

Self-Soothing for the Child with the Difficult Temperament

Self-calming can be the answer for many children who are sensory over or under-activated, anxious, angry or hyper. Helping your child to develop this competency when their mood becomes dysregulated can become a life-long skill.

Below are some ways for a child to self-soothe. These suggestions are best used before the child becomes upset or prior to a time that is triggering for them (usually transition times such as getting up, going to bed, meal times, leaving the house). It is likely that these will not work after a child is 'revved up':

- Puzzles, Lego building
- Reading
- Patting a pet – either a real one or a stuffed one
- Taking a warm bath
- Getting hugs – either gentle or firm, depending on which the child prefers
- Rubbing your child's cuticles, then pulling each finger and even toes
- giving them a massage
- Listening to music – which ever a child needs – fast or slow
- Blowing bubbles
- Having a story read to them, often a familiar favorite is best
- Taking your child away from being overstimulated, when possible
- Softening or dimming the lights
- Smelling soothing fragrances such as lavender and cinnamon
- Repetitive movement such as swinging or spinning
- Repetitive motions such as coloring, drawing, weaving
- Playing with clay
- Putting hands into sand, beans or rice
- Running, throwing balls, shooting baskets, running up and down stairs
- Singing silly songs, especially about what could have been an upset
- Breath-work such as yoga, or practicing slowing breath

*** Many of the above are taken from An excellent resource, the book, EFFECTIVE PARENTING FOR THE HARD TO MANAGE CHILD by Georgia A. DeGangi

Others are: TOO LOUD TOO BRIGHT TOO FAST TOO TIGHT by Sharon Heller, PhD

And THE OUT OF SYNC CHILD HAS FUN by Carol Stock Kranowitz, MA

Leta LaRue LeRossignol, LCSW, BCD, RPT-S

210-381-8662