

# Emotional Regulation Chart

The Emotional Regulation Chart is a valuable tool for helping children recognize and manage their emotions, whether in the classroom or at home.



This chart categorizes emotions into four zones, each representing different feelings, emotions, and body sensations. These zones are designed to help children recognize and manage their emotions effectively:

## Blue zone: low energy or discomfort

The Blue Zone refers to a state of low alertness and decreased energy. Individuals in this zone may feel sad, tired, unwell, injured, lonely, or bored. Physical movements tend to slow down, and there's often a sense of withdrawal or disconnection.

When someone is in the Blue Zone, they typically need rest or recharging to regain balance and meet their goals. Regulation strategies may include seeking comfort, engaging in energizing activities, or simply resting—depending on the specific emotion. For instance, rest is helpful when someone feels sick; energizing may be more appropriate when they're just tired; and emotional support can be beneficial when they're feeling sad. Across all scenarios, the key lies in recognizing low energy or down emotions and choosing supportive responses.

## Green zone: optimal state for learning and interaction

The Green Zone represents a calm, steady state where individuals are alert, content, and emotionally balanced. Common feelings in this zone include happiness, focus, peacefulness, and a sense of safety. In this state, the nervous system is well-regulated, making it an ideal time for learning and engagement—though learning can still happen in other zones as well.

Regulation in the Green Zone involves maintaining well-being through supportive actions. A person may eat a nourishing snack, take a break, practice mindfulness, or get light physical activity. These practices help sustain balance and prepare them to navigate tasks or challenges effectively and comfortably.

## Yellow zone: caution or unease

The Yellow Zone indicates rising energy levels and heightened emotions. Individuals in this state may feel stressed, excited, silly, nervous, confused, overwhelmed, or jittery. Emotions are more intense than in the Green Zone, but not yet extreme.

To regulate in the Yellow Zone, individuals may need to actively manage their responses and energy. For example, if someone is overly energetic at the lunch table, a deep breath can help maintain control. When feeling nervous before a presentation, mindfulness tools can help slow down thoughts and speech. And when frustration starts to rise, taking a pause allows space for a thoughtful response instead of a reactive one.

## Red zone: intense emotions

The Red Zone describes a state of very high energy and intense emotional overwhelm. In this zone, individuals may experience extreme emotions such as rage, panic, devastation, euphoria, or a sense of being out of control. This state often triggers the body's natural fight, flight, freeze, or flee response.

When someone enters the Red Zone, regulation involves recognizing the intensity of their state and choosing strategies to regain control. For instance, counting to ten can help reduce the urge to react in anger. If panic sets in, self-talk can be used to calm and reframe racing thoughts. Even in moments of extreme joy—like celebrating a big win—pausing for a breath can help manage impulses and maintain situational awareness.

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## Guided questions

Encourage the child to identify their emotions by asking guiding questions, such as:

- "What are you feeling right now?"
- "Does your body feel tired, calm, or tense?"
- "Are you happy, upset, or something else?"
- "What happened that might have made you feel this way?"
- "Do you feel like you need a break or want to talk about it?"
- "Which color zone matches how you feel?"

Once the child identifies their feelings and the corresponding zone, encourage them to use the suggested strategies to regulate their emotions. Reinforce the idea that all emotions are valid, and the focus is on finding constructive ways to manage them.

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## Additional notes