Self-Regulation

For adults, Self-Regulation is the ability to act in your long-term best interest, consistent with morals, ethics and values. Having the ability to Self-Regulate provides the framework to settle emotion. It is the ability to soothe yourself when you’re distressed or feeling disheartened. A baby learns to Self-Regulate and begins to establish the patterns of ethics and values by experiencing a mother who provides an environment to nurture calm. In the beginning, the mother is the auxiliary regulator for her baby. Her soothing voice, self-control, gentle touch and sharing of the world around her helps set the tone of Self-Regulation. This allows the baby to stay relaxed, focus on the important task of ‘growing’ and practice using their senses taking cues from the environment to learn to calm and soothe themselves.

The Co-Regulation “Dance”:
The process by which two individuals are socially “in synch” with each other because they:

- Understand what is on each other’s mind by making sense of cues and gestures
- Recognize the effects of each person’s behavior on the other
- Adjust their behavior to help up-regulate or down regulate each other as necessary

Such a “dance”, it is now recognized, begins as early as mothers and others react with infants under their care. Shanker, Stuart. (2012) Classroom Strategies for Self-Regulation. Pearson Education Canada

Secure Attachment

Human beings are heavily dependent on social relationships for our survival and are highly impressionable during infancy and early childhood. Research supports the relationships we each have with our first caregivers affects all of our subsequent relationships. Our emotional well-being throughout adulthood is a reflection of our reactions to our earliest human interactions. Feeling emotionally connected and Securely Attached allows adults to face problems and better navigate traumatic situations. Secure people tend to be able to articulate and discuss their feelings, and can show appreciation and affection to those who are important to them.

When a child’s needs are responded to with tender consistency, the child develops trust in their caregiver, along with a sense of self-awareness and self-love.

Sensitive, responsive adults who are able to Self-Regulate their emotional reactions are best able to support Secure Attachment in children. A mother who practices being present is naturally more attuned to both her own internal working model and her baby’s needs. When a parent is attuned to their child, they are aware of their child’s inner thoughts, feelings, and emotions. This awareness fosters a state of resonance and the child feels heard and supported. When we feel understood as an adult, it produces a sense of safety and trust. This is especially true for an infant or child who needs context and guidance as they explore their new environment. When a mother learns what her baby needs and responds to their needs consistently and timely, both mother and baby associate meaning to each other’s signals, fostering two way communication and building emotional development in the child.