



Preschool Field Officer Service Newsletter Term Three 2020

To contact the PSFO Team:

Tel: 9742 8199

Email: psfo.service@wyndham.vic.gov.au

AREA LEADER UPDATE

Hello Wyndham Educators

30 ways to practice self-care

1. Wake up and watch the sunrise
2. Make your bed each morning
3. Read a book
4. Go for a walk
5. Meditate
6. Catch up on your favourite TV show
7. Bake something
8. Drink a glass of water
9. Dance to your favourite song
10. Find a quiet place at home to sit and have a coffee or tea
11. Light a candle
12. Catch up with a friend via video chat
13. Buy yourself some flowers to brighten up the home
14. Treat yourself to your favourite sweet treat
15. Run a bath
16. Go to bed early
17. Sing in the shower
18. Start a gratitude journal
19. Take 4 deep breathes
20. Order take-out and get it delivered
21. Join an online yoga class
22. Cosy up on the couch with a blanket
23. Take some time to be still and listen to your surroundings
24. Listen to a podcast
25. Cook your favourite meal
26. Do a mini declutter
27. Have a good laugh with friends
28. Pamper yourself
29. Have a sleep in
30. Sit outside and watch the sunset

As we continue to navigate the constant challenges and changes that COVID-19 is delivering to our communities, I encourage you to keep your own wellbeing at the forefront of your mind. Taking the time to practice self-care is important not only for ourselves, but for our families and those we work with. Small strategies when practiced consistently can make a big difference.

The PSFO Team have continued to run the PSFO Service throughout the whole pandemic thus far, albeit with wearing a different lens. Educators have been provided with support via phone catch ups, email follow ups and video chats. Some Educators have fed back that the video chats simply feel like the PSFO is sitting and chatting in the office, like usual. PSFO's are still able to observe children thanks to Educators sending through video footage (with parent permission). We are still accepting all Support Requests and are working towards resuming on site observations/visits once restrictions are lifted.

At the beginning of Term Two the PSFO team brainstormed new ways to provide virtual support to the Educators in Wyndham – how could we ensure we were meeting the needs of Educators in a safe manner that followed the guidelines in place? The Online Professional Conversation sessions were then born and last term we carried out 22 sessions in which over 40 Educators participated (from both sessional Kindergartens and Long Daycare centres). The sessions were simply a great opportunity to meet with a PSFO and other Wyndham Educators and discuss topics of choice related to the inclusion and participation of children with additional needs. Term Three will see the sessions continuing and this time will focus on specific topics that have emerged in recent months. I encourage you to look out for the email with the upcoming session details and book yourself in. Educators can attend multiple sessions throughout the term and they are all free.

A common theme that has arisen amongst many Educators recently is that many children are facing challenges with their emotional regulation. This is completely understandable given the current climate, the anxiety and stress within families / households and the constant attention that the media gives to COVID-19. This edition of the PSFO newsletter contains an article with information and practical ideas to support children's emotional regulation and tips on introducing the Zones of Regulation to your early childhood program.

Stay safe and take care of yourselves and each other. We hope to see you back out at your services soon.

PSFO Area Leader



EMOTIONAL REGULATION IN YOUNG CHILDREN

Introducing the Zones of Regulation

Emotional Regulation is a skill that children begin to develop in the toddler / preschool years and continue on learning throughout their lives. Just like all early childhood achievements, some children are more adept and master the skills quickly, whilst others take longer and require high levels of adult support along the way.

WHAT IS SELF REGULATION?

Self regulation is the ability to understand and manage behaviour and reactions to feelings and things happening around you. It includes being able to:

- ❖ regulate reactions to emotions like frustration or excitement
- ❖ calm down after something exciting or upsetting
- ❖ focus on a task
- ❖ refocus attention on a new task
- ❖ control impulses
- ❖ learn behaviour that helps you get along with other people.

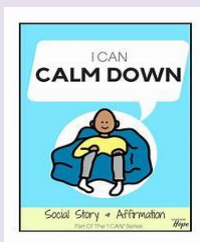
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Self regulation helps children to:

- ❖ learn at school – self-regulation gives your child the ability to sit and listen in the classroom
- ❖ behave in socially acceptable ways self-regulation gives children the ability to control impulses
- ❖ make friends – self-regulation gives children the ability to take turns in games, share toys and express emotions in appropriate ways
- ❖ become more independent –self-regulation gives children the ability to make good decisions about their behaviour and learn how to behave in new situations
- ❖ manage stress - self-regulation helps children learn that they can cope with strong feelings

There are a few key points to consider when supporting children to regulate their emotions:

Identify where each child's understanding is at: Assess each child's current level of understanding in relation to labelling emotions; can they correctly identify happy, sad and angry in themselves and others (including pictures of faces)? Can they label any secondary emotions such as frustrated, tired, surprised, jealous? Do they know what "calm down" even means? Can they list some physiological signs of feelings that accompany facial expressions, such as clenched fist/teeth, faster heartbeat, red/hot face for anger? If they are not quite there yet, intentionally plan for and teach daily activities that teach these concepts. Children cannot express their feelings appropriately unless they can understand and label them first.



Intentionally teach: Ensure that children's interests are considered when teaching the concepts; if a child is not interested their attention will be quickly lost. Try and think outside of the box and create opportunities for all types of learners. Perhaps pop some feelings activities into the sandpit/sand tub for the sensory child, maybe the active child would enjoy identifying faces attached to the obstacle course or the train obsessed student may respond well to different faces placed on the engines? Try creating social stories for tricky concepts such as deep breathing to calm down

Frequent adult role modelling: Encourage all adults (including parents) to use language related to feelings and emotions on a daily basis. It is important for children to understand that *everyone* feels a variety of emotions throughout each day, including parents and teachers. It is also vital that children learn it is ok to experience *all* feelings, no feeling is 'bad' or 'wrong.' What is important to learn is how to respond to feelings appropriately.

"I'm feeling frustrated today..."

Reinforce: Ensure that acknowledgement and positive reinforcement is provided when children engage with the materials, use new concepts and show the ability to regulate an emotion. Don't forget that emotional regulation is not just about calming down when angry, but about exerting control over all emotions. This may also include soothing self when sad, accepting an adult decision, focusing attention when excited etc. It is important to point out to children when they have practiced/achieved these skills.

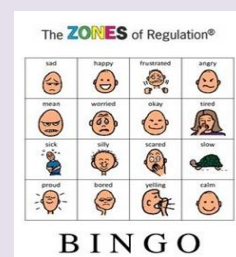
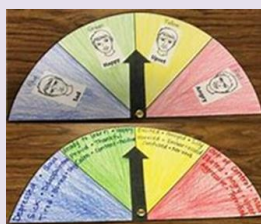
The Zones of Regulation

The Zones of Regulation is a framework for teaching children about emotional and sensory self-management. The Zones approach uses four colours to help children identify how they are feeling and guides them to implement strategies to support regulation. The beauty of the 'Zones' is that it is not an in-depth additional program that teachers must somehow find the time to implement; it is simply a teaching tool and way of thinking that can be incorporated into all aspects of the preschool.

Introduction of Zones

- Display a poster and begin using the language, throughout play and routines: Red Zone, Blue Zone, Yellow Zone, Green Zone, Rest, Go, Slow and Stop plus other 'feelings' words
- Frequently model the language in front of children. e.g. "I stubbed my toe last night, it hurt so much, I felt sad and I was in the blue zone." "I was angry because the rain stopped me from walking my dog, so I was in the red zone"
- Teach these concepts when children are in the green zone, in the 'ready to learn' state. A child who is already upset cannot grasp new concepts. Remind children that we all flow in and out of all zones daily
- Share the concepts/language with families, consistent practice masters new skills

Activities you may like to try:



- Acknowledge how children are feeling: eg: "I can see you're feeling angry, it looks like you're in the red zone" "You seem to be in yellow, let's go and grab your toolbox!"
- Provide and support children to access an array of 'toolbox items' that are readily available eg: an enclosed calm area, water to drink, deep breathing visuals, bubbles to blow, the option to engage in heavy work. Ensure these tools are visually represented in your classroom eg:



For more information about the Zones of Regulation <https://www.zonesofregulation.com/learn-more-about-the-zones.html>

There is also a vast array of information that can be found on Google or contact the PSFO Team for info/resources

Websites, Clips and Visuals

<https://allplaylearn.org.au/>

"AllPlay Learn helps to create inclusive education environments for children and young people with developmental challenges and disabilities through practical online information, courses and resources for teachers, as well as information and resources for parents, children and the community."

JUST BREATHE!

A beautiful video to watch:

<https://youtu.be/RVA2N6tX2>

[cg](#)

SECOND YEAR OF KINDER

An interesting article from The Age about Second Year of Kinder in relation to COVID.

<https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/natural-reaction-might-be-to-hold-back-parents-ponder-extra-year-of-kinder-20200707-p559pj.html>

Don't forget ...

Attending PSFO/Educator Professional Conversation sessions counts as PD time for your VIT!

“

Every time you think of calling a kid 'attention-seeking' this year, consider changing it to 'connection-seeking' and see how your perspective changes.

— Dr. Jody Carrington
PSYCHOLOGIST

edutopia

De-escalation Strategies

Act calm even if you're not.

Give a choice.

Use humor to lighten the mood.

Ask them to draw a picture.

Say, "I see where you are coming from."

Talk about something they like.

Try to understand their perspective.

Let the person talk without interrupting.

Avoid needing to get the last word.

Remind them they are not in trouble.

Say, "I'm here for you."

Ignore the behavior if you can.

Say, "What would help you right now?"

Offer to change something you are doing.

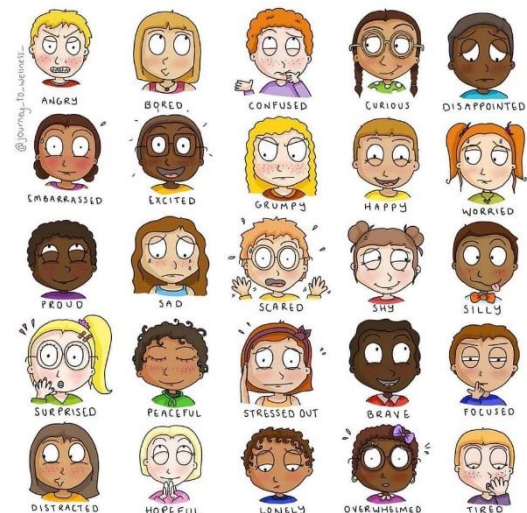
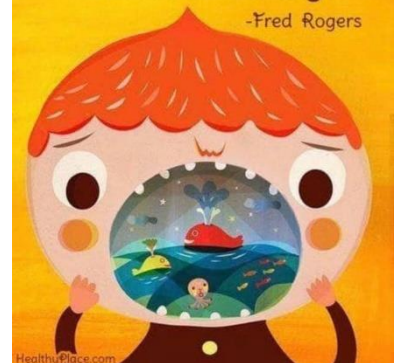
Let them take a walk or get a drink.

Either we spend time meeting children's emotional needs by filling their cup with love or we spend time dealing with the behaviors caused from their unmet needs. Either way we spend the time.

—Pam Leo

When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary.

—Fred Rogers



If you want copies of any of these visuals, just email us at psfo.service@wyndham.vic.gov.au