

# Children's Speech and Language Therapy Services



Information and resource pack

THE  
**ZONES** OF  
REGULATION®

## What is 'The Zones of Regulation?'

The Zones of Regulation is a cognitive behavioural approach that is used to teach self-regulation strategies through categorising all of the different ways we feel into four clear and concrete coloured zones.

The framework provides strategies to teach children and young people to become more aware of and be in independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, managing their own sensory needs and improving problem-solving abilities.

The framework aims to address children's underlying difficulties with emotional and sensory regulation, executive functioning and social cognition. It aims to help children move towards independent regulation.

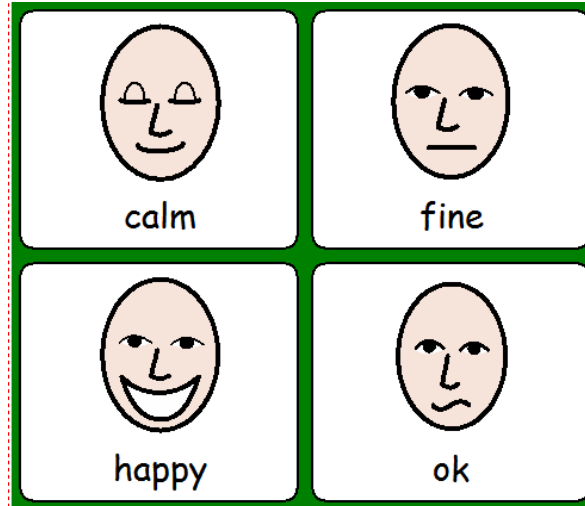
It is a visual and structured programme that teaches children to develop their understanding of emotions in both themselves and in others, to understand how their emotions and behaviours impact everybody around them, and learn what tools they can use to manage these feelings.

## **What are the goals of the programme?**

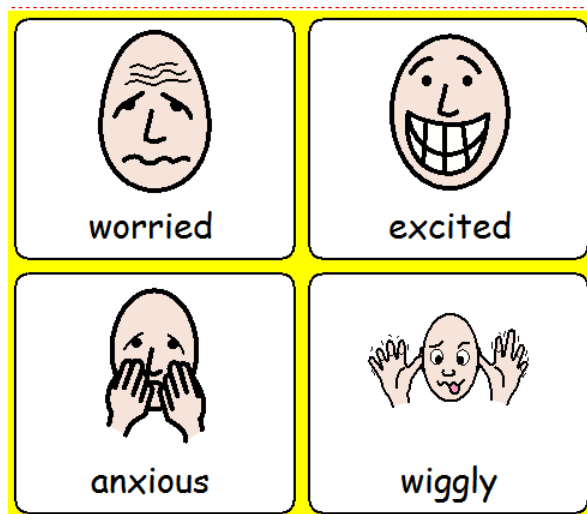
- To recognise and communicate the different zones.
- To learn tools to stay in or move between zones.
- To develop an individualised set of tools for each pupil.
- For both adults and the children themselves to recognise triggers and when to use tools.
- To recognise others' emotions and how own behaviour impacts others.
- To be able to independently regulate: to control emotions/impulses, manage sensory needs and improve problem-solving skills.

There are **four** zones within the programme:

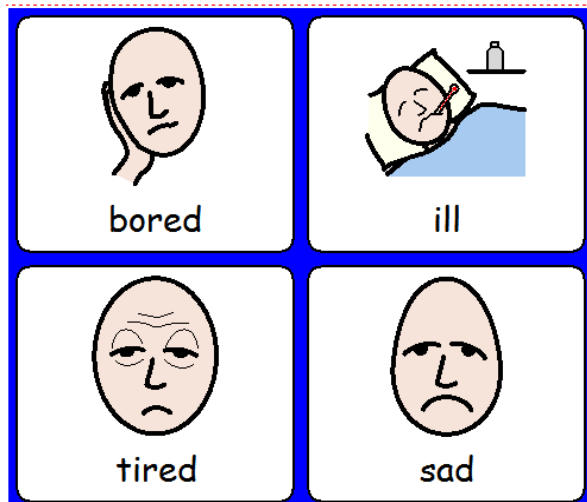
**The Green Zone** is used to describe a calm state of alertness. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs. The emotions in the green zone are:



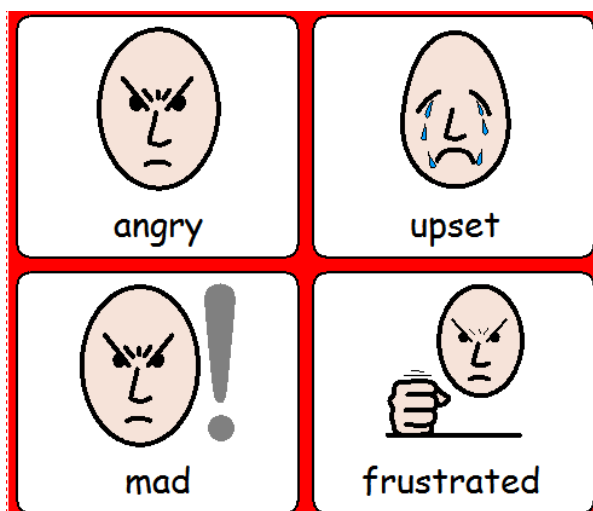
**The yellow zone** is used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions; however the child still has control over their emotions. The emotions in the yellow zone are:



**The Blue Zone** is used to describe a low state of alertness and arousal. The emotions in the blue zone are:



**The Red Zone** is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A child may not have control over their own emotions and behaviours if they are in the red zone. The emotions in the red zone are:



The Zones can be compared to traffic signs:

- When given a green light or in the Green Zone, one is “good to go”.
- A yellow sign means be aware or take caution, which applies to the Yellow Zone.
- A red light or stop sign means stop, and when one is the Red Zone this often is the case.
- The Blue Zone can be compared to the rest area signs where one goes to rest or re-energize.



The zones of regulation teaches children and young people that **all** zones are natural to experience and it is okay and acceptable not to be in the green zone. We all experience multiple, (if not all four!) zones every day and can be in more than one zone at the same time.

It is important to learn what to do in order to get back to the green zone, if you are not feeling happy and the framework teaches children and young people to manage their emotions based on the environment and its demands, and the people around them at any given time.

## **Tools for self-regulation**

Every child will have a different set of tools that help them get back to their green zone – this will relate to hobbies, interests and personal preference. However, some examples are listed below and you could use these to compile the tools linked to specific children or young people you are working with:

### **Communication tools:**

Give choices, communication devices, e.g. iPad/AAC, visual tools (schedules, photos, objects of reference, PECS) countdown timer, cue cards, task planner/to-do list, verbal instructions, gestural cues, (including signing and Makaton) verbal redirection and prompting, writing, discussion

### **Sensory tools:**

Snack, fidget toys, glass of water, walk and movement breaks, strong scents, rocking chairs or other vestibular exercises, colouring/drawing, sensory rooms and spaces, headphones/ear-defenders, music, deep pressure and massage, weighted objects, exercise, breathing exercises, therapy ball, puzzles, sand play, water play, messy play, take a break

### **Thinking tools:**

Size of the problem, positive self-talk, discussion of problem with adults/peers,

### **Environmental changes:**

Lights on/off, change seating arrangement, temperature of room, noises in room, independent working area, relaxation corner, change of people in environment

## So what does the zones of regulation look like in practice?

Children are encouraged to 'check in' to the zone station when they arrive in school in the morning, and throughout the day. This may need to be supported and modelled by adults initially, e.g. "you were feeling happy earlier but I think you look a bit excited now, shall we change you to the yellow zone?" This may need to be simpler at first, e.g. just one emotion per zone.








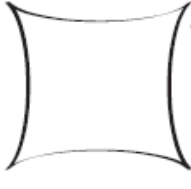

Children are encouraged to learn about what different emotions look like in other people, their friends, their family and their teaching staff. You Tube is an amazing resource for this element, just type in Zones of Regulation!











The ZONES of Regulation® Reproducible | Yellow

## Understanding Different Perspectives

When I am in the **YELLOW ZONE** and my behavior is unexpected...

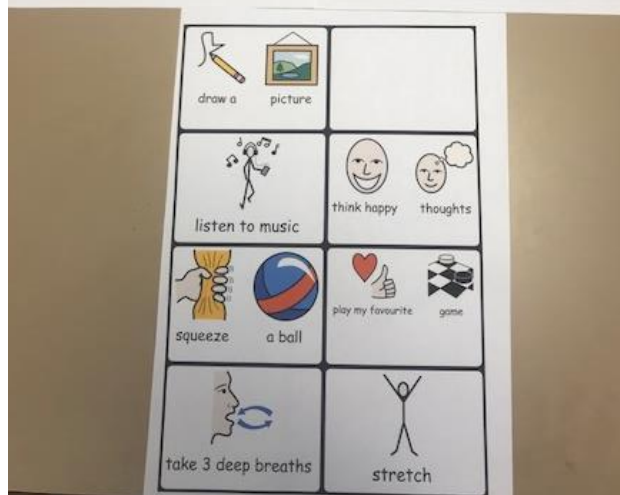
Other kids might feel    around me.

Other kids might be thinking   or  

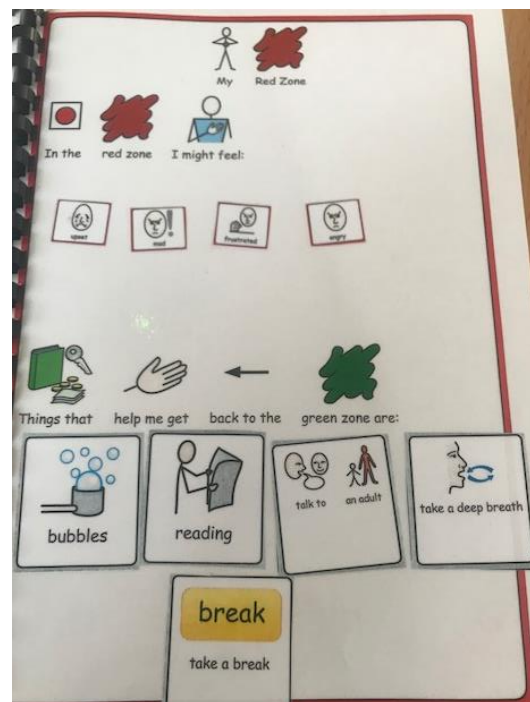
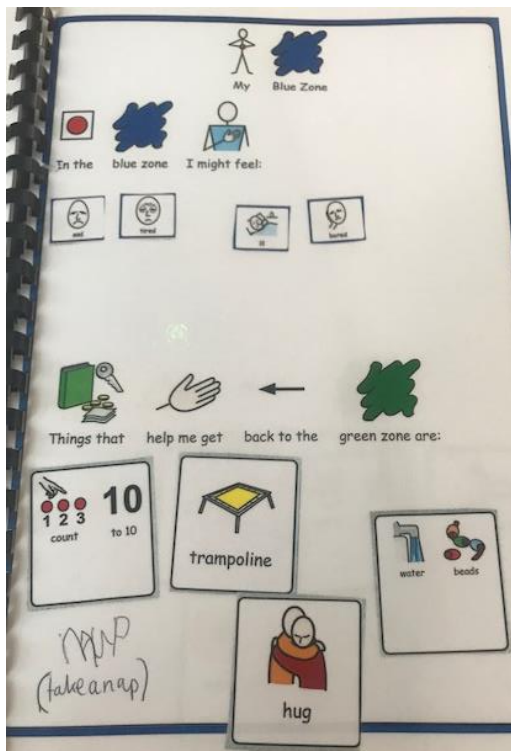
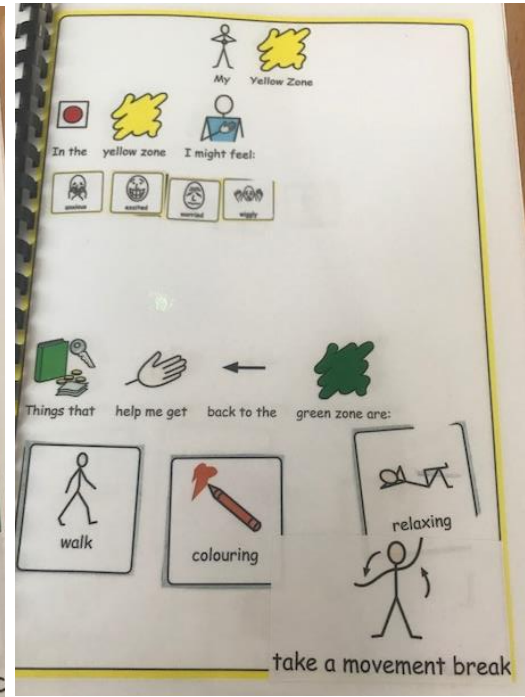
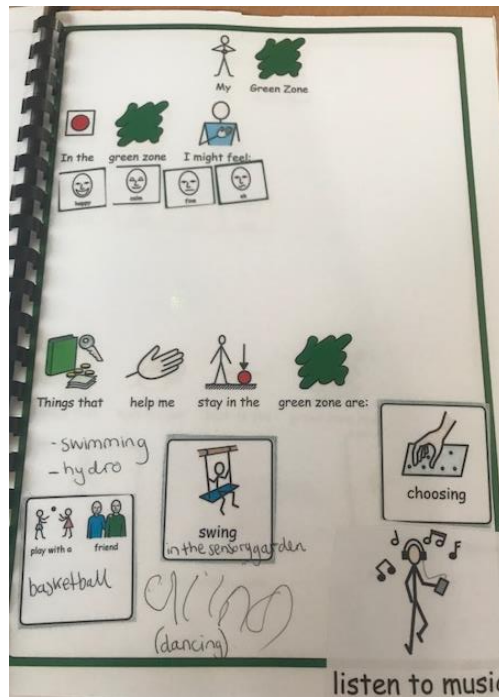
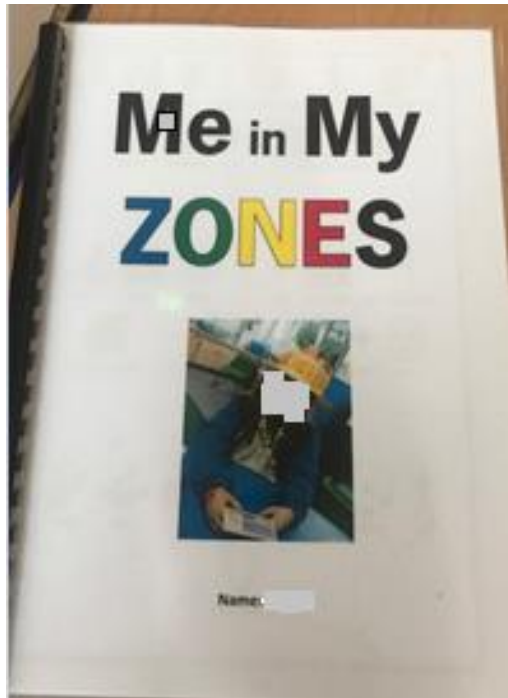
Other kids might say   or  

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Children should have visuals for different 'tools' available from the beginning of the programme and adults are encouraged to model alongside this, e.g. "I think you might be a bit excited, shall we go to the relaxation corner?"



Once children have developed their understanding of emotions, they can begin to relate this to themselves and discussions can be had around what helps *them* get back to green zone.



Children are encouraged to talk about feelings! When people in their environment are sad, or frustrated or anxious, talking about this will support their understanding and consolidate their learning further, e.g. “I know \_\_\_ is feeling sad isn’t he, he’s in the blue zone right now, what can we do to help him get back to green?”

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## Which ZONE Would I Be In?

All of the zone colors are okay. There are times when you will be in different zones. Think about times that you expect you would be in the Blue, Green, Yellow, or Red Zone.

I experience all the Zones!

Times I may be in the BLUE ZONE...	Times I may be in the GREEN ZONE...
Times I may be in the YELLOW ZONE...	Times I may be in the RED ZONE...

Children are encouraged to check in throughout the day. Smaller, more portable visuals can be used to transport across contexts, this will promote discussion backed up by visuals when not in the classroom; when out and about or when at home.



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\_\_\_\_\_ 's **Toolbox**

Blue Zone Tools	Green Zone Tools	Yellow Zone Tools	Red Zone Tools
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