Zones of Regulation

How to Own the Zones (for Parents/Adults)

- Start identifying when you feel a certain Zone
  - “This is really frustrating me and making me go into the yellow zone”
- Model how you used a Zone tool and got back into the “Green Zone”
  - “I need to use a tool to calm down”
  - “I will take some deep breaths”

Zone Strategies at Home: Proactive

- Post the zones
  - As a family, make a poster together and add pictures or drawings of each person in each zone.
  - Make a zones toolbox for your family
  - Talk about what zone is expected or unexpected in the situation –
  - Make a social story for when to use the zone tool

Zone Strategies at Home: In the Moment

- Point out observations of children
  - “I notice you’re in the ___ zone because you’re ______” –
  - Share with the child how his/her behavior is affecting the zone you are in
    - Ask, “Is this a small or big problem?”
    - Ask, “Is this expected or unexpected?”

Remind child to use one of the tools Zone Strategies at Home: Reflection

- Implement a reward system for using a strategy and getting back to the green zone
  - Verbal reinforcement for using strategies:
    - I noticed you were in the _____ zone. You did ______ You got back to the green zone.
      - Ask, “What could you do differently next time?”
  - Social Behavior Mapping:
    - You did ______ Others felt ______ Others did ______ You felt _________
WHAT ARE THE ZONES?

The Zones is a systematic, cognitive behavioral approach used to teach self-regulation by categorizing all the different ways we feel and states of alertness we experience into four concrete colored zones. The Zones framework provides strategies to teach students to become more aware of and independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, manage their sensory needs, and improve their ability to problem solve conflicts.

By addressing underlying deficits in emotional and sensory regulation, executive functioning, and social cognition, the framework is designed to help move students toward independent regulation. The Zones of Regulation incorporates Social Thinking® (www.socialthinking.com) concepts and numerous visuals to teach students to identify their feelings/level of alertness, understand how their behavior impacts those around them, and learn what tools they can use to manage their feelings and states.

THE FOUR ZONES: OUR FEELINGS & STATES DETERMINE OUR ZONE

The Red Zone is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.

The Yellow Zone is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions, however one has more control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone.

The Green Zone is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.

The Blue Zone is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.

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. All of the zones are natural to experience, but the framework focuses on teaching students how to recognize and manage their Zone based on the environment and its demands and the people around them. For example, when playing on the playground or in an active/competitive game, students are often experiencing a heightened internal state such as silliness or excitement and are in the Yellow Zone, but it may not need to be managed. However, if the environment is changed to the library where there are different expectations than the playground, students may still be in the Yellow Zone but have to manage it differently so their behavior meets the expectations of the library setting.
Information About The ZONES of Regulation®

will be participating in The Zones of Regulation® curriculum (or “The Zones” for short), which are lessons and activities designed by Leah Kuypers, licensed occupational therapist, to help him/her gain skills in the area of self-regulation. Self-regulation can go by many names, such as self-control, self-management, and impulse control. It is defined as the best state of alertness of both the body and emotions for the specific situation. For example, when a student plays on the playground or in a competitive game, it is beneficial to have a higher state of alertness. However, that same state would not be appropriate in the library. The lessons and learning activities are designed to help the students recognize when they are in the different zones as well as learn how to use strategies to change or stay in the zone they are in. In addition to addressing self-regulation, the students will gain an increased vocabulary of emotional terms, skills in reading other people’s facial expressions, perspective about how others see and react to their behavior, insight into events that trigger their behavior, calming and alerting strategies, and problem solving skills.

A critical aspect of this curriculum is that all team members know and understand The Zones language. This creates a comfortable and supportive environment for the student to practice his or her self-regulation skills. It also helps the student learn the skills more quickly and be more likely to apply them in many situations. You can support the student during this process by doing the following:

• Use the language and talk about the concepts of The Zones as they apply to you in a variety of environments. Make comments aloud so the student understands it is natural that we all experience the different zones and use strategies to control (or regulate) ourselves. For example, “This is really frustrating me and making me go into the Yellow Zone. I need to use a tool to calm down. I will take some deep breaths.”
• Help the student gain awareness of his or her zones and feelings by pointing out your observations.
• Validate what zone your students are in and help them brainstorm expected ways to self-regulate so their behavior is expected for the context.
• Share with the student how his or her behavior is affecting the zone you are in and how you feel.
• Help the student become comfortable using the language to communicate his or her feelings and needs by encouraging the student to share his or her zone with you.
• Show interest in learning about the student’s triggers and Zones tools. Ask the student if he or she wants reminders to use these tools and how you should present these reminders.
• Ask the student to frequently share his or her Zones Folder with you and talk about what he or she has learned.
• Make sure to positively reinforce students for recognizing their zone and managing their behaviors while in it, rather than only pointing out when students are demonstrating unexpected behaviors while in a zone.

It is important to note that everyone experiences all of the zones—the Red and Yellow Zones are not the “bad” or “naughty” zones. All of the zones are expected at one time or another. The Zones of Regulation is intended to be neutral and not communicate judgment.

Sincerely,

(name) (role on team)
The Six Sides of **Breathing**

Starting at the yellow star trace with your finger the sides of the hexagon as you take a deep breath in, feeling your shoulders rise as the air fills you. Trace over the next side as you hold your breath for a moment. Slowly breathe out as you trace the third side of the hexagon. Continue tracing around the bottom three sides of the hexagon as you complete another deep breath. Continue The Six Sides of Breathing cycle until you feel calm and relaxed.

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Lazy 8 Breathing

Trace the Lazy 8 with your finger starting at the star and taking a deep breath in.

As you cross over to the other side of the Lazy 8, slowly let your breath out.

Continue breathing around the Lazy 8 until you have a calm body and mind.
The ZONES of Regulation® - Visual

BLUE ZONE
- Sad
- Sick
- Tired
- Bored
- Moving Slowly

GREEN ZONE
- Happy
- Calm
- Feeling Okay
- Focused
- Ready to Learn

YELLOW ZONE
- Frustrated
- Worried
- Silly/Wiggly
- Excited
- Loss of Some Control

RED ZONE
- Mad/Angry
- Terrified
- Yelling/Hitting
- Elated
- Out of Control

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ZONES Tools Menu

- Carry
- Read
- Jump
- Bounce
- Run
- Push
- Tickle
- Pull
- Swing
- Talk to Adult
- Hug
- Animal Walks

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ZONES Tools Menu

Listen to Music  Squishes  Walk

Jumping Jacks  Shoulder Rub  Belly/Breath

You CAN do it!

Inner Coach  Take a Break  Lazy 8 Breathing

Fidget Ball  Size of Problem  Six Sides of Breathing

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Tools for Each of My ZONES

When I feel... I can try...

Tired or Sad

Calm or Happy

Frustrated or Silly

Angry or Mad

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