

What are the Zones of Regulation?

The Zones of Regulation were developed by Leah Kuypers, an American occupational therapist and parent of a child with autism. Drawing on both her professional experience and personal insights, Leah created The Zones of Regulation framework to help children develop self-regulation skills.

The program teaches children how to recognise and manage their sensory needs, emotions, and impulses so they can meet the demands of their environment and achieve success both academically and socially.

The primary focus of The Zones of Regulation is self-regulation. The approach can be taught and reinforced by everyone involved in a child's life, including teachers, support staff, parents, and respite carers. Importantly, both children and adults can benefit from understanding self-regulation and learning strategies to effectively manage their emotions and responses.

What is self-regulation?

Self-regulation is the ability to adjust levels of alertness and manage how emotions are expressed behaviourally in socially appropriate ways in order to achieve goals. It involves recognising different levels of arousal. For example, when your alarm first goes off and you hit the snooze button, you are experiencing a low level of arousal. In contrast, high levels of arousal may be triggered by anxiety or stress.

Self-regulation encompasses a wide range of emotional states, including anger, sadness, excitement, stress, and attention. Having an optimal level of arousal directly impacts a child's readiness to learn and ability to engage effectively.

The key components of self-regulation are sensory processing, executive functioning, and emotional regulation.

Sensory processing refers to how the brain interprets information received through the senses and how this information is organised and integrated to support purposeful action.

Executive functioning describes the cognitive processes involved in the conscious control of thoughts and behaviours. It can be likened to the brain's command and control centre, overseeing planning, attention, and problem-solving.

Emotional regulation involves the processes responsible for monitoring and managing emotional responses in order to achieve desired outcomes.

All three components must work together to support effective self-regulation. This is why The Zones of Regulation program focuses on developing sensory processing, executive functioning, and emotional regulation skills, enabling children to become more successful self-regulators.

What are, 'The Zones of Regulation'?

The Zones of Regulation is a systematic, cognitive-behavioural approach designed to teach self-regulation by categorising the wide range of emotions and levels of alertness we experience into four clearly defined, colour-coded zones.

The Zones framework provides students with strategies to increase awareness of their emotions and states of alertness, while promoting independence in managing their feelings and impulses. It also supports students in addressing their sensory needs and strengthening their ability to problem-solve and manage conflicts effectively.

The Zones of Regulation framework consists of four colour-coded zones: **Blue**, **Green**, **Yellow** and **Red**. Each zone represents a different level of alertness and emotional state.

The **Blue Zone** describes low levels of alertness. A person in the Blue Zone may feel sad, tired, sick, bored, or unwell.

The **Green Zone** represents a calm, regulated state of alertness. When in the Green Zone, a person may feel happy, focused, content, and ready to learn. This is the optimal state for learning and demonstrates emotional and behavioural control.

The **Yellow Zone** describes a heightened level of alertness and increased emotions, while the person still maintains some control. Emotions in the Yellow Zone may include stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, or nervousness. Individuals in this zone may also be sensory seeking.

The **Red Zone** represents extremely heightened levels of alertness and intense emotions. A person in the Red Zone may experience anger, rage, terror, devastation, or extreme excitement or elation.

The Zones of Regulation®

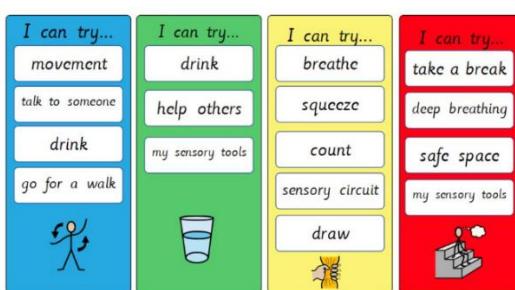


What is a toolbox?

A toolbox is a collection of calming and alerting strategies that a child can draw upon depending on the zone they are currently in and the support they need. The toolbox may include strategies such as following a sensory diet, carrying heavy objects, bouncing, jumping, talking with someone, listening to music, or receiving a shoulder rub.

These strategies are individualised, as different children respond to different techniques, and specific strategies may be more effective for certain zones than others.

The overall goal is to help the child move towards the Green Zone, where they are calm, happy, and ready to learn.



If you require further information, please feel free to contact Katie Turner or Katy Morley.