



THE **ZONES** OF REGULATION™

Parent's Guide



Helping children understand and manage their emotions

The *Zones of Regulation* is a way of teaching children to recognise their feelings and learn what to do when they feel strong emotions. It helps them become more aware of their body, their feelings, and how to manage their reactions - a skill known as self-regulation.

Everyone moves through different emotions during the day — children and adults alike. Sometimes we feel calm and ready to learn, and other times we might feel tired, worried, or cross. The Zones help children notice their feelings, name them, and choose a tool to help themselves get back to feeling calm and focused.

The **ZONES** of Regulation™

			
BLUE ZONE Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	GREEN ZONE Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Relaxed	YELLOW ZONE Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	RED ZONE Mad/Angry Terrified Elated/Ecstatic Devastated Out of Control

The Four Zones

There are four coloured zones, each showing a different level of alertness or emotion. No Zone is “good” or “bad”; we all experience them all. The key is to notice, understand, and manage them.

The **ZONES** of Regulation®



Zone	What it means	Examples of feelings	What helps
Blue Zone	Low energy or low mood	Sad, tired, bored, sick	Move, stretch, drink water, talk to someone
Green Zone	Calm, focused, ready to learn	Happy, relaxed, content	Keep doing what's working! Notice and name it ("I'm in the green zone!")
Yellow Zone	Wobbly or heightened - starting to lose control	Worried, excited, silly, frustrated	Take deep breaths, use calm corner, ask for help, go for a short break
Red Zone	Strong emotions or loss of control	Angry, panicked, scared, overjoyed	Go somewhere safe and quiet, breathe slowly, squeeze a stress toy, talk when calm

Remember: All Zones are normal - even Red! What matters is recognising them and knowing how to get back to Green.

Your Child's Regulation Toolkit

Each child is encouraged to build a personal toolkit — a set of strategies they can use to help themselves when they feel dysregulated.

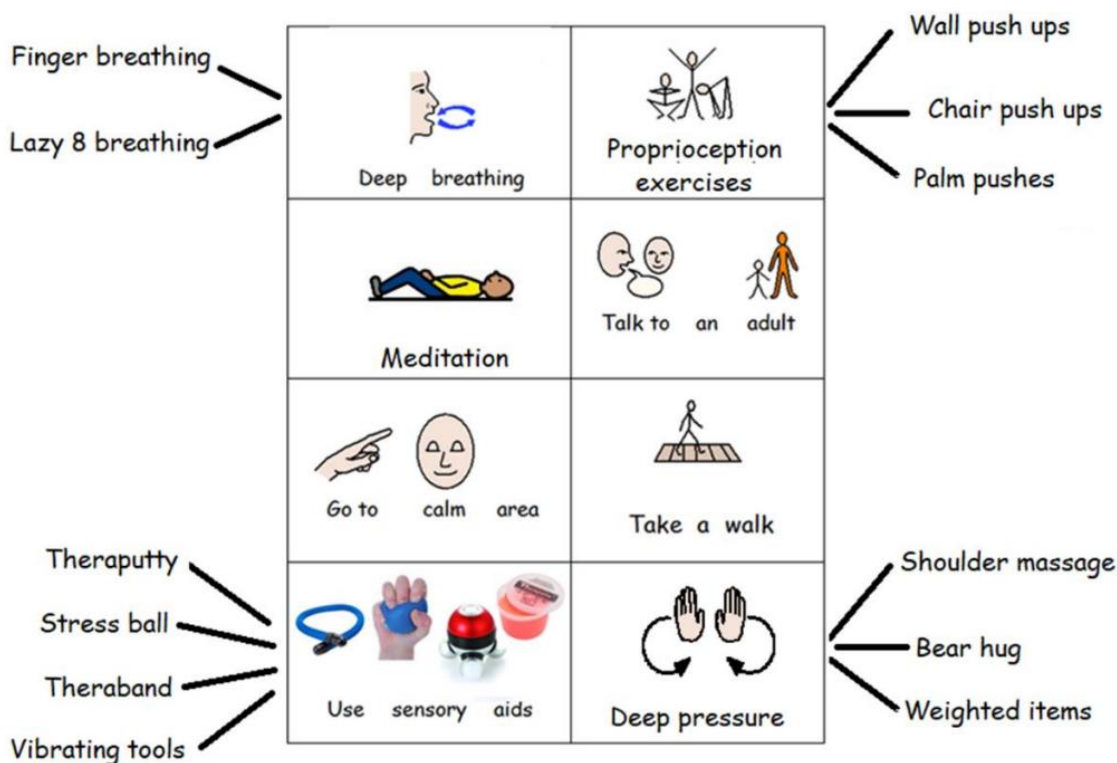
You can help your child practise these tools at home so they're confident using them at school.

Examples of Tools:

Blue Zone: Jumping jacks, walking outside, upbeat music, drinking water

Green Zone: Reading, colouring, quiet play, deep breathing

Yellow Zone: When you see your child starting to become heightened, fidgety, overexcited or unfocused – try to introduce the following calming strategies to prevent an escalation into the Red Zone (or out of control).



Red Zone: Time in a calm space, hugging a soft toy, low voice reassurance, heavy work (pushing a wall, squeezing playdough). Encourage your child to notice what helps them most - every child's toolkit will look different.

How Parents Can Support at Home

✓ Talk the Zones Language

Model using the Zones yourself:

"I'm feeling a bit frustrated - I think I'm in the Yellow Zone, so I'll take a few deep breaths."

Ask gentle questions:

"Which Zone are you in right now?"

"What could help you get back to Green?"

✓ Validate Feelings

All emotions are normal. Say:

"It's okay to feel cross. Let's find a way to calm down together."

✓ Notice Triggers

Talk about what moves your child between Zones - tiredness, hunger, noise, transitions, or conflicts.

Understanding triggers helps prevent problems.

✓ Practise When Calm

Try breathing, sensory play, or movement breaks while your child is already calm - it's harder to learn new strategies in the Red Zone.

✓ Create a Calm Space

Have a small, safe space at home with comfort items - cushions, books, sensory toys, or music.

It's not a punishment area - it's a "reset" space.

✓ Use Consistent Language

Use the same calm, positive phrases as school:

"Let's get back to green."

"That was a safe choice."

"You were really respectful just then."

✓ Model Regulation

Stay calm yourself before helping your child.

"I need a minute to calm down before we talk."

This teaches children that everyone works to manage their emotions.

✓ Celebrate Effort

Praise your child for recognising their feelings or using a tool - not just for being calm.

"I'm proud you noticed you were in the Yellow Zone and chose to have a break."

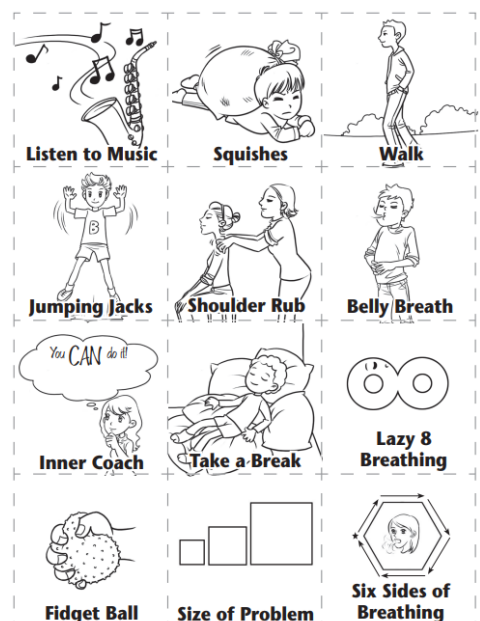
When Things Get Tough

If your child is in the Red Zone, keep language **short** and **calm**:

"You're safe. I'm here. Let's breathe together."

Wait until they are calm to talk about what happened and what might help next time.

Focus on **learning**, not **blame**.



In Our School

We use the Zones of Regulation across the school to help children:

- Recognise and name their emotions
- Learn self-control and problem-solving skills
- Build empathy by noticing others' Zones
- Develop resilience and independence
- Each classroom has a Zones display and calm corner, and staff use consistent language and strategies to support children in returning to Green.

Useful Resources

- www.zonesofregulation.com
- The *Zones of Regulation* app (Apple / Google Play)
- [The OT Toolbox: Zones Activities](#)
- [Parents With Confidence – Calming Strategies for Kids](#)

“All feelings are okay — it’s what we do with them that matters.”

When home and school use the same language, children feel safe, understood, and ready to learn.

