



3 PART WEBINAR SERIES

Raising Regulated, Resilient Children

Part 1: Co-regulation,
Connection, & Cooperation



Video

Please review the professional development training video; you will need approximately 60 minutes to complete the training.



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Certification

Please take a moment to complete the learning review provided. Upon submission, your certification will be sent to you immediately.

Start

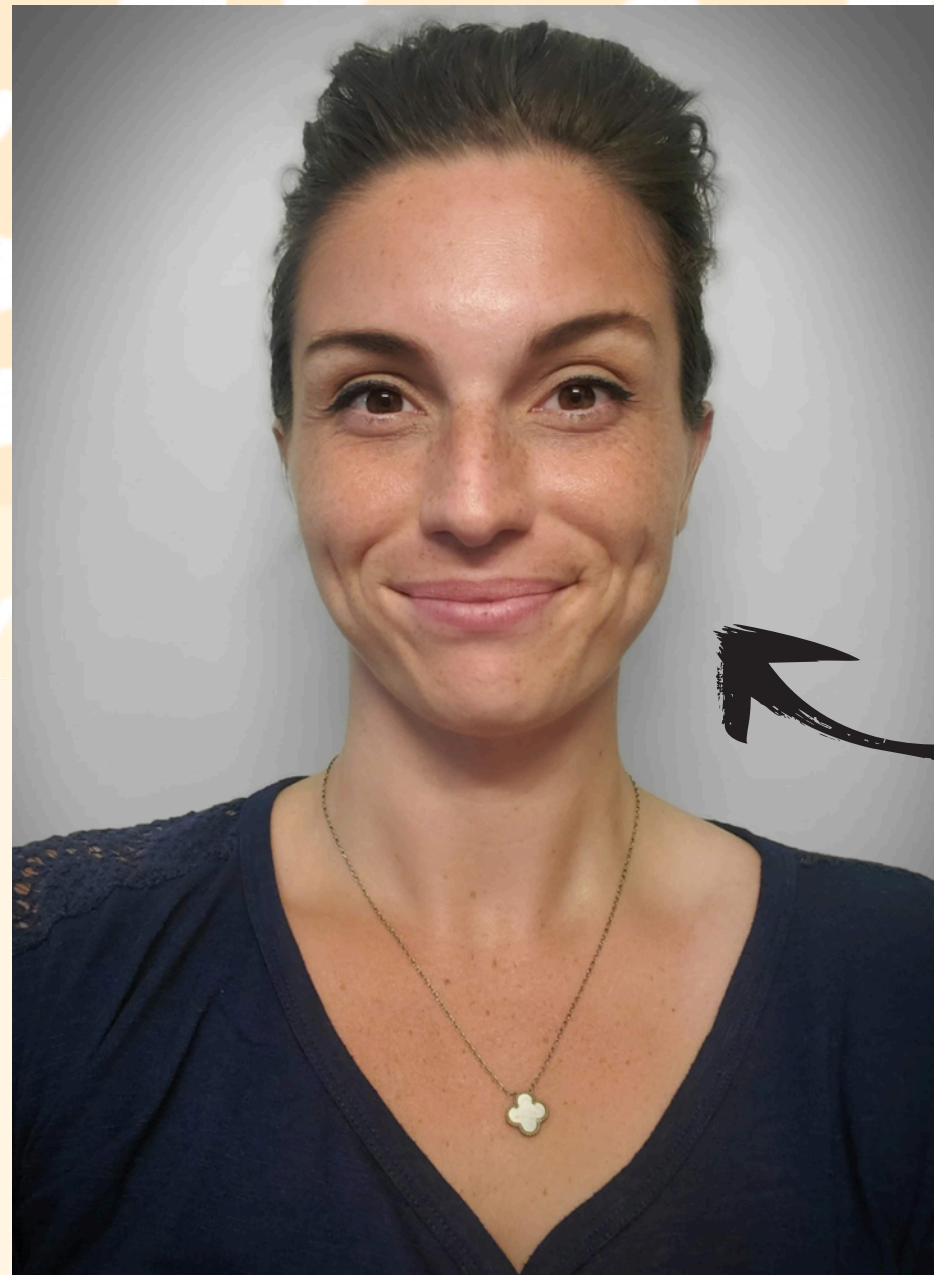


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Before We Begin...

- **If you've signed up for Attendance or Professional Development Certification, you'll receive the session recording and slides by email**
For those who chose "Certificate of Professional Development" your slides will come with a brief learning review. Once completed, your personalized certificate will be emailed as a PDF.
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- **If you have questions,** please drop them in the chat! We'll do our best to answer everyone's questions at the end of the presentation.





THAT'S ME



AND THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS...



My wild child 7 year old daughter



Our cats (Venom, Carnage, & Knully)

Stephanie Seidler



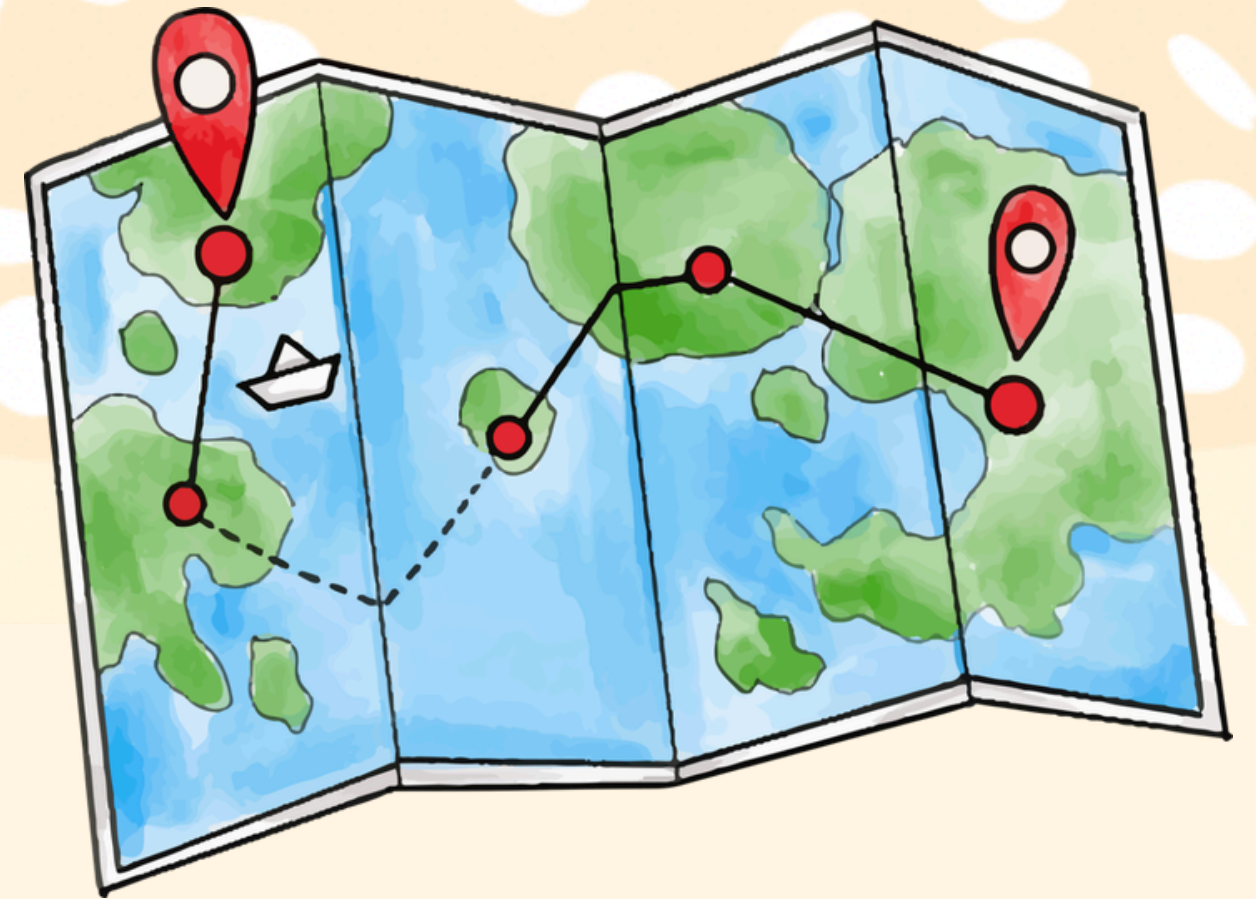
- Director & Content Creator of WSH
- M.Ed. in School Leadership
- 20+ Years in ECE Field



Creating children's picture books

**AND
COFFEE.
CANT
FORGET
COFFEE.**

3 PART WEBINAR SERIES MAP: RAISING REGULATED, RESILIENT CHILDREN



Part 1: Co-Regulation, Connection & Cooperation (May)

Dependence → Supported
regulation



**YOU ARE
HERE**

Part 2: Resilience & Frustration Tolerance (June)

Supported regulation →
Internal coping

Part 3: Risk & Responsibility (July)

Internal coping →
Independent
decision-making

Co-regulation: The process of helping a child feel safe, calm, and emotionally organized through adult presence, support, and connection.

Connection: A secure emotional relationship in which a child feels safe, understood, and trusting.

Cooperation: A child's ability to work with and respond to guidance from others.

**Co-regulation builds connection.
Connection helps cooperation.**



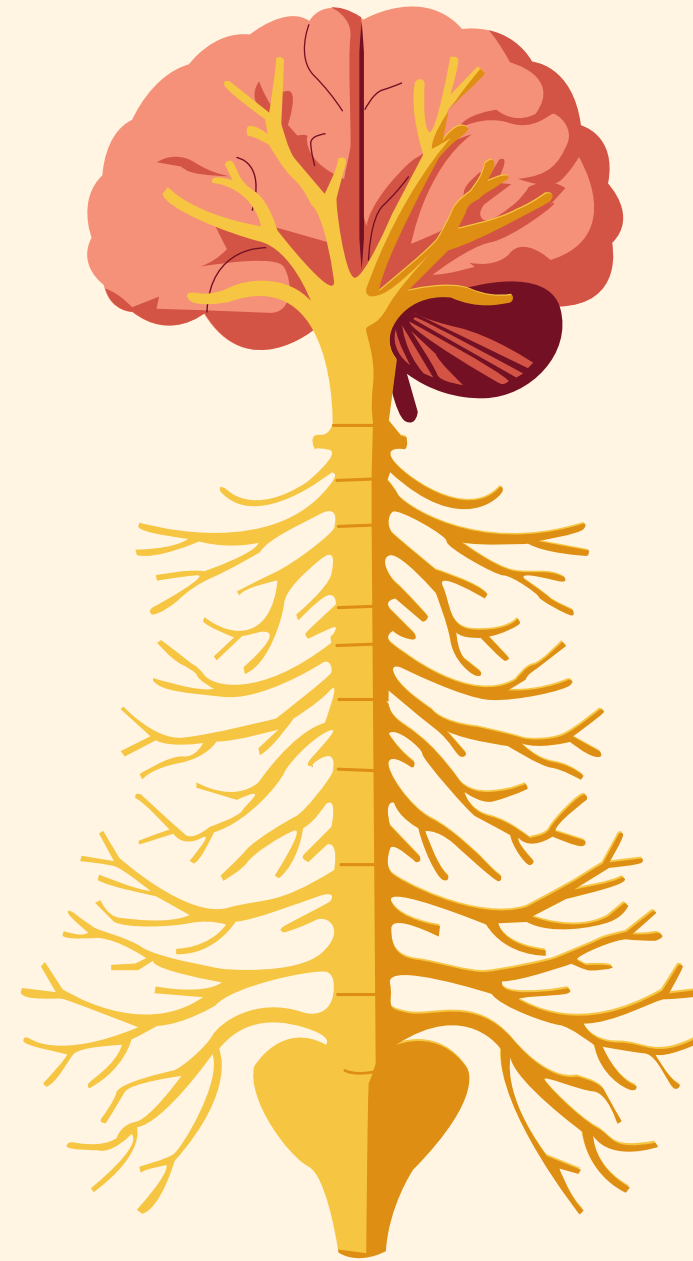
The Brain and The Nervous System

Brain development refers to the growth and organization of neural pathways involved in thinking, memory, language, learning, and executive functioning.



The nervous system = entire communication network
The brain = main control center within that network

Nervous system development refers to how the body and brain organize stress, safety, emotional states, and physiological regulation over time.



The nervous system has two critical branches

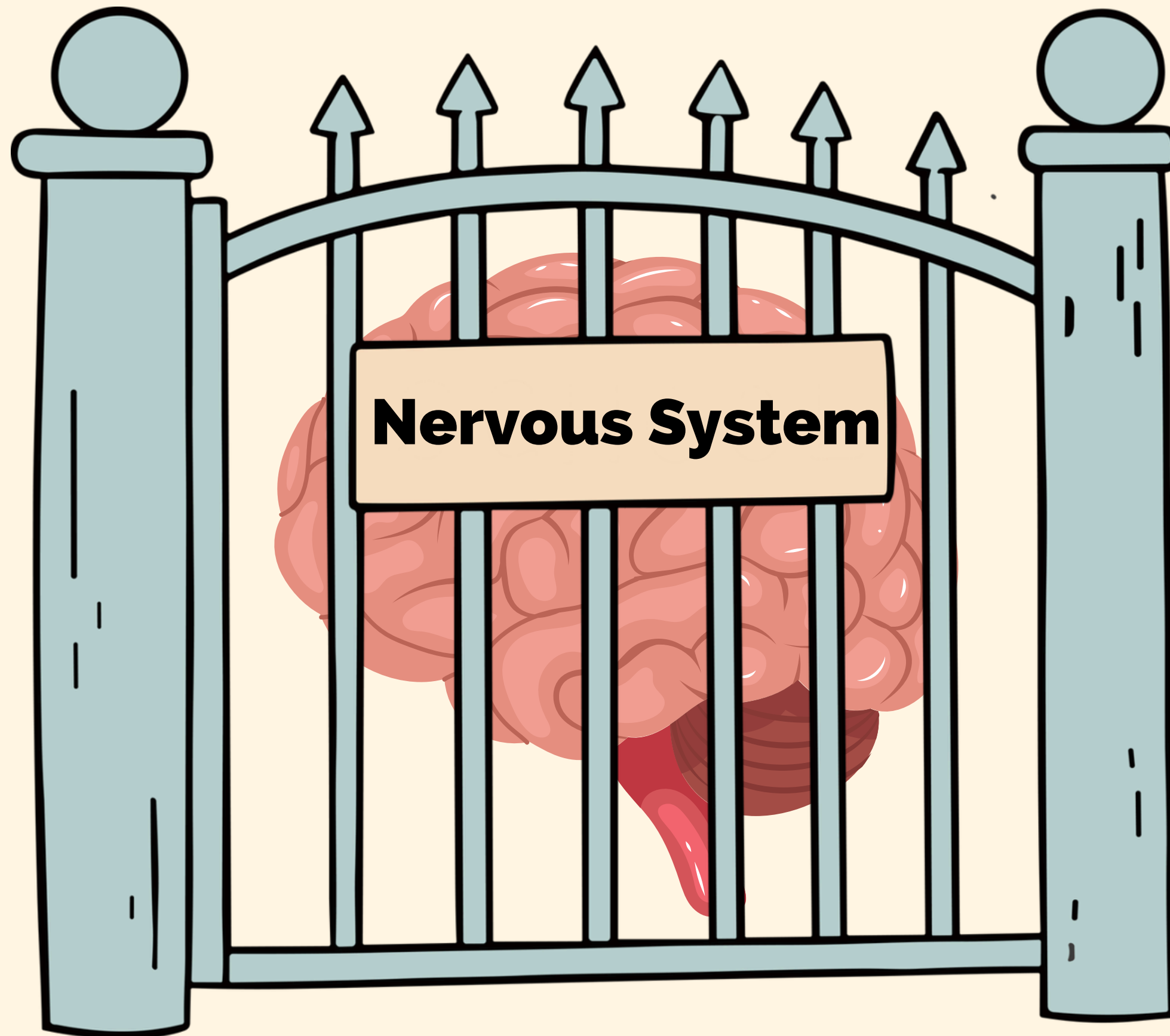
- **Central Nervous System**
 - Brain + spinal cord
 - Thinking, learning, memory, language, processing
- **Peripheral Nervous System**
 - The body's communication network of nerves
 - **Includes the autonomic nervous system, which helps control stress, heartbeat, breathing, safety, regulation, fight/ flight/ freeze, and recovery (much outside of our conscious awareness).**

The Nervous System is the Gatekeeper of the Brain

When the nervous system feels safe, the gate is open. The brain is accessible. A child can think, learn, remember, communicate, problem solve, and connect.



When the nervous system feels threatened (dysregulated) the gate closes. It doesn't matter what is stored in the brain. It doesn't matter how much a child knows or how capable they are. In a state of dysregulation, that information is out of reach.



This is why a child can know the rules and still not follow them.

Can be perfectly capable on a calm day and completely fall apart on a hard one.



The bottom line is a dysregulated nervous system cannot access a developing brain.

Regulation comes first. Always. Early experiences help shape the nervous system patterns that often carry into later life.





**The nervous system
learns through
repeated experiences.**

Which means adult responses can either help organize a child's nervous system through co-regulation...

or contribute to greater stress and dysregulation over time.

So what supports co-regulation — and what interferes with it?

Factors That Support Co-Regulation	Factors That Hinder Co-Regulation
Responsive caregiving and emotional presence	Leaving babies or young children alone in distress
Calm, regulated adult nervous systems	Reactive yelling, threatening, or emotional escalation
Consistent “serve and return” interaction with physical closeness and affection	Excessive screen use that reduces real human connection and responsiveness
Reliable boundaries with consistent follow-through	No boundaries, inconsistency, permissiveness, or chaotic responses
Validation of emotions while holding limits	Shaming, dismissing, ignoring, or punishment-heavy discipline
Play, connection, and relationship-building	Constant correcting, directing, criticizing, or managing
Predictability, routines, and felt safety	Chronic chaos, unpredictability, or overstimulation
Repair after rupture or conflict	Humiliation, comparisons, blame, or lack of accountability

When babies and young children interact with caregivers, the brain is constantly reading:
“Are you emotionally available?” “Am I safe?” “Are you responding to me?” “Do my signals matter?”



Common Misconception (Relative to Co-regulation)

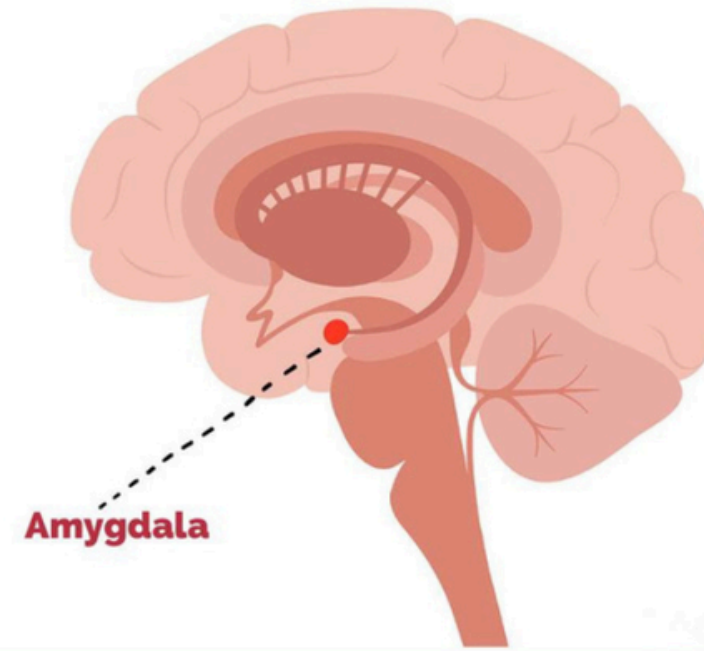
- **“Responding to babies too much spoils them.”**
 - Human infants are born neurologically immature and biologically dependent on responsive caregiving to help organize stress responses, attachment systems, and nervous system regulation.
- **“Children who stay close to caregivers are too dependent or shy.”**
 - Staying close to trusted adults is a biologically normal attachment behavior. Children who feel emotionally safe often become more confident explorers over time because the nervous system experiences the caregiver as a secure base.
- **“Connection-based parenting/teaching is permissive/soft.”**
 - Co-regulation is not the absence of boundaries. Predictable, reliable adult leadership helps reduce nervous system uncertainty and supports emotional organization, safety, and cooperation.
- **“Punishment is how children learn best.”**
 - Punishment may stop behavior in the moment through fear and stress activation, but chronic activation of survival systems can reduce access to learning, emotional regulation, problem-solving, connection, and long-term internalized self-control.

What happens to your baby's brain when you leave them to cry?



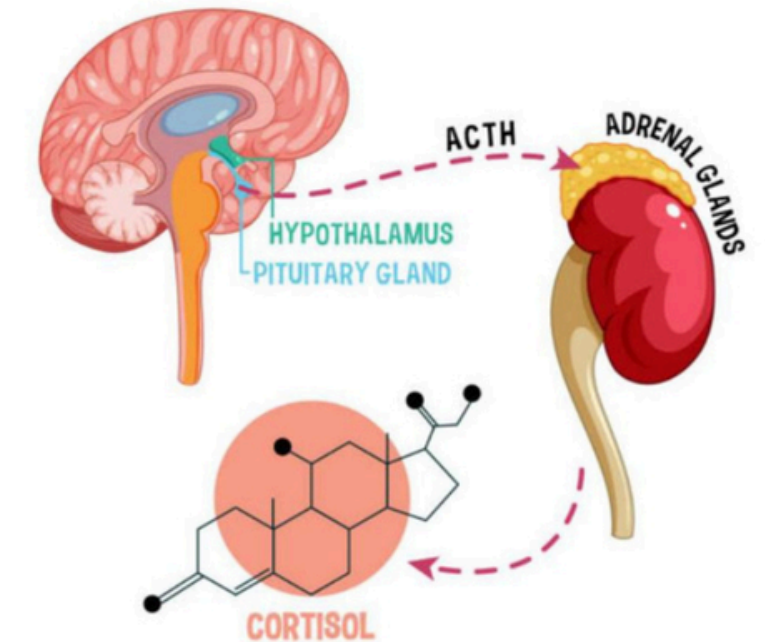
Amygdala (Fear & Stress Response):

Becomes overactive, reinforcing stress & anxiety; prolonged distress may lead to an enlarged amygdala, increasing sensitivity to stress
(Graham et al., 2019; Tottenham, 2012)



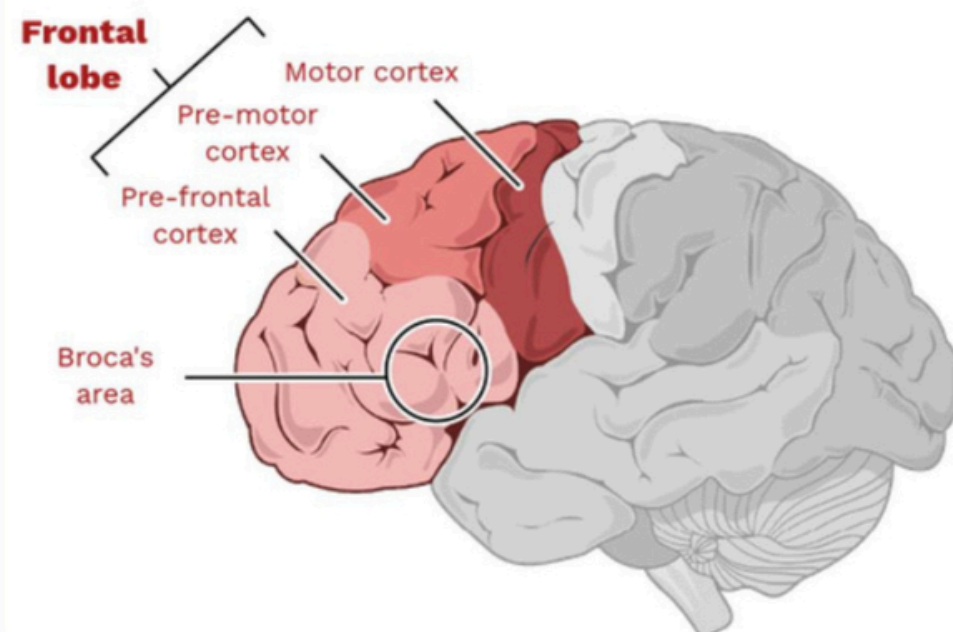
HPA Axis (Stress Hormone Production)

Releases high cortisol, which can weaken brain connections and contribute to a smaller prefrontal cortex, impacting emotional regulation
(Gunnar & Quevedo, 2007; Lupien et al., 2009)



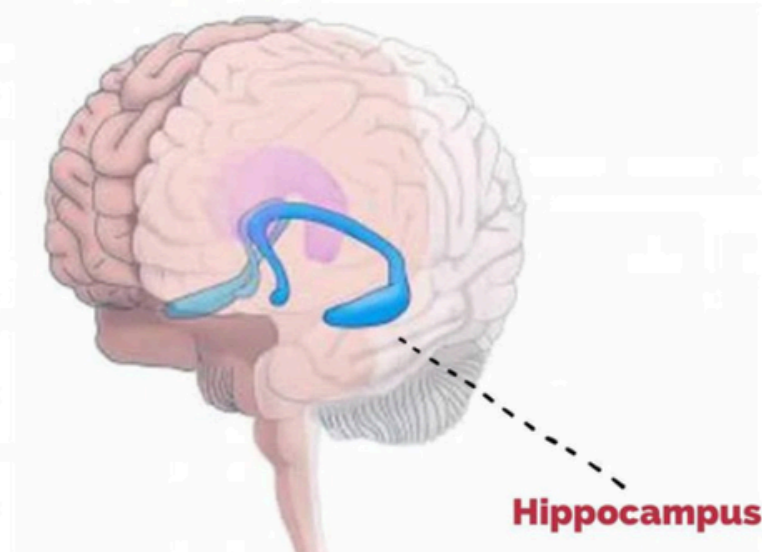
Prefrontal Cortex (Regulation & Social Connection)

Lacks co-regulation, making self-soothing harder; chronic stress can lead to reduced growth in this area, affecting impulse control and social skills
(Schore, 2001; Perry, 2002)



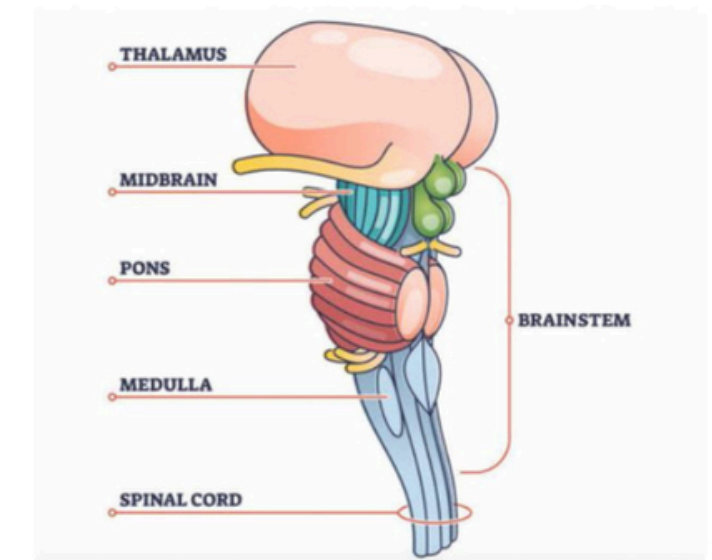
Hippocampus (Memory & Learning)

Chronic stress may impair emotional regulation and learning; high cortisol exposure is linked to a smaller hippocampus, affecting memory and stress management
(McEwen, 2012; Luby et al., 2013)



Brainstem (Survival Mode)

Activates survival responses; baby may stop crying due to shutdown, not self-soothing; prolonged stress can cause hyper-reactivity in the brainstem, leading to long-term difficulty managing fear.
(Porges, 2011; Tronick, 2007).

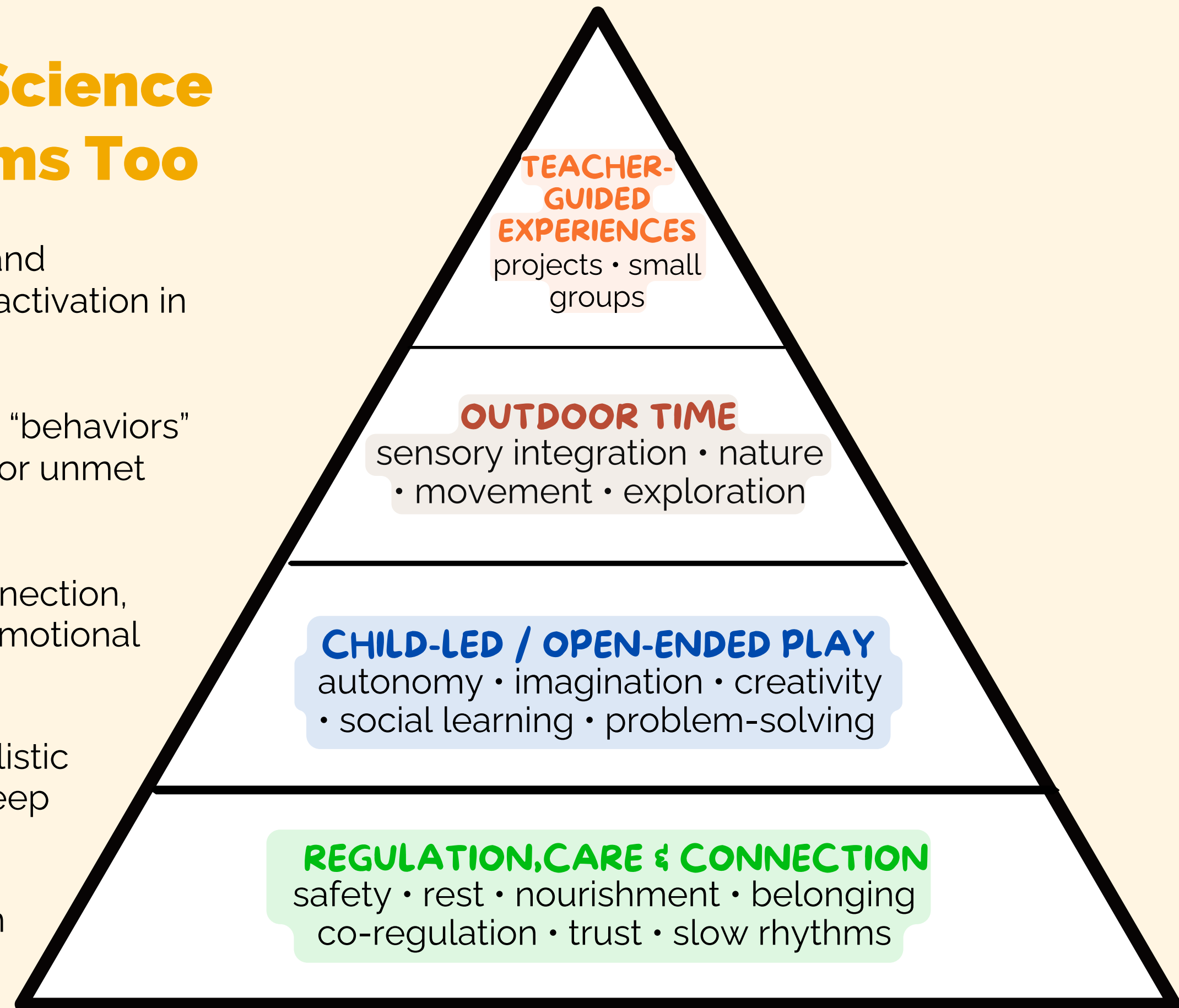


The Same Nervous System Science Applies Inside the Classrooms Too

Highly controlled, overly directed, overstimulating, and correction-heavy environments can increase stress activation in developing brains and nervous systems.

Which means many classroom power struggles and “behaviors” may reflect overload, disconnection, chronic stress, or unmet developmental needs more than simple defiance.

- Children thrive in environments that support connection, movement, autonomy, predictability, play, and emotional safety.
- Constant correction, excessive transitions, unrealistic expectations, and chronic overstimulation can keep children in a heightened stress state.
- Cooperation becomes more likely when children feel connected, safe, supported, and developmentally understood.



What Children Need Most During the School Day

Common Behavioral Approaches Through a Nervous System Lens

- **Behavior charts, sticker systems, and excessive rewards** often prioritize external compliance over internal regulation and intrinsic motivation.
- **Punishment and fear-based discipline may stop behavior in the moment**, but can increase stress activation while reducing access to regulation, reflection, and problem-solving.
- **Time-outs and isolation-based discipline can feel especially** overwhelming for dysregulated children who are biologically needing co-regulation and connection most in those moments.
- **Chronic correction, public shaming, comparisons, and humiliation** can increase nervous system stress, defensiveness, and disconnection.
- **Long-term cooperation and emotional regulation are more** strongly built through connection, co-regulation, skill-building, predictable boundaries, and emotionally safe relationships.



What Builds Connection & Cooperation

- **Regulate yourself first:** A calm nervous system is felt before it is heard. Slow your voice, body, breathing, and reactions.
- **Stop viewing behavior as personal:** “This child is having a hard time” changes the adult nervous system very differently than “this child is giving me a hard time.”
- **Learn your own triggers:** Children often activate unresolved stress, control patterns, sensory overload, perfectionism, shame, or emotional wounds in adults.
- **Focus on connection before correction:** Children regulate, learn, and cooperate best through felt safety — not fear.
- **Understand what is developmentally appropriate:** Many frustrations come from expecting skills children are not yet neurologically capable of consistently.
- **Repair after rupture:** Regulation is not perfection. Healthy repair is a huge part of secure relationships too.
- **Have fun with children too!!** Play. Laugh. Be silly. Get on their level. Tap into your own inner child. Connection is built through shared joy and genuine relationship — not just managing behavior all day.



Adult Trigger	What It May Stem From	How You Might Respond
Defiance, backtalk, “not listening,” or you’re feeling disrespected	Fear of losing control, harsh discipline backgrounds, or equating obedience with respect	Stay calm and firm, avoid power struggles, focus on regulation and connection before correction
A child crying or having big emotions	Discomfort with emotions or being taught feelings should be suppressed	Validate the feeling without needing to immediately stop it or fix it
Tantrums in public	Fear of judgment or pressure to appear “in control”	Focus on supporting the child instead of managing others’ opinions
Mess, clutter, or chaos	Overstimulation, perfectionism, or chronic stress	Reduce sensory overload where possible and prioritize connection over perfection
Whining or repetitive behaviors	Nervous system overload or burnout	Stay regulated, acknowledge the need underneath the behavior, redirect calmly
Slow pace or dawdling	Productivity-based worth or chronic rushing	Build in more transition time and remember young children move at a different pace
Children making mistakes or struggling	Perfectionism, shame-based environments, or fear of failure	Focus on guidance and learning rather than immediate correction or control

Scenario Guide: Center by Center

The following scenarios apply the SPACE-GUIDE framework across the common environments of your classroom. Each is rooted in the developmental reality of children ages 0-6.

The Block Center

- The Scenario
- Two children are building in the block center. One knocks the other's structure.
 - There are cries, raised voices, possibly grabbing.
 - This is not a problem to be solved — it is a learning opportunity to be held.



What NOT to Do — and Why it Harms SEL

- Do not immediately separate the children:** Separation removes the learning. The social problem is between them — they need the opportunity (supported) to navigate it together. Separation also communicates that the conflict was too big to handle, which increases anxiety around future conflict.
- Do not take the materials away:** This is a punitive response to a developmental behavior. It shames, it doesn't teach, and it removes the very context in which the learning needs to happen.
- Do not assign blame:** Children what he's mad' but reading without biology regulated is eachumpingg. Wait.



Peace Corner

This is not a time-out space and must never function as one. It is a proactively introduced, positively framed area where any child may go at any time to support themselves in regulating.

Some Optional Materials to Include: Sensory tools (squeeze balls, fabric swatches, putty), simple emotion visuals (feeling faces, simple breathing anchor cards), pillows and/or stuffed animals, blank paper/crayons, headphones with calm music (optional), a mirror, books about feelings, and comforting elements (plants, warm lights).

Ultimately, you want this space to be simple, calming, and cozy, with different mediums that may support different children in different ways. Please keep the space simple and inviting, as ultimately that is what's going to support regulation the most.



How to Introduce It — Not as a Rule, but as a Gift

- Invite children to explore it freely and throughout the day, welcoming open access for any child who needs it emotionally and physically.
- Sit in it yourself. Say: 'This is a place I might go when I need to feel calm again.' Sit in it yourself. Say: 'This is a place I might go when I need to feel calm again.' Sit in it yourself. Say: 'This is a place I might go when I need to feel calm again.'
- Never send a child there as a consequence. Never. The moment it becomes a consequence, it loses its function.

Part Three: The Adult As The Intervention

Your Presence, Your Nervous System, Your Language

The Regulated Adult

You Are the Most Important SEL Tool in the Room. No curriculum, no material, no strategy will matter if the adult is dysregulated, disconnected, or in a reactive state. Your nervous system directly co-regulates the nervous systems of the children around you. This is not metaphor — it is polyvagal biology.

What Children Pick Up From You — Even When You Say Nothing

- Your tone of voice (tightness, softness, urgency, warmth) is processed before your words.
- Your body language, facial expression, and proximity communicate safety or danger instantly.
- Your breathing pace literally influences the autonomic nervous systems of children near you.
- Your capacity to stay present during a child's big emotion is itself the intervention.
- Children who are in 'fight, flight, or freeze' cannot access language, reason, or problem-solving — only your calm can reach them first.

Regulation Practices

The Language of SEL: Talking With, Not At (Children)

Language is an SEL intervention. The words you choose (and when you choose them) either open or close the window of learning and connection.

Instead of This...	...Try This (and Why It Works)
Stop crying!	I can see something really big is happening for you right now. I am right here. [Validates; signals safety; does not shame emotion]
You're fine. It's not a big deal.	That felt really scary/frustrating/sad to you. That makes sense. [Mirrors their internal experience; builds emotional literacy]
Say sorry right now!	Let's check on [name]. What do you notice on their face? [Builds empathy; repair comes after regulation, not during it]
Go sit in time out!	You need some time to get your body calm. Do you want the peace corner, or do you want me to stay close to you? [Offers agency; never punitive]
Use your words!	Let me help you find the words. Show me what happened. [You are the scaffold — meet them where they are]
Why did you do that?	Hmm. I wonder what was going on for you right before that happened. [Curiosity, not interrogation; invites reflection without shame]
That's not how we treat our friends.	I think you were feeling [feeling]. And your body did [action]. Let's figure out what to do next. [Names emotion → links to behavior → moves to problem-solving]
You have to share. It's their turn.	When they're done, it will be your turn. Waiting is hard—let's find something else in the meantime." [Respects ongoing play; builds patience and flexible thinking without imposing adult timing]

We Skoolhouse

Social Emotional Learning

A Living Framework for Educators (0-6 Years)



40 page SEL living framework (For ages 0-6)

- Included in Membership on Dashboard
 - Social Emotional Learning > Social Emotional Development > SEL Living Framework
- Purchase on weschoolhouse.com store
 - Store > Guides > SEL Living Framework

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NEXT WEBINAR: Three Part SEL Series; Part 2: Resilience & Frustration Tolerance

When: Wednesday, June 24th (12:00PM EST)

