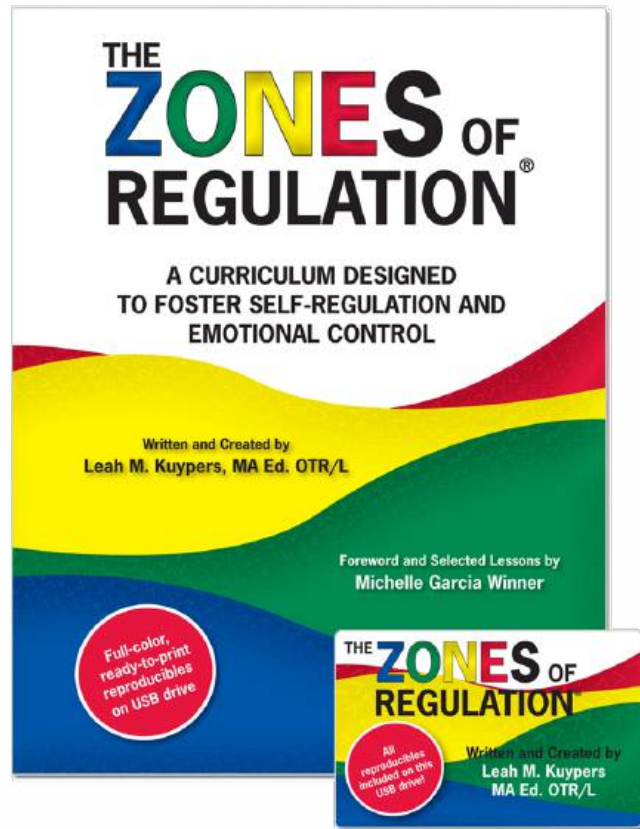




# The Zones of Regulation

A Social Thinking Resource  
By Leah M. Kuypers







# Social Thinking

- ▶ **Michelle Garcia Winner** specialises in the treatment of individuals with social learning challenges and since the mid 1990s has created numerous unique treatment frameworks and research books about the **Social Thinking Methodology**. She works with a team of professionals, including Dr Pamela Crooke, in developing a range of resources, books, games, seminars, webinars, webpages and newsletters.
- ▶ The ***Social Thinking Website*** and newsletter have a lot of resources that teachers, therapists and parents can access: [www.socialmind.com.au](http://www.socialmind.com.au).
- ▶ ***The Zones of Regulation*** was developed by Leah Kuypers as part of this approach to teaching Social Thinking.

# The Zones of Regulation

- ▶ *The Zones of Regulation*® is a framework and easy-to-use curriculum for teaching students strategies for emotional and sensory self-management.
- ▶ Rooted in cognitive behavioural therapy, 'The Zones approach' uses four colours to help students identify how they are feeling in the moment according to their emotions and level of alertness, as well as guide them to strategies to support regulation.
- ▶ By understanding how to notice their body's signals, detect triggers, read social context and consider how their behaviour can impact those around them, students learn improved emotional control, sensory regulation, self-awareness and problem-solving abilities.

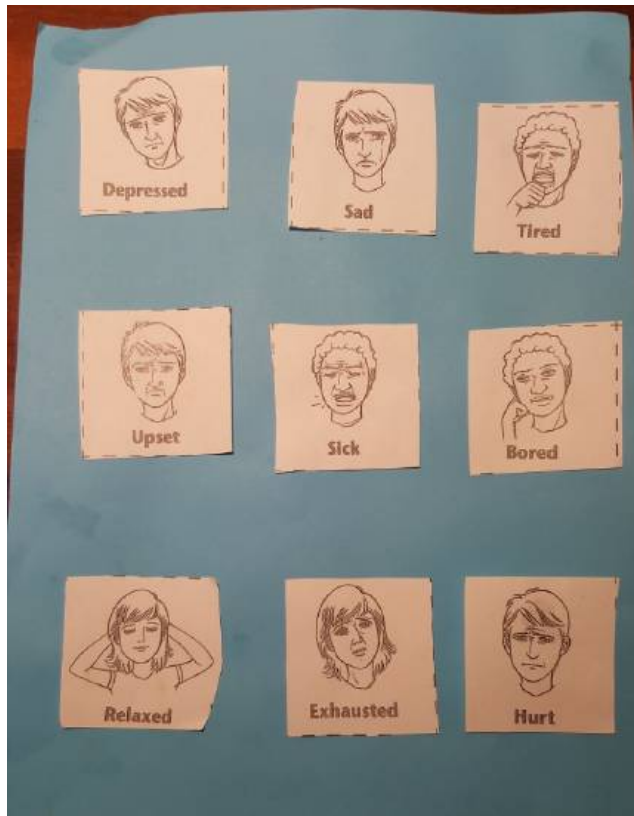
# The ZONES of Regulation®

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

# Emotions

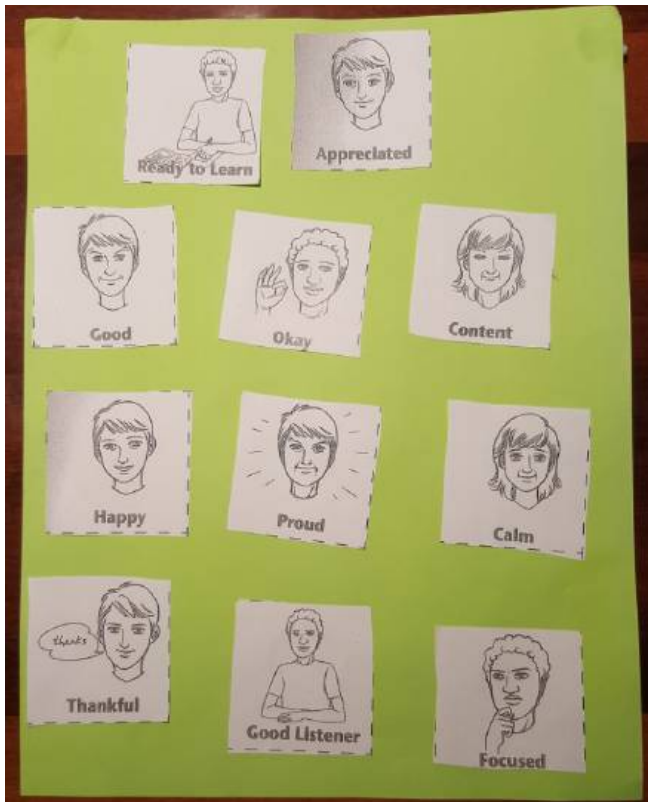
- ▶ Children have various understandings about emotions. In a group (large or small depending on the make up of your group) discuss different emotions using the visuals and how your face might appear or change and your body react when feeling that way.
- ▶ Work together to choose the Zone that each emotion would go in. Children will have individual responses.
- ▶ Emotions are OK. It is OK to feel angry - what can you do when you feel like that? This is a good opportunity to introduce language around 'good choices.' What is a good choice when you are feeling angry?

# The Blue Zone



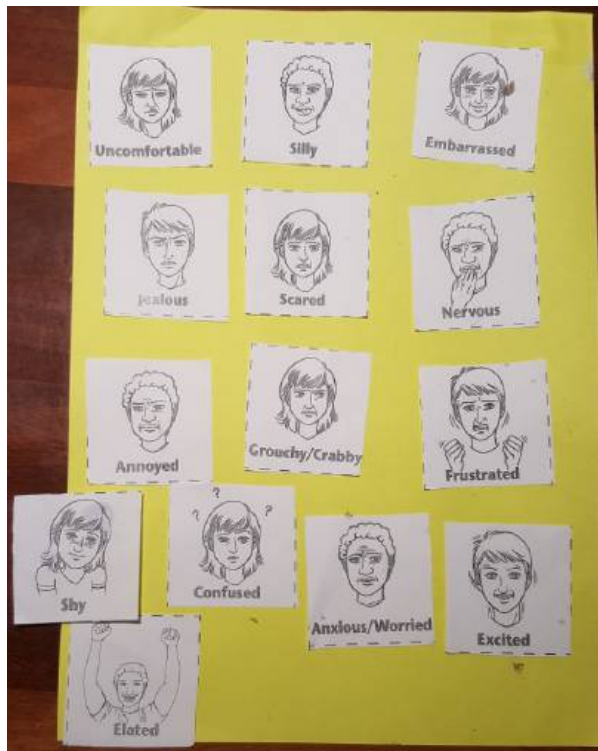
- ▶ The **Blue Zone** is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.

# The Green Zone



- ▶ The **Green Zone** is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.

# The Yellow Zone



- ▶ The **Yellow Zone** is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions; however, individuals have more control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone.



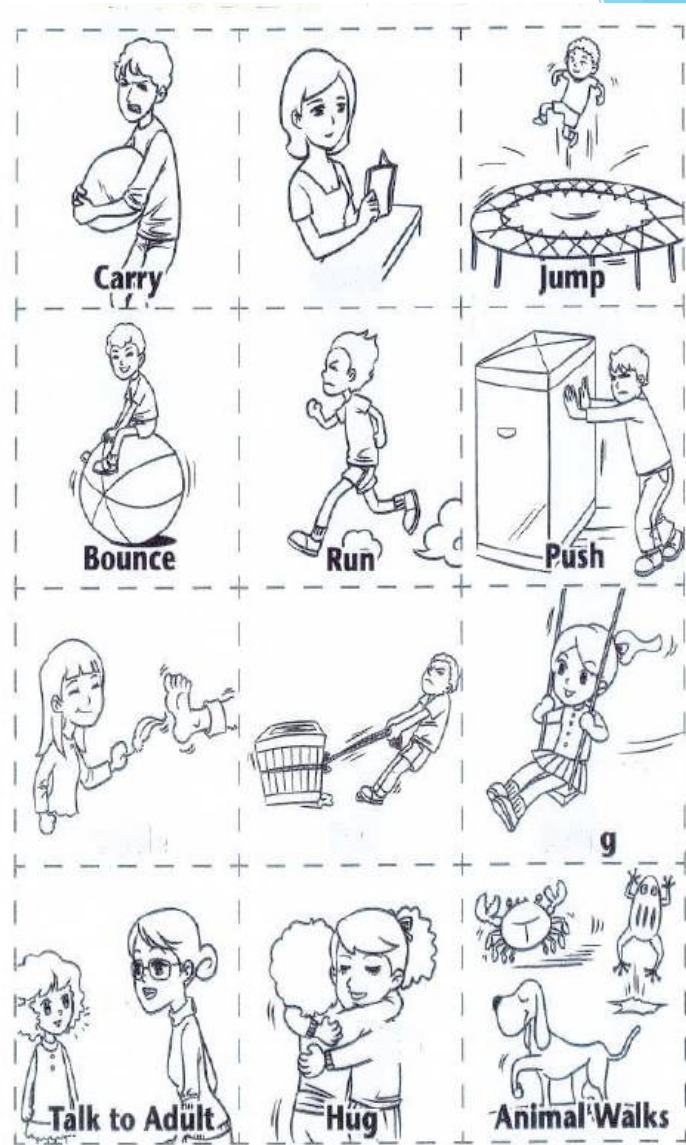
# The Red Zone



- ▶ The **Red Zone** is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated, euphoric, or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behaviour, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.

# Calming tools

- ▶ Children who spend most of their day in the Yellow or Red Zones (i.e. in a heightened state) are really needing to experience life in the Green Zone (a calm state), to be able to understand what that actually feels like. Feeling calm and being able to focus their attention may not have been experienced very often for some children.
- ▶ There are lots of calming strategies to choose from and often something that ‘works’ one day, may not the next.
- ▶ It is important to try lots of different strategies and develop with the child a ‘toolbox’ of strategies that they like and can choose from when they are feeling heightened.



## Other ways to use the Zones of Regulation

As a check in when children enter kindergarten or during a transition, they can place a picture of themselves in the Zone that represents how they are feeling. This is a good way of identifying children who may need some extra support.

Prompt individual children to examine their ENERGY levels.

Once they reach the Yellow Zone, they may need to access their 'toolbox' to enable moving back into the Green Zone.

This can be used one to one for individuals or the whole group.

