

# SELF-REG for PARENTS



## What is Self-Reg all about?

Shanker Self-Reg® is a process for enhancing self-regulation by understanding and dealing with stress. In Self-Reg we consider both our responses to stress and our underlying state of energy and tension when we encounter a stress.

## Self-Regulation

- Self-Reg is based on the original, psychophysiological definition of self-regulation, which refers to how we respond to stress.
- We all self-regulate, though sometimes in ways that are maladaptive: i.e., that don't help us recover from stress and actually lead to even greater stress down the road.
- Adaptive (effective and helpful) self-regulation promotes growth and learning as well as helping us recover from stress.
- Self-regulation is not the same as self-control. Self-control is about inhibiting troublesome impulses. Effective self-regulation reduces the stress-induced feelings that cause impulses.
- Self-regulation is about understanding, not "monitoring and managing," emotions, thoughts and behaviour in ourselves and others.

Shanker Self-Reg® looks at stress across five domains of experience: biological, emotion, cognitive, social, and prosocial.

## There are five practices in The Shanker Method®:

1. Reframe the behaviour.
2. Recognize the stressors across the five domains.
3. Reduce the stress.
4. Reflect and enhance stress awareness.
5. Respond with personalized ways to support restoration and resilience.

Self-Reg includes recognizing what calm feels like for yourself as well as what it feels like to become overstressed.

The ultimate, long-term Self-Reg goal is to help children acquire the necessary understanding of when and how to manage their own energy and tension, so they can adapt to the various stresses of life. But Self-Reg is also personal. If we are going to support our children's self-regulation we first have to understand our own stress and know how to manage our own energy and tension.

Self-Reg can help us understand and respond positively to the roots of many behaviour, emotion and social challenges that affect children and families.



# The Seeds of Self-Reg Parenting

## SAFETY

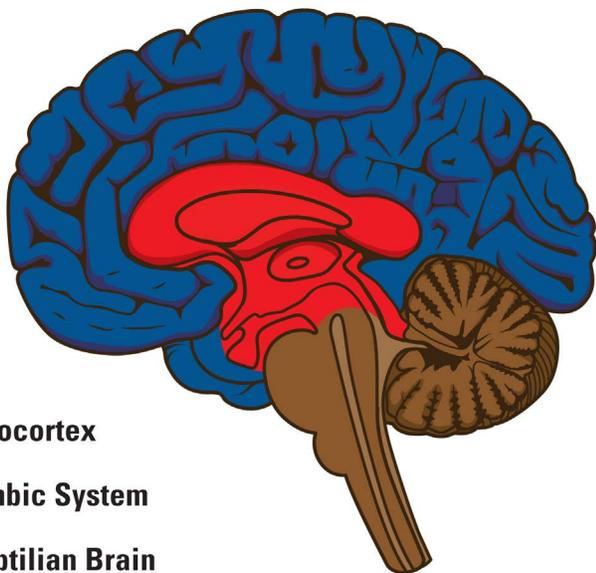
- Helping children feel safe, in every way—physically, emotional and socially—provides the foundation for their mental, social and emotional wellness.
- Excess stress affects brain-body stress systems in ways that can make children feel unsafe, even if we think they are safe (and should feel safe).

## RELATIONSHIPS

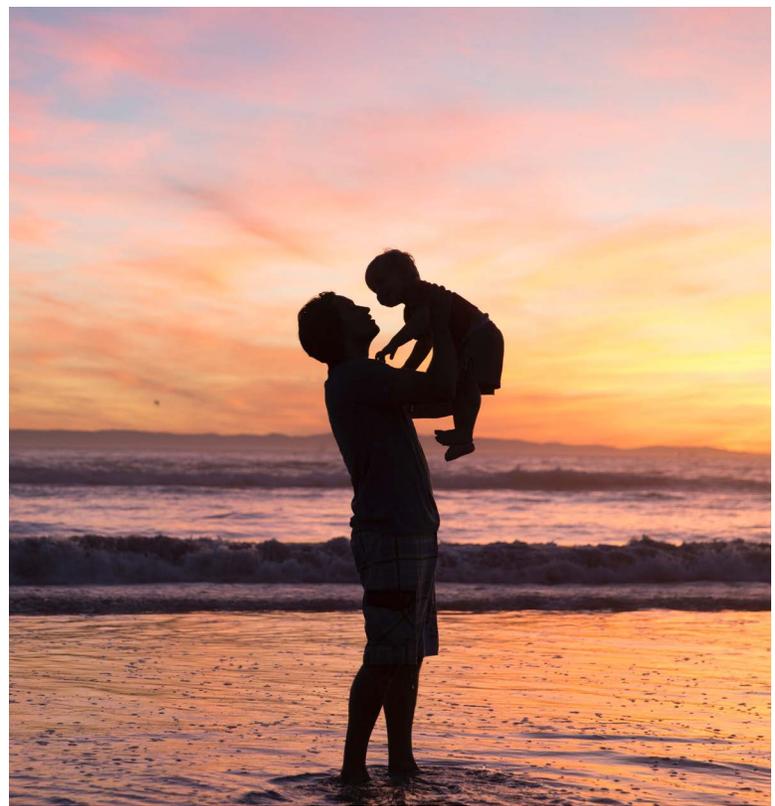
- Self-Reg parenting starts with relationships. Dr. Stuart Shanker says. “The foundation of self-regulation is the feeling of calmness and safety that children experience with their parents.”
- Children learn to self-regulate through “co-regulation” with parents.
- Co-regulation: When two people adjust to and regulate one another’s behaviour (mood, emotions, language) via bi-directional interactive signals and behaviours.

## ENVIRONMENTS

- Factors such as too much screen time, not enough physical activity, visual clutter, lack of sleep and excess junk food are “hidden stressors” for some kids.
- Create spaces in your home where children can go to feel more calm or more energized as needed.
- Unstructured, non-electronic play, especially outdoor play, are great stress relievers for children.



- Neocortex
- Limbic System
- Reptilian Brain



## BECOME A STRESS DETECTIVE

- Learn to “reframe” children’s behaviour (see and understand it in a different way)
- Many behaviours that adults think of as misbehaviour—tantrums, for example—are actually “stress behaviour,” caused by too much stress.
- When a child “misbehaves, ask “Why?” and “Why now?” Look for stressors that may be causing the behaviour.

## IT’S PERSONAL

- Self-Reg is personal and it begins with you. Consider your own stress and how it affects you and, in turn, your children. You will be most able to build your children’s self-regulation, if you take care of your own.
- Self-Reg can help you understand your children’s behaviour better and help you be less angry and more patient and understanding.

## SELF-REG PARENTING IS A LEARNING JOURNEY

- Learn about the connections between stress, energy and tension and how they affect children’s behaviour, mood and learning.
- Read Dr. Stuart Shanker’s book Self-Reg.
- Consider taking one of our [online](#) courses, such as Self-Reg in Parenting or Self-Reg Foundations.