

December 1, 2021

Student Services Newsletter

Welcome to the Monthly Susquehanna Township School District Student Services Newsletter! The purpose of this letter is to support our families by providing them information about training opportunities for parents as well as exciting new information about our classrooms.

Engage Your Learners Over Breaks

1. Embrace the Season
 - Tie the holidays into activities in your surroundings
2. Write Holiday Greetings
 - Works on handwriting skills and specific writing skills (poems, syntax, grammar)
3. Keep a routine
 - Learning activities should occur in the morning when they are fresh. Have them read aloud during breakfast.
4. Explore your surroundings
 - Make a bingo car for things you will see on family trips. Make a word game to play in the car.
5. Math is everywhere
 - Let them help count money while at the store. Play War with a deck of cards to identify greater than/less than. Challenge older students to find geometric shapes. Have them help measure with gift wrapping.

Sensory Bins

By Christa Orbin, SLAC

What is a sensory bin?

A sensory bin is simply a container filled with materials to stimulate the senses and encourage children to explore. It can stimulate one or more of the following senses: Tactile (touch), Visual (sight), Auditory (hearing), Olfactory (smell), Gustation (taste). At the elementary level, it engages students in their learning such as:

- math and science (counting, measuring, comparing)
- literacy: tracing or making letters, learning new vocabulary, telling stories
- motor skills: pinching (with fingers or tongs), grasping, pouring

How are we using them?

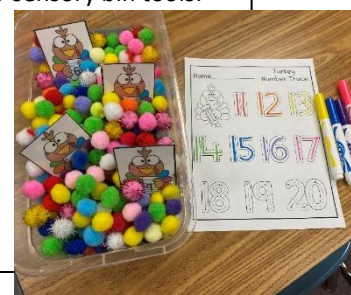
In the supplemental learning support room at SL/AC, we have been using these bins as independent practice for fine motor skills, applying phonics skills, math skills, and writing.

Check out the fun, fall bins we have been working with!

- **Candy Corn Letter Writing:** black beans, candy corn, candy corn letter cards, guided tracing page
- **Turkey Number Trace:** turkey number cards, pom poms, feathers, guided tracing page
- **Thanksgiving Beginning Sounds Match:** popcorn kernels, Thanksgiving-themed picture cards, magnet letters

Below are a few of the many possibilities for sensory bin tools:

- corn, beans, rice, or other pasta
- water beads
- kinetic sand
- pom poms or cotton balls
- magnetic letters or numbers



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The Zones of Regulation

By Rebecca Cole, OTR/L

In today's world, both students and staff are experiencing a variety of circumstances that alter our everyday regulation. It is important to not only identify what causes those circumstances to occur but also important to identify our emotions & ability to self-regulate. The Zones of Regulation is a framework that can assist both you and your students to do just this.

According to the creator of this framework, Leah Kuypers, the Zones of Regulation “creates a systematic approach to teach regulation by categorizing all the different ways we feel and states of alertness we experience into four concrete-colored zones. Integrating in cognitive behavior therapy, students build skills in emotional and sensory regulation, executive functioning, and social cognition. The framework is designed to help move students toward more independent regulation while also honoring and respecting each student and their unique self.” (Kuypers, 2021). The Zones are separated into 4 concrete, colored zones to help students both identify how they are feeling and lead them to independently finding a coping skill for those emotions.

These definitions were taken directly from Leah Kuypers, the founder & creator of the Zones of Regulation:

“The **Red Zone** is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.

The **Yellow Zone** is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions, however one has more control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone.

The **Green Zone** is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.

The **Blue Zone** is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.” (Kuypers, 2021).

When putting these zones into practice and when a student is able to identify their “zone” or primary emotion, they can then learn to use a coping skill to bring themselves into optimal self-regulation. Coping strategies & activities that can bring about self-regulation can include: movement, deep breathing, listening to music, talking to a trusted adult, stretching, writing in a journal, rest, coloring/drawing, and many other activities that can bring the student into optimal learning. Every student is different, and no two things may work for every student. One of the key pieces to this framework is there is no one “right” zone to be in. It's OK to be in the red zone or the yellow zone or even a mixture of both. We all have fluctuations of moods and behaviors. The part that is important for us as advocates for students and for students to advocate for themselves, is to identify strategies to help them understand and identify their feelings and emotions. It's important for kids to understand how their reactions impact others, particularly when they are not able to manage their emotional or behavioral response. From there, they can then become more independent and able to advocate for themselves & their self-regulation needs.



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