





Zones of Regulation: Parent Explanation

2025

ZONES OF REGULATION!

Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
			
Sick Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Good to Go Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Anxious Excited	Mad/Angry Mean Yelling/Hitting Out of Control I Need Time and Space

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What are the Zones of Regulation?

The Zones of Regulation are a tool for teaching children self-regulation. It provides a simple, common language to talk about, understand and teach regulation.

What is self-regulation/emotional-regulation?

- *The ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences in an appropriate and adaptive way.*
- *This may include amplifying, maintaining or decreasing an emotional response.*

What does each zone represent?

▶ Red Zone –

- Extremely heightened states of alertness/intense emotions (elation, anger, rage, explosive behaviour, devastation, terror).
- Not expected in school.
- May feel out of control – needs tools to keep them safe (breathe, take a break, calm jar, music)

▶ Yellow Zone –

- Heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions but still has some control (stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness)
- Might be expected at break time or trips.
- Calming tools - help to reduce energy levels back to the green zone ready to learn.

▶ Green Zone –


- Calm state of alertness (happy, focused, content, or ready to learn)
- Zone where optimal learning occurs.

▶ Blue Zone –


- Low states of alertness and down feelings (sad, tired, sick, or bored)
- Requires energy and alerting tools (e.g. stretch, drink water)

The Ethos

All zones are acceptable (no 'bad' emotions): everyone feels all the zones at some point and there are appropriate moments for each zone



We make others feel comfortable and safe when we are in the expected zone at the expected time

- For example: yellow zone in the playground, blue zone cuddled up on a Sunday morning, red zone when you are in danger, green zone in the classroom
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By teaching children the vocabulary and giving them tools and strategies, we help them self-regulate which zones they in, learning to be in the appropriate zone for the context

Zones of Regulation helps children to...

01

Develop their emotional vocabulary

02

Recognise and name their own emotions

03

Empathise with the emotions of others

04

Explain their emotions and responses to others

05

Regulate their emotions using strategies and tools

06

Feel that their emotions are valid (as there are no 'bad' emotions)

*Which in turn leads to improved ability to:
Concentrate in class, develop friendships, higher attainment, navigate conflict*

How do use the Zones of Regulation in Tetherdown?

Lessons
in class

Displays

Self-regulation 'tools'
(such as fidget toys and
movement breaks)

Vocabulary used in
every-day language
(“I am feeling in the
yellow zone today”)

Vocabulary used in
conflict resolution
(“What zone do you think they
were in?” “How could we help
them get back to green?”)

How can you use Zones of Regulation at home?

Help them
manage their
emotions

Develop a
toolkit

Calm-down
Strategies

Wake-up
Strategies

Use it to model
emotional
regulation and
explain your own
emotions

Co-regulate
with your child

“Getting back to green”

All zones have their place in life. For example, if you are running around playing with your friends then yellow zone is appropriate. Cuddled up to watch a movie you may feel in the blue zone. Sometimes, anger and a ‘big reaction’ (red zone) is an appropriate response.

However, sometimes it is helpful to ‘get back to green’. This is true in the classroom, but also when crossing the road and sitting down for dinner! You can use the Zones or Regulation language to support your child with regulating their emotions so that they can ‘get back to green’.

Suggested tools for 'getting back to green'

Blue Zone	Green Zone	Yellow Zone	Red Zone
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● talk about your feelings (adult/friend)● drink water● eat a snack● ask for a hug● go for a walk● rub hands together● run on the spot● shoulder rub● swinging or spinning● listen to music● sit in the calming corner● think happy thoughts	<p>Keep going - you're doing great!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● finish your work● show the expected behaviour● remember your daily goals● think happy thoughts● help others/cooperate● keep your eyes on the teacher● be a good friend● smile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● talk about to an adult/friend● take deep breaths/finger breathing● drink water● do a wall push up● use a fidget● go for a walk● stretching/meditation● draw a picture/colour● take a break● read● tense and relax your muscles● listen to music	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● STOP!● walk away● take deep breaths/finger breathing● deep pressure – hug or lie between pillows/blankets● jump on a trampoline● wall push up● sensory break - sit in the calming corner● rock back and forth● count to 20● how big is my problem?● talk about your problem

Co-regulation

Zones of Regulation aims to empower children to regulate their own emotions. However, this may not always be possible - especially with a young child. The younger your child is, the less they will be able to self-regulate and the more they will depend on your support. If your child is struggling to manage their emotions and having a heightened emotional response, you may use co-regulation techniques.

This includes:

- ▶ Getting down to their level
- ▶ Take them to a quiet place
- ▶ Use a soothing tone and soothing touches along with calm words
- ▶ Model mindful breathing with them: take a long deep breath and breathe out slowly - repeat until child is calm
- ▶ Verbalise their frustrations back to them (“you’re feeling frustrated”, “it hurt your feelings”, “you’re disappointed”)



co-regulation

Top tips for supporting your child's emotional regulation:

- ▶ Use the language of Zones to talk about emotions day-to-day
- ▶ Have a quiet space in your home your child can go to, to calm down
- ▶ Use easy-access sensory tools, such as a tray of rice or flour for your child to put their hands in, noise-cancelling headphones or fidget toys
- ▶ Discuss emotional regulation strategies whilst your child is calm
- ▶ Remember that no emotions are 'bad': all behaviours tell you about an underlying need
- ▶ Model regulating your own emotions out loud ("I've been feeling in the yellow zone today because work was stressful so I am going to take 5 deep breaths to calm down")
- ▶ Co-regulate with them when they are feeling emotionally dysregulated