

# Self-Regulation

## WHAT IS SELF-REGULATION?

- The “ability to attain, maintain and change arousal levels appropriate for the task or situation.” (C. Murray-Slutsky & B. Paris, 2005, p. 23).
- A neurological process that occurs within the brain, enabling us to change our physical, emotional and/or behavioural responses.

## WHY ARE SELF-REGULATION SKILLS IMPORTANT?

- Allows children to move from one arousal state to another to meet the physical, cognitive and social demands of the situation (e.g. settle themselves to sit and focus after being physically active).
- Children who have difficulty with regulating often have an arousal level that is either too high or too low for the situation. This often precipitates stress and anxiety, which escalates their arousal into a dysregulated state.
- Without the ability to regulate, children have difficulty achieving an “optimal” arousal for learning, find it challenging to remain calm in stressful situations, and require more time to recover from emotional upset in comparison to their peers.

## HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY CHILD’S ABILITY TO SELF-REGULATE?

- Helping students learn to recognize how their bodies look and feel when their arousal is escalating, and teaching them to access strategies to calm and organize before they reach a heightened and dysregulated state is crucial.
- As they learn to recognize and change their arousal levels (self-regulate), they become more successful at modifying their physical, emotional and behavioural responses to meet the demands of the task and/or situation.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[www.SIFocus.com](http://www.SIFocus.com)

Shellenberger, S. & Williams, M.S. (2001). *Take Five! Staying alert at home and school*. Albuquerque, NM: Therapy Works, Inc