

Understanding and Managing Emotions with Brain Zones

What Are Brain Zones?

The brain has three main “zones” that describe how we feel and respond to stress or emotions:

- **Green Zone (Calm and Connected):** When we feel safe and able to think, play, and learn.
- **Yellow Zone (Alert or Stressed):** When we feel worried, restless, or upset, and may act out.
- **Red Zone (Shut Down or Overwhelmed):** When we feel disconnected, tired, or very upset.

How to Use Brain Zones as a Family

Make a Brain Zones Chart:

- Draw three circles and label them: Green Zone, Yellow Zone, and Red Zone.
- Draw simple faces or symbols to show what each zone feels like.
- Show that everyone has different feelings and can move between zones.

Check In:

- Ask your child routinely, “What zone are you in?” This helps them notice their feelings.
- Discuss what helped you feel calm or how you handled tough moments. This builds emotional awareness and strengthens family bonds.
- Practice regularly! Learning to recognize and manage emotions takes time.

Move Back to Green:

- Help your child to the Green Zone when they're feeling upset. Try:
 - Within Green Zone: Deep breaths, a hug, or a favorite activity.
 - From the Yellow Zone: Jumping jacks, squeezing a toy, or talking about worries.
 - From the Red Zone: A cuddle, quiet time, or a warm bath.

The Brain Zone Game

You will need a clear space to move around and three colored papers or cards (green, yellow, and red to match the zones)

Step 1: Set Up

- Place the three colored cards in different areas of the room to represent the respective Brain Zones (Green, Yellow, and Red Zones)
- Explain what each color means using simple language

Step 2: Start the Game

- Take turns calling out different emotions or scenarios and running to the color zone that matches how they think that emotion or situation feels.
 - Example emotions: “Excited!” “Angry!” “Sleepy!” “Worried!” “Proud!”
 - Example scenarios: “You have a big test tomorrow.” “Someone took your toy.” “You’re having a fun time at the park.”

Step 3: Move Between Zones

- After picking a zone, talk about ways to move back to the Green Zone if they are in the Yellow or Red Zone.
 - “If you’re in the Yellow Zone, what could help you feel calm?”
 - “If you’re in the Red Zone, how can we help you feel better?”

Bonus Rules and Variations:

- Act it out! Take turns acting out an emotion. The other players guess which zone the person is in, and everyone talks about how they could help each other get back to Green.
- Use creative and fun movements to represent each zone! Examples: green- dancing, yellow- jumping, red- laying down.

The Brain Zone Game helps children recognize and express their emotions by connecting them to different colors and actions. By playing regularly, children practice emotional awareness and learn how to navigate between zones, building the skills to manage emotions and stress in everyday life. This fun, interactive activity strengthens family bonds and encourages problem-solving, making emotional learning engaging and supportive for everyone involved.

