

# A Guide to Our Feelings and the Zones



Figure 2: Wall Posters of the Zones

## The Zones of Regulation

Blue Red Area	Green Go	Yellow Slow Down	Red Stop
Sad	Happy	Nervous	Angry
Upset	Excited	Surprised	Yelling
Hurt	Calm	Confused	Aggressive
Tired	Proud	Silly	Mad

## What are the Zones?

As a school, we are using the Zones to help children notice their feelings and feel empowered to develop skills in the area of 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 your child plays in a basketball game, it is beneficial to have a high energy alertness. However, that same state would not be appropriate in the library.

## Some of the aims of The Zones:

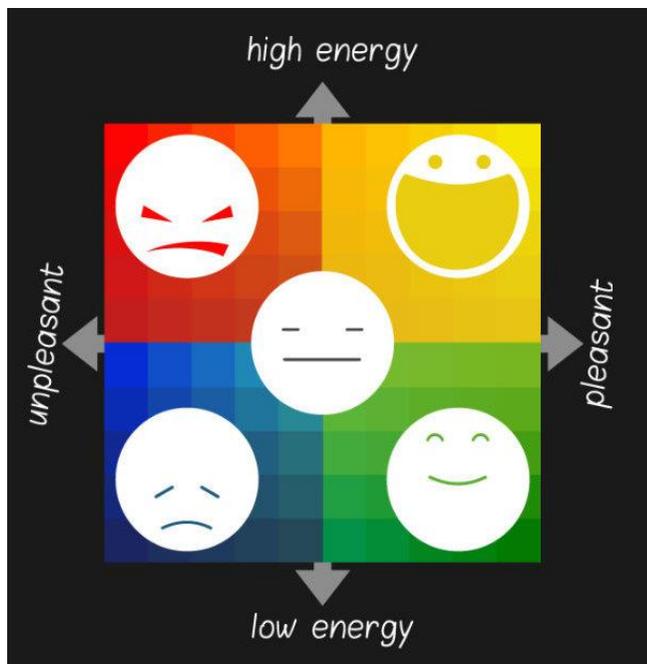
- To help children recognise when they are in the different Zones and how to change or stay in the Zone they are in.
- To gain an increased vocabulary of emotional terms so that they can explain how they are feeling.
- To help children work out what lies behind their move from one Zone to another i.e. which of their physical, sensory, emotional or learning needs are being met really well or less well. E.g. When my friends invited me to join their game, I felt liked and cared for and an important part of the group. I felt connected and that I count. It felt really pleasant. I moved to the Green Zone.
- To help children understand that emotions, sensory experiences, physiological needs (eg. hunger/lack of sleep) and environments can influence which Zone they are in.
- To develop problem-solving skills.
- To identify a range of different calming and alerting strategies/tools that support them. Tools identified may be personalised sensory supports (eg. use of putty at key times), calming techniques or thinking strategies.

A key part in this approach is your child noticing their feelings. Noticing whether they are having pleasant or unpleasant feelings.

Which different feelings are you having? Are they pleasant or unpleasant feelings? How big are the feelings? Are they high energy or low energy feelings?

Examples of high energy feelings: excited, angry, anxious, surprised.

Low energy feelings: chilled, happy, sad, a bit low.



**Noticing how your body is feeling is the first step in becoming brain fit!**

## The Zones

**Green:** When we have these Green Zone experiences, our brain releases feel good chemicals. Having these good times can mean that you will find it easier to manage any more unpleasant feelings when you experience them. What is important in the Green Zone is making sure that we are getting these pleasant feelings in a helpful way that is 'good for me, good for you, good for everyone'. Sometimes we can get pleasant feelings by calling out or taking a toy from someone – this is not helpful to others.

**Yellow:** for growth! You may get Yellow Zone feelings before doing a presentation to the rest of the class, going into school for the first time and meeting your new teacher. These experiences may make you worried/slightly stressed but they will help you to become more confident and resilient as you are learning new coping skills.

**Blue:** Rest area where you pull over when you're tired and need to recharge and put the right support in place. Blue Zone feelings can feel tough for some time. It could be that you are not sleeping well, your pet has died or you feel upset that you have fallen over. It is important to think, 'How am I managing this unpleasant feeling? Have I got the right support?'

**Red:** Stop and seek support. Red Zone feelings may make you feel like you will pop! We can experience the Red Zone if we are having too many Blue Zone experiences for too long. If we are feeling worried and stressed for too long then we may start to feel extremely worried, angry or stressed. When we are feeling like we might pop, we need to talk to the people around us who will help.

### Key points:

- ♣ Not all unpleasant feelings are a bad thing.
- ♣ Not all pleasant feelings are a good thing!
- ♣ It is important that we can spot the difference between helpful and unhelpful feelings.

### Who are the Zones for?

We need to teach ALL of our children good coping and regulation strategies so that they can help themselves when they experience emotions such as anxiety or stress. Teaching children these tools at a young age will support them in later life.

### How will my child learn about the Zones?

The Zones will be used as part of daily school life and reinforced in our worship and PSHE curriculum. Some children prefer not to use the 'Zones language' but label the emotions directly – this is fine and encouraged!

### How can you help your child use the Zones?

- Identify your own feelings using Zones language in front of your child (e.g. "I'm frustrated as I can't change this light bulb. I am in the Yellow Zone as this is an unpleasant feeling but I know that if I use some tools (Eg. counting to 10, inner coach talk) then I can achieve my goal, become more resilient and next time this will feel easier.")
- Talk about which tool you are using to support you (e.g. "I need to take 4 deep breaths to help me get back into the Green Zone.")
- At times, wonder which Zone your child is in; or discuss which Zone a character in a film/book might be in.

- Engaging your child in discussion around Zones when they are in the Red Zone 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 (e.g. "You are feeling a little nervous about your first day at school tomorrow, that's OK. Let's do some square breathing and use our inner coach. Let's remind ourselves that last year you had the same feelings but after 2 days you felt really happy going into school.")
- Share how their behaviour is affecting your Zone. For example, if they are in the Green Zone you could comment that their behaviour is also helping you feel happy/go into the Green Zone.
- Put up and reference the Zones visuals and tools in your home.
- Praise/encourage your child to share which Zone they might be in.

**It is important to note that everyone experiences all of the Zones – the Red and Blue Zones are not the 'bad' or 'naughty' Zones. All of the Zones are expected at one time or another**

