If he chooses telling his feet to walk quietly, praise him for such good thinking. If he's not sure, act out an exaggerated scene with him trying to sleep and you stomping your feet. Ask him, "Is it easy to sleep when I'm making so much noise? It's really difficult, isn't it? We need to tell our feet to walk quietly.). How can you help yourself remember to use quiet feet when someone's sleeping?" Accept just about any suggestion your child makes. You can also make suggestions from things that you might use to remind yourself. Try other places, some where he can run and stomp (like the playground) and some where he needs to control his body (for example, church, temple or synagogue).

Language of spark*

Understanding meaning and purpose is encouraged by asking, "Why do you think that's a good/not so good idea?"

Prompt him to think on his own by asking questions like, "What should you tell your (body part)?" and "how can we help ourselves remember?"

Help your child feel competent with statements like, "Good thinking!", "How did you know what to do?", "You're so clever."

Introduce storybooks with characters who are moving in different ways that are appropriate (like the gingerbread man who is running away) and inappropriate. Discuss these characters and their choices about moving their bodies in different ways and why and where it's appropriate. Suggestions for different storybooks are in the resources on the spark* website.

When you're at home or out in the community with your child, comment about how he's controlling his body or letting loose. Point out when you forget to control your body. Remind him about your discussions and storybook characters you read about.

Stage 3 – I can do it even when

Move on to this stage after your child shows that he understands that he can move his body in different ways in different places that are important to the family. He knows where he can let loose and where he needs to tell his hands, feet or body to stay under his control. Continue practicing like you did in Stage 1 whenever you can – it's fun and good for everyone.

The goal of this stage is to help your child cope in situations that might challenge the self-regulation you've worked on. The main executive functions focused on at this stage are inhibitory control (varying temptations and influences), planning and organization (thinking ahead), working memory (remembering what he's supposed to do), self-monitoring (checking to make sure he's controlling his body or letting loose depending on the situation), self-monitoring (checking to see how he's doing) and cognitive flexibility (changing for different situations).

Activities

Now that your child has practiced the different skills and understands why and where they're important, it's time to take them on the road. Go to places that are safe even if your child forgets to control his hands, feet or body. These should increasingly be places where he had difficulty regulating himself in the past. You can do some preventive work with your child before going into

the situation by talking to him about the things he has to remind his hands, feet or body to do. For example, "We're going to the grocery store and you remember the last time that your hands kept trying to put some candy in our cart. I said that we didn't need any candy. What could you tell your hands this time?" You can help your child control his body by engaging him in something that will keep him busy and productive. For example, have him push the grocery cart or hold the grocery list and check to make sure you bought everything.

EXAMPLE: (in the grocery store where your child usually picks up a candy bar at the checkout) Catch him before he touches the candy bars and comment, "Wow, look at how you told your hands to control themselves and how you just looked at the candy bars. That is fantastic! Good for you! Well done!" (I don't believe you can lay on too much praise for work well done). "What did you tell your hands?" Always remember that keeping your child's hands busy doing other things, like holding groceries or helping to put them on the conveyor, will help change the old patterns of behavior and make the new self-regulation skills easier to practice.

EXAMPLE: (in the mall where he usually runs ahead of you) If he starts to run ahead, stop him and ask, "What do you need to tell your body?" If he seems unsure about what you're talking about, remind him about how you talked about staying together at the mall so you can see him (remember, you have to give it meaning and purpose). Ask him again, "What do you need to tell your body?" If he's still not sure, ask him what would happen if he runs ahead (you can't see where he is and that makes you worry). Then ask him one more time, "What do you need to tell your body?" If he doesn't come up with an answer this time, tell him, "Body, you need to slow down and stay with ____." You could also help to keep him from running off by engaging him in activities like pushing a cart or carrying shopping bags. These will help slow him down a little and give you a chance to notice and praise his self-regulation.

Language of spark*

Prompt your child to think on his own with comments like, "You really told your hands what to do. What did you tell them?" Model statements like, "Hands, you need to help Mom with the groceries right now."

Help your child feel competent with statements like, "Good thinking!", "You really know how to tell your hands/body/feet what to do."

Stage 4 – I can help myself by

Move on to this stage when your child shows that he can control his hands, feet and body most of the time in important places. He doesn't have to have perfect control – it's a work in progress. Continue practicing like you did in Stage 1 whenever you can – it's fun and good reminders for everyone.

The goal of this stage is to help your child to support his own self-regulation in different settings by advocating for himself. The main executive functions focused on at this stage are inhibitory control (varying distractions and temptations), planning and organization (thinking ahead), working memory (comparing the present situation to rules about how to move), self-monitoring (checking to see how he's doing) and cognitive flexibility (changing for different situations).

Activities

Now that your child has practiced self-regulation in different places with your support, it's time for him to take over more control. Go to places you normally go in the course of family life. Be ready to prompt him to think of ways to help himself if he's having a difficult time controlling his hands, feet or body. No matter what he suggests (it may not be what you had in mind), if it'll help him, let him try it. He might say something that sounds ridiculous (like, "I can hold my ear and that'll help my body stay still"), let him give it a try it might just help him. Ideas that your child comes up with are usually more powerful for him than the ones you suggest.

EXAMPLE: (at a sports practice session) Keep your eyes on your child. The moment you notice that he's having a difficult time controlling his hands, feet or body, put your hand on his shoulder and quietly say to him, "It looks like your body is having a hard time staying still. What could you do to help yourself?" If he comes up with an idea, praise him. If he has a difficult time coming up with an idea, suggest something like, "You know when I have a hard time keeping my body still, I

EXAMPLE: (playing with brother/sister/friend who's knocking down the building he's constructing) "I noticed that ___ is trying to bug you. What could you do to help yourself?" If he comes up with a possible solution (like moving away, getting his brother/sister/friend another toy to play with), praise him and prompt him to do it. If he has a difficult time coming up with ways to help himself, describe what you see, "Well, it looks to me like ___ wants your attention. Do you want to stop building or what could you do to help ___?" If he can't come up with ways to help, ask him, "If you want to keep building, can you think of something else ___ could do or could ___ help you?"

Self-Regulation of breathing

Stage 1 – I can do it!

The goal of the activities is to help your child learn that he can use slowed breathing (Turtle Breathing) to calm and center himself. Turtle breathing helps focus his attention on this moment, not on what might or might not happen. This can reduce his anxiety level which opens his mind and body to other possibilities and to learning. The state of calm and being in the 'here and now' gives your child a chance to clear his mind. He can then make greater sense of the world and people around him. Many children, especially those who are quite anxious, have no idea what calmness really feels like – they spend most of their lives tense and anxious. By helping your child understand and feel what calmness is like, we can help him enjoy that experience and figure out where his body signals rising stress. It might be in his neck or shoulders or tummy - it's very individual. If he can learn the early warning signs, he'll be better able to help himself before erupting in anger or tears.

The main executive function practiced at this stage is inhibitory control where your child has to change speed. We will increasingly focus on his self-monitoring, asking him what he thinks about his Turtle Breathing (for example, "How did your breathing go that time?").

Language of spark*

Help your child understand the meaning and purpose in different settings by using statements like, "It looks like your body is having a hard time controlling itself."

Prompt your child to think on his own with comments like, "What could you do to help yourself?"

Give your child lots of opportunities to demonstrate his new skills. Try your best to stand back, getting involved only when necessary.

Language of spark*

Introduce the activity with "Let's .."
This emphasizes shared participation.
Give meaning and purpose and feelings of competence by telling your child, "Turtle Breathing helps our brains and our bodies feel calm and work better."

Activities

For Stage 1, introduce and practice self-regulation in a place that is quiet and relatively calm. You might practice at bedtime or in the bathtub which are times when a lot of children feel calm.

Tell your child that, now he knows how to tell his body what to do, you two are going to learn how to do slow Turtle Breathing. Turtle Breathing is slow like a turtle. By taking a few slow breaths and feeling the air come in and out of your nose/mouth, your brain and your body can feel calm and quiet. Practice two to three or more times every day – the more often the better – but make sure you do it in a quiet, calm place. At each practice time, breathe in and out slowly up to five or six times, whatever number is positive and successful for your child.

EXAMPLE: (sitting cross-legged on the floor in a quiet place with no distractions – speak in a calm, quiet voice) Introduce the idea of Turtle Breathing. Say, "We're going to sit very quietly and still. We breathe in through our nose really slowly, feeling the air go in your nose (hold for a count of two) and then let the air out slowly. Feel the air come out of your nose. This is slow Turtle Breathing. It helps our brains and our bodies feel calm and work better. Let's try it three times in a row really slowly. Feel the air come in and out of your nose. Do you feel your body become calm? It feels good to feel our breathing and to feel our calm bodies and brains. Can you feel the air on your nose? We're breathing slowly like a turtle and helping our brains and our bodies be calm. Even if our bodies move a little bit, we can still think only about the air coming in and out of our noses."

Stage 2 – I can do it here and here

The goal of this stage is to help your child understand where and when he can use his Turtle Breathing to calm and center himself. The main executive functions focused on at this stage are inhibitory control (varying breathing rate), planning and organization (thinking ahead), working memory (comparing the present

situation to rules about how to use his breathing) and cognitive flexibility (changing for different situations).

Activities

Talk to your child about when he can use his Turtle Breathing to help calm his brain and body and help them work better. Start off identifying situations that might help him sleep or think better. After he's made some suggestions, add situations that may have some emotion attached to them (for example, when he get really excited or feels angry).

EXAMPLE: "I'm trying to think about when it might help to use my Turtle Breathing to make my body and brain calm and work better. How about when I need to think really hard? Would that be a good time to use Turtle Breathing?" Act out the situation. Let your child take a turn preparing himself for doing a challenging activity. After trying out Turtle Breathing, introduce the idea of using it to calm ourselves when we feel very excited or angry.

Introduce storybooks with characters who are feeling different emotions (like the raccoon in *The Kissing Hand* or *The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything*). Discuss these characters and how they could use their Turtle Breathing to help them calm down and think better. Practice Turtle Breathing while pretending to be the characters. Suggestions for different storybooks are in the resources on the spark* website.

When you're at home or out in the community with your child, comment about how you and he could use your Turtle Breathing. You can point out someone who's having difficulty controlling themselves and ask your child what the person could do to help himself (that is, do some Turtle Breathing). Remind him about your discussions and storybook characters you read about.

Stage 3 – I can do it even when

The goal of this stage is to help your child cope is situations where Turtle Breathing would be appropriate. The main executive functions focused on at this stage are inhibitory control (varying movements), planning

Language of spark*

Understanding meaning and purpose is encouraged by asking, "Why do you think that's a good/not so good idea?"

Prompt him to think on his own by asking questions like, "How can we help ourselves remember?"

Language of spark*

Shared participation can be promoted by letting your child know you experience the same thing, "It's hard for me too".

Help your child feel competent with statements like, "Well done!", "You did such a great job of telling your brain and body to stay calm."

and organization (thinking ahead), working memory (remembering what he's supposed to do), self-monitoring (checking to make sure he's controlling his body or letting loose depending on the situation) and cognitive flexibility (changing from a state of upset or high activity to calmness using Turtle Breathing).

Activities

Now that your child has practiced Turtle Breathing and understands why and where it can help him, it's time to bring it into everyday life. Before going about your normal day talk to him about how well he can control his body and how Turtle Breathing can make it even easier. Practice a few Turtle Breaths with your child and move on with your day.

Don't forget to continue practicing Turtle Breathing at times when your child needs to help calm himself, like at bedtime.

EXAMPLE: (in the grocery store line-up your child is becoming restless) Try to engage your child in Turtle Breathing. An important thing to be aware of is that you need to catch your child before he becomes too restless. If his emotions and tiredness are too much for him, it'll probably just melt down if you suggest Turtle Breathing. As early as possible, comment, "It looks like your brain and your body are having a hard time standing here in line. It's hard for me too. Why don't we try some Turtle Breathing to help our brains and bodies stay calm?"

EXAMPLE: (you're talking to another adult and your child wants to get going) Again, be sure not to wait too long so your child isn't too upset before you talk to him. Comment, "I need to talk to ___ for two more minutes. What could you do to help your body and your brain stay calm?" It generally helps children to indicate exactly how many more minutes you need and try to stick with that amount of time.

Stage 4 – I can help myself by

Move on to this stage when your child shows that he can use Turtle Breathing to calm and center himself and

body most of the time. He doesn't have to use it every time he should – it'll take some time to become more aware of when he needs to use it. Continue practicing like you did in Stage 1 whenever you can, especially at bedtime or before starting a difficult task.

The goal of this stage is to help your child to support his own self-regulation by using his Turtle Breathing in important situations every day and then using that calm state to advocate for himself. The main executive functions focused on at this stage are inhibitory control (varying distractions and temptations), planning and organization (thinking ahead), working memory (comparing the present situation to rules about how to move), self-monitoring (checking to see how he's doing) and cognitive flexibility (changing for different situations).

Activities

Now it's time for your child to take over more control. Go to places you normally go in the course of family life. Be ready to prompt him to think of ways to help himself if he's having a difficult time staying calm

EXAMPLE: (a group activity your child is involved in is becoming too chaotic and out of control) Talk with your child the moment you detect he's becoming upset by the things going on. Quietly go up to him and comment, "It looks like you're having a hard time here. What could you do to help yourself?" He may decide to practice Turtle Breathing or he may want to leave the situation. Try your best to promote Turtle Breathing – he may be willing to give it a try on the sidelines rather than right in the middle of the group.

Self-Regulation of the voice

Stage 1 – I can do it!

The goal of the activities is to help your child learn that he can control the loudness of his voice all by himself. The main executive function practiced at this stage is inhibitory control where your child has to change loudness. We will increasingly focus on his self-

monitoring, asking him what he thinks about his voice loudness (for example, “How did your voice do that time?”).

For Stage 1, introduce and practice self-regulation in activities your child enjoys. Check back to page 21 where you wrote out your child’s likes and dislikes. Songs and rhymes are naturals for practicing voice control.

Choose a place for practicing that is suitable for loud and quiet voices – practicing can get raucous! You can practice in the car when driving place to place, in the bathtub or just about anywhere it’s okay to be a little noisy.

Activities

Tell your child that sometimes you can say things really loudly and sometimes really softly or quietly. Ask your child which way he wants to do a song or rhyme: loudly, softly or in between. Let him decide and sing the song at that intensity. Part way through that song, change the intensity. Take turns with your child deciding on the intensity and mix in some changes of speed as well.

Language of spark*

Introduce the activity with “Let’s ..” or “How about we ...?” These emphasize shared participation.

Give feelings of competence by telling your child, “You really know how to control your voice.”

Increase your child’s sense of control by letting him decide the loudness level you both should use.

EXAMPLE: (in the car) “Let’s sing Are you ready?” Sing one round of the song with your child. “How about we do that again but do it really loudly?” Sing the round again. “Okay, let’s do the next part really softly or quietly. Are you ready?” Sing the next round. “Wow, you really controlled your voice and told it what to do. Well done! (OR “It looks like you have to tell your voice to do what you want. Let’s tell them now, voice you need to sing softly.”) Now, how do you want to do the actions the next one, quietly, loudly or in between?” Sing the next round using the loudness your child chose. “Nice job! You really told your voice what to do. (OR “Keep trying. That silly voice needs to listen better. You tell it.) Okay, let’s do one more round. How should we do it this time?” After the next round, ask “How did your voice do this time?” If his judgement of his performance was accurate, praise him. If it wasn’t very well done, say, “Hmm, it didn’t look like the best you can do. Let’s try again and really watch how loud your voice is.”

Stage 2 – I can do it here and here

The goal of this stage is to help your child understand where and when he can use different loudnesses. The main executive functions focused on at this stage are inhibitory control (varying loudness), planning and organization (thinking ahead), working memory (comparing the present situation to rules about how to move) and cognitive flexibility (changing for different situations).

Activities

Talk to your child about what he thinks: when can he use a loud voice? when should he use a quiet voice? when should he use an in-between voice? Think of all sorts of places and situations at home and in the community.

EXAMPLE: "I'm trying to think about how we need to use different voices in different places. How about if _____ is having a nap? What should we tell our voices to do?" Act out the situation as needed. Let your child take a turn being the sleeping person. Talk in a really loud voice. Then ask him, "Hmm, do you think that would be a good idea? What should I tell my voice to do?" If he chooses telling his voice to talk quietly, praise him for such good thinking. (If he's not sure, act out an exaggerated scene with him trying to sleep and you speaking really loudly. Ask him, "Is it easy to sleep when I'm making so much noise? It's really difficult, isn't it? We need to tell our voice to quiet.") How can you help yourself remember to use a quiet voice when someone's sleeping?" Accept his suggestion and make some of your own. Try other places, some where he can use a loud voice (like the playground) and some where he needs to use a quiet voice (for example, church, temple or synagogue, the library).

Introduce storybooks with characters who are using appropriate voices and inappropriate (like Mortimer in *Mortimer be quiet*). Discuss these characters and their choices about their voices and why and where it's appropriate. Suggestions for different storybooks are in the resources on the spark* website.

Language of spark*

Thinking on his own is encouraged by asking, "Why do you think that's a good/not so good idea?" and "how can we help ourselves remember?"

Help your child feel competent with statements like, "Good thinking!", "How did you know what to do?"

When you're at home or out in the community with your child, comment about how he's controlling his voice in ways that appropriate to the situation. Remind him about your discussions and storybook characters you read about.

Stage 3 – I can do it even when

The goal of this stage is to help your child cope in situations that might challenge self-regulation of his voice. The main executive functions focused on at this stage are inhibitory control (varying movements), planning and organization (thinking ahead), working memory (remembering what he's supposed to do), self-monitoring (checking to make sure he's controlling his body or letting loose depending on the situation) and cognitive flexibility (changing for different situations).

Language of spark*

Remembering the meaning and purpose and thinking on his own are encouraged by asking, "Why do you think that's a good/not so good voice to use?"

Prompt him to think on his own by asking questions like, "What should you tell your voice?" and "How can we help ourselves remember?"

Activities

Now that your child has practiced different voice volumes and understands why and where his voice should be quiet, loud or in between, it's time to practice in everyday life. Go to places that are challenging for your child as well as places where he can use a loud voice. Before going into situations that are more difficult, talk to him about reminding his voice. For example, "We're going to the library and you remember how our voices are supposed to be there? What could we tell our voices when we're in the library?"

EXAMPLE: (going to church/temple/synagogue) If he starts to use a loud voice, stop him and ask, "What do you need to tell your voice when we're in ___?" If he seems unsure, remind him about how you talked about using a quiet voice even though some people are allowed to talk loudly. Ask him again, "What do you need to tell your voice?" When your child uses a quiet voice, be sure to praise him for remembering. Explain that it makes it easier for other people to hear.

Stage 4 – I can help myself by

Move on to this stage when your child shows that he can control his voice volume most of the time in important places. He doesn't have to have perfect

control but he's showing progress. Continue practicing like you did in Stage 1 whenever you can – it's fun and good reminders for everyone.

The goal of this stage is to help your child to support his own self-regulation in different settings by advocating for himself. The main executive functions focused on at this stage are inhibitory control (varying distractions and temptations), planning and organization (thinking ahead), working memory (comparing the present situation to rules about how to move), self-monitoring (checking to see how he's doing) and cognitive flexibility (changing for different situations).

Activities

Now that your child has practiced self-regulation in different places with your support, it's time for him to take over more control. Go to places you normally go in the course of family life. Be ready to prompt him to think of ways to help himself if he's having a difficult time controlling his voice.

EXAMPLE: (a group activity where your child is becoming very loud and/or other people are loud and that bothers him) Watch your child closely and look for signs of upset. If he doesn't make some decisions on his own about using a quieter voice or asking others to use quieter voices, talk to him privately and comment, "It looks like you're having a hard time here. What could you do to help yourself?" He may decide to practice Turtle Breathing and then use a quieter voice. He may choose to ask another child to use a quieter voice or he may want to leave the situation. Help him decide which choice might be best.

Language of spark*

Help your child keep a sense of control by making his own decisions about what to do – "What could you do to help yourself?"

Give him opportunities to demonstrate his new skills. Try your best to stand back, getting involved only when necessary.

Refining body self-regulation

Yoga

Yoga is a wonderful way to practice regulating the speed, location and intensity of movement coordinated with Turtle Breathing. It also helps to improve imitation skills, concentration, body strength and flexibility. Other great features of yoga are that it doesn't require any

exotic equipment or clothing, is simple to learn and can be done just about anywhere.

First, find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. The space should be as uncluttered as possible – a place where distractions are minimized. Wear comfortable clothes that will let you move easily. Use a non-slip mat if one is available.

Next, decide what poses you want to use. You can do a few simple ones with your child but it's usually best to do a little warm-up first. Do some Turtle Breathing with your child and then show him a pose and help him do it. Start with a set of positions that (a) feel comfortable to you and your child and (b) let you breathe freely. Remember, yoga is supposed to be gentle and calming.

Some positions are easy for everyone. Have a look at the chart of poses below. There are two labeled "simple" because they require little to no coordination yet, when coupled with Turtle Breathing, they promote a state of calm.

Simple calming pose "corpse" pose	 A stick figure lying flat on its back with arms and legs extended straight out to the sides, representing the Corpse Pose (Savasana).
Calming, flexing pose "child" pose (also called "let's see if you can touch your nose to your knees)	 A stick figure sitting on its heels with its knees pulled up close to its body and its torso folded forward, representing the Child Pose (Balasana).
Calming pose "calm heart" pose	 A stick figure sitting in a cross-legged position with its back straight and hands resting on its knees, representing the Lotus Pose (Padmasana).
Calming pose "seated forward bend" pose (also known as "let's see if you can smell your toes")	 A stick figure sitting on its heels with its torso bent forward and its hands reaching towards its feet, representing the Seated Forward Bend (Paschimottasana).

Simple alerting pose "mountain" pose	
Alerting, stretching pose "warrior" pose (also called "let's see if you can touch the ceiling")	
Alerting, flexing pose "cat" pose	
Alerting, stretching pose "dog", "downward dog" pose	

Some poses tend to be more calming and quieting and others are more alerting. You'll notice poses in the table that are labeled "calming"; those are positions that curl the body. The poses labeled "alerting" are ones where the body is stretched. They tend to wake up your muscles and brain.

You can do one pose if that works best for you and your child. When you go into a pose, move slowly and be sure to use your Turtle Breathing. It is generally best if you're going to do a sequence of poses that you use the mountain pose as the one you move to when changing from position to position. That is, you would start with mountain pose, move slowly into the next pose and then move into mountain pose again before taking on another pose.

There are a number of helpful resources on the internet and in the library and in stores that can help you. Please check the spark* website for suggestions.

Active games

There are a lot of games and sports that can help you and your child practice body self-regulation. Check the resources on the spark* website for suggestions.

You can vary games and sports in terms of how quickly or slowly you play them. You can also pretend being different animals playing the sport or game (for example, stomping dinosaurs playing tag). You can also play games or sports silently – that would really test self-regulation of your voices.

There are a lot of stop-and-go games like freeze tag, *What time is it Mr. Wolf?* and *Simple Simon*. With those games, you have to listen carefully, stop and start your body according to directions as well as have fun.

Household tasks

Living together in a household means that everyone can share in helping it run smoothly. Every person, even young children, can do household tasks. Being responsible for even simple jobs builds your child's sense of responsibility as well as his self-regulation skills and independence. You're preparing him to look after himself as he matures and leaves home.

On the next two pages are household tasks suitable for different age groups. Two to three year old children can do a few simple tasks on their own. You'll notice, however, that many of those listed are done with help from an adult. All of the tasks should be done with supervision.

Four to five year olds can do more things than the younger children but still need some help and supervision. Don't expect perfection at first. With a lot of practice, you should see improvement and more and more independence.

Age appropriate household tasks for children	
2 to 3 year olds	4 to 5 year olds
<p>Personal care help brush teeth</p> <p>Cleaning: help dust throw trash in bin</p> <p>Meal preparation: put napkins on table put silverware on table</p> <p>Tidying: help put away toys put books back on shelf</p> <p>Laundry: put laundry in hamper</p>	<p>Personal care help brush teeth wash hands and face select own clothes for the day</p> <p>Cleaning: help dust throw trash in bin help mop floor help wipe up spills help vacuum</p> <p>Meal preparation: put napkins on table put silverware on table help clear table</p> <p>Tidying: help put away toys put books back on shelf help make beds empty silverware & plastic dishes from dishwasher</p> <p>Laundry: put laundry in hamper</p> <p>Pet care: help feed pet</p>

The list of possible household tasks keeps expanding for children between six and eight years of age. Less and less supervision should be needed also.

Be sure to add tasks to the lists if you see some missing.

Age appropriate household tasks for children

6 to 7 year olds

Personal care

brush teeth
help bathe/shower
select own clothes for the day

Cleaning:

help dust
throw trash in bin
help sort recycling
help mop floor
wipe up spills
help vacuum

Meal preparation:

set table
clear table
help carry groceries
help put away groceries
help make salad

Tidying:

put away toys
put books back on shelf
help make beds
empty dishwasher

Laundry:

put laundry in hamper
help sort laundry

Pet care:

feed pet

Yard & garden:

help rake leaves
water plants
help plan garden

Family events:

help plan own birthday party

7 to 8 year olds

Personal care

brush teeth
brush hair
bathe/shower on own
select own clothes for the day

Cleaning:

dust furniture
take out trash
help sort recycling
mop floor
wipe up spills
vacuum

Meal preparation:

set table
clear table
help with grocery shopping
help carry groceries
help put away groceries
help make salad
chop vegetables

Tidying:

put away toys
put books back on shelf
make bed
empty dishwasher

Laundry:

put laundry in hamper
help sort laundry

Pet care:

feed pet
exercise pet

Yard & garden:

help rake leaves/shovel snow
water plants
help plan garden
clean up pet waste

Family events:

Help plan parties for other family members

