



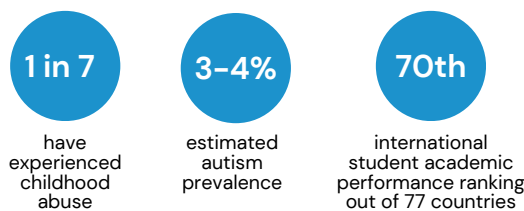
SUPPORTING SELF-REGULATION IN AUSTRALIA'S CLASSROOMS

BACKGROUND

Globally, one in three students struggle with emotional and behavioral regulation, leading to mental health challenges and lower academic performance. Teachers are increasingly focused on keeping students engaged, as disruptive behavior in classrooms has risen since the COVID-19 pandemic ([Gore et al., 2020](#); [National Center for Education Statistics, 2022](#)). Autistic students, and those who have experienced childhood trauma or attend under resourced schools are particularly vulnerable, making success more difficult ([Joseph et al., 2023](#)).



AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT*



THE GAP

Health professionals, such as occupational therapists, school psychologists, and speech pathologists, specialise in helping students develop self-regulation skills to support learning. However, these services often withdraw individual students out of class which can result in lost learning time and leave students feeling stigmatised ([Iacono et al., 2023](#)). Students also need more opportunities to apply the skills learned in therapy within the classroom.

THE SOLUTION

Our novel, interdisciplinary, self-regulation in-school support program.

We are closing the gap by training teachers and occupational therapists in a whole-of-classroom self-regulation curriculum based on the Alert Program[®] to universally support students to recognise their 'alert' states and adjust them using individualised sensory and movement strategies. Our approach enhances engagement with learning and teacher confidence by supporting self-regulation and improving the classroom environment.

Pilot testing shows a **decrease in disruptive classroom behaviours...**



and improvements in student wellbeing.

AIMS, PROGRESS AND TIMELINE



To co-design a universal, co-taught, whole-class self-regulation program to enhance learner engagement.

- ✓ **Pilot** an adapted Alert Program® in three Victorian schools and assess its impact on child mental wellbeing, student school engagement and teacher confidence.
- ⊖ **Refine** the program through co-design with students, allied health practitioners, teachers, caregivers and students.
- ⊖ **Implement** and evaluate the program, using a cluster randomised controlled trial design, in low-resourced schools in Australia.
- ⊖ **Create** a training program for allied health and teachers to co-deliver universal, effective self-regulation programs in schools.



POTENTIAL FOR IMPACT

- **Improved teacher understanding** of how self-regulation impacts student engagement and academic success.
- **Enhanced teacher self-regulation and co-regulation skills**, improving self-regulation and fostering a supportive classroom environment.
- **Improved student and teacher wellbeing and engagement:** Better emotional regulation leads to improved mental health, higher engagement, and fewer classroom disruptions.
- **Capacity building:** Strengthening the ability of teachers and allied health professionals to support student self-regulation and building their confidence.
- **Enhanced collaboration:** Fostering more robust relationships between schools and allied health professionals, promoting an integrated, inclusive approach to student needs.
- **Increasing awareness** of student wellbeing challenges in Australian schools.
- **Broad policy change** to include allied health support as a standard in schools.

RESEARCH TEAM



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OTARC Director



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... the class I have is a totally different class this term to last term and I really like to think that being part of the program has kind of been one of the factors that's led to that

-Secondary school teacher response to pilot testing of Alert Program®



INVESTMENT

Our pilot approach has shown success in improving student engagement, emotional regulation, and classroom environments through collaborative support from teachers and allied health professionals. Your investment will expand this impact, fostering student wellbeing, reducing classroom disruptions, and promoting a more inclusive, supportive education system.

2023

OTARC, donated funds (\$13K)

2025 - 2028

Seeking funding of \$300K to co-develop the program with students, teachers and community stakeholders, and trial the refined program in more schools.

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