

Home Connection

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Skill: Understanding Zones of Regulation

Leah Kuypers (2021) said, “As a mom and therapist, I catch myself from time to time telling someone, “Don’t worry...” or “Don’t be sad...” only to remind myself “It’s too late, the other person is already worried or sad.” Rather than offering support in the form of telling others not to feel this way or that, we can help people manage the feelings they are experiencing in an adaptive and prosocial way.” In Grades K-2 we are making an effort to help students self-regulate and better yet, understand their emotions and initiate strategies to help themselves.

The focus of Zones of Regulation is to positively support the acquisition of self-regulation skills, especially in school-age children as they learn to work together as a group. Zones are not discipline or punishment. It’s worth repeating: our behavior DOES NOT determine the Zone! Our behavior is a by-product of how we manage our Zone.



Here are some strategies to help your child better understand the zones:

1. When discussing the zones at home, please understand what they mean:
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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.
 - d. The **Blue Zone** is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.
2. Understand the language that accompanies zones.
3. Understand that this is not about behavior but more about skill development.

4. Educate your child on different emotions, Many of the students may not be able to verbalize the emotion because they do not understand the emotion. Emotions can vary so it is important for children and adults to understand their emotions in order to make rational decisions.
5. Play the emotion sorting game.
6. Role play with your child about what they can do when exhibiting or feeling certain emotions.
7. Incorporate a sensory break or calming area in the home.
8. Remember that meltdowns and emotional regulation impact the entire family. Have a plan that is proactive and not reactive.
9. Ask questions instead of making assumptions. Validate your child's feelings when they answer. You can always validate how your child is feeling even if the behavior is not appropriate. Begin a sentence saying things like, "I hear you...", "I'm listening...", and "I understand..." Praise them for putting the effort in to identify and verbalize their emotion: "I understand this work is difficult for you, thanks for telling me how hard it is...."
10. Listen to our [CAS Chat on Zones of Regulation!](#)

Some websites for strategies:

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

<https://www.socialthinking.com/Articles?name=all-the-zones-are-ok>

<https://aheartforallstudents.com/uniquely-wired/equipping-our-kids-emotional-toolbelt-zones-of-regulation/>