

The **ZONES** of Regulation®





Information for Parents

The Zones of Regulation are all about helping your child with his / her self-regulation.

What is Self-Regulation?

Self-regulation is the ability to manage disruptive emotions and impulses, and to think before you react.

The Zones

			
BLUE ZONE Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	GREEN ZONE Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	YELLOW ZONE Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	RED ZONE Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control

The main idea of the Zones is that the children are able to learn to tell you which zone they are in and are able to choose a tool to help them **Get Back to Green**.

Tools for Regulation

For the Blue Zone - increase arousal:

- have a hug • talk to a friend • get a drink of water • watch a funny movie • listen to music

For the Green Zone - maintaining:

- remember your successes • think happy thoughts/think of a happy place • be a good friend • help others • smile

For the Yellow Zone - decrease arousal:

- talk to my parents/friends • take 3 deep breaths • do a wall push up • use a fidget tool • go for a walk • take a break • read • deep pressure • slow movement • heavy work to muscles • soft lighting • listen to music • chewy foods

For the Red Zone - decrease arousal:

- deep breaths • jump on a trampoline • relax your muscles • sensory break • push the wall • walk away • STOP! • deep pressure • soft lighting • listen to music • chewy foods

Common Questions on the Zones of Regulation

Can my child be in more than one zone at the same time?

Yes. Your child may feel tired (blue zone) because she did not get enough sleep, and anxious (yellow zone) because she is worried about an activity or contest at school. Listing more than one zone reflects a good sense of personal feelings and alertness levels.

Should children be penalised for being in the RED zone?

It's best for children to experience the natural consequences of being in the RED zone. If a child's actions/choices hurt someone or destroys property, he needs to repair the relationship and take responsibility for the mess they create. Once the child has calmed down, use the experience as a learning opportunity to process what the child would do differently next time.

Can you look like one zone on the outside and feel like you are in another zone on the inside?

Yes. Many of us "disguise" our zone to match social expectations. We use the expression "put on a happy face" or mask the emotion so other people will have good thoughts about us. Parents often say that their children "lose it" and goes into the RED zone as soon as they get home. This is because children are increasing their awareness of their peers and expectations. They make every effort to keep it together at school to stay in the GREEN zone. Home is when they feel safe to let it all out.

Tips for Practicing the Zones of Regulation

- Know yourself and how you react in difficult situations before dealing with your child's behaviours.
- Know your child's triggers.
- Be consistent in managing your child's behaviour and use the same language you use at home.
- Empathise with your child and validate what they are feeling.
- Have clear boundaries/routines and always follow through.
- Do not deal with an angry, upset child when you are not yet calm yourself.
- Discuss strategies for the next time when you are in a similar situation.
- Remember to ask your child how their choices made you feel (empathy).
- Praise your child for using strategies. Encourage them to take a sensory break to help regulate their bodies.

Make a Coping Skills Tool Box

A coping skills tool box is a place to keep things that help to calm you down in periods of distress. Having everything gathered in one place helps you remember to use your coping skills rather than using negative behaviours. What to put in it?

1. Self-Soothing Objects that help to calm you through your five senses:

Something to touch - e.g. stuffed animal, stress ball. Something to hear - e.g. music, meditation guide

Something to see - e.g. snowglobe, happy pictures Something to taste - e.g. mints, tea, sour candy

Something to smell - e.g. lotion, candles, perfume

2. Distractions to take your mind off the problem for a while:

puzzles, books, artwork, crafts, knitting, crocheting, sewing, crossword puzzles,
sudoku, positive websites, music, movies, etc.

3. Opposite action - do something that is opposite to your impulse that is consistent with a more positive emotion:
affirmations and inspiration - e.g. looking at drawings or motivational statements,
something funny or cheering - e.g. funny movies, books

4. Emotional Awareness - tools for identifying and expressing your feelings, e.g. a chart of emotions,
a journal, writing supplies, art supplies.

5. Mindfulness - tools for helping keep yourself in the present moment, e.g. meditation or relaxation recordings, grounding objects (rock, paperweight), yoga mat, breathing exercises.