

# **ZONES of Regulation®** **in Practice**

**Empowering Students for Success: A Collaborative Approach to Implementing the 'Zones of Regulation'**

Mitchell Oxley– R/Assistant Principal

Sarah Gonsalves – School Occupational Therapist





# Introductions and School Context



Mitchell Oxley  
R/ Assistant Principal  
Lucas Gardens School



Sarah Gonsalves  
Occupational Therapist  
Lucas Gardens School



# Learning Outcomes

- An overview of Sensory Processing and Regulation
- Discussion on the Pyramid of Learning and Developmental Iceberg of Behaviour
- Introduction to The Zones of Regulation
- The Lucas Gardens School Approach to Self-Regulation in the Classroom
- How You Can Start Your Own Journey

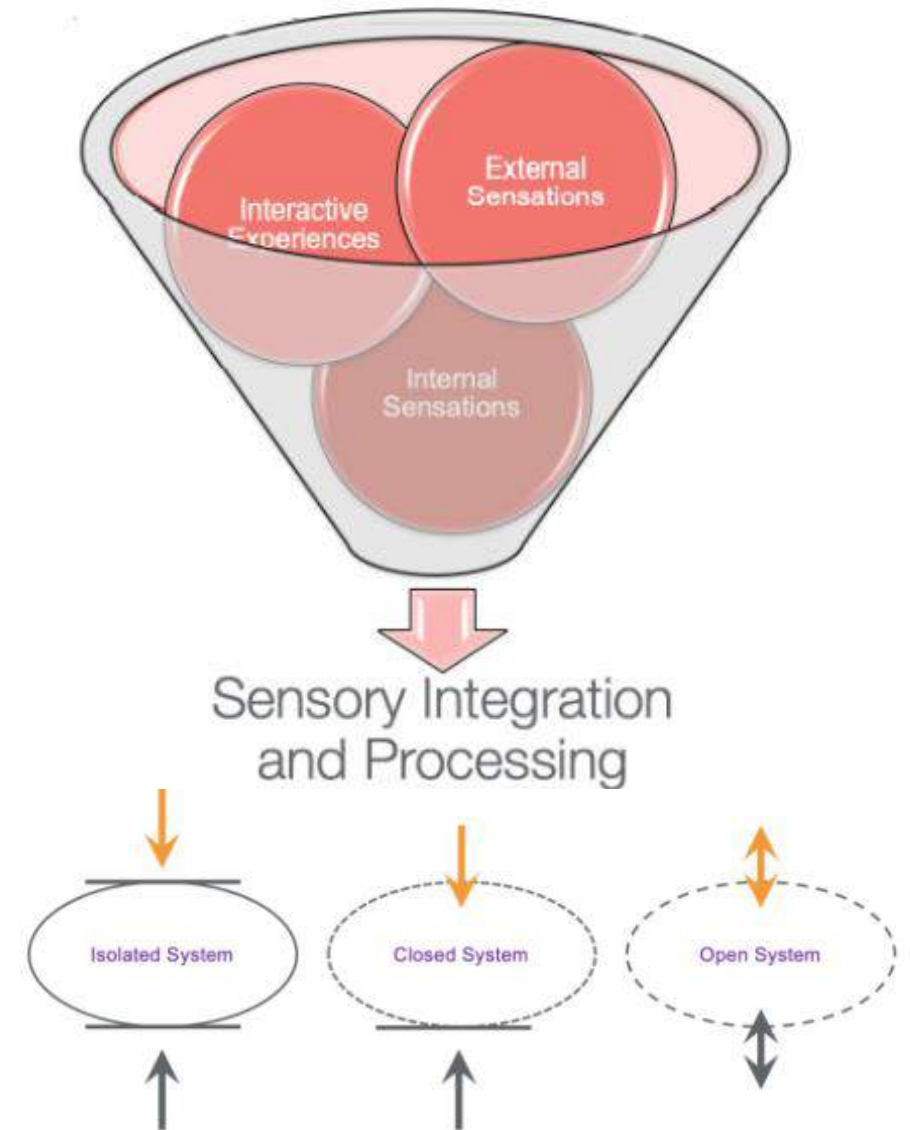


# Open System

## Example

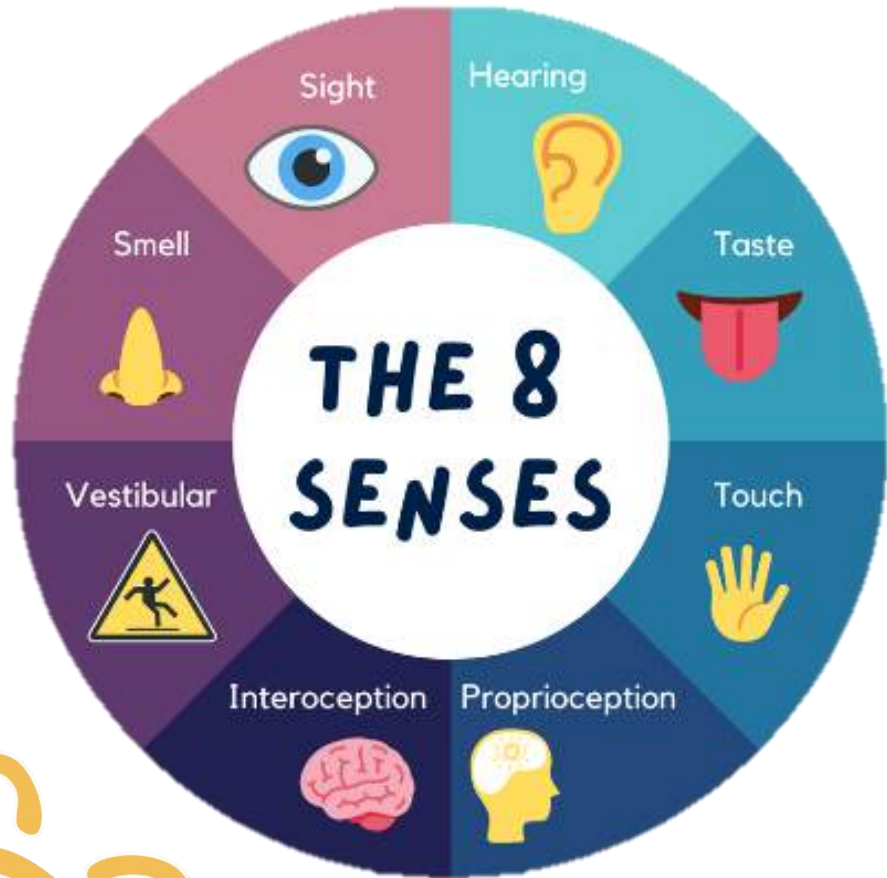
In a school environment there are dozens of teachers which create a micro level, but then there are additional non-teaching managerial departments which moves towards a levelled system.

This is the sample principle for the nervous system, brain and sensory systems. Crucial to think of systems as open and dynamic which means it is a changing, constantly evolving working system.





# Overview of Sensory Systems



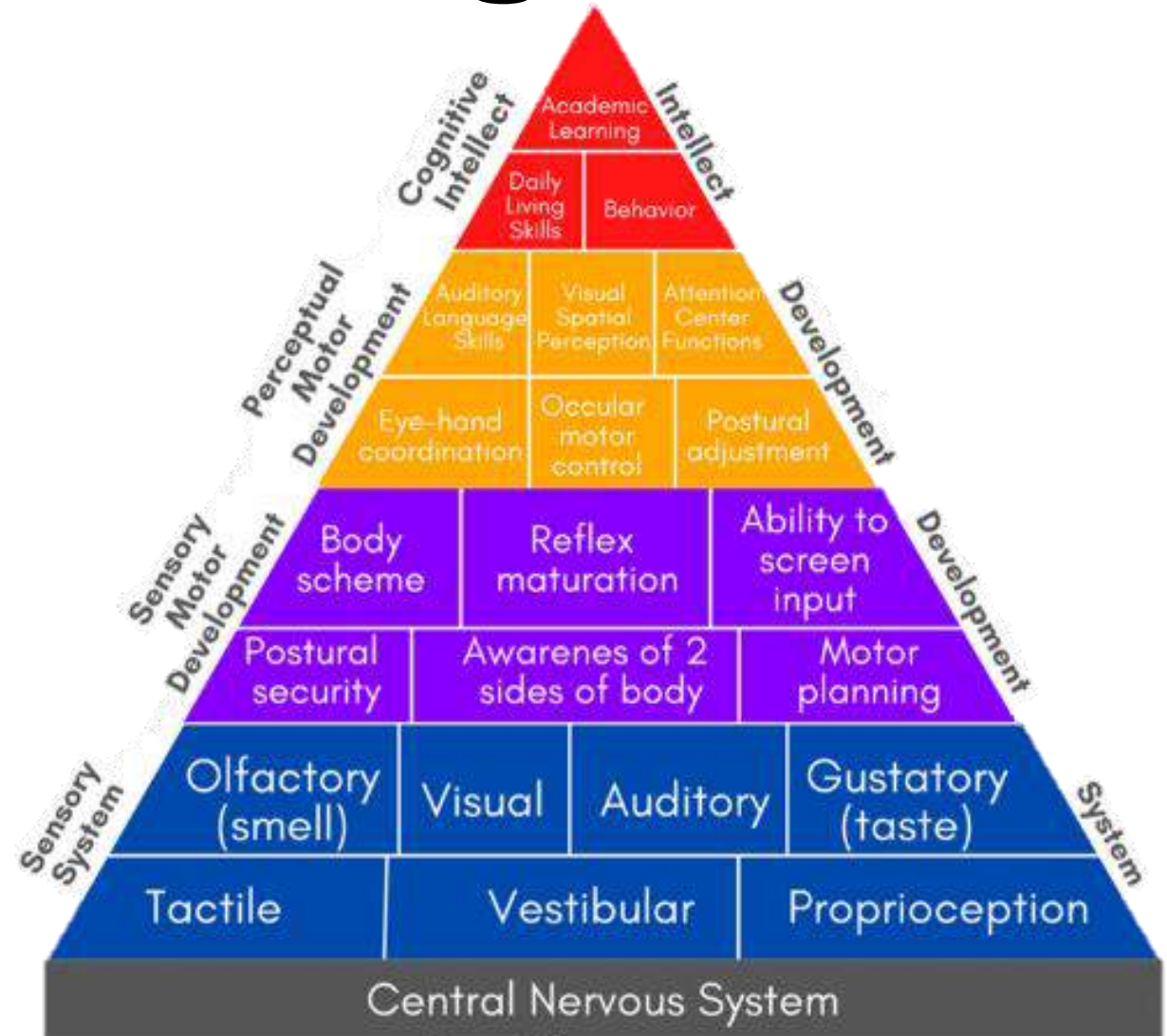
The **vestibular system** is located in the inner ear which consists of endolymph liquid which moves nerve endings converting signals into information.

The **proprioceptive system** is located in the deep mechanoreceptors of the muscles and joints in the body. This provides important data when there is compression or traction on the joints.

**Interoception** is the eighth system which refers to our bodies understanding of our internal senses. This is crucial for understanding hunger, thirst, bowel/bladder movements and temperature change.

# Pyramid of Learning

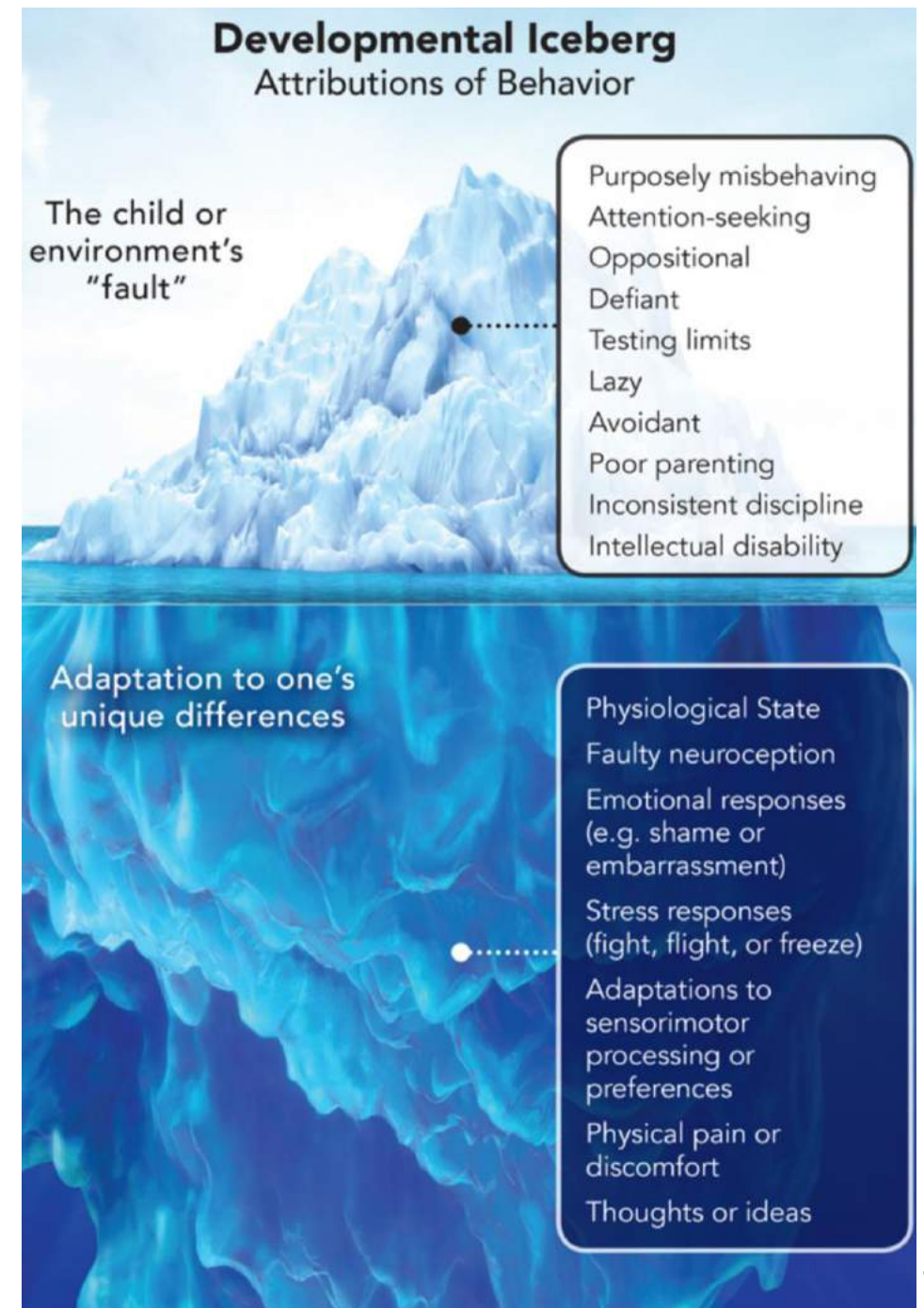
Sensory processing is the foundations of learning therefore if a child is not regulated and in a calm state they are not able to access higher level thinking skills.



# Developmental Iceberg of Behaviour

The iceberg analogy assists us with understanding the diverse range of causes to behaviour. Behaviour is the adaptive response to a situation and is often a child's way of communicating their needs, frustrations or emotions.

Labelling a behaviour as “defiant” without providing any possible reasoning, trigger or cause is often unhelpful as it results in generic strategies that do not often work to support healthy, positive, behaviour-emotional changes.

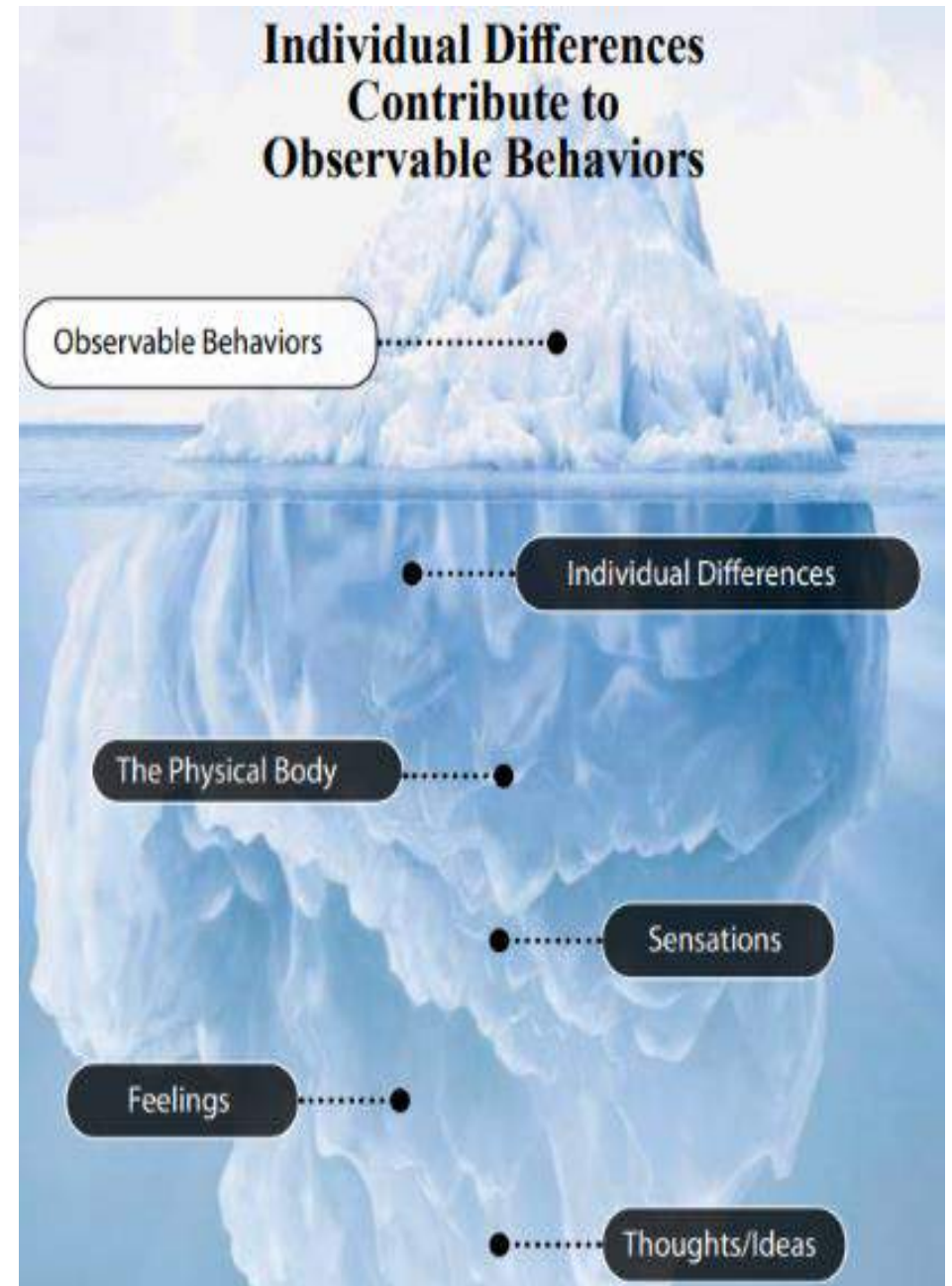




# Developmental Iceberg of Behaviour

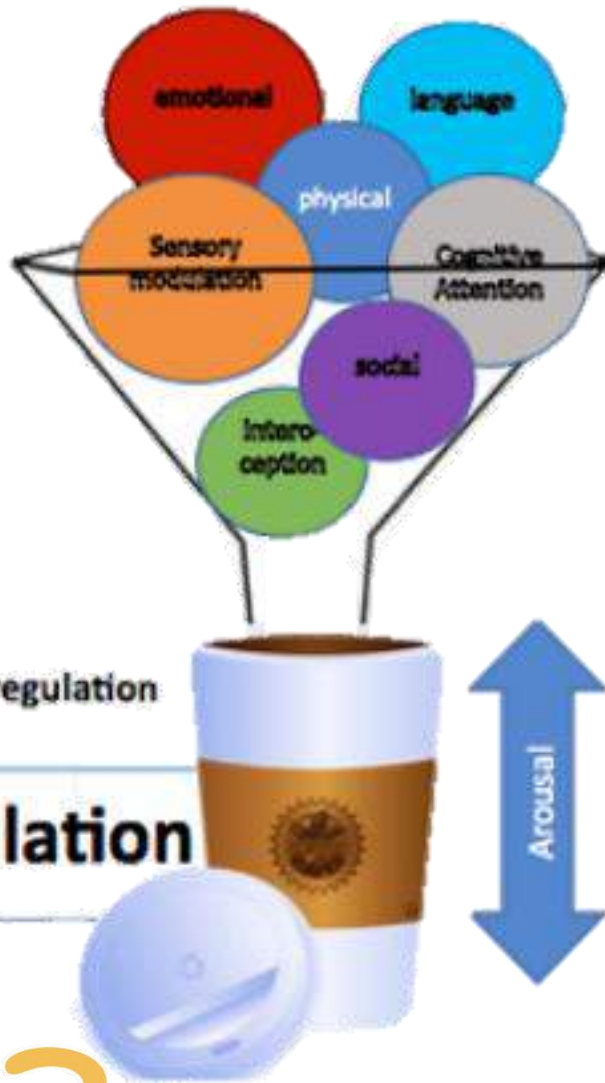
Understanding a student's "individual profile" means witnessing their individual needs and ways they process information. This is crucial in supporting healthy learning and regulation.

Functional-emotional capacity levels are fluid and can change rapidly. This reinforces our need to recognise these levels in our students as it assists us in using the correct strategies to support them. Often over-use of inappropriate strategies can reinforce a behaviour that is not ideal of the situation.





# Definition of Sensory Regulation



“The capacity to be appropriately **calm, and alert, and available** in response to internal and environmental demands” (Miller et al., 2007).

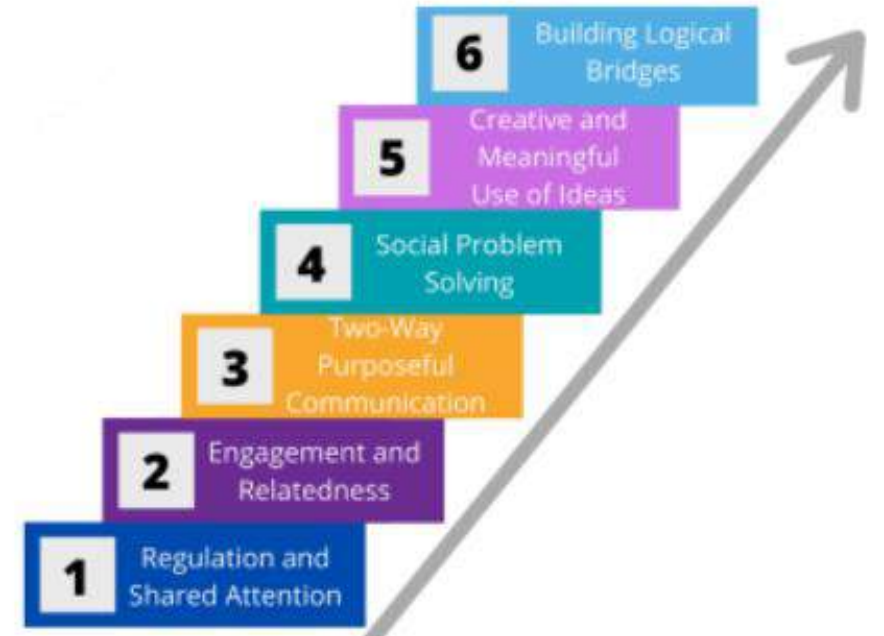
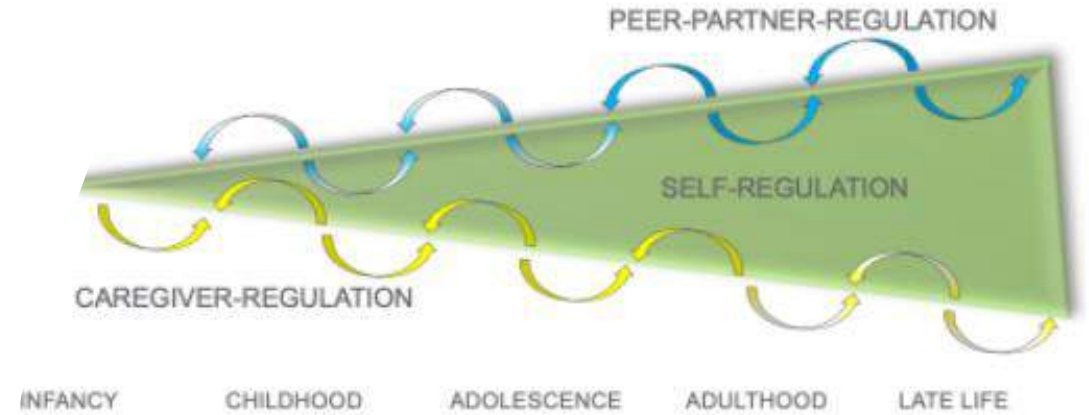
Regulation is a **whole brain process** which refers to state arousal, physiological regulation, and nervous system level regulation.

A child who is **calm** but **not alert or available** is not regulated. The size of each person's cup varies and a child's ability to regulate amounts of sensation differs. What may overwhelm one child may be different to another.

# Sensory Regulation Development

This highly depends on a child's functional-emotional capacity level. A child's ability to independently regulate themselves has pre-requisite skills which must be achieved. These skills include:

- Awareness of self and awareness of their arousal state (Zones of Regulation was created to support this).
- Ability to identify strategies that feel good and understand the cause and effect of using these strategies.
- Ability to communicate needs with others either through verbal or non-verbal ways.



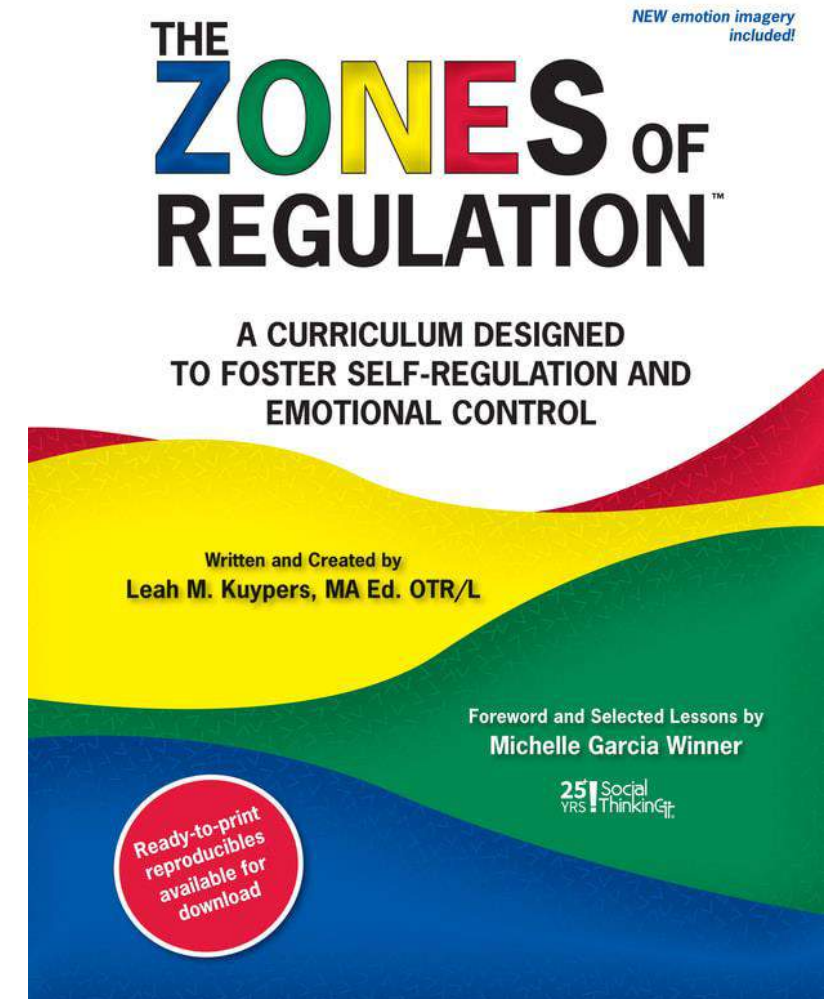


# What is **ZONES** of Regulation?

The Zones of Regulation is a curriculum geared towards helping students gain skills in consciously regulating their actions, which in turn leads to increased control and problem-solving.

The Zones provide a framework to explore calming techniques, cognitive strategies and the sensory supports students require.

The Zones were originally created for neurodivergent students, however we know that the strategies we use in 'special education' are almost always best-practice for all students. We also recognise the cognitive demand of the original lessons are not always suitable for those with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities.



# Journey Pathway at Lucas Gardens School

## Laying the Foundation

2021

- Development of implementation plan with occupational therapist and executive team.
- Beginning of the development of the program.
- Approval of the first unit.
- Development of regulation plans for all students across the school.

## Building on the Framework

2022

- Introduction of social mapping concepts, language and resources.
- Unit program completed.
- Discussion of data to be collected to support teachers.
- Sharing of Zones of Regulation PL to the other schools in the Strathfield network.

## Co-Teaching and Data Collection

2023

- Co-teaching of the unit plan.
- Regulation data collected in Term 1 and Term 4 to show the impact of the program implementation.
- Beginning consults with occupational therapist and classroom teacher to identify PLSP goals for students linked to the LGS program.

## Full Implementation, Success and Reflection

2024

- Program has been successfully implemented across the school.
- All classrooms are utilising social mapping, regulation plans, zones check-ins, and teaching lessons as part of the curriculum.
- Student data is taken consistently to demonstrate progress in self regulation skills.





# Supporting Staff for Success



## Term 2 2024 – Focus: Student Engagement and Assessment

Week 1	PLSP and communication goal tracking Led by leadership team	5.1.2 – Assess student learning 5.4.2 – Interpret student data	
Week 2	Introduction to Literacy and Numeracy Progressions & Lucas Gardens Pre-skills and tracking data in PLAN2 Led Wendy du Plessis	5.1.2 – Assess student learning 5.4.2 – Interpret student data	
Week 3	Positive Behaviour for Learning at Lucas Gardens Led by Lucas Gardens teachers	4.3.2 – Manage challenging behaviours	
Week 4	Report Writing Led by leadership team	5.5.2 – Report on student achievement	
Week 5	<b>The Zones of Regulation</b> School Walk-around and Classroom Visits  Led by Lucas Gardens teachers	4.2.2 – Manage classroom activities 3.4.2 – Select and use resources	



# The Plan for Lucas Gardens School




Unit	Learning Experiences/ Adjustments	Learning Intention	Success Criteria
<b>UNI1</b>  <b>Introduction to The Zones</b>	<b>Focus:</b> Introduction to the Zones aims to improve the students' understanding of the colour-based system and <u>begin establishing</u> connections between how they feel internally and how they express this externally. Children with disabilities may require additional support	<b>We are learning to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify that feelings can be grouped into four coloured "Zones"</li> <li>Associate feelings/emotions to <u>drawings</u> or picture symbols</li> </ul>	<b>I can:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look at the Zones Posters</li> <li>Select a colour when given a verbal prompt</li> <li>Look at images of emotions/feelings</li> </ul>
	<p>to recognise how their actions impact others and what behaviours they demonstrate <u>as a result</u> of how they feel. These lessons aim to expand on their skills <u>in a logical and sequential manner</u>.</p> <p><b>The purpose of using thought and speech bubbles</b> <u>begins</u> to introduce the concept that "thoughts" <u>impacts</u> feelings. For children with Theory of Mind deficits (particularly children with <u>Autism</u>) this is a foreign concept and therefore visuals and <u>supports</u> are needed. This is helpful for students who have ongoing difficulties with a particular peer, topics, trigger <u>words</u>, or activities.</p>	<b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to Zones of Regulation and <u>colour system</u>. Begin using terms related to how our "engine runs".</li> <li>Starting with 4 Emotions - Sad, Happy, Excited and Angry.</li> <li>Discuss the emotions and make connections to <u>own</u> experiences.</li> <li>Label simple emotions &amp; pair with Zones (zones matching activities)</li> <li>Showing Zones videos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a poster for a Zone of Regulation</li> <li>Look at a Zone of Regulation poster</li> </ul>



# The Plan for Lucas Gardens School



Adjustments	Cortical Vision Impairment Profile Adjustments	
	<i>Please refer to Appendix for General Considerations &amp; Education on CVI</i>	
	Area of Vision Impairment (select as appropriate)	Adjustments
	<b>Colour</b>  The student may have a strong attraction to visual targets of particular colours. The use of vibrant or highly saturated colours can increase, alert, and sustain visual attention.	<b>Zones Posters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using materials such as cellophane can greatly assist in attracting visual attention to the zone's colour.</li> <li>Using materials that are textured can increase the variety of sensory input improving understanding of the concept.</li> </ul>

Lesson Plan	The Zones in Videos	
	YouCue Feelings Activities	
	Lesson 1 - Introducing Zones Videos	
	<b>Aim:</b> To expose students to the different zones colours and emotions (1 emotion per zone) without any expectation for students to be correctly matching or demonstrating a receptive understanding.	
	 <p>Inside Out: Guessing the Feelings.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Teacher labels emotion</b> and zone colour and provides a tangible photo or light box to students to hold, feel, and press.</li> <li>Students are identifying what zone they are in with prompting from the teacher.</li> <li>Students can point, touch, or hold a zone visual whilst the teacher is playing the video. <i>Pause the video on each zone and discuss, demonstrate, and use visual aids to support students' understanding.</i></li> </ul>	

# Unit and Lesson Implementation



## The **ZONES** of Regulation®

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Created by School Occupational Therapy Sarah Gonsalves.

ADHERE: Teacher accurately delivers program elements	
<b>Prepares</b>	Teacher prepares visual materials in advance
<b>Structures</b>	Teacher structures lessons in recommended sequence (Opening Routine, Lessons, Wrap Up)
	Teacher refers to appendix for resources and visuals
<b>Facilitates</b>	Teacher uses curriculum to introduce vocabulary and visual supports to aid students understanding
	Teacher facilitates involvement/reflection of the curriculum content through statements and activities
<b>Evaluates</b>	Teacher gives verbal feedback to students and evaluates student learning

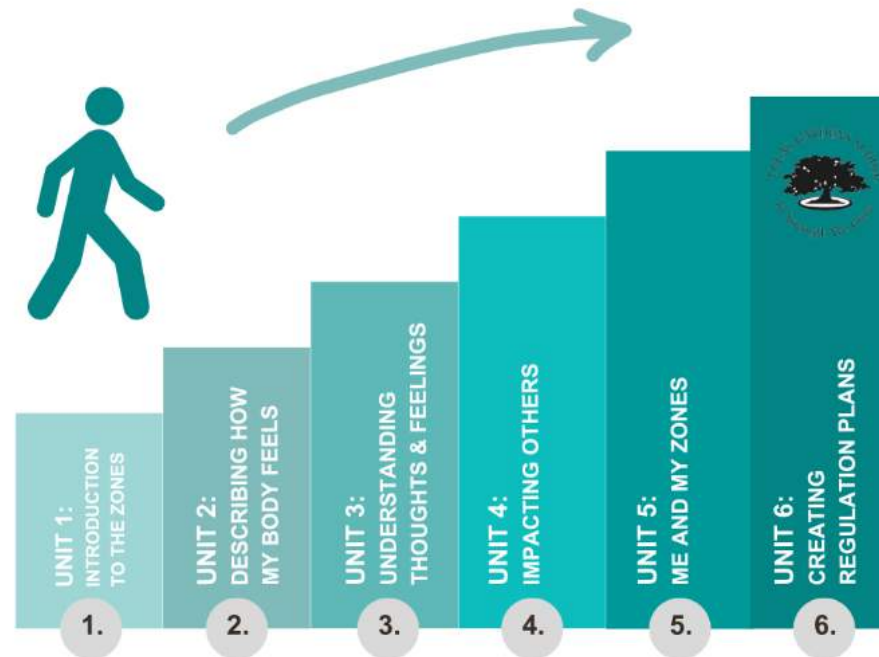




# Unit and Lesson Implementation



## The Unit Progression



# Unit and Lesson Implementation



Outcomes	Content/access content point/precursors
<p><b>UN1- Introduction to The Zones</b></p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to The Zones of Regulation and Colour System</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Starting simple with 1 emotion per Zone and slowly increasing based on understanding expanding.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the emotion and begin making connections with your own experiences.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Label simple emotions &amp; pair with Zones (zones matching activities)</li></ul>	<p><b>Resources Needed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> A3 Cardboard for each Zone colour - Blue, Green, Yellow and Red.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Crayons or Textas for each Zone colour - Blue, Green, Yellow and Red.</li></ul> <p><b>Video Links:</b></p> <p>Video: Everybody's Feelings Can Change Link: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uzend67vKc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uzend67vKc</a></p> <p>Video: Sesame Street: Belly Breathing Link: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDOpylA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mZbzDOpylA</a></p> <p>Video: Inside Out: Meet the Zones Link: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0e-oMZi000">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0e-oMZi000</a></p> <p>Video: Sesame Street: Name that Feeling Link: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxfJicfyCdg&amp;t=132s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxfJicfyCdg&amp;t=132s</a></p>



# Unit and lesson Implementation


**Lesson Plan**

## Understanding a Thought

**Focus:** Students are introduced to the concept that everyone had different thoughts and began bridging the understanding that this is a "shared world".


- Teacher provides an image of children looking at various items. Teacher states "thoughts are in our head" and "our heart is in our chest". "Our brain is our thought keeper and our heart is for feelings".
- Teacher shows an image of students and states "what are they thinking about" the student points to the object in the child's hand. The teacher points to the image in the thought bubble and the object and uses KWS to demonstrate this is the same.

Depending on the students capabilities the teacher can choose to use an image with the thought bubble with the answer or without.



- The teacher can choose to use the above images and cartoons or take their own images of their students with a drawn thought bubble.
- It is highly suggested you first introduce the concept of "different" thoughts and you use key-word-sign to represent this.


## Introducing the concept of "same thoughts"



- Repeat as above but demonstrating KWS to represent the children are having the "same" thought and playing together.

## Lesson 1: What are they thinking about?

The teacher should print a thought bubble that can be used to represent what the students or characters in the pictures are thinking about.



**Applying in the Classroom:**


- Each student can have a thought bubble on their table. When the student is completing work we place this image in the thought bubble. We state "we are thinking about work"
- If the student attempts to avoid work we may label "not thinking play - we are thinking about work" and pointing to the thought bubble.

**Applying in the Classroom:**

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## Lesson 2: Recognising and Matching Thoughts with Images.


- Students are shown a laminated thought bubble with an image of children (can be taken of students playing or cartoon images) engaging in activities. Visuals of the activities the students in the image are engaged in are then provided and students are asked to put the image in the thought bubble following the prompt "what are they thinking about". This can be accompanied with a point prompt to the activity for direct matching.



**Adjustments**

### Cortical Vision Impairment Profile Adjustments

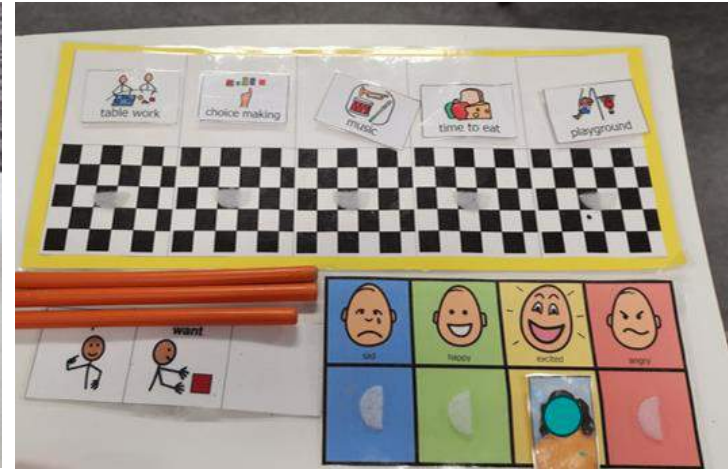
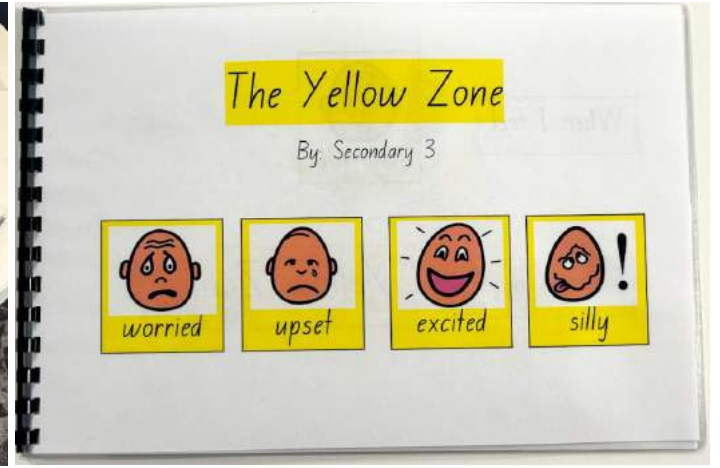
*Please refer to Appendix for General Considerations & Education on CVI*

Area of Vision Impairment	Image	General Adjustments
<b>Colour</b>  The student may have a strong attraction to visual targets of particular colours. The use of vibrant or highly saturated colours can increase, alert, and sustain visual attention.		<input type="checkbox"/> Using preferred colours with a black background with no patterns allows for improved visual attention.  <input type="checkbox"/> Reduce colour in peripheral vision and reduce any "hanging items" near the child's visual field.  <input type="checkbox"/> Consider the colour as a visual target to highlight important concepts.





# Unit and lesson implementation



# Regulation Plans

## Me in My ZONES

This is a picture of me in the RED ZONE:



This is a picture of me in the GREEN ZONE:



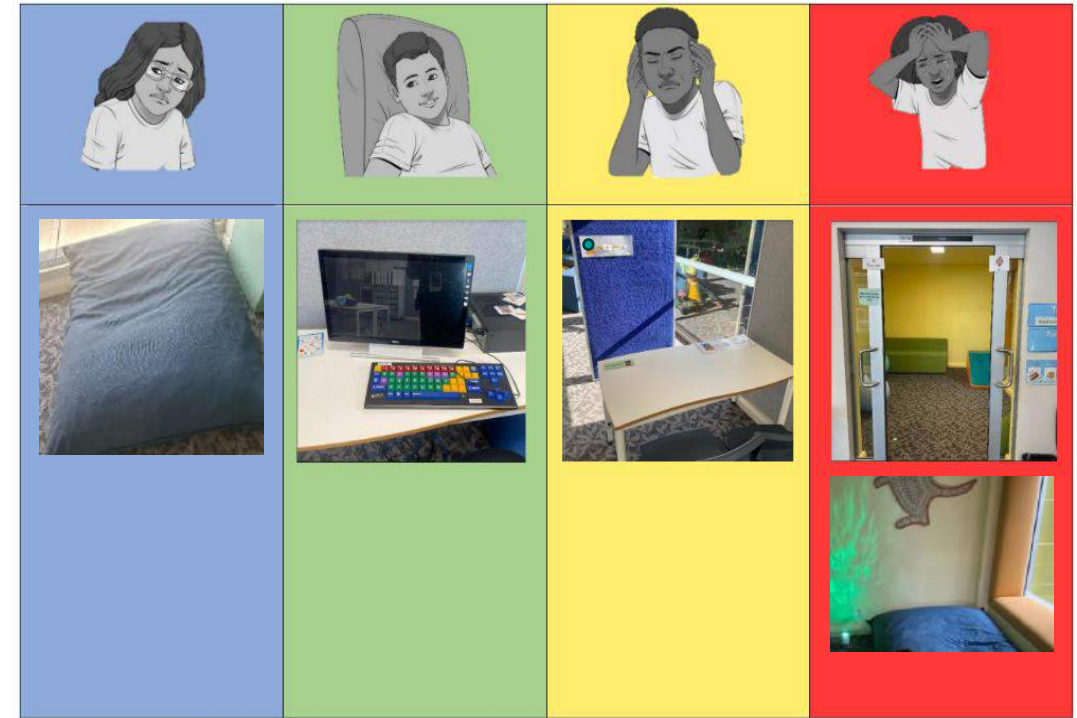
This is a picture of me in the YELLOW ZONE:



This is a picture of me in the BLUE ZONE:



## Tools for Each of My ZONES





# Regulation Plans

**CAUTION!** Sometimes things happen to make me feel worried, upset, or frustrated! These things are called "triggers." These put me in the Yellow or Red Zone! Here are some of my triggers:



- Unpredictable changes in routine
- Prolonged sitting without regulation breaks and opportunity for movement.
- Prolonged periods without a stimulating activity present leading to boredom
- Overwhelming sensory feedback including a combination of loud noise, crowds, and visual feedback.

## Strategies To Support XX

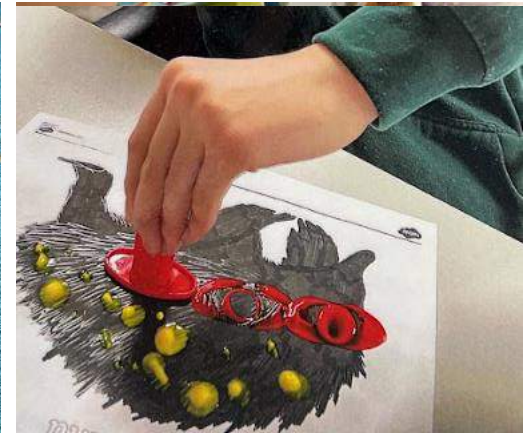
### Goals:

1. For XX to transition between environments without the presence of avoidant behaviour or absconding to support his ability to engage in a school-based routine.
2. For XX to use functional communication strategies to reflect his sensory-related needs and reduce the occurrence of sensory-seeking behaviours.
3. For XX to recognise and expand his self-awareness through identifying himself within the zones of regulation.

Behaviour	Preventative Strategies	Reactive Strategies
<p>Absconding from the room or his seat</p> <p><i>Purpose: Attention</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide first-then instruction</li> <li>• Provide choice board and allow XX to have some choice and control</li> <li>• Provide consistent vocal praise for positive behaviour</li> </ul> <p>It is crucial that XX is given opportunities for <i>positive reinforcement</i> which includes choosing rewards prior to a behaviour occurring. Providing reward options after a behaviour has occurred is a form of tangible bribery which will increase the likelihood of behaviour in the future. XX must choose items to continuously motivate him which can be used as encouragement but must occur prior to behaviours.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure XX is safe by retrieving him from where he has run too. Limit vocal attention unless XX is in an unsafe situation.</li> <li>2. Continue with first-then instruction and redirect XX to engage in the appropriate behaviour.</li> <li>3. Reduce demand to be achievable for XX's current state.</li> <li>4. Provide a visual timer of when the activity will be finished.</li> <li>5. Reduce the availability/timing or size of the reward if problematic behaviour has occurred.</li> </ol> <p>Is XX calm?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is XX providing eye contact?</li> <li>2. Is XX's skin clear and not sweaty?</li> <li>3. Is XX laughing or calm?</li> </ol>
<p>Grabbing and pulling others</p> <p><i>Purpose: Attention</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide frequent opportunity for engagement and communication</li> <li>• Be mindful of when XX is left unattended or with limited distraction or access to items – This often instigates most attention related behaviours</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prompt XX to communicate his needs using his AAC device.</li> <li>2. Provide vocal praise for appropriate communication. ]</li> </ol>
<p>Undress himself and remove his clothing</p> <p><i>Purpose: Attention</i></p>	<p>Same as above</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide clear verbal instruction "stop", "listen" and "pants on"</li> <li>2. Provide first-then instruction</li> <li>3. If available redirect XX to the bathroom and to use the toilet if needed</li> </ol>
<p>Urinating</p> <p><i>Purpose: Attention</i></p>	<p>Same as above</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Redirect XX to the bathroom immediately if possible</li> <li>2. Prompt XX to use functional communication via his device to reflect his wants and needs</li> <li>3. Use very simple language and encourage eye contact and connection to ensure XX is listening and engaged</li> </ol>
<p>Screaming</p> <p><i>Purpose: Dysregulated and Attention</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide frequent opportunities for XX to request a regulation break</li> <li>• Provide many opportunities for XX to use his choice board to request for activities/sensory items that can soothe and regulate him</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prompt XX "use a quiet voice" and point to your mouth</li> <li>2. Provide alternate options that are available to redirect him to regulating activities. Provide options in a field of 2 e.g., "do you want (a) or (b)?"</li> <li>3. Redirect XX to engage with someone – sing nursery rhymes and encourage XX to clap, tap his legs or his chest in time with you – This can support him in de-escalating</li> </ol>

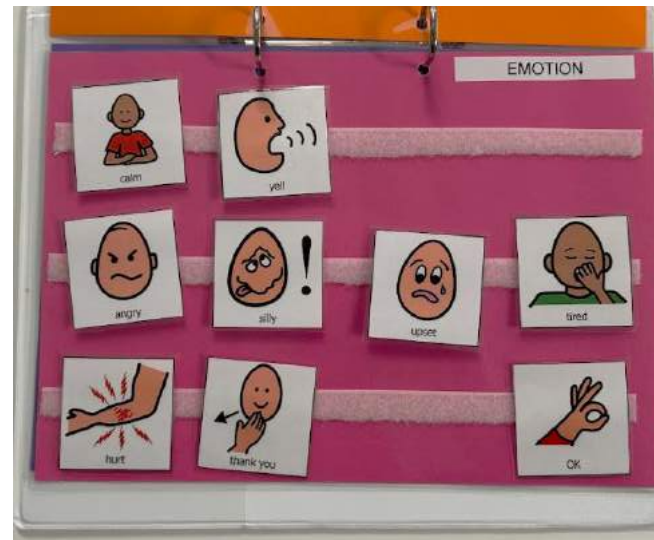


# Regulation Tools

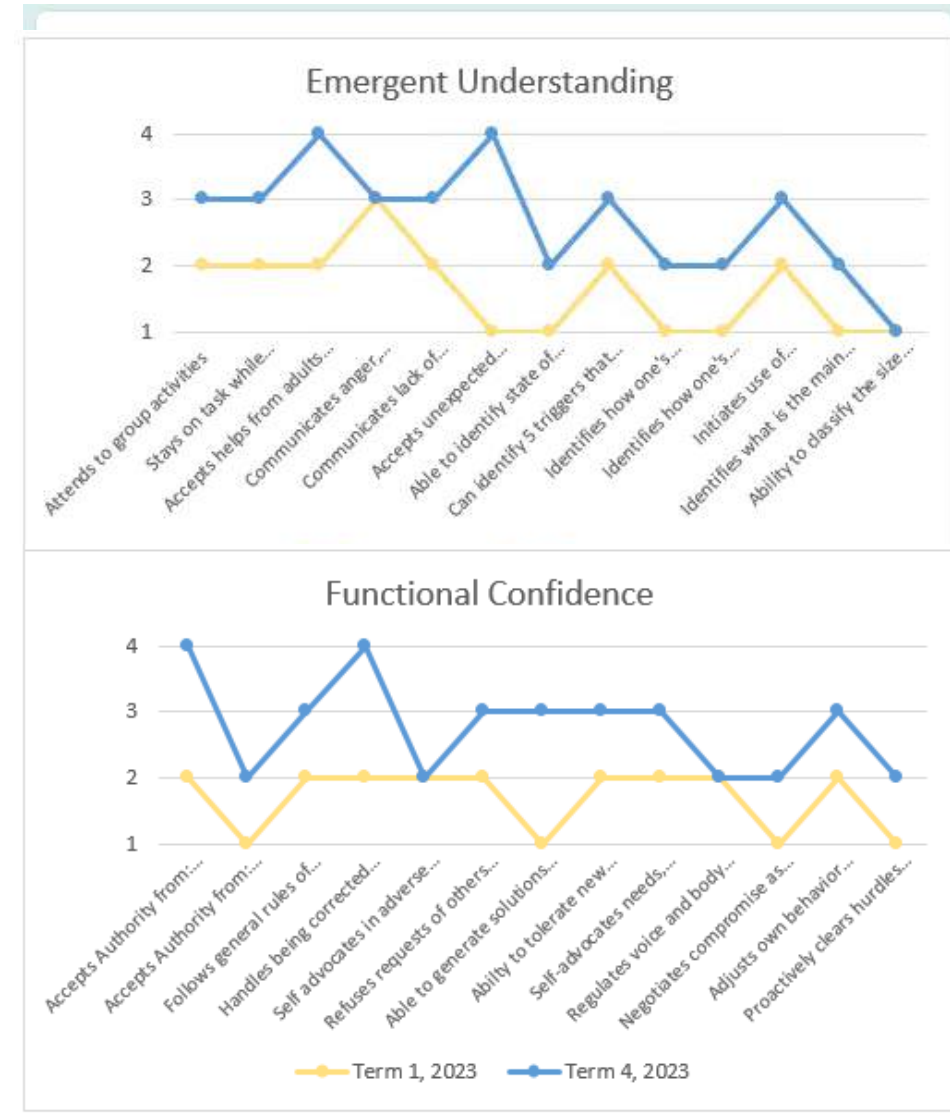
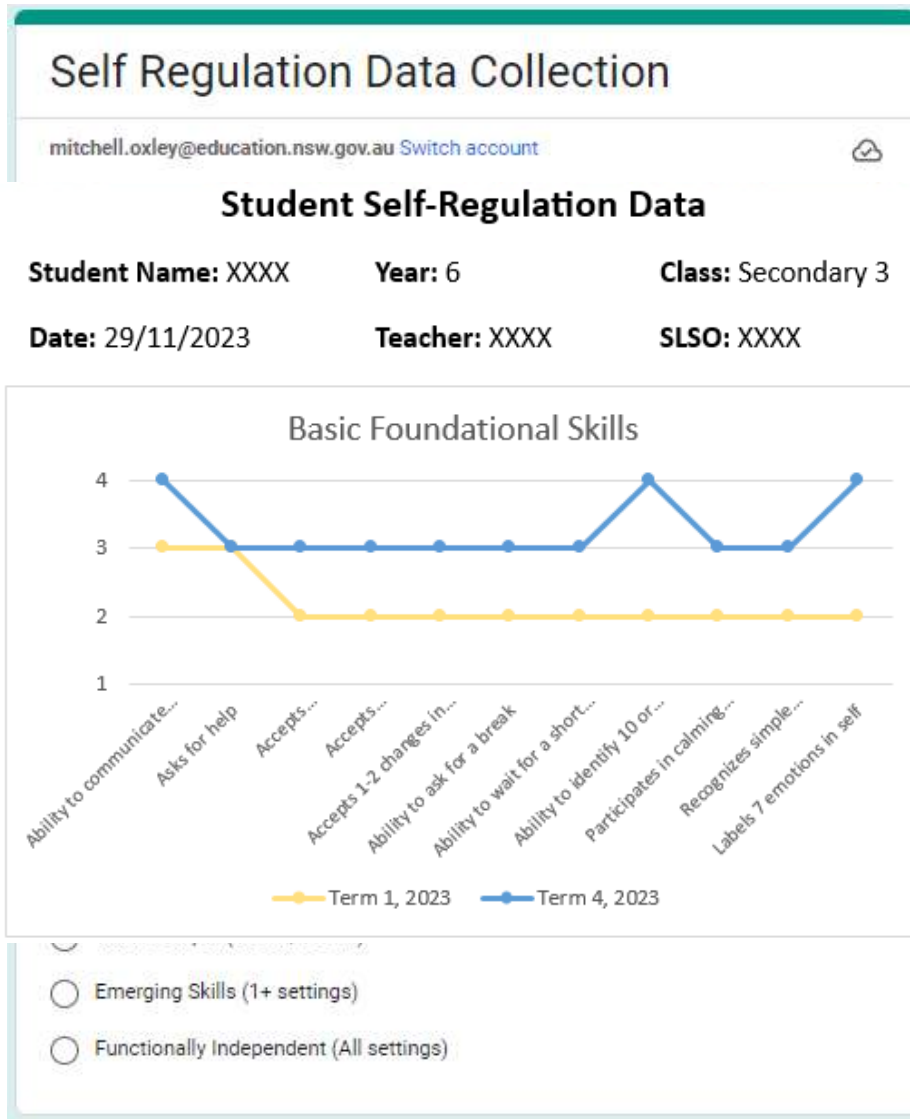




# Social Behaviour Mapping

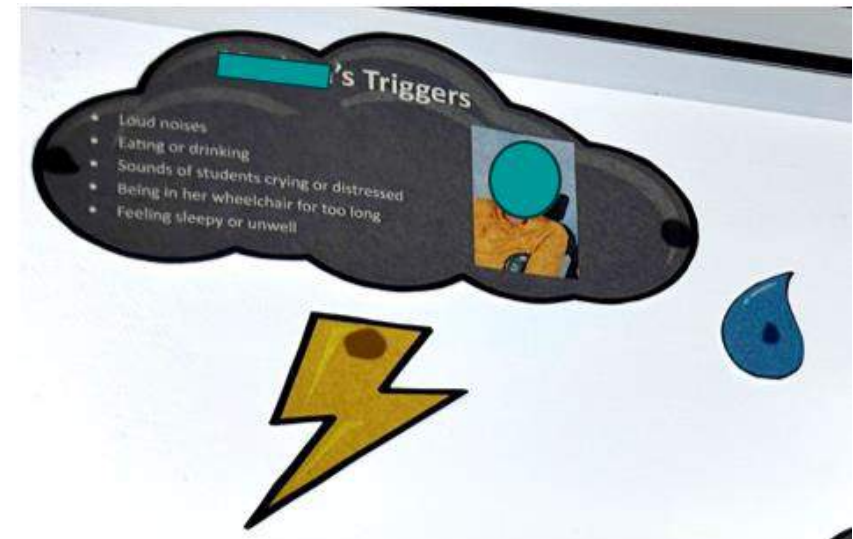
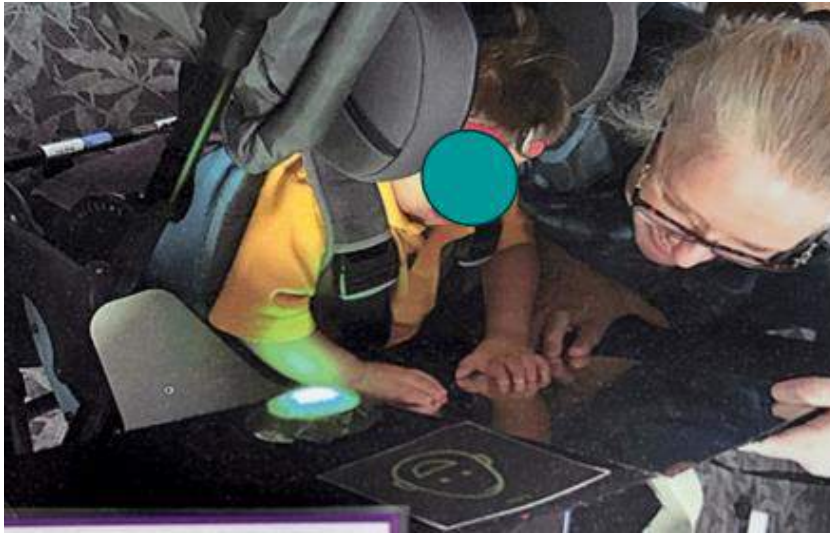


# Regulation Data Collection

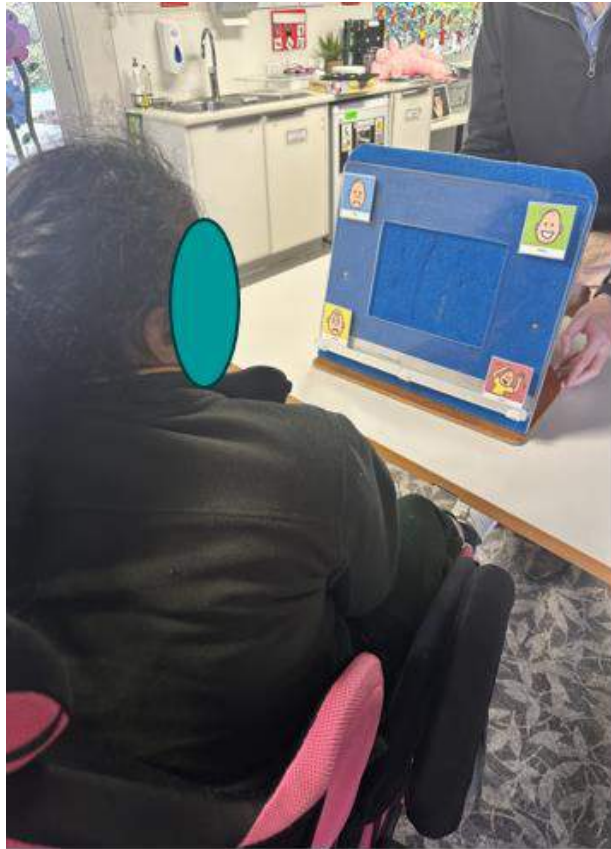




# Zone Displays for Classes with Visual Impairment

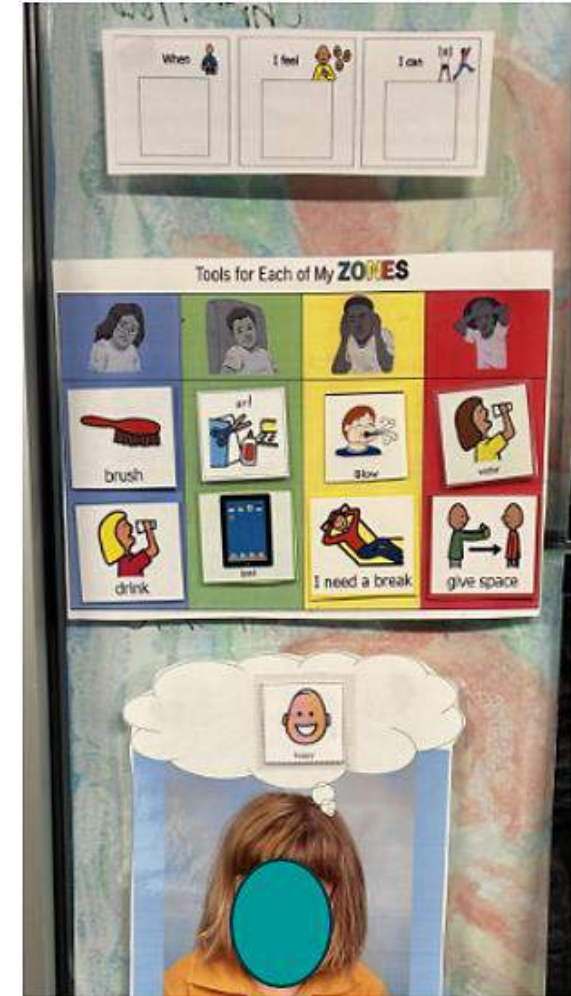


# Zone Displays for Classes with Students with Physical Disabilities



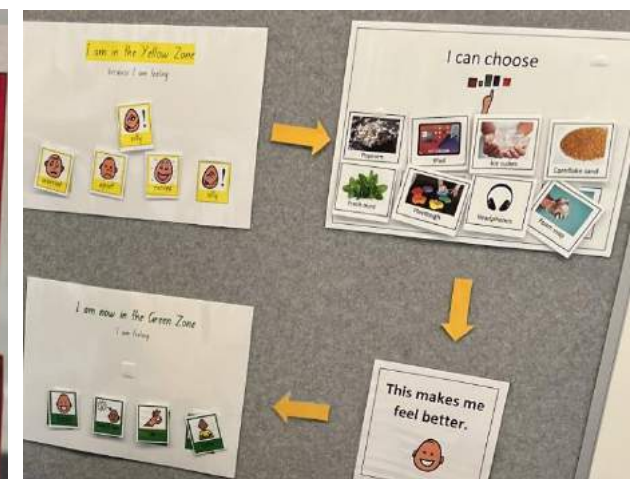
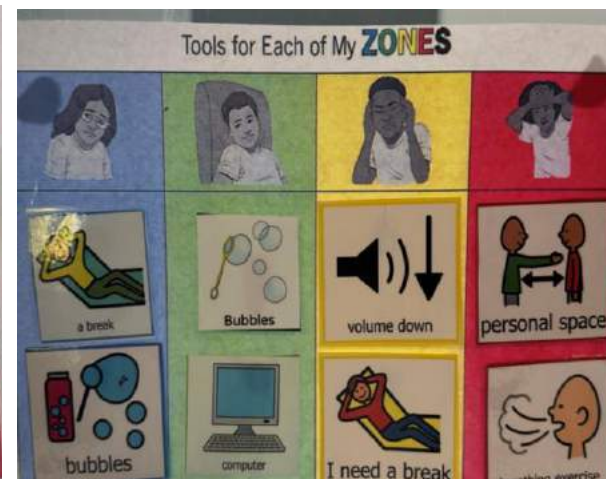
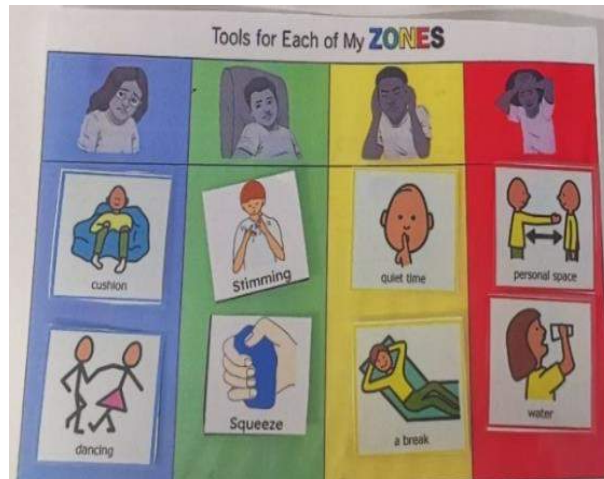


# Zone Displays for Classes with Neurodivergent Students





# Visuals and Language



# Our Top Recommendations

- Consider your context and how the zones of regulation can be adjusted to meet the needs of your setting
- What supports are available, or needed for your staff and students
- Develop an implementation plan
- Review and adapt
- Give it time – it is a journey to implement this and not an overnight change





# **Thankyou & Questions**