

## ***USEFUL RESOURCES***

"Sensational Kids: Hope and Help for Children with Sensory Processing Disorder" by Lucy Jane Miller

## ***WHO CAN HELP?***

If you would like help or advice, you could contact your

**EYSENIT**

**C&I Teacher**

**Educational Psychologist**

**Speech & Language Therapist**

Leaflet created by Early Years Autism Project

## **Children's rights**

We are committed to upholding the rights of all children.

## **Child protection**

We respect the need for confidentiality. The exception to this is when there are concerns about child protection. In these cases, having discussed our concerns with you, we would liaise with social care in accordance with Oxfordshire's safeguarding children procedures.

**Emotional  
Regulation**



## Emotional regulation is the ability to:

Know how to calm down or get others to help you

Keep calm and focussed so that you can engage in interaction, work and play

Express emotion appropriately

Keep yourself alert so you can engage in interaction, work and play

Autistic children find it harder to be emotionally regulated because:

- ◆ They don't recognise what they are feeling (emotionally and sometimes physically) and why
- ◆ They are additionally stressed by changes, demands, sensory overload and difficulty in understanding language and the social world
- ◆ They might not predict that other people can help them
- ◆ They find it difficult to communicate what they are feeling verbally and often use behaviour instead

Things you might see:

Hiding in a small space (e.g. under the table)

Throwing things

Lying on the floor

Hitting out, spitting, biting, scratching, pinching

Zoning out

Running up and down, spinning, jumping

Crying, screaming, shouting

Hand flapping, clapping

These behaviours should be interpreted as the child's attempts to express emotion and calm themselves.

If the child is unable to calm, or remove themselves from the source of stress, these behaviours can escalate into a meltdown or a shutdown, where the child is no longer in control of their actions and is unable to respond to offers of help.

Meltdowns are distressing and scary for the child. The child can appear angry and aggressive when they are actually extremely anxious and stressed. They will benefit from reassurance and comfort after the meltdown. This can be hard for the carer who may also need support.

### Things that can help your child to regulate their emotions:

- ◆ Reduce sensory challenges in your child's environment, where this is possible
- ◆ Visual supports to help with transitions and changes in routine (e.g. timetables, schedules, 'something different' symbols, social stories)
- ◆ Teach the child to identify their feelings by naming the child's emotions as they happen, using emotions pictures
- ◆ Offer a choice of alerting/calming strategies that help your child (with visual support)



### Things to avoid!

- ◆ Shouting (*increases anxiety and sensory overload*)
- ◆ Physical contact may be threatening
- ◆ Using confusing language—asking questions, giving instructions, making demands, reasoning
- ◆ Talking about how the child is making *you* feel (e.g. you're making me sad)
- ◆ Leaving the child on their own (*teaches that no one will help*)
- ◆ Punishment e.g. time out (although removing the child from a stressful situation is helpful)

