



Cochrane Temiskaming Children's Treatment Centre Centre de traitement pour enfants Cochrane Temiskaming

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STRATEGIES FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD THROUGH MOMENTS OF 'DYSREGULATION'

<p>SIMPLIFY YOUR LANGUAGE</p> <p>When the brain is in a stressed state, the language processing centre shuts down.</p> <p>Don't use language to reason or explain when your child is in a stressed state.</p> <p>Break down tasks to manageable steps. For example, instead of "clean your room" which can be overwhelming, say "pick up the books while I pick up the blocks".</p>	<p>CO-REGULATION</p> <p>Your emotional state greatly impacts your child's emotional state. Your tone of voice matters more than what you say. If your child is over-aroused, use a calm, quiet and controlled voice. Model acceptance of your child's emotions, no matter how far fetched they may seem to you</p> <p><i>"When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it is our job to share our calm, not join their chaos" – L.R. Knot</i></p>	<p>BREATHING</p> <p>If your child is cognitively able to, teach them deep breathing strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - take 5 deep breaths - finger breathing - blowing out the candles <p>If your child is unable to understand this concept, incorporate sucking and blowing activities to help them learn how to take a deep breath; sing songs</p>	<p>MODIFY THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Change the environment around your child, to help regulate their nervous system. Some simple, easy strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dim lighting - Cozy blankets - Comfortable seating that promotes flexion, like a beanbag chair - Comfort objects (stuffed animal, fidget objects, etc). - Calming music
<p>DEEP PRESSURE INPUT</p> <p>Deep pressure or "heavy work" activities provide proprioceptive input can often be calming to our nervous system. Some examples include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Big hugs - Wrapping in a blanket - Push or pull activities - Jumping into a pile of pillows 	<p>BALANCE YOUR AGENDA</p> <p>Try to reduce what your child perceives as stressful demands during times of the day when they struggle more (e.g. before bedtime).</p> <p>Balance familiar and/or well-tolerated activities with those that are more difficult, rather than full days of difficult activities, if possible.</p> <p>Provide calming breaks, as needed.</p>	<p>ROUTINES</p> <p>Routines help with predictability of the day. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use visual schedules to assist with knowing when changes will occur and what is coming in the day. - Prepare for change. Discuss what will happen before hand, what the expectation is, etc. - Read books, watch videos, visit new sites before the expected demand to help your child understand expectations. 	<p>MOVEMENT</p> <p>Aerobic exercise (running, jumping) releases endorphins, which also decrease anxiety. Incorporate movement into your child's day as much as possible. If you see your child beginning to struggle, take a movement break.</p> <p>Rhythmic movement can be very regulating (e.g. rocking in a rocking chair, swinging on a swing)</p>

If you have any questions, please speak to your Occupational Therapist for more information.