

Tip Sheets

Creating a Cozy Calm-Down Spot



Offering a cozy corner or area of your classroom environment is a wonderful way to provide children with a space to decompress, take a break, and manage their emotions effectively.

Take into consideration the following elements when developing your calm down spot:

- Location
- Comfort
- Sensory tools
- Mindfulness tools
- Establishing rules and guidelines for use
- Offering your support

Location

Thinking about the location of your cozy calm down spot is crucial. Placing it in a low-traffic area of the classroom can be beneficial. Consider where children naturally go to regulate their emotions. Perhaps there's a corner or a cozy spot beside furniture or shelving that would be ideal. Feel free to experiment with different locations to see what works best for your room. Additionally, it's important to consider safety and privacy when choosing the spot.

Comfort

Adding soft rugs, stuffed animals, blankets, and pillows can make your cozy spot even more inviting. Incorporate items like cushions, a child-sized couch, or beanbag chairs to enhance comfort and create a welcoming atmosphere and soothing environment to relax and feel secure.

Sensory Tools

Promote quiet mindfulness and self-regulation of emotion by providing sensory items such as fidgets, pinwheels, stress balls, sensory bottles, and other similar items.

Mindfulness Tools

Having books about calming down, mindfulness, or certain behavioral topics may be useful in creating a soothing and supportive environment. Writing and drawing materials, coloring pages, puzzles, feeling charts, social scripts, breathing cards, and a visual timer can also help support regulation skills.

Rules and Guidelines

Establishing clear rules and guidelines for the cozy calm-down space is essential. Teach children that this area is designated for calming down, not for socializing or playing. Emphasize that the purpose of the space is to help regulate their emotions so they can return to learning once they feel ready.

Less is More

The calm down space should be supplied with tools and strategies to help children regulate

emotions, but not cluttered. You may also want to rotate items in the calm down space for children. Over time, you will figure out the best tools and supplies for your children.

Other Tips

- In the beginning, it's important to support the child as they navigate their big emotions. You might say something like, "I see that you're feeling upset about waiting your turn. How about we go to the calm down spot and take three deep breaths together?" With your guidance, children will learn how to calm down and manage their emotions effectively.
- This is a space where we want children to learn to regulate their big emotions. Going to the cozy calm down spot should **not** be a punishment or a timeout.
- If you have a child that is throwing things when they have big emotions, you may want to consider only having soft items in the calm down spot while they're learning to regulate.
- Ensuring that the calm down corner is safe, culturally appropriate, and accessible for all students, including children with special needs, is important.

Additional Resources

NCPMI | Taking a Break: Using a Calm Down Area at Home

https://www.challengingbehavior.org/docs/Calm-Down-Area_Tipsheet.pdf

Spark & Wow | How to Create an Effective Calming Corner in Your Childcare Center

<https://sparkandwow.com/blogs/news/how-to-create-an-effective-calming-corner-in-your-childcare-center>

Pre-K Pages | How to Set Up a Cozy Corner in Preschool

<https://www.pre-kpages.com/safe-space-cozy-corner-preschool>

For more information, visit www.inclusivechildcare.org.

Copyright © 2025 Center for Inclusive Child Care

These materials may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. Information in this tip sheet has been modified from multiple sources.

Funding provided by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

www.inclusivechildcare.org