

Calm Down Area Tips

Each classroom should consider establishing a calm down area available to accommodate one or more children. Think of this area as a “retreat” or “protected” space. The area should be designed to provide children with the opportunity to remove themselves from the group in order to become calm, regain composure, and maintain self-control when upset, angry, or frustrated. Children may also go to this safe place in order to be helpful and not hurtful to themselves and others. This is an important part of developing self-control and anger management skills. The designated space should not be used for discipline or as a form of punishment. The list below provides teachers with the information and tools for establishing and maintaining a “protected space.”

Establishing a Calm Down Area

A safe place may be permanent or portable and should be away from distractions and other students. Students should understand when another student is in the protected space, they want to be alone.

Permanent Spaces:

- Quiet nook with soft seating
- Space set up with headphones
- Transparent fabric (netting, organza, or tulle) draped from the ceiling

Portable Spaces:

- Carpet squares
- Hula hoops
- Placemats
- Sign a child uses to define a “no interruption” space



Calm Down Area Tips (Continued)

Supplying the Calm Down Corner

Once the space is established, include visuals and calming activities for children to use while in the space. Below are examples of materials or activities you might include in the safe place.

Ideas for Doodling and Drawing

- Activity/Coloring books
- Small chalkboard and chalk
- Magna-Doodle
- Etch-a-Sketch
- Scratch-art doodle pad.
- Blank notebook
- Writing utensils (crayons, pencils, markers, etc.)

Sensorial and Fidget Ideas

- Bubble wrap
- Playdough or silly putty
- Pipe cleaners to twist and bend
- Pop-Its
- Puzzles
- Rubik's cube
- Stress balls
- Stretchy resistance bands
- Small blanket
- Tissue/scrap paper to rip/tear
- Weighted lap cushion or stuffed animal

Various Breathing Techniques/ Examples

- Conscience Discipline breathing techniques
- Pinwheels - Practice deep breathing and blowing out air
- Scratch and sniff stickers

Visual stimulators

- Kaleidoscope
- Sand Timers
- Plastic snow globe
- Sensory bottle or calm down jar
- Spinning top
- Light up toys
- Flashlight

Ideas for Exploring Emotions

- Small mirror for making silly faces or exploring emotions
- Emotions poster
- Visual calm down strategy cards/poster
- Photo album filled with photos of family and friends
- Book of yoga poses or yoga cards
- Social/emotional books
- Social stories dedicated to breathing/calming strategies

