

Zones of regulation Project



Purpose

Following the behaviour curriculum training at Courthouse School, practitioners felt this element would be really helpful for continuity of care and regular check ins on their key children's feelings.

Provided in the pack is a laminated sheet with the zones of regulation and on the back how to help with the different emotions and questions to ask, there is one per keyworker.

Also provided is a peg for a child to select how they are feeling, this can be done in keyworker groups or individually. As we have experienced children have a lot to juggle in their school day and then come to after school club, do you know if they have had a good day? Do you know how they are feeling? Their behaviour in club can be because of something which is happening personally or something within the school day, this system enables a child to think about their feelings and be able to convey them before they escalate.

The purpose of this is for keyworkers to understand their key children's emotions, get to know them better as well as giving the child an opportunity to communicate and regulate their emotions.

Allowing children to talk about their emotions has several important benefits for their mental, social, and cognitive development. Here are some key advantages:

1. Emotional Regulation

- When children express their feelings, they learn to identify and manage emotions like anger, sadness, or frustration.
- This reduces emotional outbursts and helps them develop coping strategies.

2. Improved Communication Skills

- Talking about emotions teaches children how to articulate thoughts and feelings clearly.
- It fosters better listening and empathy when interacting with others.

3. Stronger Mental Health

- Bottling up emotions can lead to anxiety or depression. Open expression provides relief and prevents emotional buildup.
- It encourages resilience and self-confidence.

4. Healthy Relationships

- Children who can express emotions are more likely to form positive relationships with peers and adults.
- They learn to resolve conflicts constructively.

5. Cognitive Development

- Naming emotions activates language and reasoning skills.
- It helps children understand cause-and-effect relationships (e.g., “I feel sad because...”).

6. Empathy and Social Awareness

- Discussing feelings promotes understanding of others’ emotions.
- This builds compassion and reduces bullying behaviors.

How to embed into your setting

Each keyworker has a laminated copy of the zones of regulation to be used with their key group

Each keyworker will be given wooden pegs for children to have their own peg (can decorate/personalise) with their name.

The zones of regulation can be used multiple times throughout the session, can be available for children to peg their emotion on the card away from others so the keyworker is aware and clear that they are feeling a certain way.

On the back of the zones of regulations are pointers for the keyworker with how to handle children, along with questions and ways to speak with them calmly.

Step 1: Calm Connection Say: • "Let's take a few deep breaths together." • "Are you ready to have a chat with me?" • "I'm here to help you."	Step 2: What Happened? Listen to their version without interrupting or jumping to conclusions Say: • "Can you tell me what happened?" • "I want to understand what was going on for you."	Step 3: How Did You Feel? Name and explore feelings Say: • "I could see that you were ... because..." • "How do you think the other person/child felt?" • "I understand how you are feeling and that is ok" Use a feelings chart if needed
Step 4: Who Was Affected? Understand the impact: help them to see the effect of their actions Say: • "It's ok to feel that way, but it is not ok to..." • "What do you think happened because of your choice?" • "Did anyone get hurt or feel sad?" • "How would you feel if that happened to you?"	Step 5: Making Things Right Think about ways to take responsibility and actions to repair or fix things Say: • "What can you do to help make things better?"	Step 6: Looking Ahead Encourage future positive choices and a plan for next time Say: • "What could you do next time instead?" • "Is there anything we can do to help you make a good choice next time?" • "I know you can be kind and make good choices."

Handling negative behaviour – how can a keyworker get support?

Introduce the word 'face swap' amongst your staffing team. This is a phrase that can be used when you are struggling to control and manage a child's behaviour. Say to your colleague face swap and take a breather, your colleague will then take over and aim to manage the child's behaviour. Work together to prevent the situation escalating and follow the Wise Owls Childcare behaviour management policy at all times.