

Impulse Control & Self Regulation

- 1). **Help child- LABEL FEELINGS** it helps children tell you how they feel instead of showing you (acting out) how they feel. It is okay to be upset or angry, but not okay to hit, say something or do something mean or hurtful.
- 2). **Teach your child to listen to directions by asking the child to repeat directions** back to you. Say “before you start (or move) I want you to repeat the instructions back to me.”
- 3). **Managing strong emotions** (*deep breathing*, counting slowly, self-talk), walking around the house to burn off energy. Practice calming tools daily.
 - *Self-talk*: i.e.- I need to take a break, I can handle this, they may not have done this on purpose, I can ask for help, it’s okay to make mistakes, etc (these are helpful, positive thoughts) instead of unhelpful thoughts, and/or jumping to conclusion (they did this on purpose, I am bad because I made a mistake).
- 4). **Establish House Rules**- be firm and assertive but calm with your child. Set clear rules and explain reasons behind the rules. Make your expectations known BEFORE your child goes into a new situation. Also explain negative consequences in advance, if rules are broken.
- 5). **Provide structure and consistency**- with rules and discipline. Keep the daily routine the same as much as possible. It reduces impulsive behavior when children know what to expect.
- 6). **Practice delayed gratification**- give them opportunities to have to wait patiently for something, wait turns etc.
May use a reward system with tokens to turn in after a certain number of tokens have been earned for positive behavior.
- 7). **Model patience as a parent**- ways to wait patiently and delay gratification, as well as using calming tools when frustrated. For example, a parent says...“this is a long line but we have to wait patiently for our turn.”

8). **Catch them being GOOD**- any time you see any behavior you want to see more of, point it out and be SPECIFIC with your praise. *“Good job waiting patiently for your turn. Thank you for doing what I asked you to do right away. I see that you were feeling frustrated and you used your belly breathing to calm yourself down. Great job working on your homework and really focusing.”*

9). **Get plenty of Physical Activity**- exercise and movement affects focus, and attention and also improves concentration and motivation. It also helps decrease hyperactivity and impulsivity.

10). **Practice ASSERTIVE communication**: stand up straight, look at the person you are talking to, use a calm voice, with respectful words. Give your child opportunities to practice with parents and other children and adults when asking for things or when asking someone to stop doing something. It is the most effective way to communicate.

11). **IF, then Plans**:

IF “*I get frustrated, or upset with someone,*”

THEN: I will use a calm down tool (belly breathe, count slowly in head, drink water, walk away), then use my words.

12). **Play Impulse Control & Memory Games**: See below for ideas. This will help train the brain to have better self-control.

- With practice, and consistent, and reasonable discipline, impulse control can develop over time. If your child continues to struggle with developing self-control and interferes with his/her learning, and social skills, it is important to speak with your pediatrician about it to determine if there are underlying causes.

Games that help with Memory & Self-Control:

- My Turn, Your Turn (Second Step)
- Freeze Dance (Move or Wait)
- Red Light, Green Light
- Simon Says
- Follow the Leader
- Follow My Clap- leader does clapping pattern, child listens and repeats pattern

- Qwirkle- (game to purchase)
- Spot It (game to purchase)
- Jenga- (game to purchase)
- Puzzles
- Memory Matching Games-
- The Missing Item Memory Game-
- Self Control Bubbles- (for young children) blow bubbles and let your child pop all of them. Once all the bubbles are popped, explain to your child that you are going to blow more bubbles, but this time the child must NOT pop (or touch) any of the bubbles- even if one lands on them. Explain that the feeling of really, really wanting to do something but holding back is called “*self control.*” Blow more bubbles toward your child and PRAISE them for not touching or popping the bubbles.