

# The Zones of Regulation

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## **What is The Zones of Regulation?**

The Zones of Regulation is a curriculum that includes a range of activities to help your child develop skills in the area of self-regulation. Self-regulation can go by many names, such as self-control, self-management and impulse control. It is defined as the best state of alertness of both the body and emotions for the specific situation. For example, when your child plays in a football game, it is beneficial to have a higher state of alertness. However, that same state would not be appropriate in the library.

The lessons and learning activities are designed to help children recognise when they are in the different Zones as well as learn how to use strategies to change or stay in the Zone they are in. In addition to addressing self-regulation, the students will gain an increased vocabulary of emotional terms, skills in reading other people's facial expressions, perspective about how others see and react to their behaviour, insight into events that trigger their behaviour, calming and alerting strategies, and problem solving skills.

## **Some of the aims of The Zones of Regulation:**

- To gain an increased vocabulary of emotional terms so that they can explain how they are feeling.

To increase recognition of facial expressions

- To gain insight into events that might make them move into the different Zones eg. disagreement with a friend, a certain subject being taught or a fire drill.
- To identify a range of different calming and alerting strategies/tools that support them. Tools identified may be personalised sensory supports (eg. use of putty at key times), calming techniques or thinking strategies.

It is important to note that everyone experiences all of the Zones – the Red and Yellow Zones are not the 'bad' or 'naughty' Zones. All of the Zones are expected at one time or another. The Zones of Regulation can help children to think of ways to get back to the Green Zone.

## **The Zones:**

**Blue Zone:** Used to describe a low state of alertness. The Blue Zone is used to describe when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.

**Green Zone:** Used to describe the ideal state of alertness. A person may be described as calm, happy, focused, or content when he or she is in the Green Zone. The student feels a strong sense of internal control when in the Green Zone.

**Yellow Zone:** Used to describe a heightened state of alertness. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, or fear when in the Yellow Zone. The student's energy is elevated yet he or she feels some sense of internal control in the Yellow Zone.

**Red Zone:** Used to describe an extremely heightened state of alertness. A person may be experiencing anger, rage, explosive behaviour, panic, extreme grief, terror, or elation when in the Red Zone and feels a loss of control.

The Zones can be likened to traffic lights: *Green: you are 'good to go!'*, *Yellow: slow down or take warning*, *Red: stop and regain control*, *Blue: rest area where you pull over when you're tired and need to recharge*.

### **Who is The Zones of Regulation for?**

We need to teach ALL of our children good coping and regulation strategies so that they can help themselves when they experience emotions such as anxiety or stress. Teaching children these tools at a young age will support them in later life.

In school, all children will be taught some of the Zones lessons. Each class will have their own Zones of Regulation display. The school staff will support children to use the colours and language but the display may look different in each classroom. Please speak to your class teacher about how the Zones are represented in your child's classroom.

At different times in their life, some children may require more support from the Zones of Regulation curriculum and this will be supported by a child's class teacher.

### **How will my child learn about the Zones?**

Whilst it will be introduced in discrete teaching sessions, the Zones language will be used as part of daily school life.

### **How can you help your child use The Zones of Regulation?**

- Identify your own feelings using Zones language in front of your child (e.g. "I'm frustrated; I think I am in the Yellow Zone.").
- Talk about what tool you will use to be in the appropriate Zone (e.g. "I need to take 4 deep breaths to help get me back to the Green Zone.")
- At times, wonder which Zone your child is in. Or, discuss which Zone a character in a film/book might be in (eg. "You look sleepy, are you in the Blue Zone?")
- Engaging your child in discussion around Zones when they are in the Red Zone is unlikely to be effective. You need to be discussing the different Zones and tools they can use when they are more regulated/calm.
- Teach your child which tools they can use (e.g. "It's time for bed, let's read a book together in the rocking chair to get to the Blue Zone"). Different strategies will be uploaded to our website.
- Share how their behaviour is affecting your Zone. For example, if they are in the Green Zone you could comment that their behaviour is also helping you feel happy/go into the Green Zone.
- Put up and reference the Zones visuals and tools in your home.
- Praise/encourage your child to share which Zone they might be in.

### **Useful resources**

- ***In My Heart*** by Jo Witek and Christine Roussey
- ***Listening to My Body*** by Gabi Garcia and Ying Hui Tan

- ***The Colour Monster*** by Anna Llenas – Please be aware that the colours in this book differ to the Zones of Regulation
- ***Disney Pixar: Inside Out*** – Please be advised that this film is PG and may not be suitable for some viewers

If you have any further queries about the Zones of Regulation, please see your child's class teacher.

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