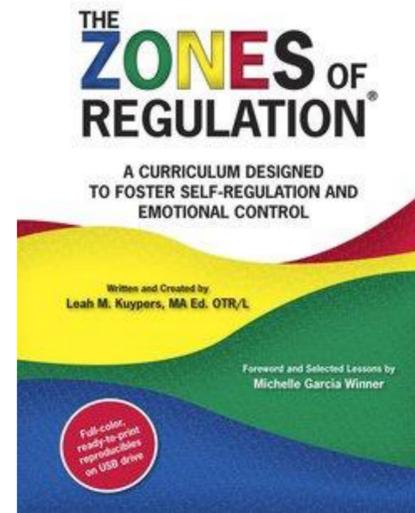


### BACKGROUND

- Social emotional learning (SEL) is defined as, “the process of acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle interpersonal situations constructively” (Durlak et. al., 2011)
- A national survey of 3,000 kindergarten teachers found 30% reported least half their students had difficulty following directions and working in a group, 20% reported their students had trouble with social skills (Whitted, 2011).
- During the 2015-2016 school year 2.7 million, K-12 students were suspended out of school at least once and 120,800 were expelled (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, 2019).
- Studies have shown SEL can produce an 11-percentage point gain in grades/test scores and increase graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment and completion, employment and wage while decreasing dropout rates, behavior issues, teen pregnancy, mental health problems and criminal behavior (The Aspen Institute, 2016).
- The Zones of Regulation® uses a cognitive behavioral approach to teach students self-regulation (Kuypers Consulting, Inc., 2020). This approach helps students improve their ability to recognize and communicate feelings and learn tools to help them calm down or wake up (Kuypers, 2011).



### PROGRAM DETAILS

- **Curriculum:**
  - Zones of Regulation® written and created by Leah M. Kuypers, MA Ed. OTR/L
- **Implementation:**
  - 20-minute lessons a week, for 10 weeks
  - Final lesson and knowledge check, post-self assessment and final test completed online due to COVID-19 closures
  - One-week without teaching between 8<sup>th</sup> lesson and 9<sup>th</sup> lesson/final test/post-self assessment due to COVID-19 closures
- **Lessons:**
  - 9 lessons selected and adapted for classroom-wide intervention and active learning:
    - All 4 Zones (Blue, Green, Yellow, Red)
    - Zones BINGO
    - Expected vs. Unexpected Behaviors
    - The Zones in Me
    - Caution! Triggers Ahead
    - Exploring Sensory Support Tools
- **Student A's SEL Progress Checks**
  - Pre-Program, Student Self-Assessment
  - Parent Pre- Program Survey of Perceptions of Child's Abilities
  - 9 Knowledge Checks given after each lesson
  - Final Test composed of 10 questions
  - Post-Program, Student Self-Assessment
  - Parent Post- Program Survey of Perceptions of Child's Abilities
- **Teacher and Parent Education**
  - 9 Weekly Teacher Tips sent at the beginning of the week
  - 9 Weekly Parent Tips sent at the end of the week

### METHODS

- **Literature Review**
  - Found factors that are commonly found in successful school SEL programs:
    - Teacher and Parent education and involvement
    - Curriculum embedded into all areas of school- not just classroom
    - Creating safe space for student to share feelings
- **Program Development**
  - Chose 9 lessons out of Zones of Regulation® curriculum that laid out foundation for SEL and built upon foundation
  - Modified lessons to involve active learning (acting, moving around room)
- **Program Implementation**
  - Implemented program weekly, for 10 weeks
  - Lesson Layout:
    - Recap of previous week's lesson concepts
    - Introduce new lesson
    - Active learning activity
    - Recap of concepts
    - Knowledge check
  - Future lessons were modified based on observations of concepts that needed extra practice or review

### RESULTS

- **Student A:**
  - Had a 7-point increase from Pre to Post Self-Assessment
  - Scored a 10/10 on the final test
  - Scored 21/ 22 total of weekly knowledge checks
- **Student A Parent:**
  - Had a 4-point decrease from Pre to Post Survey of Perceptions of Child's Abilities
  - Parent rated Student A's skills improved in:
    - Understanding their behaviors affect others
    - Knowing what sounds/situations bother her and how to help herself
  - When asked , “On a scale of 1-10, 1 being not at all and 10 being completely able how would you rate your child's ability to regulate his/her emotions currently”, parent response increased by 1 point on the Likert Scale

### BOTTOM LINE FOR OT

- **Question 1:**
  - Student A did increase and retain their knowledge of SEL concepts throughout 10 weeks, evidenced by final test score. Student A increased their skills evidenced by increase in self-assessment; however, self-assessments are subjective so these results could be confounded by discrepancies in Student A's self-perception. Parent saw a minimal increase in SEL skills at home but, still saw difficulties with specific SEL skills.
- **Question 2:**
  - 20 minutes was difficult for certain lessons due to many concepts that needed to be reviewed while allowing for questions to be answered at end of lesson. It would be appropriate with modifications to lesson schedule and timeline.
- **Bottom Line:**
  - As more teachers see gaps in their student's SEL skills and large amounts of suspensions/expulsions continue, school SEL programs are warranted. Occupational therapists are equipped with the professional skills to create and/or implement these school SEL programs as well as educate staff and parents about the program. The following are suggestions I have for future implementation of program:
    - Increase program from 10 weeks to half a year or full year. One lesson can be split between weeks to allow more time to learn concepts and answer questions
    - Educate all staff that interacts with student and parents about program, goals and how to support and embed lesson concepts into the classroom and at home to better support the student's SEL growth holistically
    - Collaborate with principle and district to create school-wide SEL expectations

### STUDENT A HISTORY

- 5<sup>th</sup> grade student at Vandenberg Elementary School
- 11-year-old, female
- Had not previously experienced or completed The Zones of Regulation®
- Attended all 9 lessons and completed pre and post self-assessments, final test and all knowledge checks
- Parent completed both pre and post survey of perceptions of child's current abilities

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- **Question 1:** Can a 20 minute/week, adapted Zones of Regulation® curriculum increase student's emotional regulation skills?
- **Question 2:** Is a 20 minute/week, adapted Zones of Regulation® curriculum appropriate for future implementation?

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