

The Zones of Regulation

at

St Luke's CoFE Primary School

If a child doesn't know how to read, we **teach**.
 If a child doesn't know how to swim, we **teach**.
 If a child doesn't know how to multiply, we **teach**.
 If a child doesn't know how to drive, we **teach**.
 If a child doesn't know how to behave, we ...

teach? **punish?**

John Herner (NASDE President) Counterpoint 1998, page 2

Supplementary Reproducible E for Elementary Ages



The ZONES of Regulation

Blue Zone Sad Bored Tired Sick	Green Zone Happy Focused Calm Proud	Yellow Zone Worried Frustrated Silly Excited	Red Zone overjoyed/Elated Panicked Angry Terrified

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The Zones of Regulation

From time to time, all of us find it hard to manage strong feelings such as worry, anger, restlessness, fear or tiredness, and this stops us from getting on with our day effectively. Children who feel these emotions often find it hard to learn and concentrate in school. The Zones of Regulation aims to teach children strategies to help them cope with these feelings so they can get back to feeling calm and ready to learn. These coping strategies are called 'self-regulation'.

Self-regulation can go by many names - 'self-control', 'impulse management' and 'self-management'. Self-regulation is best described as the best state of alertness for a situation. For example, when your child takes part in a sports game, they would need to have a higher state of alertness than when, for example, they were working in a library. Through teaching all of our children good coping strategies and how to self regulate we hope they will become able to help themselves when they experience anxiety and heightened levels of stress.

In the classroom, sometimes children panic when faced with a tricky learning problem or challenge. In the dinner hall, some children become overwhelmed by the level of noise or different smells and outside, maybe it's that they don't want to play a particular game but don't know how to manage the situation socially.

By teaching our children how to first of all identify these feeling and then equip them with the strategies to cope with the feelings, we hope it will make them better at tackling learning challenges, friendship struggles and build better resilience so they don't give up easily when faced with difficulty.

Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it.

-Charles Sindoll

We want children at St Luke's to grow into successful teenagers then adults and being able to manage their emotions is incredibly important for this. Teaching the children at a young age about managing their feelings will support them in later life so that they don't turn to negative coping strategies which affect their mental and physical wellbeing.

Understanding the Zones

Blue Zone: low level of arousal; not ready to learn; feels sad, sick, tired, bored, moving slowly.

Green Zone: calm state of alertness; optimal level to learn; feels happy, calm, feeling okay, focused.

Yellow Zone: heightened state of alertness; elevated emotions; has some control; feels frustrated, worried, silly/wiggly, excited, loss of some control.

Red Zone: heightened state of alertness and intense emotions; not an optimal level for learning; out of control; feels mad/angry, terrified, yelling/hitting, elated, out of control.

We teach the children that all zones are ok and that everyone experiences all of the zones. This is carefully modelled at school and we never use language 'bad' or 'naughty' in relation to the red/yellow zone.

We teach the children that all zones are expected at one time or another and that different zones are appropriate for different times e.g. the yellow zone is a good zone to be in if we're going to a birthday party!

We aim to help children to:

- Recognise when they are in the different Zones and learn how to change or stay in the Zone they are in.
- Increase their emotional vocabulary so they can explain how they are feeling.
- Recognise when other people are in different Zones, therefore developing better empathy.
- Develop an understanding into what might make them move into the different Zones.
- Understand that emotions, sensory experiences such as lack of sleep or hunger and their environment might influence which Zone they are in.
- Develop problem-solving skills and resilience
- Identify a range of calming and alerting strategies that support them (known as their personal 'toolkit').

How can you help your child use The Zones of Regulation at home?

- Identify your own feelings using Zones language in front of your child (e.g.: I'm frustrated. I think I am in the Yellow Zone.")
- Talk about what tool you will use to be in the appropriate Zone (e.g.: "I need to take four deep breaths to help get me back to the Green Zone.")
- At times, wonder which Zone your child is in. Or, discuss which Zone a character in a film / book might be in. (e.g.: "You look sleepy. Are you in the Blue Zone?")
- Engage your child in discussion around Zones when they are in the Red Zone is unlikely to be effective. You need to be discussing the different Zones and tools they can use when they are more regulated / calm.
- Teach your child which tools they can use. (eg: "It's time for bed. Let's read a book together in the comfy chair to get you in the Blue Zone.")
- Regular Check-ins. "How are you feeling now?" and "How can you get back to Green?"
- Modelling It is important to remember to show the children how you use tools to get back to the green zones. You might say "I am going to make myself a cup of tea and do some breathing exercises because I am in the blue zone" and afterwards tell your child how using those tools helped you get back to the green zone.
- Share how their behaviour is affecting your Zone. For example, if they are in the Green Zone, you could comment that their behaviour is also helping you feel happy / go into the Green Zone.
- Put up and reference the Zones visuals and tools in your home.
- Praise and encourage your child when they share which Zone they are in.

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 sensory threshold. We all process sensory information differently and it impacts our reactivity to situations.
- 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.
- Create a 'calm' box full of things which help to keep your child calm and alert.