

Information About The **ZONES** of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation™ curriculum (or “The Zones” for short), which are lessons and activities designed by Leah Kuypers, licensed occupational therapist, to help students gain skills in 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 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” Zones. All the Zones are expected at one time or another. The Zones of Regulation is intended to be neutral and not communicate judgment.