



Ah, summer. That magical time when the sun is shining, the ice cream is melting and your children are arguing over who breathed too loudly in the living room.

If you've ever found yourself refereeing a heated debate over who touched whose elbow first, this is for you.

Classic Sibling Arguments



Big emotions, tiny humans

Let's face it - kids feel things *big*. One minute they're giggling over a shared joke, the next they're sobbing because someone looked at them 'in a mean way'.

Try this

Name it to tame it. Help kids label their feelings by saying, "You're feeling frustrated because your sister took the last strawberry yoghurt. That makes sense."

Model calm. If you can stay cool while someone screams over a Lego dispute, "It's not fair!", you deserve a medal. Or at least a quiet coffee.

Conflict resolution: the mini-mediator method

Sibling fights are normal. In fact, they're basically a childhood rite of passage. But that doesn't mean you have to listen to them all day.

Parent tools

The both sides rule: Each child gets 30 seconds to explain their side with no interruptions or eye-rolling (from you or them).

The fix-it question: Ask, "What can we do to fix this?" instead of jumping in with a verdict.

The walk it off option: Sometimes a lap around the garden or a dance break is all it takes to reset.

Bonus tip: If they're fighting over a toy, take it away and tell them it's going on a holiday. Toys need breaks too.

Boredom - the gateway to chaos

Boredom is the spark that lights the sibling squabble fire. But here's the twist. Boredom isn't bad, it's the birthplace of creativity... and unfortunately indoor wrestling.

Boredom busters (that don't involve screens)

I'm bored jar: Fill a jar with fun, silly or helpful activities e.g. build a fort, make a snack for someone else or invent a new sport.

Reverse chores: Let them assign *you* a chore. You'll be amazed how fast they want to do it themselves.

Creative chaos: Give your children cardboard boxes, tape and markers. Then walk away and come back to a spaceship, zoo or a very messy living room.

Final thoughts (and deep breaths)

Summer with kids is a rollercoaster of joy, noise and the occasional glitter explosion. But with a little humour, a few strategies and a lot of snacks, you *can* survive it - and maybe even enjoy it! And remember you're not alone. Somewhere out there, another parent is also hiding in the bathroom for five minutes of peace.





How to help children with self-regulation?

We all encounter situations that trigger emotional responses - sometimes positive, sometimes challenging. A vital life skill we develop over time is **emotional regulation**. This is the ability to manage our feelings in a way that allows us to respond thoughtfully and appropriately, rather than reacting impulsively. This skill helps us stay grounded, make better decisions and maintain healthy relationships, especially in moments of stress or conflict.

What Is self-regulation?

Self-regulation is the ability to understand and manage your emotions and behaviours in response to what's happening around you. It allows both children and adults to pause, stay calm and make thoughtful decisions - even in challenging situations. This essential skill begins developing in early childhood through a nurturing relationship with a responsive caregiver. When a baby or young child experiences big emotions and their needs are met with comfort and consistency, their brain begins to learn how to feel safe and manage those emotions over time.

Modelling calm behaviour

Children learn by watching the adults around them. When we manage our own emotions, especially during stressful moments, we show children how to do the same. If we approach a dysregulated child while feeling overwhelmed ourselves, it's less likely to be effective. Staying calm helps children feel safe and supported.

Co-regulation

Before children can regulate on their own, they need co-regulation - the calming presence of a trusted adult. This means being physically and emotionally present during moments of distress, offering comfort and helping them to name and understand their feelings. Focus on the emotion. Try saying, "You're feeling angry" rather than the behaviour, "Stop shouting".

Talking about your emotions

Make space for regular conversations about feelings. Help your child understand that all emotions are normal and manageable. Use stories, songs or games to explore different emotions and coping strategies in a fun and engaging way. The more familiar children become with emotional language, the better equipped they are to express themselves and seek help when needed.

The Zones of Regulation: Helping children understand their emotions

The Zones of Regulation is a simple, colour-coded framework designed to help children recognize and manage their emotions. By identifying how they feel and which 'zone' they're in, children can begin to develop emotional awareness and self-regulation skills. One of the most important messages of this approach is that no zone is bad. Everyone moves through all four zones - what matters is learning how to respond appropriately in each one. Here is a colourful and child-friendly Zones of Regulation chart for parents and children. The chart should include four sections, each clearly labelled with a colour and description:

1. **Green zone:** Calm, happy, focused – ready to learn and interact
2. **Orange zone:** Excited, frustrated, anxious – elevated emotions, still in control
3. **Red zone:** Angry, scared, out of control – intense emotions, need help
4. **Blue zone:** Sad, tired, bored – low energy, need rest or support

Each zone should include simple icons or illustrations representing the emotions e.g. smiley face, tired face and angry face

How parents can use the zones at home

Name the zones together: Help your child identify which zone they're in throughout the day.

Normalise all emotions: Remind them that it's okay to feel all the zones - what matters is how we respond.

Create a toolbox: Work together to build a list of calming or energising strategies for each zone (deep breathing, jumping jacks, listening to music).

Use visuals: Putting a zones chart on the fridge or in a calm corner can be a great daily reference.





Understanding your child's brain: Dan Siegel's 'flipping your lid' model

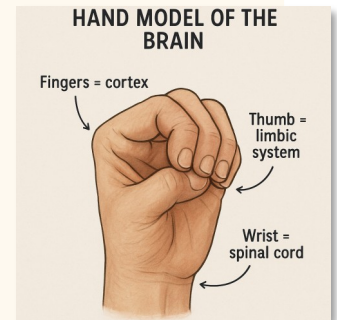
Ever wonder why your child suddenly melts down over something small? Neuroscientist and parenting expert Dr. Dan Siegel offers a simple, powerful way to understand what's going on inside your child's brain and how you can help.

The hand model of the brain

Dr. Siegel uses a hand to represent the brain in a way that's easy for both adults and children to understand:

Make a fist with your thumb tucked inside your fingers. This is your brain when it's calm and regulated. Your fingers represent the thinking brain (the cortex) and your thumb is the emotional brain (the limbic system). When the fingers are wrapped around the thumb, your thinking brain is in charge. Now lift your fingers up -

This is what happens when you or your child 'flips your lid'. The thinking brain goes offline and the emotional brain takes over. This is when tantrums, yelling or shutting down can happen.



Why this matters for parents

Understanding this model helps you respond with empathy instead of frustration. When your child flips their lid, they're not being naughty, they're overwhelmed and need help calming down.

How to use this at home

Stay calm yourself. Your calm presence helps your child re-engage their thinking brain.

Naming the feeling by saying, "You're feeling really frustrated right now" helps your child feel seen and starts the process of calming down.

Teach the model. Show your child the hand model so they can learn to recognise when they're about to flip their lid and what to do next.

Building emotional resilience

Using this model regularly helps children develop emotional awareness and self-regulation. It also strengthens your connection with them, making it easier to navigate tough moments together.



Ways to manage stress

Stress is a very normal emotion that we all experience in our daily lives. However, it can be quite uncomfortable and challenging to experience. Here are some ways to help manage stress:

Get more physically active: Studies have found that participating in aerobic exercise for two days per week can significantly reduce stress. Walking or biking can be a good starting point for people new to exercising. Try to pick something enjoyable to make you stick to it long term.

Balanced diet: People who follow a diet high in ultra-processed foods and added sugar are more likely to experience higher perceived stress levels. Not eating nutrient dense food may increase your risk of deficiencies in magnesium and B vitamins which are essential stress regulators.

Spend time with loved ones: Having a social system is important for your mental health. One study associated lower levels of support from family, friends and romantic partners with having higher perceived stress levels.

Create boundaries and learn to say no: Being selective about what you take on and saying no to things that will unnecessarily add to your load, can reduce stress levels. Creating boundaries with people who add to your stress levels is a healthy way to protect your well-being.



Decoding emojis: What Netflix's Adolescence reveals about teen communication

Netflix's *Adolescence* has pulled back the curtain on a crucial reality - emojis aren't always what they seem. For parents, educators and mentors, this hidden language is easy to miss but essential to understand. What looks like an innocent symbol might actually carry a coded message with deeper, sometimes unsettling, implications. In a world where digital communication is second nature to young people, understanding their emoji use is more than just staying current, it's about staying connected.

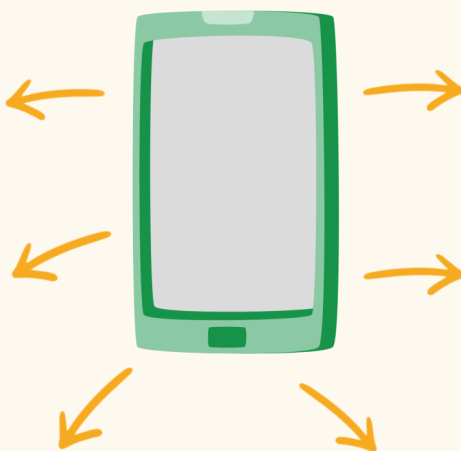
What can parents do? Here are some practical, non-invasive ways to stay in tune with your child's digital world:

Stay curious, not confrontational

Ask open ended questions like, "I heard emojis can have different meanings - what do you think?" Keep the tone light and curious rather than accusatory.

Explore their digital world together

Ask them to explain the symbols, trends and influencers they follow. Instead of assuming, stay open and learn alongside them.



Encourage critical thinking

Help them analyse online content by asking, "Why do you think this idea is being spread? Who benefits from it?" Teach them to question, not just comply.

Check in, don't spy

Open communication is more effective than secret monitoring. Make digital check-ins a normal part of parenting, not just a reaction to problems.

Boost their confidence offline

Kids who feel valued in the real world are less likely to seek validation in risky online spaces.

Expose online manipulation

Talk about how toxic online groups lure young people by making them feel special, included or like they have insider knowledge.

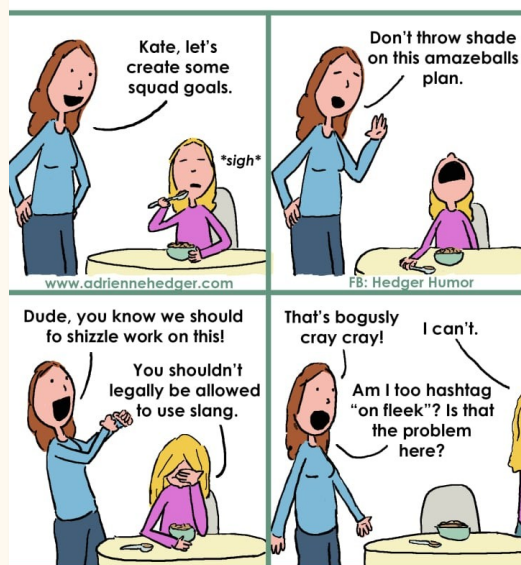
Technology moves fast but parents don't have to be left behind. By staying engaged, informed and open, you can help your child navigate the digital world with confidence and clarity.

EVERY TEENAGERS #271
TEENAGERS ARE THE MOST
MISUNDERSTOOD PEOPLE ON
THE PLANET. THEY ARE
TREATED LIKE CHILDREN AND
EXPECTED TO ACT LIKE ADULTS.

everyteenagers.tumblr.com

How to Have Fun With Teens:

Load your sentences with slang.





The power of music

The psychological benefits of music

Music can reduce Stress

Research has found that music can have stress relieving effects particularly with its effects on the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal (HPA) axis and the autonomic nervous system. These areas of the brain regulate emotions and control breathing and heart rate.

People who listen to music recover more quickly from stressors. Research shows that high frequency music leads to the greatest relief by lowering cortisol (stress hormone) and increasing oxytocin (love hormone) levels.

Music can help you sleep better

Many people have trouble sleeping. Recent research shows listening to relaxing music can be effective. Research has shown children of all ages, from premature infants to secondary school children, sleep better after listening to soothing melodies. One study even suggested that music can help people to fall asleep quicker and increase the duration of their sleep.

Music may reduce symptoms of depression

Music therapy is an estimated clinical intervention that uses the innate properties of music that helps improve mood. One study found music therapy was a safe way to reduce depression and anxiety in patients suffering from neurological conditions such as Parkinson's disease, dementia and strokes.

Music can help improve mood

Research has also widely shown that music can boost your mood, happiness and subject wellbeing in a number of different ways:

- Helps enhance social connections, particularly with shared experiences of music
- Music helps the release of the chemical dopamine which is linked to pleasurable experiences
- Playing an instrument can improve cognition and mental wellbeing
- Combining music and dance can be particularly helpful





BB4K arty amusements

Here are some reasons why art is important for kids over the summer holidays:

1. **Reduce screen time:** Art offers a wonderful way to balance screen time. Reducing the time spent in front of the screen encourages healthier habits, promotes creativity and provides a break from overstimulation that devices can create.
2. **A sense of accomplishment:** Completing an art project gives children a sense of pride and accomplishment. It boosts their self-esteem and motivates them to try things by knowing that they were able to make something.
3. **Increases focus and patience:** Art makes children slow down and pay attention to detail. They learn to take their time and focus on each step. This builds up patience which can transfer to other areas of their lives.
4. **Emotional development:** Art provides an outlet for children to process their emotions in a healthy way. Whether their frustrated, excited or calm, expressing these feelings through art allows them to better understand and regulate their emotions - especially for children that don't like expressing themselves verbally.

Art activity ideas for the summer:

Painted rocks: Children can paint rocks with different colours or patterns and then arrange them in the garden or on a table. This activity allows them to enjoy being outdoors as well as express their thoughts creatively.

Tissue paper flowers: Children can cut and layer tissue paper to look like flowers and attach them to the pipe cleaners to make stems.

Nature prints: Take a walk to the park and collect various natural items with children. Place these on a piece of paper and use the crayons to gently run over the items to create prints.



Summer Kindness Bucket List Challenge

This summer, let kindness be your compass. Check off as many as you can—and invite someone to join you. Every act is a spark. Together, we can make kindness the norm. 🌞🌍

<p>Kindness to Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliment three people you don't know. Leave a kind note on someone's windshield or bike. Help a neighbor with yard work, groceries, or errands. Offer cold drinks to delivery drivers or postal workers. Pick up litter at a park, trail, or beach. Write a thank-you card to someone who quietly makes life better. (custodian, bus driver, teacher, etc.) 	<p>Kindness to the Planet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant flowers for pollinators. Start a water bowl station for pets and wildlife. Walk or bike instead of driving when you can. Reuse something instead of tossing it. Bring your own bag, bottle, or container. Host a "no waste" picnic. 	<p>Bonus Round: Inclusive Kindness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn to say "hello" in five languages. Ask someone about a tradition that's different from yours. Invite someone new to join your group, game, or table. Read or listen to a story from a perspective you've never considered. Make space for someone else to shine.
<p>Kindness to Your Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donate summer clothes or school supplies. Visit a local library and leave a positive note in a book. Support a small or minority-owned business. Share a free community resource online. Leave chalk art messages around your neighborhood. Organize a "kindness scavenger hunt" with friends or family. 	<p>Kindness to Yourself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend 30 screen-free minutes doing something creative. Write a love letter... to yourself. Try one new activity that scares or excites you. Say no to something that doesn't serve your joy. Create a playlist that makes you feel unstoppable. Go outside just to watch the sunset or count stars. 	<p>At the end of summer, ask yourself:</p> <p>What act of kindness felt the most meaningful?</p> <p>What surprised you?</p> <p>How will you carry kindness into fall and beyond?</p>

make kindness the norm.
randomactsofkindness.org
RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS FOUNDATION

