

## 5th Parents' Newsletter – April 2025

Subject: *“Rhythm, Relationship and Springtime: Supporting Your Child’s Self-Regulation through Present Parenting”*

Dear parents and carers,

Spring carries the quiet promise of renewal. As nature shifts rhythm, as light grows and flowers open, our children call us—without words—to see them with fresh eyes.

During the Easter break, when daily routines soften and days take on a different pace, we are offered a rare opportunity to slow down, observe more gently, and reconnect with ourselves, our children, and the rhythm that holds us together.

Some families visit their home villages, others stay in the city. But wherever we find ourselves, our internal rhythms change. And in that shift lies a chance to notice how our children experience their world and how they learn to manage it.

In this newsletter, I invite you to reflect on something foundational: **self-regulation**. It may sound like a technical term, but in everyday life, it speaks to childhood's emotional and social heart. It relates to:

- How a child calms down when upset.
- How they wait their turn.
- How they use words instead of shouting.
- How they express disappointment without hurting or being hurt.
- How they stay focused when there are distractions around them.

Self-regulation is not something a child learns - it grows through relationships. When a child feels safe, secure, and emotionally held – when we as adults guide them gently, without controlling them – then, over time, they begin to discover ways to pause, think before reacting, and recognise and manage their feelings.

All children begin their regulation journey with us by their side. A baby cannot calm itself. When it cries, feels hunger, pain or tiredness, it needs a person – a voice, an embrace, a gaze. This is called **co-regulation**, or simply **regulation through relationship**.

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Gradually, during the preschool years (ages 3–6), children move into **mutual regulation**: they start syncing with us, imitating us, learning from our rhythm, voice, and handling frustration, joy, or sadness.

After around age 6 or 7 – if they’ve received the support they need – children begin to develop **self-regulation**: they can pause, take a breath, think, and choose how to respond.

But even then, self-regulation doesn’t “finish” magically. It is a lifelong process. And every child – especially those with learning differences, neurodevelopmental needs or emotional challenges – has their own rhythm and pace.

The key thing to remember is that no child builds regulation in isolation. Regulation is built through connection. And that’s why your role as a parent or caregiver is so vital. Your rhythm becomes theirs when you are there – calm, consistent, emotionally available.

Below, you will find 20 low-cost, multi-sensory activities well suited to families with children attending kindergarten. They can be done together with your own children or with the children of relatives and friends during the Easter holidays. Each activity supports a different aspect of (social-emotional) self-regulation: attention, waiting, physical and emotional calm, and the capacity for expression and connection:

1. Spring basket: Collect leaves, flowers, and stones together. This activity activates the senses and helps the child calm down through observation.
2. Tree hug: Place hands on the tree trunk and breathe deeply. This provides grounding and stability and reduces tension.
3. Build a bird’s nest: Use natural materials to create a nest. Encourages care and focused attention.
4. Walk with missions: While walking, look for sounds, smells, and images. It brings the child into the present moment and reduces the rush.
5. Bake Easter biscuits or sweet breads: Knead, shape, and wait for them to bake. This process enhances patience, rhythm, and cooperation.
6. Egg painting: Choose colours and decorate together. It teaches acceptance of imperfection and focuses on the process.

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7. Easter storytelling from an elder: Loved ones (grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends) share childhood memories of Easter. It connects the child to tradition and supports emotional grounding through stories and familiar voices.
8. Lighting a candle and 30 seconds of silence: Light the candle and remain quiet for a short while. This practice cultivates inner stillness and calm.
9. Handmade card or drawing with a wish: The child creates something for someone they love, which encourages emotional expression and connection.
10. Outdoor games: Play skipping rope, hopscotch or tag. It helps regulate energy and build cooperation.
11. Ball game: Throw, kick, or aim for a target. This game develops impulse control, responsiveness to rules, and a sense of rhythm.
12. Building with wood or stones: Build something together in the countryside or garden. It strengthens concentration, creativity, and teamwork.
13. Music and pause: Dance and then freeze when the music stops. This trains impulse control and listening.
14. Calm words before bedtime: Hold your child's hand and say something gentle. This will support emotional safety and the bedtime transition.
15. Memory map drawing: Write down where you went and how you felt. This organises experiences and creates space for communication and emotion.
16. Planting and caring for a small plant: Plant something simple (lentils, basil, a flower) with your child. This will build patience, care, and the idea of "growing slowly."
17. The silence clock: Set a timer for one minute of complete quiet. This encourages inner pause, regulation, and mindful breathing.
18. Puzzle or construction game: Complete a puzzle or Lego together (it does not need to be finished). It builds focus, persistence, and frustration tolerance.
19. Walking to the rhythm of the heart: Stand still, place your hand on your chest, and feel your heartbeat. Walk in that rhythm. This exercise enhances body awareness and rhythm recognition.

20. “Naming the feeling” with a mirror: Look in the mirror together and play with facial expressions. It helps the child recognise and name emotions.

May this season of holidays offer a bridge of connection with our children - not only through our traditions but also through our gaze, patience, embrace, and everyday presence. Self-regulation is not built through words. It is built through presence and relationship – through time with our child, time together.

Wishing you a calm, bright and meaningful Easter. With moments that regulate... and relationships that last.

With respect and appreciation,

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