



The MEHRIT Centre

# Self-Reg in Early Childhood Development

Cost: \$695 for the Full Program

[www.self-reg.ca/learn/online-courses-with-dr-shanker/](http://www.self-reg.ca/learn/online-courses-with-dr-shanker/)

## Program Overview

Self-Reg ECD is a three-course, 12-module online program designed for early childhood educators and other individuals interested in early child development. The program is designed to give learners a new and more complete understanding of the factors that affect early development by looking at many key concepts in early child development through the lens of Self-Reg, Dr. Stuart Shanker's framework for understanding stress and managing energy and tension, in order to support self-regulation in children and adults. The program is delivered on the TMC e-school and takes three months to complete.

## Course 1: Self-Reg in the Early Years

1. Moving Beyond Deterministic Thinking
2. The Interbrain and Self-Reg
3. The Interbrain in Early Childhood Education
4. The Triune Brain and Self-Reg

## Course 2: Self-Reg Reframe of Human Development

5. Optimal Self-Regulation: Seeking Red Brain - Blue Brain Balance
6. Reframing Temperament
7. Reframing Attachment
8. Reframing Personality

## Course 3: The Inestimable Impact of the Self-Reg ECE

9. Unpacking Intelligence
10. Reframing Intelligence
11. Foundations Building
12. The Self-Reg ECE



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## Course 1: Self-Reg in the Early Years

### 1. Moving Beyond Deterministic Thinking

The nature/nurture debate is over. It is no longer a question of nature vs. nurture. The real question is understanding the interdependence of nature and nurture: how nurture affects nature and visa-versa. This module will cover:

- epigenetics (the ways in which experience, including “nurture,” can affect gene expression);
- reframing the concept of self-control and its role in early child development;
- individual differences in infants’ and toddlers’ stress reactivity and sensory sensitivity, and the impact these individual differences can have on parents/caregivers and their interactions and relationships with young children

### 2. The Interbrain and Self-Reg

Digby Tantam’s concept of the Interbrain describes the process by which a mature, adult brain regulates the immature brain of a young child, including via non-verbal brain to brain communication that takes place beneath the level of conscious thought. This module covers:

- the critical role played by the Interbrain in the development of self-regulation
- secondary altriciality and the idea that children learn to self-regulate by being regulated by adults in the context of caring relationships
- limbic resonance and other mechanisms by which the Interbrain functions
- how children’s behaviour and responses can be affected by Interbrain communication that adults are not always aware of
- how understanding the Interbrain will enhance educators’ ability to understand and address children’s individual needs

### 3. The Interbrain in Early Childhood Education

The concept of the Interbrain was originally based on primary relationships in a family context. However, the Interbrain operates in other settings as well. This module covers how the Interbrain works in early learning and care settings including:

- children shifting from one Interbrain (parent-child) to a new one (ECE-child)
- how children interface with multiple Interbrains, including peer-to peer
- how the Interbrain works in groups, including the “contagion effect,” where a group of children take on the same mood or behaviour due to brain-to-brain communication that takes place beneath the level of conscious thought
- how awareness of the Interbrain and its functioning in early childhood settings can enhance the practice of early childhood education and care

### 4. The Triune Brain and Self-Reg

The Triune Brain is a model, developed by neuroscientist Paul Maclean, that describes the function of three brain systems that developed at different stages of evolution: the reptilian brain (governs basic survival mechanisms), the paleo-mammalian brain (the limbic system: home of strong emotions and memories) and the neocortex (governs rational thought and social engagement). This module discusses:

- the importance of the Triune Brain in the Self-Reg Framework and presents neuroscientific knowledge on the function of each system
- how they work together and impact each other as they support human emotion, thinking, behaviour, social engagement and stress responses,
- the importance of the Triune brain in Self-Reg



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## Course 2: Self-Reg Reframe of Human Development

### 5. Optimal Self-Regulation: Seeking Red Brain - Blue Brain Balance

Although the “blue brain” governs “higher” and “rational” brain functions, while the red brain is involved with “lower” or non-rational functioning, self-regulation cannot be defined in terms of learning to suppress Red Brain so that Blue Brain is always dominant. In fact, Blue Brain and Red Brain play complementary roles in human development, learning, behaviour, mood and social interaction. Thus, it is red brain – blue brain balance that is key to self-regulation. This module explains:

- the concept of red brain-blue brain balance
- the role ECE's play in supporting red brain – blue brain balance in very young children
- factors that cause some children to have greater challenges (and need more support) in attaining and maintaining red brain – blue brain balance
- how Shanker Self-Reg® can help ECEs support red brain blue brain balance in all children

### 6. Reframing Temperament

Temperament is widely regarded as one of the most important concepts in understanding individual differences in human development. However, the Self-Reg view is that temperament is less fixed and more malleable than some theorists believe. This module looks at temperament from a Self-Reg view, including:

- biologically-based differences in children's stress reactivity, which affect children's behaviour and mood in ways that are often attributed to differences in temperament
- the importance of understanding the stressors that affect some individual children (but not others)
- challenging deterministic thinking that a child's “inborn” temperament is carved in stone
- the role of self-regulation in temperament

### 7. Reframing Attachment

Attachment is another core concept in early child development, and rightly so, since Self-Reg sees relationships as central and also sees the dyad, rather than the individual, as the core unit of human development. This module looks aspects of Self-Reg that are related to attachment including:

- the Interbrain, the Bluetooth-like connection by which a higher-order (adult) brain regulates an immature infant or toddler brain
- the central importance of the relationships and social engagement in self-regulation and stress management and recovery in early childhood and throughout the lifespan
- challenging some of the assumptions underlying the idea of secure and insecure (or avoidant) attachment
- how stressors, which can vary greatly from individual and also from dyad to dyad, affect attachment relationships

### 8. Reframing Personality

A child's personality is generally thought to be largely influenced by genetics, but we also know that a child's environmental influences and experiences while growing up play an important role. This module looks at both non-genetic and genetic influences on personality development through a Self-Reg lens including:

- the Self-Reg view of what personality really means
- the problems with the traditional views of personality and its development
- neurobiological factors, such as stress reactivity, that influence children's experiences and personality development in the early years
- how the Self-Reg ECE can help early childhood educators have a positive impact on personality development by recognizing and nurturing children's strengths and understanding and supporting children with their unique challenges



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## Course 3: The Inestimable Impact of the Self-Reg ECE

### 9. Unpacking Intelligence

We now know that, during the early years, a great deal of important brain development takes place that affects children's learning potential in school and life. Intelligence is one factor in learning potential that has been studied extensively. This module will give ECEs a new way of looking at intelligence, while addressing a number of key issues and questions including:

- the history and evolving conceptions of intelligence
- why are some kids "smarter" than others?
- brainpower: what is it really and where does the brain's "power" come from
- Harold Skeel's famous Iowa experiment, which transformed conventional thinking about the role of nurture in intelligence

### 10. Reframing Intelligence

This module examines the role that stress and self-regulation play in intelligence. It will help early childhood educators understand intelligence in a new way both in terms of how intelligence develops and how self-regulation enables or blocks a children's ability to use their intelligence and other cognitive abilities. The discussion covers relevant issues including:

- stress variability in children and its implications for IQ
- new thinking about the Bell Curve and what it means
- "limbic brakes," subcortical brain activity that can cause children to stop using their brainpower
- how Shanker Self-Reg® help Early Childhood Educators to support the intelligence development of all children, including children dealing with challenges in self-regulation

### 11. Foundations Building

Humans are born wired for connection, empathy, compassion and moral thinking and behaviour. This module uses a Self-Reg lens to explore:

- stress-related factors that can interfere with or block the development and expression of empathy and other aspects of moral development
- steps early childhood educators can take to support children's moral development and behaviour
- revisiting and delving more deeply into the difference between misbehaviour and stress behaviour and its implications for empathy, compassion and moral development

### 12. The Self-Reg ECE

This module draws from all aspects of the Self-Reg perspective on child development to present a full-circle discussion on how Self-Reg can enhance the practice of early childhood educators including:

- ways to modify classroom design and routines in ways that reduce subtle and hidden stressors that affect children's behaviour, mood and learning
- simple classroom activities and practices that enhance self-regulation and promote restoration of the energy and tension students expend in dealing with stress
- the role of relationships
- how to create a Self-Reg Haven: an environment in which students and staff alike feel emotionally as well as physically safe