

Zones of Regulation

Introducing children to The Zones:

Children will learn that they have zones or different levels of alertness and emotional states of being. The activities in these lessons are designed to help students expand their emotional vocabulary, recognise emotions in themselves and others, understand how their states affect those around them and increase their awareness of triggers that lead to regulated states.

The focus is on **self-awareness** at this point in the curriculum. 'Ways to check for learning' suggests methods that can be used to determine if children are grasping the concepts.

Goals for Lessons 1- 9 (Chapter 3)

By the end of the learning sequence, children will be learning to:

- Develop the ability to identify a range of emotions and how they relate to a child's specific zone (lessons 1,2,3 and 7)
- Read their own body's cues regarding what zone they are experiencing (lessons 3 and 6)
- Develop insights on triggers and circumstances that influence their zones (lessons 4,8 and 9)
- Relate how their zone and behaviours have changed others' perspectives (lessons 3,4,5 and 8)

In the lessons, children consider the following essential questions:

- What are the zones?
- How will they help you identify what emotion or state of alertness you are feeling?
- How do different emotions play different roles in different zones?
- How does the way you act in the different zones affect the way other people perceive you?
- How can you benefit from understanding what makes you change zones?

Exploring Tools to Calm and Alert:

In the next sequence of lessons, children learn and practise tools that can help them regulate their zones (The lessons in the next sequence – chapter 5 - focus on understanding when to use these tools). These lessons can be completed in any order.

Goals for Lessons 10- 12 (Chapter 4)

By the end of the learning sequence, children will be learning to:

- Understand that there are strategies or tools they can use that will influence their zones (lessons 10,11 and 12)
- Understand that tools affect each person differently and they need to determine which tools are most effective for them (lessons 10,11 and 12)
- Know at least five strategies they find calming, at least two strategies they find alerting, and at least one strategy that helps them remain in the Green Zone (lessons 10,11 and 12)
- Be able to demonstrate the use of a strategy to self-regulate(lessons 10,11 and 12)

In the lessons, children consider the following essential questions:

- How does the use of a zones tool change the way I think and feel?
- Do all tools affect me in the same way or are some more effective for me than others?

The range of tools are organised into the following categories: sensory supports, calming techniques and thinking strategies. There is an overlap among these categories.

In addition to addressing the children's sensory needs and teaching calming techniques, it is valuable to teach children about how their thinking patterns can cause them to become less regulated. Children who struggle with self-regulation frequently tend to be inflexible, black-and-white thinkers, unable to see the shades of grey. They have difficulty with objectivity and seeing the big picture, getting caught up in insignificant details, making it difficult for them to think rationally about their thoughts and feelings, ('I can't do this!' and 'No one ever listens to me!'). Tools that address thinking patterns can be called 'thinking strategies', as these work to change one's cognitive thoughts.

Learning when to use and apply the tools:

In the final sequence of learning, children learn how to put into practise the tools they are taught in chapter 4 in order to change their state of alertness and regulate their emotions. Children are taught that they are in control of themselves and that to be successful, they need to know when and what strategies to use so that people around them will have more positive thoughts and feelings about them. There is also a focus in being better problem solvers.

Goals for Lessons 13- 18 (Chapter 5)

By the end of the learning sequence, children will be learning to:

- Use tools to regulate themselves (lessons 13,14,15,16,17 and 18)
- Determine when they need to use a tool to regulate (lessons 14 and 15)
- Problem solve desirable solutions to problems they encounter (lessons 15,16 and 17)
- Understand how utilising tools to regulate positively affects them (lessons 14,15,16,17 and 18)

In the lessons, children consider the following essential questions:

- How will learning to regulate their body and emotions influence their success at home and school?
- How can understanding their emotions help identify strategies to control their behaviour?
- How will the use of strategies to self-regulate influence the thoughts and feelings of others nearby?