



# Crippling the Story of Overcoming: An Analysis of the Discourses and Practices of Self-Regulation in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)

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*ABSTRACT This paper applies crip theory (McRuer, 2006, 2018) as well as other key conceptual tools from disabled childhood studies (Runswick-Cole et al., 2018) and disability studies in education (Cousik & Maconochie, 2017) as a tactic intended to question and resist the story of overcoming as it manifests itself within the discourses and practices of self-regulation in early learning classrooms. This paper offers a brief overview of the range of self-regulation strategies enacted within educational settings in Ontario, Canada, that purport to support young children in overcoming themselves on their way to normalcy. This paper also engages in crip theory as a strategy to both question and disrupt the taken for granted assumption that self-regulation entails a return towards or a sustaining of the efficient and productive neoliberal individual in school systems. Finally, this paper considers how we might not only invite but embrace the disruptions that occur when embodied differences refuse to be overcome by demands to self-regulate. Ultimately, a key aim of this paper is to resist how discourses and practices of self-regulation in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) establish the overcoming narrative as a means to cure, fix or exclude embodied differences while contemplating the vibrant possibilities embedded within learning with and from disabled childhoods.*

**KEYWORDS** disabled childhoods; normalcy; self-regulation; crip theory

The overcoming narrative is projected onto a wide range of social and economic issues: poverty, homelessness, unemployment, addiction, health, as well as all kinds of trauma, discrimination, violence and abuse. These are all collapsed into a single narrative arc – one of adversity as a personal challenge to be overcome. According to this logic, anyone with enough pluck, and often, good luck, can “come

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back” from, well . . . anything. Yet, in this celebration of human resilience, a sleight of hand takes place. Accounts that could bear witness to histories and continuities of deep-seated structural violence, without many of us noticing, are transformed into tales of individual hardship and redemption. (DeVolder, 2013, p. 747)

We begin with this description of the overcoming narrative from DeVolder (2013) as an entry point into critically analyzing the relationship between the hegemonic role of neoliberal individualism and discourses and practices of self-regulation within early childhood education classrooms that purport to be oriented towards inclusion. We turn our attention to how neoliberalism as a social, political, and economic structure emphasizes narratives of individual responsibility while simultaneously constructing individuals as failures. In particular we focus on how disabled children are represented as needy, dependent, and dysregulated (Goodley & Lawthom, 2019). Through a critical analysis that applies concepts from disability studies, DeVolder (2013) alerts us to the ways the overcoming narrative reinforces sociocultural beliefs that individuals have problems that need to be solved and self-managed. In particular, DeVolder (2013) confronts how the stories of disabled people who overcome their disability reinforces the value of the neoliberal normative order. One of the ways this manifests itself in educational settings is through an emphasis on overcoming and containing behavioural differences as a means for inclusion within the normative conditions of early childhood learning (Cousik & Maconochie, 2017).

Within this context of overcoming, disability is conceptualized as a problem requiring a solution in a manner that reinforces rather than questions conceptions of disability as undesirable and an impediment to normalcy (Titchkosky & DeWelles, 2020). Within neoliberal schooling, resilience, perseverance, and individual determination are synonymous with eschewing disability and other embodied differences as barriers to overcome in maintaining the status quo (Runswick-Cole et al., 2018). The status quo here pertains to the ways the neoliberal and western colonial order depends on the overcoming narrative as a way to conceal longstanding and pervasive mechanisms of systemic injustices that exclude disabled children and emphasize performances of normalcy. As early childhood educators, schoolteachers, and instructors of future early childhood educators, DeVolder (2013) provokes us to think about the role of the overcoming narrative in sustaining the conditions for injustices in early learning and formal school settings by marking disabled children as “excludable” (Titchkosky, 2019, p. 282).

In response to this special issue’s prompt to investigate how disabled children’s activism, resistance, and presence challenge and contribute to understanding children’s realities, we seek to apply crip theory (McRuer, 2006, 2018) as well as other key conceptual tools from disabled childhood studies (Runswick-Cole et al., 2018) and disability studies in education (Cousik & Maconochie, 2017) to crip and disrupt the story of overcoming as it manifests

itself in the discourses and practices of self-regulation in early learning classrooms. We consider the hegemonic role of educational and developmental psychology in shaping the kinds of policies and practices that reinforce self-regulation as an overcoming narrative. Specifically, this paper is interested in both questioning and confronting the ways requirements to teach, monitor, and assess self-regulation practices of children not only reinforce and valorize the normative neoliberal order, but also persist in sustaining beliefs and practices that ensure that disabled children remain conditionally included or outright excluded (Cousik & Maconochie, 2017; Karmiris, 2020; Titchkosky, 2019).

This paper has three parts. First, it will offer a brief overview of the range of self-regulation techniques and strategies enacted within educational and care settings in Ontario, Canada, that purport to support young children in overcoming themselves on their way to making it as close to normalcy as possible. The second portion of the paper will engage crip theory as a strategy to both question and disrupt the taken for granted assumptions that self-regulation entails a return towards or sustaining of the efficient and productive neoliberal individual in school systems. Third, our paper considers how we might not only invite but embrace the disruptions that occur when embodied differences refuse to be overcome by demands to self-regulate. Ultimately, a key aim of this paper is to resist how discourses and practices of self-regulation in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) establish the overcoming narrative as a means to cure, fix or exclude embodied differences while orienting ourselves towards the vibrant possibilities embedded within learning with and from disabled childhoods.

### **Self-Regulation: Overcome Yourself and Get Back to Normal!**

The narrative of self-regulation is dominant within the fields of ECEC and K-12 schooling. Children are encouraged to engage in practices of emotional and behavioural regulation to monitor and coordinate their executive functioning processes by adapting their behaviour in a flexible style to meet the demands of their environment (Montroy et al., 2016). In the Canadian context, the work of Educational Psychology and Philosophy professor, Stuart Shanker (2010, 2013), is central in promoting self-regulation as “enabling children to respond efficiently and effectively to the everyday challenges they face in and out of school” (2013, p. xii). In this sense, self-regulation is posited as a potential solution to the problem of dysregulated learners who might be struggling with everyday challenges. Normative childhood is thereby constructed as the pursuit of diminishing the problems of dysregulation, while disabled children and those who are constructed as dysregulated are represented as in need of potential separation or exclusion from their peers (Cousik & Maconochie, 2017; Curran & Runswick-Cole, 2014). By teaching children self-regulation skills, learners are encouraged to be adaptable and thus preserve their inclusion

by managing the demands of the environment and different situations in their learning (Vassallo, 2013).

Shanker (2010, p. 4) defines self-regulation through “the ability to stay calmly focused and alert,” even titling one of his texts on self-regulation, *Calm, Alert, and Learning: Classroom Strategies for Self-Regulation* (Shanker, 2013). In Shanker’s work (2010, 2013), he defines self-regulation in terms of five domains: (1) biological (regulation of arousal); (2) emotional (self-monitoring and modification of emotional responses); (3) cognitive (switching attention, inhibiting impulses, coping with frustration, sequencing thoughts); (4) social (understanding rules of appropriate behaviour and co-regulating with others); and (5) prosocial (development of empathy). In Shanker’s (2010, 2013) work, these domains are all considered interconnected through six elements that highlight metacognition, or “the awareness and understanding of one’s own thinking or cognitive processes” (p. 46). Critical self-reflection is noted as crucial for the development of self-regulation, which is also considered key to establishing resilience in learners (Shanker, 2010, 2013).

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2016) connects Shanker’s work on self-regulation to fostering children’s well-being, sense of self, and ability to manage and cope with stress. Within *The Kindergarten Program – Ontario’s governing kindergarten curricula – The Ontario Ministry of Education* describes self-regulation as crucial to a child’s ability to learn:

Children’s ability to self-regulate – to set limits for themselves and manage their own emotions, attention, and behaviour – allows them to develop the emotional well-being and the habits of mind, such as persistence and curiosity, that are essential for early learning and that set the stage for lifelong learning. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 55)

Although the Ontario Ministry of Education (2016) clearly articulates how self-regulation is not compliance, the kindergarten document focuses on how children “will monitor and adapt their own emotions and behaviour and become aware of and accommodate the thinking and feelings of others” while educators will “observe each child’s development and... encourage and support the child in individualized ways” (p. 56). As explained by Cousik and Maconochie (2017), disabled children are separated from their peers in schools (i.e., contained in separate rooms) based on their ability to self-regulate and perform normalcy within inclusive classroom settings. These practices orient classrooms towards the neoliberal ethos of regulated learning and reflexivity whereby learners are expected to be able to emotionally adapt themselves to the increasing demands of the standardized school system and academic assessment (Vassallo, 2013). As described by Vassallo (2013), discourses of self-regulation from educational psychology expect learners to change and adapt themselves continually within the market-based standardized schooling ethos to contribute to the reproduction of neoliberal capitalist aims and ideas of personal autonomy, self-interest, and rationalization (Vassallo, 2013).

In this sense, our educational system expects emotional and behavioural regulation from students in order to perform specific tasks and forms of assessment. Students are encouraged to overcome their experiences of emotional dysregulation since experiences of dysregulation or distress are encountered as barriers to academic performance or a hindrance to a student's ability to learn and function within a school environment. As such, students who fail at self-regulation, or are unable to perform the demands of classroom contexts, are deemed dependent, of higher needs, or of concern and in need of intervention. For example, *The Kindergarten Program*, from the Ontario Ministry of Education (2016) articulates this clearly:

Educators report the benefits of waiting before they intervene to help children manage behaviour and emotions – they have seen that “stepping back” makes room for the gradual emergence and consolidation of children's ability to self-regulate. When educators notice that a child's inability to focus or to manage emotions persists over time, they consult the parents and, where appropriate, the school's special education support team, to determine whether a physical issue, such as an auditory processing problem, may be involved. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 57)

Therefore, for children who are unable to self-regulate their emotions, attention, and sensations, there arises concern and an orientation towards special education programming. Educators are encouraged to become concerned about the child's inability to meet the demands of the school environment and turn towards psychoeducational interventions. The regulation of the bounds of normalcy becomes a mission that connects all children who are deemed abnormal and deviant (Curran & Runswick-Cole, 2014). Embodied, affective, and sensorial differences are interpreted through a frame of lack and loss whereby students who experience emotional differences are considered a disruption to the functioning of normative classrooms. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2016) notes an expectation that by the end of kindergarten children “are increasingly able to identify, monitor, and manage stress levels and engage in strategies for self-regulation (e.g., of emotions, attention, and behaviour)” (p. 62).

Disrupting this narrative of overcoming through management, monitoring, and identification involves imagining new orientations to children who are constructed as failing to regulate themselves. In this article, we focus on considering disabled children's bodyminds as a beginning place of inquiry into the current conditions of classroom practices (Curran & Runswick-Cole, 2014). As explained by Mills and LeFrançois (2018), children are widely considered irrational and the “Other” to adult figures, who imagine children as only ever in need of scaffolding for developmental trajectories towards independence and reason. Discourses of self-regulation within education deploy the same developmental logics of self-control that “legitimizes various regimes of ruling that promote the subordination of certain groups in the name of benevolence” (Mills & LeFrançois, 2018, p. 504). This echoes Fritsch's

(2016) argument in that disabled children's futurity is imagined as an impossibility or only ever possible when working to overcome and do *without* disability while reaching towards normalcy. We now turn to explaining the potential for crippling such narratives and a specific example of disabled resistance.

### **Crippling the Overcoming Story: Examples of Resistance and Refusal of the Neoliberal Normative Order**

Crip theory (McRuer, 2006) and cripistemologies (Johnson & McRuer, 2014) both provoke and invite those of us who are situated within the hegemonic policies and practices of self-regulation in ECEC and K-12 schooling to question the logics of *overcoming* as a strategy to make it back to as close to normal as possible. One of the aims of crip theory and other critical engagements within the fields of disability studies (Titchkosky & DeWelles, 2020) and disabled children's childhood studies (Curran & Runswick-Cole, 2014) is to refuse and disrupt the single story (Adichie, 2009) of supposed efficient progress toward being a productive subject within this current iteration of neoliberal capitalist western colonialism. In keeping with work in both crip theory (McRuer 2006, 2018) and cripistemologies (Johnson & McRuer, 2014), it is also important here to take a moment to question the risks of sustaining binaries in the needed work of questioning the hegemonic place of self-regulation discourses and practices within ECEC. Some elements of self-regulation practices invite both teachers and students to make time for sensory play, attunement with embodied practices such as deep breathing or yoga or simply moments of pause and opportunities to disconnect with what can be the excessive focus on task completion within the classroom (Maich et al., 2019).

The aim of this paper is not to completely reject or vilify opportunities for embodied ways of teaching and learning that comprise some elements of policies and practices under the broad umbrella of self-regulation. Nor is the aim here to replace one form of hegemony with another by attributing "epistemic privilege" to disabled childhoods (Johnson & McRuer, 2014, p. 141). Rather, as stated by Johnson and McRuer (2014) "cripistemology at its best demonstrates that theorizing is and always should be multi-directional (and multitudinous)" (p.145). Thus, in crippling the story of overcoming, we also refuse the western colonial logics that sustain unjust relations of power that are embedded within the kinds of binary categorizations that persist in outright excluding or conditionally including diverse childhoods (Davies & Kenneally, 2020; Dyer, 2019; Runswick-Cole et al., 2018). In this manner, our paper seeks to apply crip theory as an invitation to embrace the complexities of our intersectional entanglements within ECEC learning spaces. Cripistemology offers us an opportunity to analyze a specific encounter between teacher and child while noting how analyzing this specific encounter

offers opportunities for thinking otherwise beyond the confines of our current educational system and its neoliberal ethos.

Through our engagement with crip theory, we consider the ways that the hegemony of self-regulation discourses and practices are enacted “from on high” (Johnson & McRuer, 2014, p. 145) in a unidirectional manner that assumes what is in the “best interests” of children. This taken for granted assumption that all children will benefit from scrutinizing, self-monitoring, and self-assessing their self-regulation skills, limits if not entirely negates the possibility of learning with and from children who have already been labeled, categorized, and pathologized. It also sustains the assumption that the teacher or early childcare provider is the authority that will impart knowledge on the child that the child will then internalize (i.e., how to self-regulate). The “multidirectional (and multitudinous)” (Johnson & McRuer, 2014, p. 145) provocations and implications of working within cripistemologies disrupt and refuse the easy way in which the preposition “on” is used to refer to the unidirectional flow of both power and supposed solutions from the Early Childhood Educator to the problem as represented by children who fail to self-regulate. This refusal to impose hegemonic regimes of self-regulation takes seriously the ethical commitment to transform unbalanced relations of power within the field ECEC.

Therefore, we ask how might we learn with, from, and in our engagement with disabled childhoods? How might we crip our engagement with refusals, disruptions, and interruptions to the supposed self-regulating neoliberal classroom and its obsessive preoccupation with sustaining or quickly returning to efficiency and productivity (Pyne, 2021; Titchkosky & DeWelles, 2020)? What happens when crippling the overcoming story entails being overcome by our embodied relations with one another as we teach and learn with each other? What happens when the moments of screaming, stomping, hiding under desks, throwing objects, crying, refusing to stand up or sit down, refusing to even speak at all or refusing to stop speaking, are not considered individual problems to be managed, cured, or rehabilitated? What if the problem is not any one individual being resilient enough to sustain or return to the neoliberal order of productivity and efficiency (DeVolder, 2013; Pyne, 2021; Titchkosky & DeWelles, 2020), but the very sociocultural and colonial onto-epistemologies that comprise the current order of things? To what degree does the desire for self-regulation represent our collective denial of the systemic injustices we are embedded within and the disproportionate ways those injustices impact the daily lived experiences of disabled childhoods?

The provocations here are intended to foreground the ethical dilemmas of teaching, learning, and the ways in which crip theory and cripistemologies invite multi-directionality as integral to questioning and disrupting the hegemonic western colonial neoliberal logics we are all embedded within (Johnson & McRuer, 2014). There are no available productive, simple, and efficient solutions to these provocations but rather an embracing of the potentialities that might occur in the dissolving of our desires for easy

questions (e.g., what do I do when a child can't sit still and pay attention?) that might be connected to easy answers (e.g., give them a fidget toy and teach them to breathe deeply). Similarly, when we embed crip theory into our understanding of how we might engage in our teaching and learning practices and relationships differently, there is a simultaneous impossibility in declaring or valorizing heroes in tales of overcoming that aim to reinforce rather than question western colonial neoliberal logics (DeVolder, 2013; Pyne, 2021). Thus, instead of finding solace in stories of overcoming (DeVolder, 2013), or as Pyne (2021, p. 343) states, "trap doors" that leave us explicitly and implicitly sustaining mechanisms of systemic racism, ableism, classism, and heteropatriarchy, crip theory and cripistemologies invite us to confront the unjust relations of power that assume that some people are problem solvers (i.e., educators in positions of authority) and others are problems (i.e., disabled and dysregulated children) that need to learn how to self-regulate.

To further illustrate this point, we offer here a small partially fictionalized reflection from one of our classroom teaching experiences:<sup>1</sup>

Kirby was a six-year-old child in a senior kindergarten classroom in one of my placements during pre-service teacher education. Located within a small class, Kirby was an active child who was often taken on walks throughout the hallways of the school when they started acting aggressively towards other children or not listening during circle time or free play. The supervising educator I worked with informed me that Kirby experienced difficulties with self-regulation and that they often needed time away from the other children in the class to take time to modulate their emotions and feelings. As a teacher education student, I commonly took Kirby for their walks while we stopped and chatted with other staff at the school in the hallways. Smiling at Kirby, the staff would often stop and ask Kirby how their day was, and which activities they were up to in class while they calmed down before re-entering the classroom. Interestingly, Kirby started asking to go on walks, at which point they were informed by adult figures in their classroom that if they acted aggressively in class or disrupted the playing and learning of their peers, they would not be able to go on a walk.

One day, when reading a story during the circle time, Kirby inched closer to my leg and declared, "I want to go for a walk." After letting them know that now was circle time and that it was not an opportune moment to leave the classroom, Kirby stated, "But I don't want to be here!" Standing up and moving away from the circle towards the door, they shouted, "I'm going for a walk and no one can stop me!" Quickly moving towards the door, my supervising teacher started talking to Kirby to calm them down and reassure them that they would be able to go on a walk at a different time. Suddenly, other children started declaring their need to go on a walk and began moving around on the carpet and asking why they could not leave the

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<sup>1</sup> By stating that this is a partially fictionalized reflection, we mean that we are not focused on the "accuracy" of the retelling and have anonymized any details from this account that could be identifying. Kirby is described using gender-neutral pronouns, although their actual gender identity is left unspecified.

classroom. I quickly closed the book, stood up, and started a song to gather the children's attention while Kirby was being spoken to.

This is a small moment in time that represents an observation of one child's experience in relation to their teachers and classmates. It offers each of us an opportunity to reflect upon the limits of discourses and practices of self-regulation while also attending to how solutions (e.g., going on a walk) do not always result in stories of heroes that overcome (DeVolder, 2013). However, as educators who have legitimate concerns regarding the taken-for-granted assumptions in self-regulation practices, we are also tempted by the desire and hope that Kirby will overcome. We want Kirby to be the hero of their own story! Even as Kirby's walks becomes a source for a power struggle, we want the walks, intended to cultivate self-regulation, to work. Even as Kirby refuses, we hope that they will accept. We are drawn towards the solutions on offer by the discourses and practices of self-regulation that insist children can and should overcome and just be normal. According to DeVolder (2013) "compulsory heroism then like compulsory heterosexism and compulsory ablebodiedness is intimately related to the construction of normal" (p. 750). DeVolder (2013) also points out that one of the ways the story of overcoming remains so intertwined with reproducing normalcy is through "a certain compulsion to its iteration" (p.747). There is something irresistible to the simplicity of a list or chart of recommended best practices for self-regulation that portends to the compulsion of normalcy's reiteration. Yet, Kirby resists. Kirby refuses to act like the hero they are supposed to be by self-regulating and thus overcoming the challenges they are experiencing in the classroom. Kirby and countless students who embody disabled childhoods demonstrate through their resistance, the very limits of self-regulatory practices that desire heroic narratives where overcoming means returning to normal.

### **Crippling Normalcy and Embracing Embodied Differences**

DeVolder (2013) reminds us that "successful rehabilitation demands an overcoming story" (p. 749). How might we learn with and from Kirby in a manner that not only refuses the overcoming story that self-regulation advocates depend on but invites educators within ECEC to embrace embodied differences within our teaching and learning spaces? For instance, how might we engage in crippling normalcy by attending to the ways some of Kirby's classmates also desired a break from normal through their own demands to walk out of the classroom? How was this strategy of supposed self-regulation *crippled* by Kirby as a tool to resist normalcy rather than return to normalcy? The power imbalance between the teachers and Kirby is palpable because of the ways in which the teachers in the classroom control whether both Kirby and their classmates receive a respite from the normative demands of the classroom. In the sense, this small moment within this ECEC classroom reveals

the ways in which practices of self-regulation reinforce the type of overcoming story that sustain practices of conditional inclusion. Instead of reinforcing or sustaining the power imbalance between the teachers and Kirby, how might we join with Kirby, and both resist and refuse to be overcome by normalcy's demands?

Through its call for an analysis and praxis that embraces the "multidirectional" (Johnson & McRuer, 2014, p. 145), cripistemologies aims to fundamentally disrupt and question what Titchkosky & DeWelles (2020, p. 13) refer to as "the problem-solution dialectic" that form the very basis of the kinds of self-regulation overcoming stories that Kirby is resisting and that we as educators should be working to confront, resist and transform. As mentioned earlier and exemplified in Hernández-Saca & Khan's (2019) application of cripistemologies in their qualitative inquiry, Kirby is not alone in their desire to crip normalcy and its tools of management and self-regulation. According to Hernández-Saca and Khan's (2019) analysis of the narratives of two youths resisting deficit and medicalized discourses and labeling practices, an approach that foregrounded cripistemologies was vital to interpreting and representing the stories of their participants in "nonhegemonic and nonpathological" ways (p. 14). Hernández-Saca and Kahn (2019) contend that "the global hegemonic order, institutionalized in educational contexts, that is not only based on Whiteness, but psycho-emotional disablism at the intersections is the root of dis-stress" (p.14). As is evidenced by their desire to walk out of the classroom, Kirby at the age of six is already embedded in this dis-stress.

In this sense, Kirby's resistance and refusal to overcome is not only necessary but a vital moment to attend to the colonial logics embedded in the current neoliberal demand for self-management and self-regulation (Hernandez-Saca & Khan, 2019; Pyne, 2021; Titchkosky & DeWelles, 2020). As early childhood educators attending to Kirby's distress as representative of the injustices sustained by the normative demands of schooling, we might also engage in our own contestations of this single story (Adichie, 2009) and its manifestations in policies, checklists, guidebooks, instructional websites, and other regimes of monitoring. Such a demand for self-regulation can be masked through recommendations that a "positive and polite label and visual should be included that indicates the use of this element of the classroom (e.g., relaxation station, cozy corner, calm-down corner, the nest, or the office)" (Maich et al., 2019, p. 162). DeVolder (2013, p. 747) reminds us that there is "a sleight of hand" occurring in the use of such positive phrasing that seeks to avoid rather than confront the desire for the preservation of the kinds of developmentalist logics intent on overvaluing the path towards achieving the productive neoliberal heteronormative able-bodied subject. Instead of sustaining this hegemonic single story (Adichie, 2009) of what teaching and learning is supposed to be, we invite our colleagues to explore the possibilities of crippling the overcoming story to engage with the possibilities of teaching and learning within disabled childhoods rather than imposing this story on them.

## Concluding Thoughts

As this paper comes to a close, we would like to suggest the many potentialities for new openings. This paper has offered a critical analysis of self-regulation discourses and practices like those represented in the work of Shanker (2010, 2013) and in the Ontario Kindergarten Program, as a way of simultaneously attending to their intertwinement with and dependencies on the story of overcoming. We thought with crip theory and cripistemologies (Johnson & McRuer, 2014; McRuer, 2006, 2018) as well as concepts embedded within or related to critical disability studies and disability studies in education to contribute to the growing field of disabled children's childhood studies in Canada. Curran & Runswick-Cole (2014) ask: "What might be gained from seeing disabled children's lives as the starting point, or opening, for the discussion about disabled children's lives?" (p. 1627). In foregrounding Kirby's resistance to the story of overcoming through self-regulation, as a potential starting point, our aim was also to attend to the ways narratives of overcoming sustain hegemonic demands of normalcy and the neoliberal logics we all remain embedded within. Kirby and countless children who embody life experiences at the intersections of race, class, disability, and heteropatriarchy invite us to learn with and from them about the limits of inclusion when conceptualized within a focus on self-regulation's contention that overcoming challenges is the path of a return to normal. Self-regulation and the ways these discourses and practices are hegemonic also reinforce and entrench the valorization of neoliberal individualism with ECEC spaces of teaching and learning. Therefore, as Kirby asks us to do, we might just come out of the neoliberal demands to overcome and return to normal and join in the potentialities and multiplicities of crippling our teaching and learning relations with each other.

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