



# Self-Regulation

Self-regulation is the ability to appropriately respond to the environment, and includes regulating one’s sensory needs, emotions, and impulses for a given task or situation. In order to self regulate, one needs to be able to self monitor and recognize when their behaviour requires change. One must learn to translate what they experience into information they can use to regulate their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. The components of self-regulation include:

- Sensory processing skills
- Executive functioning skills (cognitive processes involved in conscious control of thoughts/emotions)
- Problem solving/planning skills
- Emotional regulation (understanding emotion in self and others)

Observed behaviours related to poor self-regulation can include:

- Tantrums/outbursts
- Aggressive behaviour
- Emotional distress
- Inattention
- Distractibility
- Refusal

## TEACHING POSITIVE SELF-REGULATION/COPING SKILLS

Self-regulation is not an isolated skill, rather skills develop gradually. In order to develop self-regulation skills, children require opportunities to experience and practice utilizing positive replacement behaviours and coping skills in order to create new brain pathways of thinking/behaving.

Self-regulation skills can be taught explicitly or through everyday interactions and scenarios. Children learn these skills by watching those around them respond to their environment; therefore, modeling positive self-regulatory behaviour is a key tool to teaching self-regulation. By demonstrating appropriate responses to difficult situations, students see the behavioural expectation and can imitate these appropriate responses. At times, students may also require an additional hint or cue (prompting) to appropriately respond to a situation. As with many teaching situations, continued practice of these new skills, and support from peers and adults, are vital components of success.

### REFERENCES:

Florez, Ida Rose (2011). Developing young children’s self-regulation through everyday experiences. *Young Children, v66 n4 p46-51 July 2011*. Retrieved January 12th, 2016 from [https://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/201107/Self-Regulation\\_Florez\\_OnlineJuly2011.pdf](https://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/201107/Self-Regulation_Florez_OnlineJuly2011.pdf).

Kuypers, L. M. (2011). *The zones or regulation: a curriculum designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control*. San Jose, CA: Think Social Publishing, Inc.

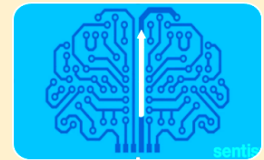
Sentis. (2012). *Neuroplasticity*. [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELpYcZa87g>.

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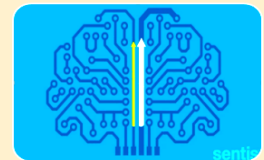


## CREATING NEW BRAIN PATHWAYS OF THINKING/ BEHAVING THROUGH PRACTICE

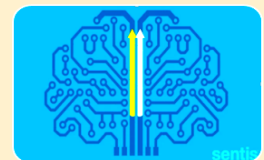
The white line refers to an established neural pathway of thinking, feeling, and doing (habits)



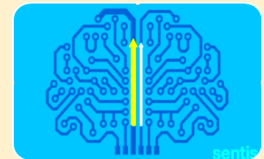
The yellow line refers to learning a new skill or the teaching of a replacement behaviour



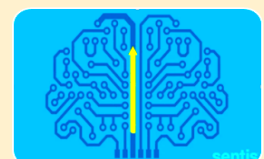
The new neural pathway strengthens with opportunity to experience and practice the new skill



The old pathway becomes used less and weakens as the new skills is used more



The new skill becomes an established neural pathway





## SUPPORTS TO ENHANCE SELF-REGULATION SKILLS

### ZONES OF REGULATION®

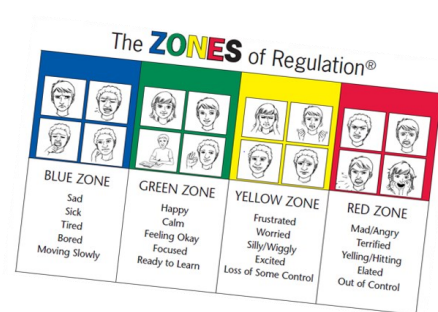
The Zones of Regulation® created by Leah M. Kuypers is a systematic, cognitive behavior approach used to teach self-regulation by categorizing the different ways we feel and states of alertness we experience into four concrete zones.

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** 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** is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions; however, one has some 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** is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behavior, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.



The Zones curriculum provides strategies to teach students to become more aware of, and independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, managing their sensory needs, and improving their ability to problem solve conflicts. The activities address underlying deficits in emotional and sensory regulation, executive functions, and social cognition to help move students toward independent regulation. It incorporates concepts and numerous visuals to teach students to identify their feelings/level of alertness, understand how their behavior impacts those around them, and learn what tools they can use to manage their feelings and states.



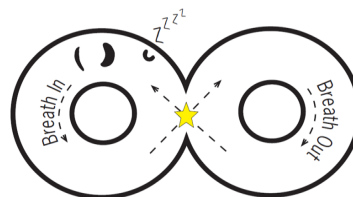
### SOCIAL EXPRESS®

The Social Express® is a learning program that teaches students how to maneuver various social situations, as well as develop more meaningful social relationships. Students interactively navigate through the computer based program, learning the skills to make and sustain friendships, empathize with others, and acquire a variety of social skills that can be utilized in various environments. The Social Express® uses a variety of webisodes, worksheets, curriculum-integrated projects, and e-books to teach both mainstream and special education students from Early Years through Grade Five. Additional information can be found at <http://thesocialexpress.com/>.

### YOGA AND DEEP BREATHING

- Helps connect experiences and develop mindful awareness
- Supports positive decision making
- Focuses on breathing exercises to support with self regulation
- Utilizes movement exercises to help minimize hyperactivity
- Incorporates tools to promote rest, relaxation, restoration and increased focus
- Partner yoga facilitates team work and cooperation

### Lazy 8 Breathing



### The Six Sides of Breathing

