

# Using zones of regulation

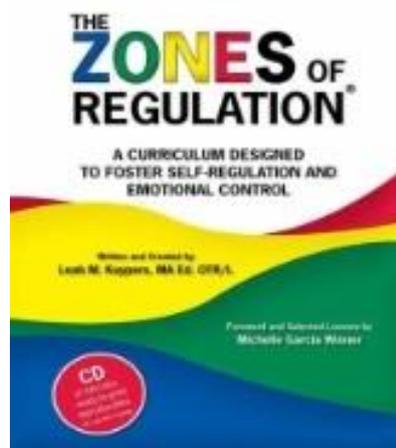
Emotional regulation is the ability to manage your emotions in response to different situations. This is something that all children need support with to some degree. Regulation involves; being able to recognise a feeling/state (e.g. nervous excited), being able to communicate that feeling/state, and being able to use a tool to support (taking deep breaths.) The speech and language therapist may recommend using an approach called zones of regulation to teach the skill of emotional regulation.

## What is 'Zone of Regulation?'

The Zones of Regulation approach is a Curriculum designed to teach self-regulation and emotional control (author Leah Kuypers) and is also known or spoken about as the Zones.

## Zones & Tools

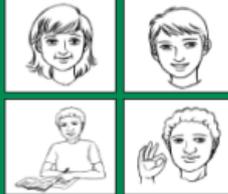
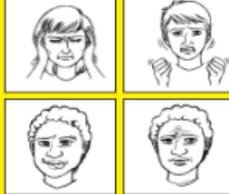
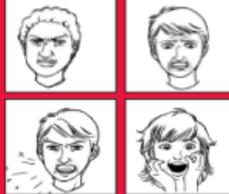
It is based on four zones represented by colours to help children and young people to identify how they are feeling in the moment given their emotions and level of alertness as well as guide them to strategies to support their emotional regulation. It aims to teach children and young people how to understand and express their emotions as well as use calming techniques, cognitive (thinking) strategies, and sensory supports to stay in a Zone or move from one Zone to another.



## What are the 4 zones?

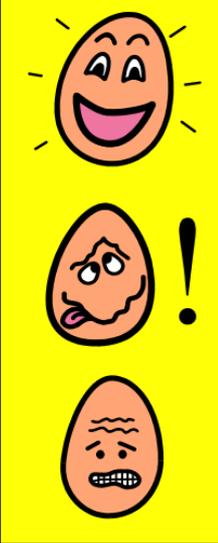
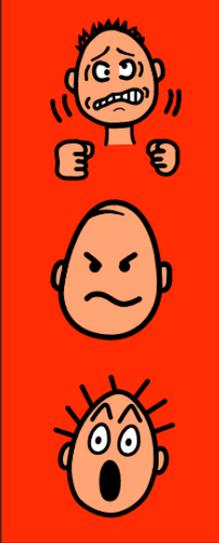
A visual identification scale made up of four parts a blue zone, red zone, yellow zone and green zone. Each zone represents different internal states. Internal states are determined by considering levels of alertness and physical control in the body. See examples on next page.

# The ZONES of Regulation®

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

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## The Zones of Regulation

			
<p><b>Blue Zone</b></p> <p>sad      tired sick      moving tired      slowly</p>	<p><b>Green Zone</b></p> <p>happy calm feeling ok focused ready to learn</p>	<p><b>Yellow Zone</b></p> <p>frustrated worried silly/wiggly excited loss of some control</p>	<p><b>Red Zone</b></p> <p>mad/angry terrified yelling/hitting elated out of control</p>

Blue Zone	Low alertness	Slow body	
Green Zone	Alert	Calm body	Ready to learn
Yellow Zone	High Alertness	Body is fuzzy and energetic	
Red Zone	Very High Alertness	Body feels out of control	

### What are tools?

Tools are strategies that can be used to support children to regulate i.e. get back to a 'green' zone. Please see example tools below – some can be adapted for home. Trial a range of 'tools' (sensory supports and calming techniques) to see helps your child feel calm at home.

For some children, they will have difficulty making choices between 'tools' offered. In this case, give your child 1 option and model this to him e.g. 'you look tired, let's take a break', 'you seen worried, let's get some putty'.

 <p><b>Blue Zone</b> <b>Tools: Rest/Stop</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a break.</li> <li>• Think happy thoughts.</li> <li>• Talk about your feelings.</li> <li>• Ask for a hug.</li> <li>• Draw a picture</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Green Zone</b> <b>Tools: Go Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete your work.</li> <li>• Listen to the teacher.</li> <li>• Remember your daily goal.</li> <li>• Think happy thoughts.</li> <li>• Help others.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Yellow Zone</b> <b>Tools: Slow Down</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a break.</li> <li>• Talk to the teacher.</li> <li>• Squeeze my stress ball.</li> <li>• Go for a walk.</li> <li>• Take three deep breaths.</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Red Zone</b> <b>Tools: Stop</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a break.</li> <li>• Squeeze my stress ball.</li> <li>• Take three deep breaths.</li> <li>• Count to ten.</li> <li>• Talk about my problem.</li> </ul>

### Using zones of regulation visuals (Adult-Led at first)

An adult can support a child to apply zones and tools by labelling their zones and tools for them, in the moment. The child needs to learn that the way we feel changes in different situations, and so labelling needs to take place all the time. We encourage you to use visuals to help this process such as the zones keyring below. See below for a step-by-step guide of how to use this visual. Some children will require photographs or symbols of facial expressions to support them.

 Red Zone	 Yellow Zone	 <p><b>Blue Zone</b> <b>Tools: Rest/Stop</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a break.</li> <li>• Think happy thoughts.</li> <li>• Talk about your feelings.</li> <li>• Ask for a hug.</li> <li>• Draw a picture</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Green Zone</b> <b>Tools: Go Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete your work.</li> <li>• Listen to the teacher.</li> <li>• Remember your daily goal.</li> <li>• Think happy thoughts.</li> <li>• Help others.</li> </ul>
 Green Zone	 Blue Zone	 <p><b>Yellow Zone</b> <b>Tools: Slow Down</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a break.</li> <li>• Talk to the teacher.</li> <li>• Squeeze my stress ball.</li> <li>• Go for a walk.</li> <li>• Take three deep breaths.</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Red Zone</b> <b>Tools: Stop</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take a break.</li> <li>• Squeeze my stress ball.</li> <li>• Take three deep breaths.</li> <li>• Count to ten.</li> <li>• Talk about my problem.</li> </ul>

**1. Adult to point to visual to label the zone and explain how you know that**

Adult: 'You're worried -> you're in the yellow zone'

**2. Then adult to select a Tool from that zone or direct child to required tool**

Adult 'You can squeeze your stress ball'

**3. Adult then directs child to the tool**

Adult: 'squeeze the stress ball' (model this if needed)

*If child has a choice of tools, continue process below:*

**4. Adult to check and reflect on whether the tool has helped**

Adult: 'You're still worried – let's do it again' or 'let's try a different tool'

**5. Adult to support student to reflect by linking it back to the green zone**

Adult: 'Your body looks calm, you are sitting up still, you are now the green zone – let's start work'

**Top tips:**

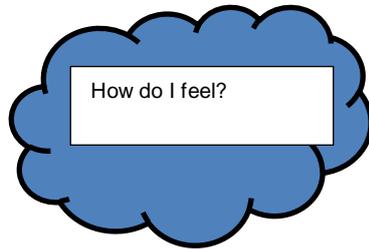
- All zones are okay and normal. You must explain this to the child.
- Talking can be overwhelming for someone in the red zone. In this zone you should avoid spoken language. You can point to the zone and tool instead.
- Remember to support child to regulate in 'Blue' zone and 'Yellow' zones. This can prevent them from escalating to the 'Red Zone' where they have minimal control.
- Remember to label the zones at regular times during the day (e.g. before starting a new activity)
- Remember to teach in different contexts (e.g. during work, at the park, during play etc.)
- Support child by applying the zones rules to yourself (e.g. 'My body is slow, I feel sleepy, I'm in the blue zone' 'I can go for a run.')
- If one tool does not work that is okay, try another. Different tools work at different times you need to have a range that work sometimes in your toolkit.

**Moving towards independence**

Once the child has become familiar with the zones and tools that support them they should then be supported to begin to become more independent in using their visual. This stage involves supporting students to label and select a tool and zone themselves, as well as supporting them to remember when to regulate.

### Support child to take the lead

- See if the child can begin to label what zone they are in themselves (from the options on the visual.) You can direct them to think about questions like:



- Support child to take the lead by starting off in situations that are easier for the child to manage and then work towards them taking the lead in situations that are trickier.
- There may be times when the child is too upset or overwhelmed to make these decisions. This is okay, you may decide to take the lead in this situation and label the emotion and zone.

### Reminders

- 'Check in' with child frequently (this might be before every piece of activity, or piece of work.) Encourage them to use their tool.
- You can show them their visual by pointing towards it.

Check-in