

THE ZONES OF REGULATION

What is 'The Zones of Regulation?'

The Zones of Regulation is a cognitive behavioural approach that is used to teach self-regulation strategies by categorising all of the different ways we feel into four coloured zones.

The framework provides strategies to teach children and young people to become more aware of and be in independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, managing their own sensory needs and improving problem-solving abilities.

The framework aims to address children's underlying difficulties with emotional and sensory regulation, executive functioning and social cognition. It aims to help children move towards independent regulation.

It is a visual and structured programme that teaches children to develop their understanding of emotions in both themselves and in others, to understand the impact their emotions and behaviours have on those around them, and learn what tools they can use to manage these feelings.

What are the goals of the programme?

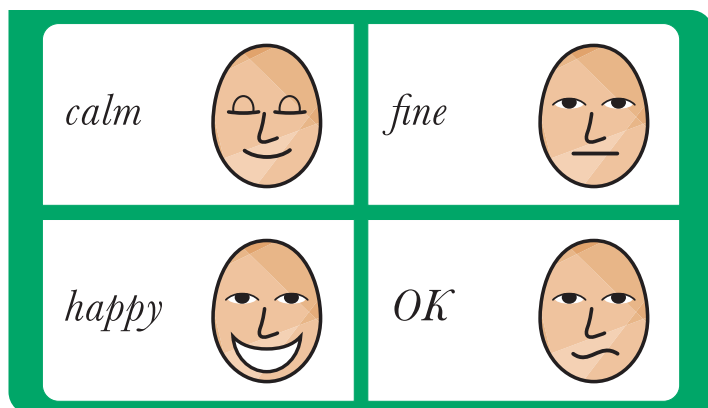
- 🚩 To recognise and communicate the different zones.
- 🚩 To learn tools to stay in or move between zones.
- 🚩 To develop an individualised set of tools for each pupil.
- 🚩 For both adults and the children themselves to recognise triggers and when to use tools.
- 🚩 To recognise others' emotions and how own behaviour impacts others.
- 🚩 To be able to independently regulate: to control emotions/impulses, manage sensory needs and improve problem-solving skills.



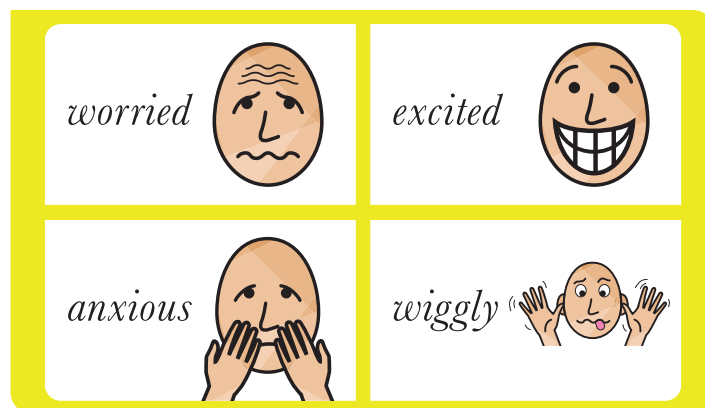
// THE ZONES OF REGULATION

There are **four** zones within the programme:

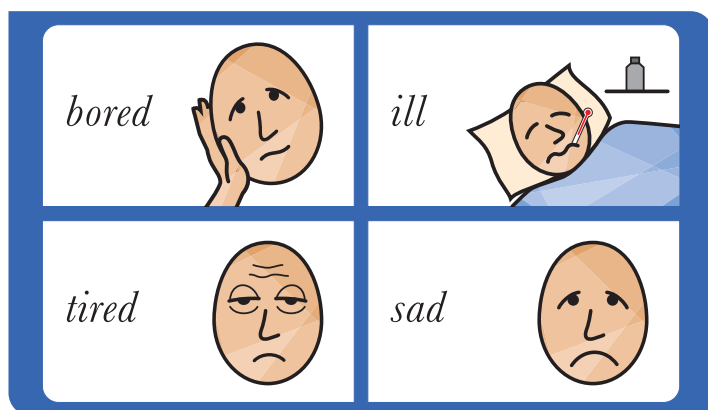
The Green Zone is used to describe a calm state of alertness. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs. The emotions in the green zone are:



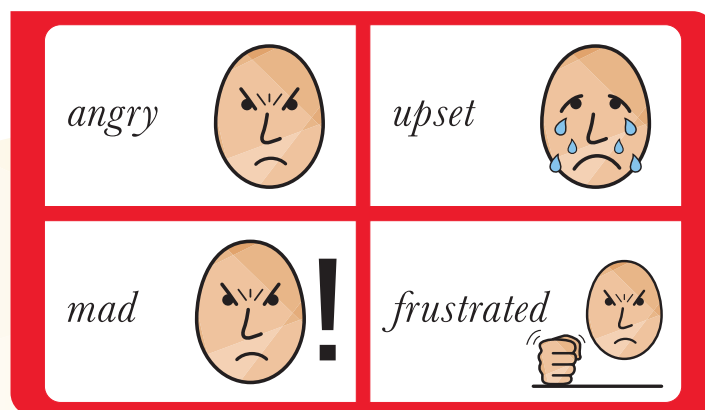
The Yellow Zone is used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions; however the child still has control over their emotions. The emotions in the yellow zone are:



The Blue Zone is used to describe a low state of alertness and arousal. The emotions in the blue zone are:



The Red Zone is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A child may not have control over their own emotions and behaviours if they are in the red zone. The emotions in the red zone are:



// THE ZONES OF REGULATION

The Zones can be compared to traffic signs:

- When given a green light or in the Green Zone, one is “good to go”.
- A yellow sign means be aware or take caution, which applies to the Yellow Zone.
- A red light or stop sign means stop, and when one is the Red Zone this often is the case.
- The Blue Zone can be compared to the rest area signs where one goes to rest or re-energize.



The Zones of Regulation teaches children and young people that all zones are natural to experience and it is okay and acceptable not to be in the green zone. We all experience multiple, (if not all four!) zones every day and can be in more than one zone at the same time.

It is important to learn what to do in order to get back to the green zone, if you are not feeling happy and the framework teaches children and young people to manage their emotions based on the environment and its demands, and the people around them at any given time.

Tools for self-regulation

Every child will have a different set of tools that help them get back to their green zone – this will relate to hobbies, interests and personal preference. Some examples are listed below and you could use these to compile the tools linked to specific children or young people you are working with.

Communication Tools

- Visual tools such as schedules, photos, objects of reference, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Using communication devices such as an iPad
- Gestural cues (including Makaton sign)
- Visual timetables and task planners
- Countdown timers
- Giving choices using photos and objects
- Cue cards

Sensory tools

- Having a snack or a drink
- Taking a break such as colouring and puzzles
- Movement breaks
- Breathing exercises
- Rocking chairs or other vestibular exercises
- Fidget toys
- Strong scents such as lavender
- Sensory rooms and spaces
- Headphones or ear-defenders
- Listening to music
- Deep pressure and massage
- Weighted objects
- Sand play, water play or messy play

Thinking tools

- Thinking about the 'Size of the problem' (see Zones of Regulation book for more information)
- Comic strip conversations
- Positive self-talk

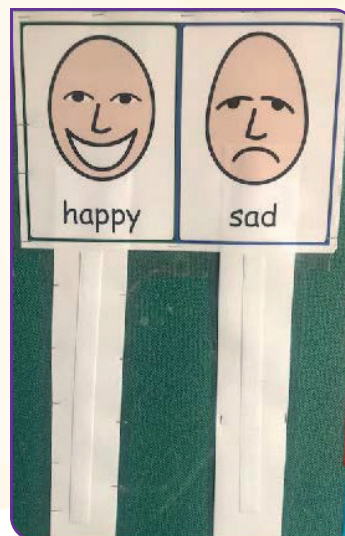
Environmental changes

- Switching the lights on or off
- Changing the seating arrangement
- Changing the temperature of room
- Attending to the noise level in room
- Creating an independent working area
- Setting up a relaxation corner
- A change of people in the environment

// THE ZONES OF REGULATION

So what does the Zones of Regulation look like in practice?

Children are encouraged to 'check in' to the Zone Station when they arrive in school in the morning, and throughout the day. This may need to be supported and modelled by adults initially, eg "you were feeling happy earlier but I think you look a bit excited now, shall we change you to the yellow zone?" This may need to be simpler at first, eg just one emotion per zone.


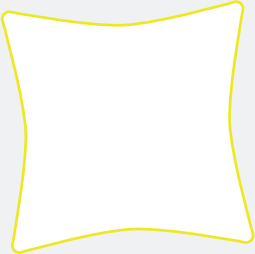
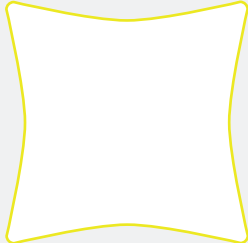


Children are encouraged to learn about what different emotions look like in other people, their friends, their family and their teaching staff. YouTube is an amazing resource for this element, just type in Zones of Regulation!

The ZONES of Regulation® Reproducible I Yellow



Understanding Different Perspectives



When I am in the **YELLOW ZONE** and my behaviour is unexpected...

Other kids might feel    around me.

Other kids might be thinking  or 

Other kids might say  or 

© 2011 Think Social Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.
From The Zones of Regulation by Leah M. Kuypers • Available at www.socialthinking.com

// THE ZONES OF REGULATION

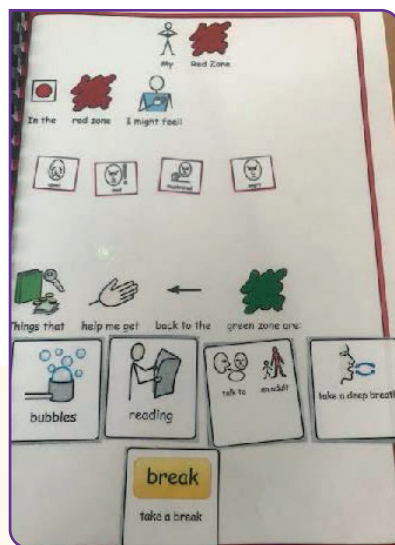
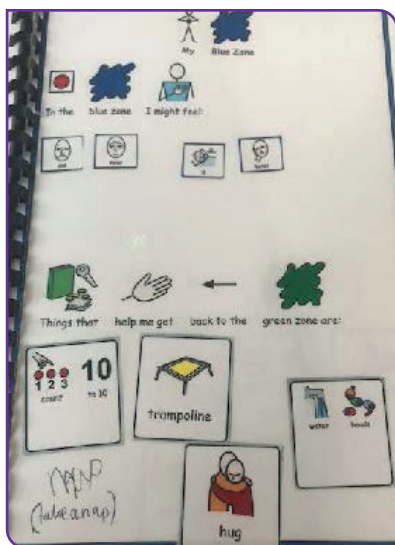
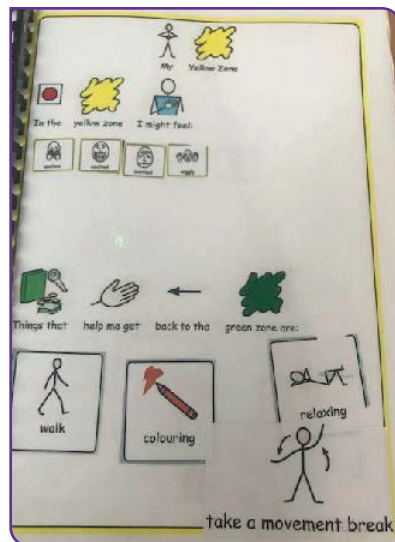
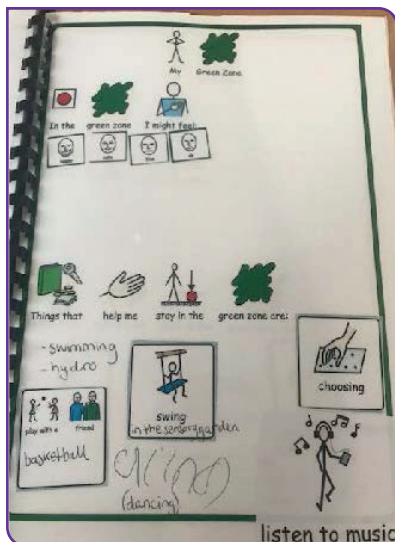
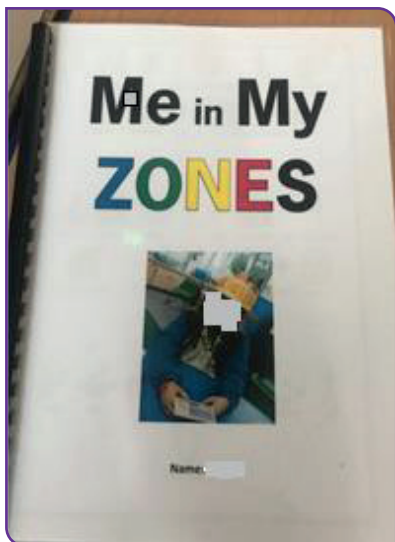
Children should have visuals for different 'tools' available from the beginning of the programme and adults are encouraged to model alongside this, eg

*“I think you might be a bit excited,
shall we go to the relaxation corner?”*



// THE ZONES OF REGULATION

Once children have developed their understanding of emotions, they can begin to relate this to themselves and this will lead to discussions about what helps them get back to **green zone**.



// THE ZONES OF REGULATION

Children are encouraged to talk about feelings! When people in their environment are sad, or frustrated or anxious, talking about this will support their understanding and consolidate their learning further, eg

“I know _____ is feeling sad isn’t he, he’s in the blue zone right now, what can we do to help him get back to green?”

The **ZONES** of Regulation® Reproducible H

Which **ZONE** would I be in?

All of the zone colours are okay. There are times when you will be in different zones. Think about times that you expect you would be in the Blue, Green, Yellow, or Red Zone.

I experience all the Zones!

Times I may be in the **BLUE** zone...

Times I may be in the **GREEN** zone...

Times I may be in the **YELLOW** zone...

Times I may be in the **RED** zone...

// THE ZONES OF REGULATION

Children are encouraged to check in throughout the day. Smaller, more portable visuals can be used to transport across contexts, this will promote discussion backed up by visuals when not in the classroom, when out and about or when at home.



The ZONES of Regulation® Reproducible Z

.....'s **Toolbox**

Blue Zone Tools	Green Zone Tools	Yellow Zone Tools	Red Zone Tools

© 2011 Think Social Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.
From The Zones of Regulation by Leah M. Kuypers • Available at www.socialthinking.com