

A Parents' Guide to the Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation is an internationally renowned intervention which helps people to manage difficult emotions, known as 'self-regulation'.

Self-regulation is best described as the best state of alertness for a situation – for example, when taking part in a sports game a higher state of alertness would be needed than when working in a library for example.

All of us (including adults) can find it hard to manage strong feelings, such as worry, anger, restlessness, fear or tiredness, which can stop us from getting on with our day effectively. The Zones of Regulation aims to teach people strategies to help them cope with these feelings so that they can get back to feeling calm and ready to learn.

At Ambergate Sports College we are launching the Zones of Regulation throughout the whole school. We want to teach all of our pupils good coping and regulation strategies so they can help themselves when they experience anxiety and stress.

We want pupils at Ambergate to grow into successful teenagers, then adults. Teaching about managing feelings from a young age can support them in later life so that they don't turn to negative coping strategies which affect their mental and physical wellbeing.

We aim to help pupils 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, thus developing better empathy.
- Develop an insight into what might make them move into different Zones.
- Understand that emotions, sensory experiences such as lack of sleep or hunger and their environment might influence what Zone they are in.
- Develop problem-solving skills and resilience.
- Identify a range of calming and alerting strategies that support them (their personal 'toolkit').

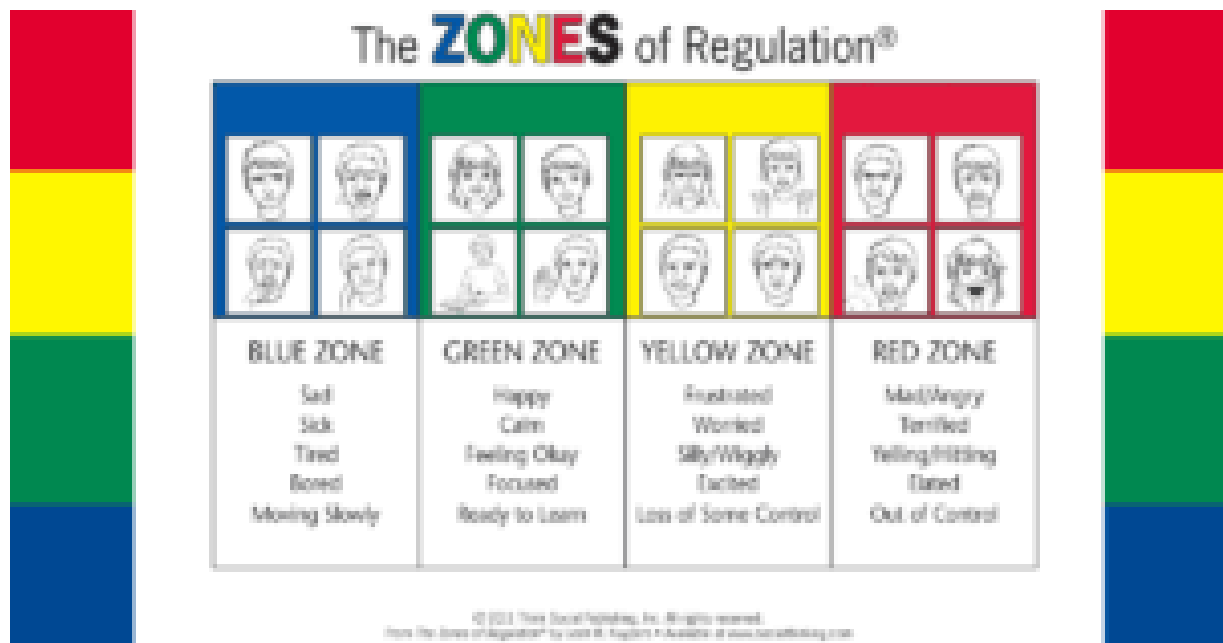
What are the different Zones?

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, 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, elated, out of control.



We will teach the pupils that everyone experiences all of the Zones. The Red and Yellow Zones are not 'bad' or 'naughty' Zones. All of the Zones are expected at one time or another. We will show them that the Blue Zone, for example, is helpful when you are trying to fall asleep.

How will my child learn about the Zones of Regulation?

We will be introducing the Zones through our PSHE curriculum as well as through some discrete sessions. We will be using the Zones language as part of daily school life so all staff will be referring to them, not just the class staff.

Some pupils might prefer not to use the 'Zones Language' but label the emotions directly – this is fine and encouraged.

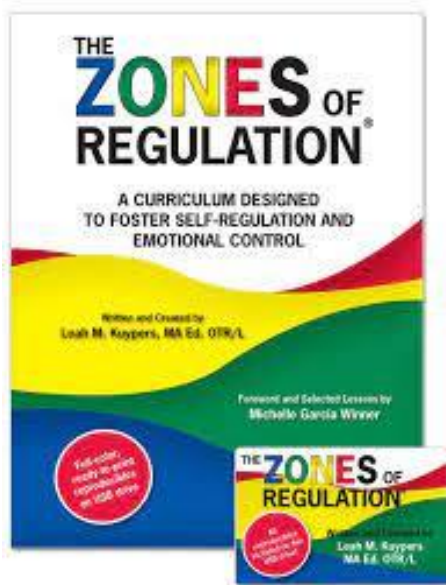
How can you help your child use The Zones of Regulation at home?

- 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 deep breaths to help me back to the Green Zone'.
- Teach your child which tools they can use e.g. 'It's time for bed, let's read a book together in the comfy chair to get you in the Blue Zone'.
- Share how their behaviour is affecting your Zone, e.g. if they are in the Green Zone you could comment that their behaviour is also helping you feel happy/ go into the Green Zone.

- Praise and encourage your child when they share which Zone they are in.

Tips for practising the Zones of Regulation

- Know your child's triggers.
- Know yourself and how you react in difficult situations before dealing with your child's behaviours.
- Be consistent in managing your child's behaviour – have clear boundaries/ routines and always follow through.
- Empathise with your child and validate what they are feeling.
- Do not deal with an angry, upset child when you are not yet calm yourself.
- Praise your child for using strategies.
- Create a 'calm' box full of things to help keep your child calm and alert.



The ZONES of Regulation™ Reproducible 1: The Zones of Regulation Visual

The ZONES of Regulation™			
BLUE ZONE Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	GREEN ZONE Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Relaxed	YELLOW ZONE Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	RED ZONE Mad/Angry Terrified Devastated Out of Control

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<https://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html>

Understanding Zone Tools

Blue Zone tools: help wake up our bodies, feel better and regain focus.

Green Zone tools: help us stay calm, focused and feeling good. These are often proactive strategies.

Yellow Zone tools: help us regain control and calm ourselves.

Red Zone tools: help us to stay safe and start to calm down.

These tools can be used anywhere to help your child to regulate (manage) their emotions.

Different tools work for different people.

SENSORY TOOLS

Anything which you can see, touch/feel, smell, hear or taste. They are also things which encourage you to move.

- Using a weighted toy or blanket
- Ear defenders/ headphones
- Blowing bubbles
- Watching colour changing lights
- Smelling relaxing scents
- Eating chewy food
- Wall push ups
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Having a warm bath
- Going for a walk

CALMING ACTIVITIES

Any activities that distract you or need you to focus to take your mind off worries and negative thoughts.

- Puzzles
- Listen to music
- Drawing
- Play-doh
- Reading

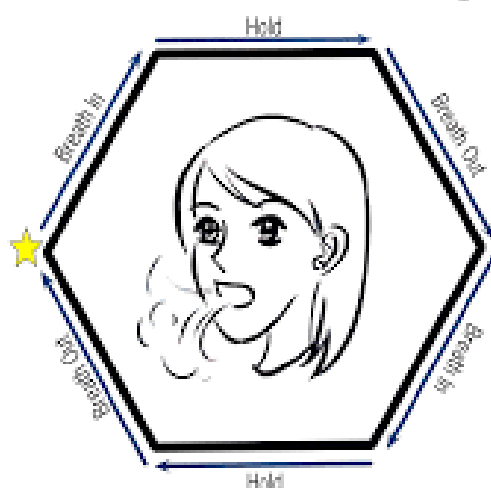
THINKING TECHNIQUES

Strategies to challenge negative thoughts and help a child deal with problems.



BREATHING TECHNIQUES

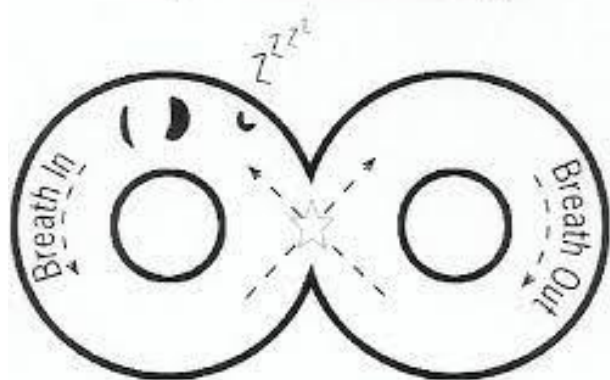
The Six Sides of Breathing



Starting at the yellow star trace with your finger the outline of the hexagon as you take a deep breath in, feeling your shoulders rise as the air flows in. Take your breath out (so in you hold your breath for a moment). Breathe in again and you trace the outline of the hexagon. Continue tracing around the hexagon three more times. The hexagon shows complete another deep breath. Continue the six sides of breathing (in, out, in, out, in, out) and feel relaxed and released.

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Lazy 8 Breathing



GROUNDING TECHNIQUES

Grounding techniques can help someone who is extremely anxious or scared, has lost self-control and is struggling to calm down.

5-4-3-2-1 Senses

5-4-3-2-1 Sights

A-B-C around the room.