

SELF-REGULATING IS MANAGING OUR

thoughts + emotions + behavior

We all have an emotional temperature and we like to feel comfortable emotions. When something happens that makes us feel uncomfortable, our temperature begins to rise. Sometimes our nervous system might activate our stress response: fight/flight/freeze. When we're in our stress response we often think, say, and do things we normally wouldn't. To bring our temperature down, we need to soothe our nervous system. A safe space can give us the time and place we need to self-regulate, feel comfortable, and choose how to respond.

- **FIND IT.** It's not the size of the space, it's setting it up in a way the child feels safe & comfortable.
- **NAME IT.** Allow your child to name their space something that is meaningful for them. They don't have to refer to it as their "safe space". Maybe they want to call it their favorite place they've visited. Or the name of their favorite stuffed animal or that special thing that makes them feel safe.
- **STOCK IT.** What kinds of things does your child love to do? Read, draw, color, use their hands? Focus on items they enjoy and also soothe the 5 senses. For example: things they love to look at, listen to, touch, taste, & smell.
- **USE IT.** Every time they need a space to self-regulate encourage them to take a break in their safe space.
- **LOVE IT.** Once you begin to experience the calming effects of self-soothing, you may be surprised to find it nurtures self-compassion & compassion for others.

