

# THE **ZONES** OF REGULATION®

A Guide for  
Parents

A CURRICULUM DESIGNED  
TO FOSTER SELF-REGULATION AND  
EMOTIONAL CONTROL

Credit to Leah Kuypers (2011) The Zones  
of Regulation: A Curriculum designed to  
foster self – regulation and emotional  
control.



# Aims:

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- Overview of what self – regulation is
- Understanding what the Zones of Regulations are and how they work
- How we have used this at school and the impact we have seen
- Strategies to use at home

# What is self– regulation?

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***Self – regulation can be defined as “the capacity to manage one’s thoughts, feelings and actions in adaptive and flexible ways across a range of contexts” – Jude Nicholas***

It includes:

- Self – control
- Self – management
- Anger control
- Impulse control
- Sensory regulation
- Resilience



# Why is self– regulation important?

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***“Life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we react to it” - Charles Swindoll***

Research has found that children who are able to self – regulate have higher academic achievement.

If children can learn how to self – regulate, they become teenagers who can self – regulate.



# Why is self– regulation important?

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A person who can self regulate will be able to:

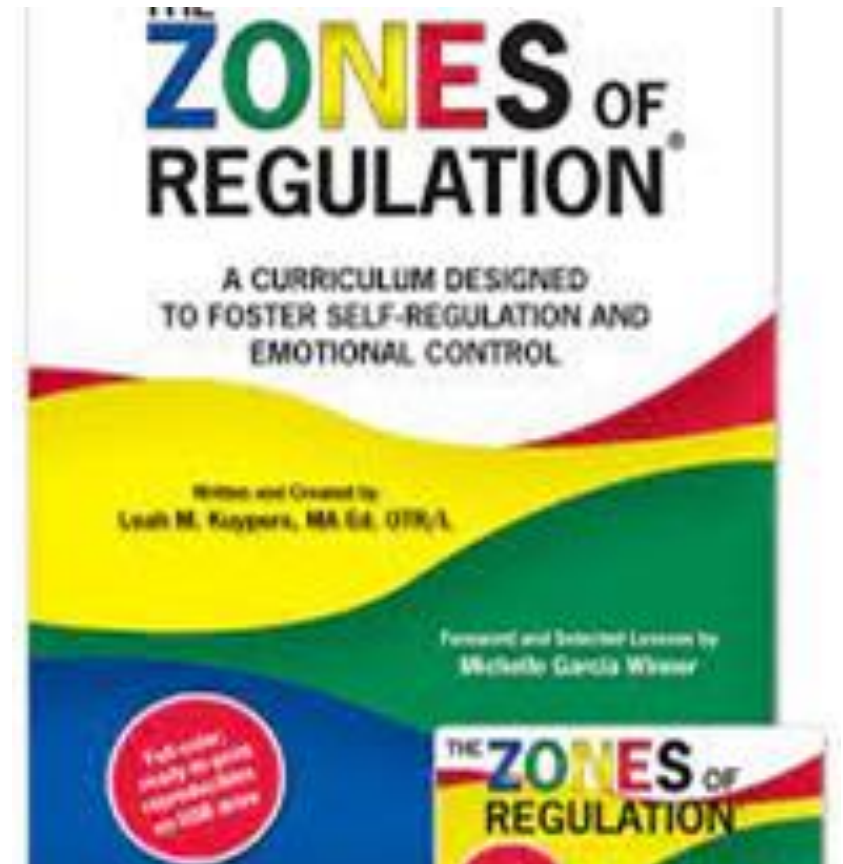
- Control emotional reactions in order to meet goals (**emotional regulation**)
- Know when they are experiencing sensory overload and make adjustments accordingly (**sensory processing**)
- Control thoughts and actions, for example remaining calm in a stressful situation (**executive function**)
- Understand appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in different situations (**social cognition**).



# What are the Zones of Regulation?

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- Programme developed by Leah Kuypers (2011) to teach children about self – regulation
- Categorises all the different ways we feel into four different coloured zones (Blue, Green, Yellow and Red)
- Provides strategies for children to become aware of their emotions and impulses and to manage their sensory needs
- Helps to support children to problem solve conflicts

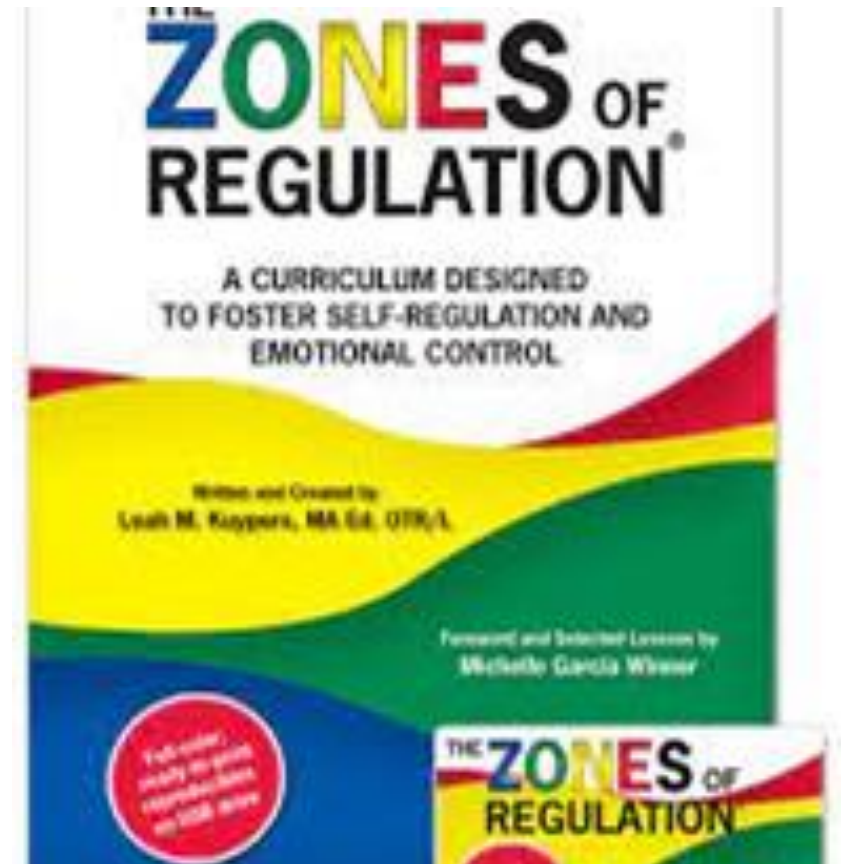


# What are the Zones of Regulation?

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Teaches children:

- Vocabulary of emotions
- How to recognise their own emotions
- How to detect the emotions of others (for example, reading facial expressions)
- What might trigger certain emotions
- How others may see their behaviour
- Problem solving skills



# Why use the Zones of Regulation?

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- Provides a common language to discuss emotions – a language that is non – judgemental
- It is simple to understand – but is helpful for all
- Teaches healthy coping and regulation strategies



# The Four Zones



The Blue Zone: low states of alertness – brain/body moving slowly or sluggishly. Could be sad, sick, tired and bored.

The Green Zone: calm/regulated state of alertness – in control, calm, happy, ready to learn. The zone where optimal learning happens.

The Yellow Zone: heightened state of alertness, but still with some control. Could be feeling worried, frustrated, silly, excited or scared.

The Red Zone: heightened state of alertness and out of control. Could be feeling elated, angry, wild or terrified.

# The Four Zones

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## The **ZONES** of Regulation<sup>®</sup>

			
<p><b>BLUE ZONE</b></p> <p>Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly</p>	<p><b>GREEN ZONE</b></p> <p>Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn</p>	<p><b>YELLOW ZONE</b></p> <p>Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control</p>	<p><b>RED ZONE</b></p> <p>Mad/Angry Mean Terrified Yelling/Hitting Out of Control</p>

# Toolkits

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Children have different tools they can use depending on which zone they are in. Some tools can be used in more than one zone and not all tools are useful for all children. Children should have no more than 2/3 tools per zone.

Blue Zone Tools: help to wake our bodies up, feel better and help us to regain focus.

Green Zone Tools: help us to remain calm, focused and feeling good. Proactive strategies.

Yellow Zone Tools: help to regain control and calm ourselves.

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

# 's **Toolbox**

## Blue Zone Tools

Drink Water

## Green Zone Tools

GO

## Yellow Zone Tools

Lazy 8 Breathing

Size of the Problem

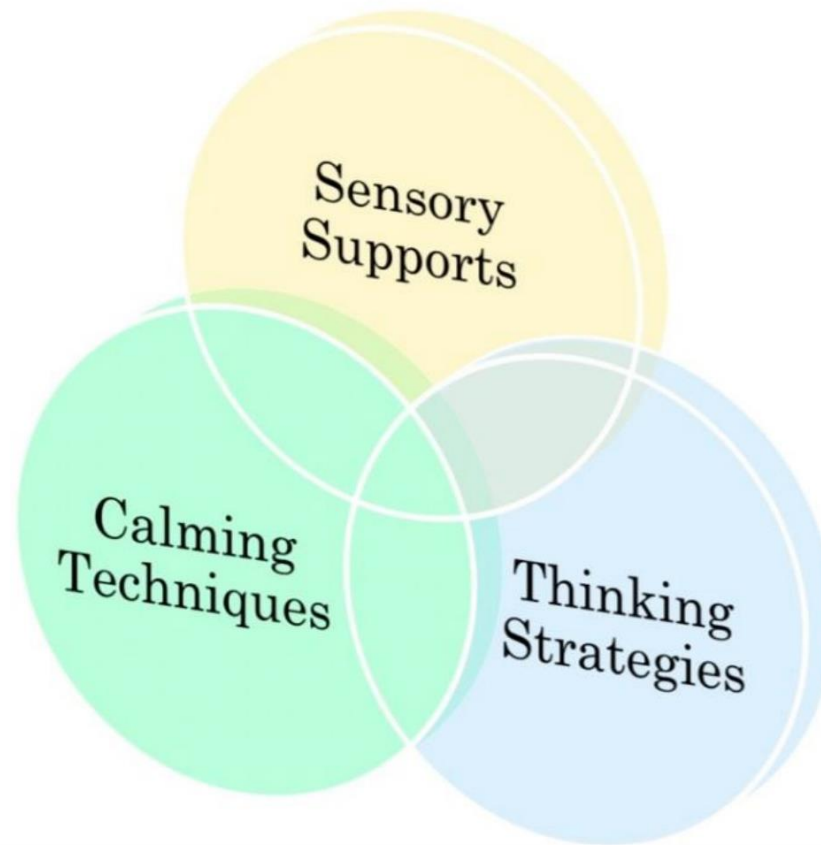
Play-Doh

## Red Zone Tools

The Six Sides of Breathing

# Tools

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# Sensory supports

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- Bear hugs
- Swing/rock
- Go for a walk
- Wall push ups
- Sucking smoothie through a straw
- Chewy foods
- Blow bubbles
- Classical music
- Roll on an exercise ball
- Trampoline
- Blanket roll

THESE ARE NOT A TREAT,  
BUT A TOOL FOR CHILDREN  
TO HELP FEEL SELF –  
REGUALTED.

Can you think of sensory  
supports you use in every day  
life?

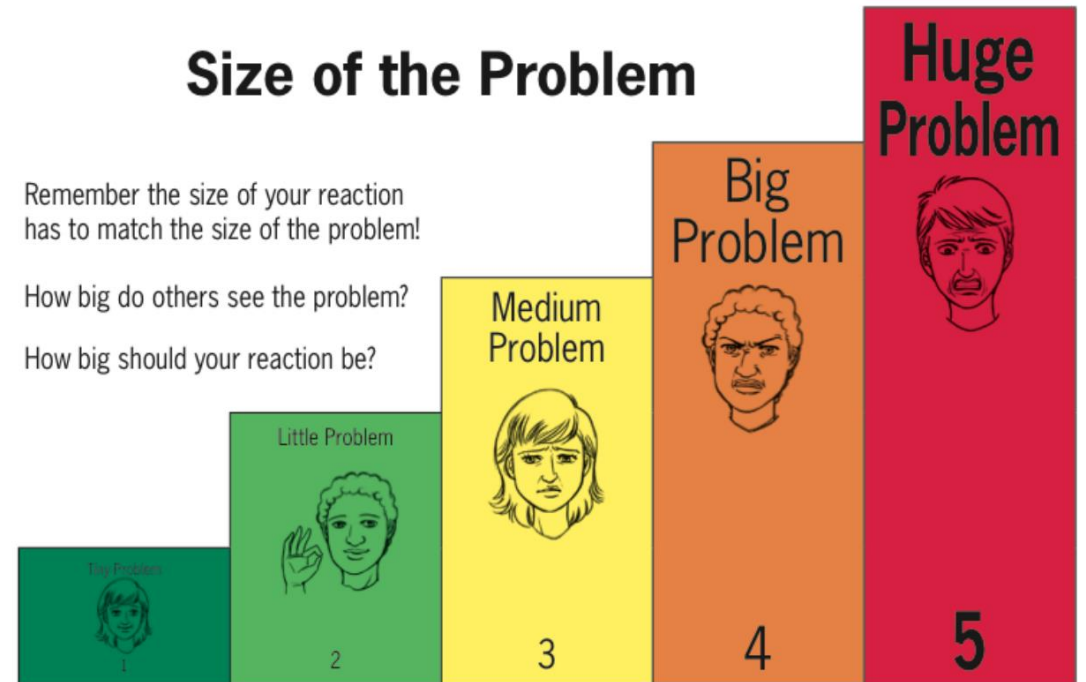
Could you have a sensory box at  
home?

# Thinking strategies

Children in KS2 explored expected and unexpected reactions to problems.

Regularly praise children for having expected reactions, rather than focussing on their unexpected reactions.

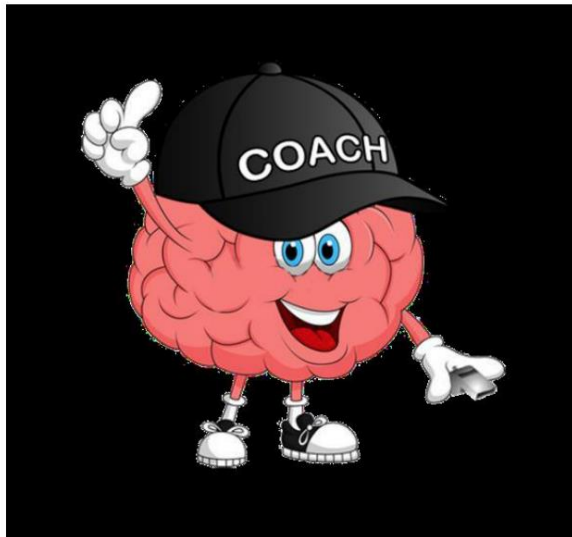
The ZONES of Regulation® Reproducible W



# Thinking strategies

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## INNER COACH VS INNER CRITIC



### INNER CRITIC



I am not good enough.

I'm bad at this.

I can't do it.

I don't fit in.

No one cares.

I am behind.

This is awful.

No one likes me.

### INNER COACH



I matter, and I am enough.

Mistakes help me learn.

I will try my best.

I am unique and awesome.

It's okay to ask for help.

I am exactly where I need to be.

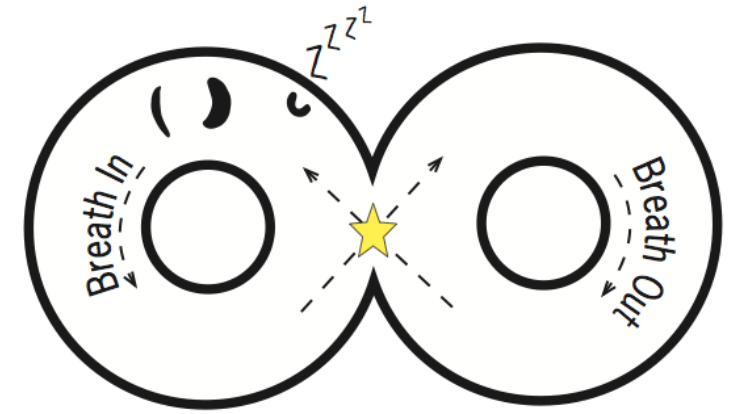
I will get through this.

I choose how I feel about myself.

# Calming strategies



## Lazy 8 Breathing

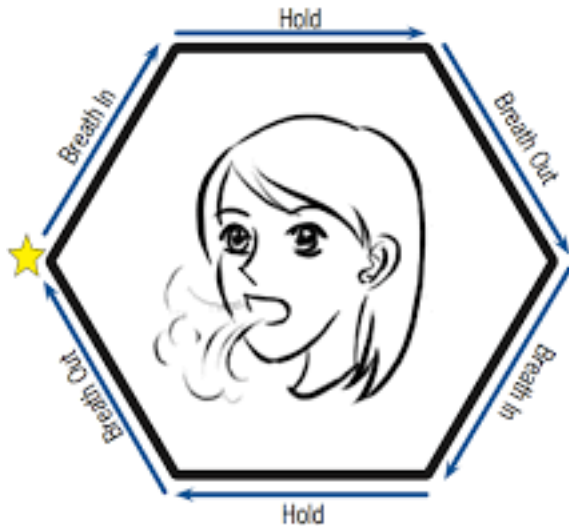


Trace the Lazy 8 with your finger starting at the star and taking a deep breath in.

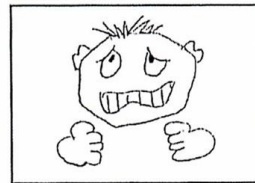
As you cross over to the other side of the Lazy 8, slowly let your breath out.

Continue breathing around the Lazy 8 until you have a calm body and mind.

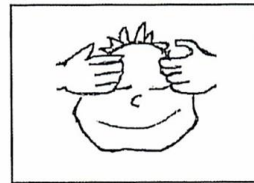
## The Six Sides of Breathing



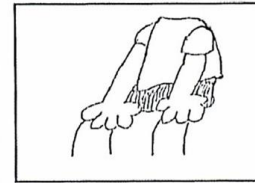
## Calming Sequence



Breathe



Close your Eyes



Rub your legs

Think of your Happy Place

# Calming activities

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- Puzzles
- Listening to music
- Drawing
- Painting
- Colouring
- Play doh
- Reading



# Zones of Regulation at home

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- Identify your own feelings and emotions using the Zones language (for example, I am frustrated, I am in the Yellow Zone)
- Positive reinforcement when your child is in the Green Zone and if they are making an effort to stay in the Green Zone (for example, I can see you are working really hard to stay in the Green Zone)
- Talk about what tool you will use to be in the appropriate Zone (for example, I'm going for a walk, I need to get into the Green Zone)
- Label the zone you can see your child in throughout the day (for example, you look sleepy, are you in the Blue Zone?)
- Teach your child which tools they can use (for example, it's time for bed, let's read a book together to get into the Blue Zone)
- Use visuals of the Zones around the house (for example, Zones check in stations, toolkits)

# Zones of Regulation at home

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Play Games!

“Feelings charades”

Take turns choosing emotions from a stack of cards or papers. Act it out using only face and body clues. Guess each other’s emotion, discuss which Zone it is in and why. Added challenge: name a tool you could use when feeling that emotion.

“Name that feeling”

Name the feelings of characters when watching films and point out any strategies they use – Inside Out is a great film for this!

For younger children: <https://vimeo.com/312563733> a great video about the Zones!

# Key Points

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- There are no bad zones!
- Everyone experiences all of the Zones at different times and in different circumstances
- We can't change the way children feel, but we can help them to manage their feelings/states and behaviours – “It is OK to feel angry, but it is not OK to hit”
- You can be in more than one Zone at a time (for example, you can feel sad and angry)
- If your child can confidently use words to describe their emotions, they don't need to use the Zones language. However, it is helpful for them to know the strategy groups that will help them.

# Key Points

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If your child is in the Red Zone:

- Limit the use of verbal communication – this is not a teachable moment
- Discuss use of tools when a child is regulated
- Plan for if/when they are in the Red Zone – use sentences such as “I wonder if this strategy will help”.

# For more information

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Zones of Regulation Website <https://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html>

Zones of Regulation Book on Amazon [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Zones-Regulation-Leah-Kuypers/dp/B008M7E0G8/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=zones+of+regulation&qid=1624721038&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Zones-Regulation-Leah-Kuypers/dp/B008M7E0G8/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=zones+of+regulation&qid=1624721038&sr=8-1)

Zones of Regulation App (priced at £5.99 on Apple Store)

Thank you!

