

Understanding and managing emotions: The Zones of Regulation—Part 1

The return to school will have stirred a mixture of emotions in the children—all perfectly normal under the circumstances. During lockdown, and particularly this week, you may have noticed your child showing different behaviours or physical symptoms which is a way for children, and adults alike, to communicate their emotions when they are unable to express them verbally. These may be complaining of tummy aches and pains, changes in mood, talking more or being more withdrawn, or hitting out at siblings.

During the last year, we have started to use the Zones of Regulation framework to help children better understand their emotions, which zone they are in and then be able to choose a strategy or tool to help manage that emotion. This is being embedded class by class. This week's update provides a summary of what this framework is about.

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

**What is the Zones of Regulation?**

This is a recognised framework used by Camden Educational Psychologists and OT service and aims to support children with:

- * A vocabulary of emotional terms
- * How to recognise their own emotions
- * How to detect the emotions of others (read others' facial expressions)
- * To know what may trigger certain emotions; knowing the things that will send them into a different zone; or how to cope when something unexpected happens around them
- * How others may interpret their behaviour
- * Problem solving skills; using tools to support themselves
- * Understand how their behaviours influence others' thoughts and feelings
- * And ultimately...independent regulation!

The **ZONES** of Regulation®**The Zones**

Being in any of these zones are ok and normal. There is no bad zone. We may go into all zones in one day!

Red Zone: Stop...I've lost control...Extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behaviour, devastation, or terror.

Yellow Zone: Caution...I'm starting to lose control....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.

Green Zone: I'm ready to learn or play....Calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.

Blue Zone: I'm too slow...Low states of alertness and down feelings such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.

This week, can you use these zones to help ask which emotion they are feeling and therefore which coloured zone they are in? For more information go to: www.zonesofregulation.com. **Next week—Part 2**—we will be focussing on how children can take the next step of finding ways to self regulate and control their emotions once they know which zone they are in.