

# Helping children be ready to learn

By **MARCY KELLEY**  
LACONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

For the past few years in Laconia, we have seen an increase in students who have difficulty with emotional self-regulation. This is not unique to Laconia. Rather, it is a trend happening nationally. In response, Woodland Heights School has spent a great deal of time on explicitly teaching our students about their emotions and strategies to use when they feel themselves beginning to become dysregulated. Woodland Heights School's motto is to "be safe, be respectful, be responsible and be ready to learn." A child who has developed strong self-regulatory skills is able to attend, control emotions and behavior and ultimately, is

ready to learn.

As a schoolwide intervention, Woodland Heights School teaches all students from prekindergarten to second grade self-regulation through "Zones of Regulation, A Curriculum Designed to Foster Self-Regulation and Emotional Control" by Leah M. Kuypers.

Zones of regulation focuses on four zones: red, yellow, green and blue. When in the red zone, students experience intense emotions such as anger or terror. In the yellow zone, students are still experiencing intense emotions but have more control such as silliness, excitement, frustration or anxiety. We want all of our students to be in the green zone, because it is when optimal



Ensuring success with every student, every day, in every way

learning happens. In the green zone students are happy, content and focused. The blue zone refers to students who have lower energy and alertness, such as being sad, bored or not feeling well.

Too often, we regulate for our own children to try and help them. But doing so may delay their learning the essential skills they need to take

care of their emotional needs outside of their homes. In addition to the language we use from "zones of regulation," there are a lot of other things that can be done at home to help your children become ready to learn, such as: keeping your own intensity low by using a calm, neutral tone of voice when your child becomes angry or frustrated; actively listen to your child when they are upset; hearing what they say and restating it in a way that they can understand and feel validated; recognizing your child when they are being cooperative. When your child is upset or sad, help them recognize and name the emotion. This will help the next time they are feeling that same way.

Research tells us that there is clear evidence between a child's ability to regulate their emotions and success in school. Additionally, it leads to increased levels of self-confidence and the ability to maintain positive peer relationships. Since implementing a schoolwide approach, we have seen a significant decrease in behaviors in the last several years. All students are hearing the same language and being taught the same strategies to help with managing their own emotions — and it's making a difference.

If you're interested in learning more about the importance of emotional regulation and how to help ensure your child is ready to learn, visit [zonesofregulation.com](http://zonesofregulation.com), [understood.org](http://understood.org), or talk to your school counselor to see how they are supporting emotional regulation in school.

*Marcy Kelley is a student services administrator in the Laconia School District.*

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area offers a surprising focal point, he says.

"We've relied on Progress Lighting for twenty years," says Quick. "Especially in the past few years, as they've taken giant leaps in design."

Stephen Alexander Homes incorporate "lifestyle focus" open floor plans as their signature look. Now, they are pioneering a new trend in home culinary spaces. Pantries are re-imagined to not only be practical, but a spot to display the homeowner's hobbies and interests. Think useful collectibles like olive oils, wine or beer. Lighting this room properly is a must, as the light needs to be functional, yet have an added element of drama to showcase the hobby.

Beyond mere dollars and cents, make style choices based on the manufacturer rather than the component. As a builder, Quick starts with a "basket" of necessary elements, but it's how they are applied that ultimately makes the design special.

Consider engaging an interior designer. Even with a smaller remodel budget, hiring an expert who knows which brands give you the most bang for your buck is worth their fee. You're more likely to end up with the look you want at a price that is worth the investment.

Paint is one of the biggest design tools at your disposal. "A new coat of paint sets the tone for everything. Choosing the perfect colors can be hard, but paint companies are on target with the latest trends within the color spectrum, adding colors that hit the mark to give your spaces a fresh look," says Quick.

And if you don't like the color once it's on the walls? "Don't be afraid to change it. Paint is not expensive. It's more expensive to keep a look you don't like."

For design ideas, visit [progresslighting.com/styles](http://progresslighting.com/styles).

— (StatePoint)

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