Support of self-regulation is critical at each stage of development from birth through young adulthood.

Self-regulation is the act of managing thoughts and feelings to enable goal-directed actions.

Self-regulation develops through interaction with caregivers and the broader environment over an extended period from birth through young adulthood (and beyond).

Caregivers support self-regulation development by using three strategies in a process called "co-regulation." Caregivers include parents, teachers, afterschool care providers, extended family members, and others.

Self-regulation includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral skills and processes that support youth in coping with strong feelings, controlling impulses, learning, and getting along with others.

Self-regulation is important because it promotes wellbeing across the lifespan, including physical, emotional, social and economic health and educational achievement.
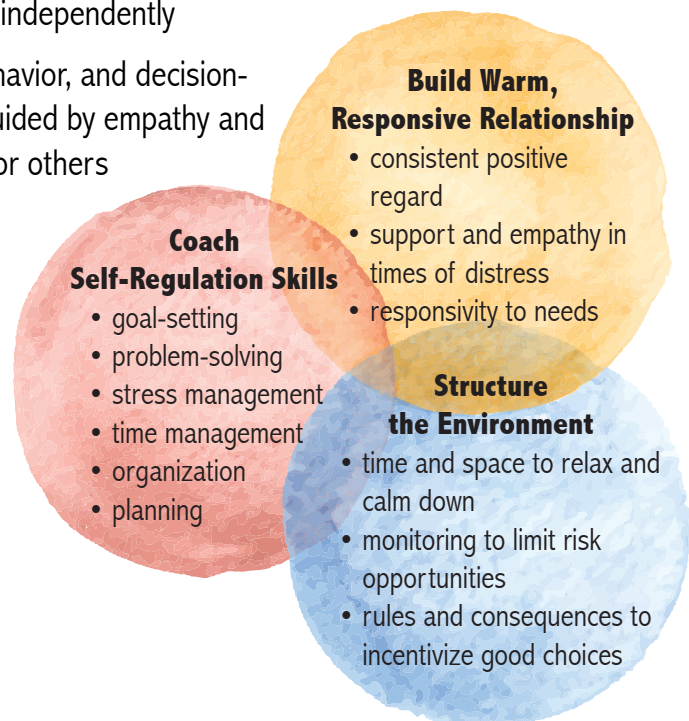
Self-Regulation Snap Shot #4:
A Focus on Middle-School Aged Youth

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Self-Regulation Skills Developing in Middle-School Aged Youth:

- Completing longer and more complex tasks
- Self-monitoring
- Planning, prioritization, and time management to achieve goals
- Using strategies to manage stress
- Using health-promoting strategies to calm down when distressed
- Considering consequences before acting
- Making effective decisions "in the moment"
- Solving more complex problems independently
- Goals, behavior, and decision-making guided by empathy and concern for others

Biology
Skills
Motivation (Internal & External)
Caregiver Support
Environmental Context

Self-regulation is influenced by stress and adversity in the environment as well as caregiving supports and children's own biology, skills, and motivation.


Build Warm, Responsive Relationship
- consistent positive regard
- support and empathy in times of distress
- responsivity to needs

Coach Self-Regulation Skills
- goal-setting
- problem-solving
- stress management
- time management
- organization
- planning

Structure the Environment
- time and space to relax and calm down
- monitoring to limit risk opportunities
- rules and consequences to incentivize good choices

**Three components of co-regulation for middle-school aged youth**

Lessons Learned About Interventions to Promote Self-Regulation in Middle-School Aged Youth

Across the lifespan, there are two intervention approaches that support development of self-regulation: skills instruction and co-regulation support. The combination of these approaches is believed to be most effective, regardless of the youth's age. In middle-school aged youth, existing interventions utilize these approaches as follows:
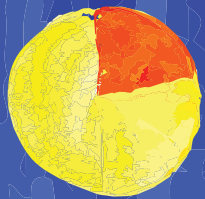
- 74% of studies focused on skills instruction alone;
- 6% focused on co-regulation alone;
- 14% combined both;
- 5% used other approaches
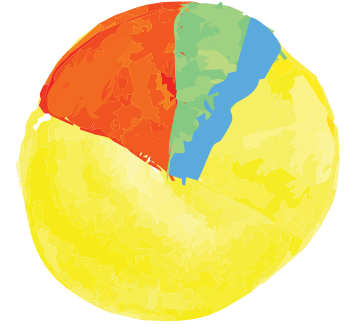
About 40% of the youth lived in adversity or were at-risk
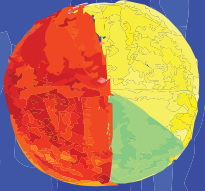
53% of youth were minority (35% African-American, 18% Hispanic)

78% of the interventions were implemented in schools

95% targeted youth; 24% targeted parents; 6% targeted teachers

Based on a review of preventive interventions published between 1989 and 2013, 78 studies were found that targeted self-regulation development for middle-school aged youth (ages 11-14 years), with the following characteristics:

Strengths:
- Large number of studies with diverse samples
- Many universal interventions exist for high-poverty schools

Limitations:
- Few interventions target parents and teachers
- Interventions are more diffuse and less focused on emotion regulation than for younger youth
- Majority of outcomes are youth self-report
- Effects across interventions vary greatly

Conclusions:
- Positive impact seen in cognitive and behavioral regulation as well as delinquency
- Effects may be somewhat smaller than for younger youth
- Room for enhancement with more focused interventions that target emotion regulation and involve parents and teachers

Outcome Assessed	# Findings	Average Effect Size*	% with Positive Effects*
Youth Outcomes: Core Self-Regulation			
Cognitive	48	Small to Medium	63%
Emotional	9	None to Small	22%
Behavioral	64	Small	64%
Stress	4	Small	25%
Motivation/Initiative	19	None to Small	10%
Youth Outcomes: Other Functional Domains			
Language/Learning	9	Small	56%
Delinquent Behavior	29	Small	79%
Health/Self-Care	7	Small to Medium	---
Interpersonal	26	Small	46%
Mental Health	43	Small	56%
Parent Outcomes			
Parenting Skills	5	Small to Medium	80%

*Reported only if findings are based on at least two studies

Key considerations for promoting self-regulation in middle-school aged youth:

- Encourage a positive school climate for all students
- Deliver self-regulation skills training in at-risk schools
- Train teachers and afterschool staff to teach, model, reinforce, and coach self-regulation skills
- Identify ways to support school and program staff's own self-regulation capacity
- Provide parent education supports that address co-regulation