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# Zones of Regulation

Information for Parents  
November 2022

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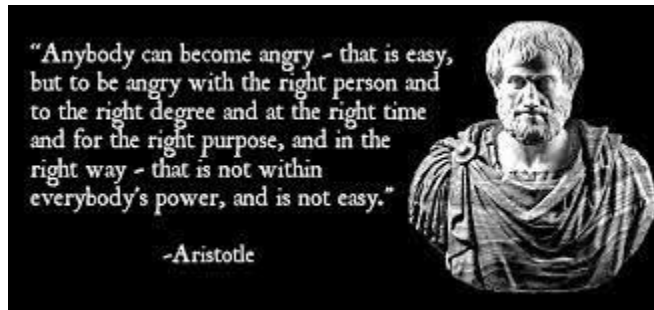


# What is self-regulation?

Three critical neurological components need to be integrated: sensory processing, executive functioning, and **emotional regulation**.

The ability to monitor and control our own behaviour, emotions or thoughts, altering them in accordance with the demands of the situation.

The ability to do what needs to be done to be in the optimal state *for that given situation*.





# Aims of Zones of Regulation

Teaches students to:

- Identify their feelings and levels of alertness;
- Understand their feelings in context;
- Identify effective regulation tools and strategies;
- Problem solve positive solutions;
- Understand how their behaviours influence others' thoughts and feelings
- Ultimately move towards independent regulation.



# The Four Zones: Step 1: identifying how we feel

The Zones of Regulation categorizes states of alertness and emotions into 4 coloured zones:

**The Blue Zone:** low states of alertness

**The Green Zone:** a regulated state of alertness

**The Yellow Zone:** a heightened state of alertness however the person has some control.

**The Red Zone:** extremely heightened states of alertness or very intense feelings.

# Blue Zone

- Low states of alertness, low energy levels
- Sad, sick, tired, bored, shy
- This zone requires energy and alerting tools



# Green Zone

- Calm state of alertness: optimal learning occurs in this zone.
- Happy, focused, content, relaxed, ready to learn





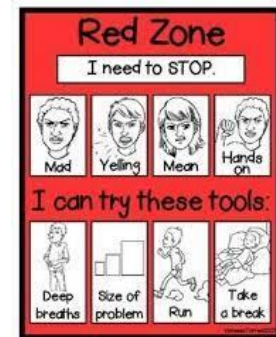
# Yellow Zone

- Heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions
- Person still has some control
- Stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, nervous, scared, 'fizzy'.
- This zone is expected at school, in some situations: break time.



# Red Zone

- Extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions.
- Anger, elation, rage, explosive behaviour, devastation or terror.
- This is not expected in a school situation.
- In this zone, a person may feel out of control and needs to use tools/strategies to keep them and others safe.



# Key messages

- There is no 'bad' zone. All zones are **acceptable** but we make others feel comfortable and safe when we are in the **expected** zone at the **expected** time;
- Everyone experiences all of the zones at different times and in different circumstances
- We can't/shouldn't change the way children feel BUT we can help them manage their feelings and behaviours: "It's ok to be angry but it is not ok to hit."
- You can be in more than one zone at a time.

# For the **BLUE** Zone: increase arousal

- Think happy thoughts/think of happy memories
- Talk with someone
- Rub your hands and legs
- Run on the spot
- Shoulder rub
- Ask for a hug (this might put some straight into the yellow zone!)
- Swinging or spinning
- Stretching or jumping jacks
- Strong scents:
- Have a drink
- Eat crunchy foods
- Bright lights
- Listen to loud music
- Fresh air-have a run around
- Sensory circuits-alerting activities

# For the GREEN zone: maintaining

- Keep your eyes on the teacher
- Finish a task that you have started
- Positive self-talk
- Help others
- Try your best
- Be kind to yourself

# For the YELLOW zone: decrease arousal

- Calming strategies
- Take 3 deep breaths
- Do wall push ups
- Use a sensory tool
- Go for a walk
- Go to a 'safe space'
- Read
- Draw
- Mindfulness colouring
- Deep pressure
- Heavy work to muscles
- Soft lighting
- Listen to calming music
- Chewy foods
- Ear defenders
- Cuddle a pet
- Hug a cuddly toy
- Blue-tac and theraputty

# For the RED zone: decrease arousal

- Deep breathing
- Jump on a trampoline
- Relax your muscles
- Have a sensory break/time out
- Go to your room or a safe space to calm down
- Count to 20
- Walk away
- Heavy work

- Listen to music
- Blow bubbles
- Punch a pillow

## If a child loses control in the red zone:

- Limit communication-this is not a teachable moment
- Discuss the use of tools when your child is in the green zone
- Plan for if/when child is in the red zone. "I wonder if this tool/strategy would help?"

## Work so far in school

- Staff had an initial training session in September
- All classrooms set up a zones display and calm corner
- Children have been introduced to strategies for each zone
- Staff are modelling and promoting the language of zones in school
- All children attended an assembly to further develop their understanding of zones
- Staff have had a second training session where we have shared progress/discussed next steps







# How can I support the Zones of Regulation at home?

- Identify your own feelings using the language of the Zones in front of your child and model how to self-regulate. At first, it is about mutual regulation rather than independent self-regulation.
- Provide positive reinforcement when your child is in the green zone and if they make efforts to stay in the green zone
- Label what zones your child is in during the day (e.g. you look sleepy. I wonder if you're in the blue zone?)
- Use Zones check in stations and toolboxes (for the whole family!)
- When watching films/reading books, discuss the zones characters might be in.
- Could you have a box of tools to help your child self-regulate? A safe-space?

# Further information

Zones of regulation website:

<https://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html>

Recommended books to develop understanding of zones

<https://www.theottoolbox.com/childrens-books-for-zones-of-regulation/>