

A Parents' Guide to The Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation is an internationally renowned approach which helps children to manage their emotions, known as 'self-regulation'. From time to time, all of us (including adults) find it hard to manage strong feelings such as worry, anger, restlessness, fear or tiredness, and this stops us from getting on with our day effectively. Children who feel these emotions often find it hard to learn and concentrate in school. The Zones of Regulation aims to teach children strategies to help them to identify their emotions and cope with these feelings so they can get back to feeling calm and ready to learn.

At Manston, we have launched The Zones of Regulation throughout the whole school, at age-appropriate levels through discrete teaching and set lessons. We will also be using the Zones language as part of daily school life, so all staff will be referring to them, not just their class teacher. Some children might prefer not to use the 'Zones language' but label the emotions directly – this is fine and encouraged!

How Does it work?

Emotions are separated into 4 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/wiggly, 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, yelling/hitting, elated, out of control.

We will teach the children 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 can you help yourself?

The BLUE zone	The GREEN zone	The YELLOW zone	The RED zone
			
How might you feel?	How might you feel?	How might you feel?	How might you feel?
sad tired bored moving slowly	happy okay focussed ready to learn	nervous confused silly not ready to learn	angry frustrated scared out of control
What might help you?	What might help you?	What might help you?	What might help you?
Talk to someone Stretch Take a brain break Stand Take a walk Close my eyes	The goal of this exercise is to get to the GREEN zone. What can you do to be happy, calm and ready to learn?	Talk to someone Count to 20 Take deep breaths Squeeze something Draw a picture Take a brain break	Stop what I'm doing Make sensible choices Take deep breaths Ask for a break Find a safe space Ask for help

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 four deep breaths to help get me back to the Green Zone.")
- At times, talk about which Zone your child is in or, discuss which Zone a character in a film / book might be in. (e.g.: "You look sleepy. Are you in the Blue Zone?")
- Engage your child in discussion around Zones. When they are in the Red Zone it is unlikely to be effective. You need to be discussing the different Zones and tools they can use when they are more regulated / calm.
- Teach your child which tools they can use, explain what works for you. (eg: "It's time for bed. Let's read a book together in the comfy chair to get you in the Blue Zone.")



Tips for practicing the Zones of Regulation

- Know yourself and how you react in difficult situations before dealing with your child's behaviours.
- Model and 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.")
- Observe your child's behaviour and try to use strategies when they are showing signs of being in the yellow zone, before they move to the red zone.
- Empathise with your child and validate what they are feeling. Normalise the whole range of emotions that they may feel.
- Do not deal with an angry, upset child if you are not yet calm yourself.
- Practice calming strategies when your child is in the green zone.
- Support your child to develop their own strategies that work for them. You could create a physical tool box (containing fidget toys, pictures of their favourite places, etc.) or a check list.

Where can I find out more about the Zones of Regulation?

<https://www.manstonprimary.co.uk/send/>

<https://hes-extraordinary.com/the-zones-of-regulation>

<https://www.theotttoolbox.com/?s=zones+of+regulation>

<http://www.zonesofregulation.com/>

Or speak to your child's teacher, Mrs Twohey or Miss Thorpe.



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<https://www.manstonprimary.co.uk/>

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