

Family Letter
“The Zones of Regulation” and “The Incredible Flexible You”
Self-Regulation & Social Thinking Curriculum

Over the next few weeks, your child will be participating in *The Zones of Regulation* and *The Incredible Flexible You* in their classroom. These programs are complimentary to each other and this letter is designed to introduce you to the curriculum and provide information about supporting your child’s learning at home.

The Zones of Regulation are lessons and activities to help children gain skills in the area of self-regulation, which can go by many names, such as self-control, self-management, and impulse control. The lessons and learning activities are designed to help the students recognize when they are in the different zones of alertness as well as learn how to use strategies to change or stay in the zone they are in. The students will gain an increased vocabulary of emotional terms, skills in reading other people’s facial expressions, perspective about how others see and react to their behaviour, insight into events that trigger their behaviour, calming and alerting strategies, and problem solving skills.

The aim of *The Incredible Flexible You* is to help young learners develop the skills they need to be flexible social thinkers and social problem solvers. They will learn about social expectations and their own thinking (and that of others) to help them make better decisions when in the midst of social play and interaction.

How you can help at home:

- Use the language and talk about the concepts of The Zones as they apply to you in a variety of environments. Make comments aloud so the student understands it is natural that we all experience the different zones and use strategies to control (or regulate) ourselves.
- Help the student gain awareness of his or her zones and feelings by pointing out your observations
- Learn about the concepts your child is being exposed to and start to use the some vocabulary at home. Talk about the concepts when you are at home, at the store, in the car – anywhere and everywhere!

We hope you and your family will have fun while learning and practicing these important concepts!

Thank you for your support!

“The Social Thinking Team”

Aliesje Vink (Support Teacher), Tracey Westood (Teacher), Stephanie Ogden (Teacher), Marta McAulay (Speech & Language Pathologist), Carrie-Anne Addis (Occupational Therapist), Jessica Day (Youth & Family Counsellor)

The ZONES of Regulation® Glossary

Self-regulation: The ability to achieve the preferred state of alertness for the given situation. This includes regulating one's body's needs as well as one's emotions.

The Zones: A concept used to help students learn how to self-regulate. The Zones of Regulation creates a system to categorize how the body feels and emotions into four colored zones with which the students can easily identify.

Blue Zone: Used to describe a low state of alertness. The Blue Zone is used to describe when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.

Green Zone: Used to describe the ideal state of alertness. A person may be described as calm, happy, focused, or content when he or she is in the Green Zone. The student is in control in the Green Zone.

Yellow Zone: Used to describe a heightened state of alertness. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, or fear when in the Yellow Zone. The student maintains some control of himself or herself in the Yellow Zone.

Red Zone: Used to describe an extremely heightened state of alertness. A person may be experiencing anger, rage, explosive behavior, panic, extreme grief, terror, or elation when in the Red Zone and is described as being "out of control."

Toolbox: A collection of calming and alerting strategies a student can pull from depending on the present need.

Tools or strategies: Used interchangeably to refer to a calming or alerting technique that aids the student in self-regulation.

Trigger: An irritant that causes a student to become less regulated and increases the likelihood of going into the Yellow or Red Zone.

Stop, Opt, and Go: A concept used to aid students in controlling impulses and problem solving better solutions. This phrase is paired with a stoplight to provide additional cues for students.

Expected behaviors¹: Behaviors that give people around you **good or comfortable thoughts** about you.

Unexpected behaviors¹: Behaviors that give people **uncomfortable thoughts** about you.

What is the size of the problem? and Is this a Big or Little Problem?²: Questions posed to help students measure the size of the problem they are experiencing (Big Problem, Medium Problem, or Little Problem).

Big Problems: Problems that many people share and that have no easy, quick, or pleasant solution.

Medium Problems: Problems some people share that are able to be resolved in an hour to a couple of days.

Little Problems: Problems that only affect one to two people and can be ignored or solved in a matter of minutes.

Inner critic: Used to describe negative, self-defeating thoughts.

Inner coach: Used to describe positive thoughts.

Superflex thinking²: A flexible thinking pattern in which a person is able to consider different points of view or ways to do something.

Rock Brain thinking²: A rigid thinking pattern in which a person gets stuck on an idea and has difficulty considering other options or ways to do something.

1 Social Thinking vocabulary developed by Michelle Garcia Winner, *Thinking About YOU Thinking About ME* (2007)

2 Social Thinking vocabulary developed by Stephanie Madrigal and Michelle Garcia Winner, *Superflex: A Superhero Social Thinking Curriculum* (2008)