

Supporting your child's

nervous system

All day long our children work hard to manage; rules, expectations, boundaries, noise, transitions, friendships and feelings.

Even when things look fine on the outside, their nervous system is working overtime on the inside.

Throughout the school day, small stressors accumulate. Sensory overwhelm, social dynamics and academic demands all draw on a child's limited regulation.

By the afternoon their emotional bucket is often full, even if they have shown no outward signs in school.

When the end of day finally arrives and they are with their parent/carer – who is their safe person – the pressure valve can open. The brain moves from coping to allowing feelings to overflow.

It can appear as, tears, anger or irritability. This isn't misbehaviour but relief.

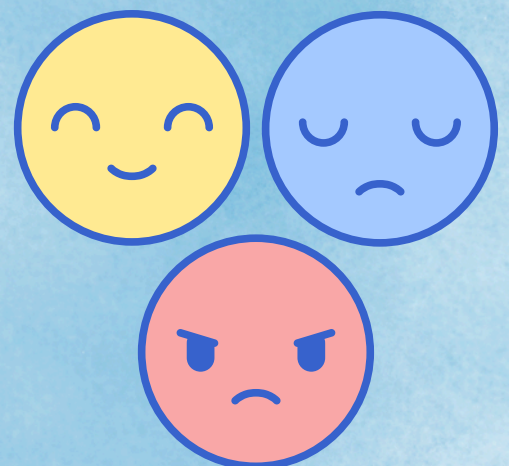
The nervous system has hit its limit. It's not the wrong snack or shoes hurting etc it is emotional exhaustion.

Our children are seeking connection. Connection calms the system. Warmth, predictability and low demands can help our children.

it's okay to feel



your feelings



What can you do to help?

Immediate needs & sensory Regulation

Connection: A calm response to an angry/overwhelmed child, 'Wow, it looks like you've had a tough day'.



"Heavy Work" Activities:

Heavy exertion helps ground an overwhelmed nervous system. Try letting them carry their own weighted backpack, do animal walks (e.g., bear crawling), jump on a trampoline, or push heavy furniture.



Replenish Blood Sugar: Offer a healthy, filling snack (e.g., fruit, cheese, or crunchy snacks like raw carrots) immediately upon pick-up or arrival home.



Rhythmic Movement: Walking or scooting home, swinging in the garden, or bouncing on a therapy ball provides soothing, repetitive sensory input.



Water Play: Let them wash their hands with warm water, take a warm bath, or play with water in the sink to transition their senses.



What can you do to help?

Low demand downtime



Independent, Open-Ended Play: Give them space to engage in activities with zero rules or objectives. Provide colouring books, or playdough.

Limit Immediate Homework: Save homework for later in the evening or the following morning, as their brains are drained and need time to recharge.



Silence "How Was School?": Avoid direct questions about their day initially. They likely do not have the vocabulary or energy to explain their day yet. Open ended questions ie, 'Who did you sit next to for lunch today' lend to more conversation when they are ready.



Cozy Spaces: Encourage resting in a blanket fort or a dark, quiet room with soft lighting.



What can you do to help?

Connection & Routine



One-on-One Bonding:

Reconnect with simple activities that do not require talking, such as snuggling up with a favourite book, listening to calming music, or playing a quick board game.

Predictable Rhythms: Maintain a consistent routine at home so they know exactly what to expect, which provides a sense of security.

