

THE NEURORELATIONAL FRAMEWORK'S Awake States Checklist

These biomarkers are used to describe individual differences. Culture, context, and clusters of biomarkers are critical components to informing the awake states.

RED ZONE Too Fast/Gas Pedal

EYES

- Open, squinted or tightly closed eyes
- Eyes look quickly around the room or not attending to person or object of focus
- Pupils are dilated
- Frequent blinking



FACIAL EXPRESSION

- Wide, open mouth
- Forced smile
- Clenched jaw or teeth

VOICE

- High-pitched yelling or screaming
- Loud, shrill, piercing
- Out of control laughing
- Non-Stop talking

BODY POSTURE/GESTURES

- Increased muscle tension
- Pushing, shoving, biting, and intruding into others' space
- Kicking, throwing, jumping, climbing
- Bumps into things, falls
- Fidgeting or restless (moving one's mouth, fingers, hands & legs, playing with hair or objects)

- Moving frequently from activity to activity; high levels of multi-tasking
- Animated gestures

RHYTHM/RATE OF MOVEMENT

- Fast movements
- Impulsive and/or jerky movements
- Constant motion

RHYTHM/RATE OF BREATHING

- Fast, shallow

EYES

- Open, squinted or tightly closed eyes
- May have direct, intense eye contact
- May avoid eye contact
- Eye roll
- Pupils are dilated



FACIAL EXPRESSION

- Wide, open mouth
- Anger, disgust
- Frown, grimace
- Forced smile
- Clenched jaw or teeth

VOICE

- High-pitched crying, yelling or screaming
- Loud, shrill, piercing
- Hostile or grumpy
- Sarcastic
- Non-Stop talking

BODY POSTURE/GESTURES

- Fingers spread out
- Arching body
- Increased muscle tension
- Pushing, shoving, and intruding into others' space
- Biting, hitting, kicking, throwing, jumping, climbing, spitting, scratching, head banging
- Threatening gestures (shakes finger, fist, halt hand)

RHYTHM/RATE OF MOVEMENT

- Fast movements
- Impulsive and/or jerky movements
- Constant motion

RHYTHM/RATE OF BREATHING

- Fast-deep

BLUE ZONE Too Slow/Brake

EYES

- Glazed-glassy eyes (looks through rather than at)
- Looks away for a long time, looks down
- Does not look around the room
- Does not look at or towards new events
- Looks at things more than people
- Tired eyes

FACE

- Flat/blank
- Mouth turned down, sad
- No smiles or hints of smiles
- Few emotions shown
- Low tone in the cheeks

VOICE

- Flat
- Makes few to no sounds
- Sounds cold, soft, sad, too quiet
- Monotone

BODY

- Slumped/slouching
- Low muscle tone, floppy
- Little or no exploring play or curiosity
- Wanders aimlessly

RHYTHM/RATE OF MOVEMENT

- Slow movements
- Slow to start moving
- Frozen, no startle response

RHYTHM/RATE OF BREATHING

- Slow, shallow

COMBO ZONE Fast & Jerky/Gas & Brake

EYES

- Wide open eyes
- Stares at things
- Frequent breaks in eye contact
- Looks around with darting eyes

FACE

- Raised eyebrows
- Trembling lips or mouth
- Mouth wide open
- Nasal flaring
- Furrowed brow
- Lip compression, pursed lips
- Startled expression

VOICE

- High-pitched, nasal, sing-song voice
- Whimpers, weak voice
- Wobbly/quivering voice
- Fast changes in tone or pitch
- Pleading

BODY

- Tense or rigid posture
- Winces, cowers, cringes, or hides
- Trembling hands
- Clings or grabs others
- Flails around

RHYTHM/RATE OF MOVEMENT

- No movement, still body
- Repetitive movements (rocking, pacing, wrings hands, shakes foot)
- Fast movements
- Jerky movements

RHYTHM/RATE OF BREATHING

- Uneven breathing
- Breath holding

GREEN ZONE Just Right/Alert

EYES

- Bright, shiny eyes
- Looks directly at people, objects with a gleam
- Looks away for breaks, then returns to eye contact

FACE

- Smiles, shows joy
- Neutral
- Can express a range of all emotions – appropriate to context

VOICE

- Laughing
- Fluctuations in tone – appropriate to context
- Fluctuations in speed – appropriate to context
- Melodic

BODY

- Relaxed with good muscle tone
- Stable, balanced and coordinated movements
- Moves arms and legs toward center of the body
- Molds body into a caring adult when held
- Gestures are coordinated with body movements

RHYTHM/RATE OF MOVEMENT

- Changes smoothly to respond to the environment
- Moves faster or slower – appropriate to context

RHYTHM/RATE OF BREATHING

- Regular, even breathing

THE NEURORELATIONAL FRAMEWORK'S **Awake States Checklist**

In the Awake States Checklist there are descriptions of behaviours we might see for a child or adult in the five coloured zones.

This checklist orients you to what you will see in the eyes, face, voice, body and also the rhythm and rate of body movement, and rhythm and rate of breathing. You will see that all these cues cluster together to describe a coloured zone. You do not have to check off all the boxes in each zone as there are a range of behaviours we see in each zone. In the red zone, you will see + and – symbols, which represent the positive and negative red zones.

This checklist gives more details to understand the zones described in the *24 Hour Sleep-Wake States Arc* and the *Colour Zone Pie*. It is helpful to observe your child's behaviours, and your own to recognize the green zone and the three stress responses.