

Top 10 Do's and Don'ts

DO

DON'T

DO emphasize that all Zones are okay and support students using tools/strategies to manage how they feel. [Article "All The Zones are OK" by Leah Kuypers](#)

DON'T suggest or portray one Zone as worse than the others, use punitive practices related to Zones, imply that the Red Zone is the "bad Zone", or emphasize "getting back to the Green Zone".

DO stress that our Zone is determined by how a person is feeling on the inside, not their outward behavior.

DON'T classify Zones based on behavior or use a color-coded behavior chart based on The Zones. The Zones of Regulation is not a disciplinary technique or behavior management system.

DO "Own Your Zone"- Staff modeling is one of the most effective strategies for developing students' awareness and helping students understand that all the Zones are experienced and are okay. This includes staff participating in Zones check-ins and modeling regulation tools/strategies.

DON'T have only students use The Zones framework. Create the climate that WE ALL work on regulation. This includes the adults as well as the students.

DO use Zones terminology and reinforce concepts throughout the day in restorative conversations, problem-solving, teachable moments, literary discussions, etc. Revisit concepts after students have had time to apply the teachings so they can process at a deeper level.

DON'T teach a Zones concept and just tuck it away without reinforcing with students how to meaningfully apply the skills or strategies in their own lives.

DO use Zones Check-Ins with your students when they are ready, providing lots of opportunities to check-in when they are more regulated and in the Green Zone.

DON'T expect students to know how to use Zones Check-Ins without practice and modeling. Don't only provide check-in opportunities when in less regulated states or force students to check-in or label their Zone, particularly when they are in an escalated state.

DO

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DO allow students to access regulation tools/strategies in their classrooms and across school settings, and directly teach them how to use them appropriately and effectively. This empowers students to be more independent with their regulation and promotes inclusion for those who may struggle with these skills.

DON'T only offer regulation tools in a special or separate location such as a resource room, counselor/social worker's room, behavior room, sensory space etc. This may lead to isolating students, forming dependence (rather than independence), and missed learning opportunities.

DO personalize The Zones Curriculum to be the most relevant for your students and school site. This includes using individualized visuals with some students, age-appropriate imagery or media, culturally/linguistically relevant images and examples. Move at a pace that works best for you and your students, taking time to reinforce concepts.

DON'T use The Zones as a scripted curriculum program without making it relevant to your student population. Don't worry about teaching a new concept every week or following a predetermined pace if students aren't ready to move on. The students will be your guides.

DO be aware that students with histories of trauma and/or social learning challenges may struggle with acknowledging that they are not in the Green Zone, even if it is obvious to you. Consider mental health supports when a student doesn't feel safe acknowledging a Zone or that student continually insists they are in only one Zone.

DON'T persist in using The Zones with a student who is consistently becoming further dysregulated when encouraged to discuss the different feelings and Zones they are experiencing. Students will learn through example even when not actively participating. Consider referring this student to a counselor or other mental health provider available in your community.

DO provide training on The Zones of Regulation for all staff, including academic and behavior support staff, specialists, cafeteria, recess, and custodial staff. Allow for staff to become familiar with the curriculum before rolling out.

DON'T offer Zones training only to teachers. Often a school's support staff are on the frontlines of helping students navigate their feelings in school; they need to be included to offer consistency across school settings. Don't just put the Zones book/resources in someone's mailbox and expect he or she to teach it effectively.

DO use The Zones of Regulation™ Curriculum and supporting resources as your primary guide for implementation.

DON'T only use resources you find online, many are not representative of The Zones framework or misuse concepts in a way that could be detrimental to students.