

Creating a Classroom Calm-Down Place

Children brainstorm ideas for creating a classroom calm-down place and discuss how to use the space.

Objective

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
- c. Takes care of own needs appropriately

Related Objectives

2c, 8a, 8b, 10a, 10b, 29

Questions to Guide Your Observations

- In general, how confident is the child in meeting her own needs independently throughout the day? (1c)
- How well did the child listen to others and share their own ideas during the discussion? (10b)

Fostering Resiliency

- Sees different sides/ideas
- Ability to think flexibly
- Ability to try different solutions
- Self-control

Materials

- Song: "Calm Down"
- *Calm-Down Steps* poster
- *Family Letter: Lesson 05*
- chart paper
- marker
- Puppet: Al

Vocabulary

calm-down place: a quiet place in the classroom where children can go to cool off, relax, or take a break

Related Daily Resources

- *Intentional Teaching Experience* SE03, "Calm-Down Place"
- *Intentional Teaching Experience* SE29, "Take a Breath"
- *Intentional Teaching Experience* SE33, "Where Are My Feelings?"
- Digital Children's Book: *Emily's Tiger*
- *Mighty Minutes* 108, "Blow Away Dandelions"
- *Mighty Minutes* 171, "Blowing Big Bubbles"

What You Do

1. Introduction

Welcome From AI

Bring AI out to introduce the lesson by having him say, “Do you remember our idea to create a calm-down place in your classroom? Today, you and your teacher are going to work together to create it. I can’t wait to see how it turns out!” Place AI beside you to watch the lesson.

2. Discussion

Calming Down

Discuss ways the children calm down when they feel strong emotions.

“What helps you feel better when you feel angry? Yes, taking deep breaths can help. Let’s all practice that now.”

3. Song

“Calm Down”

Display the *Calm-Down Steps* poster. Read and act out each step. Play “Calm Down.” Invite the children to sing along or practice the steps when they feel ready.

4. Discussion

Creating a Calm-Down Place

Tell the children that they will help create a special place in the classroom where they can go to calm down. Encourage the children to think of sensory items (e.g., fidget toys, squishies, stress balls, glitter wands), props, books, music, pillows, and other items that might be helpful to have in the calm-down place. Create a list of their suggestions.

“Do you like to calm down by standing up, sitting down, or lying down on something soft?”

“We have soothing music that we listen to when we rest. We can add that to the calm-down place. What else can we include?”

Explain the next steps you will take to create the calm-down place over the coming days. Together, decide on the rules for using the space.

“What do you think our rules should be for using the calm-down place? Why do you think it’s important to keep noisy toys out of the area?”

Consider This

Notes

- When children experience strong emotions, they often need help to calm down. Establish a calm-down place in the classroom where children can go to cool off, relax, or take a break. Such a place offers children a positive alternative to acting out or losing emotional control during a conflict.

Creating the Calm-Down Place

- The calm-down place can be used for a variety of reasons, such as for extra TLC, as a quiet space, for alone time, or to solve problems. The intention is for children to decide when to use the calm-down place—it should be the child's choice. It is not a place that children are told to go to (such as a time-out or thinking spot), nor is it a hiding spot or "opt-out" place.
- The teacher can construct the calm-down place in any way that works in her classroom. For example, a teacher may choose to create a big painted box, hang curtains around an area, arrange shelving to create an L-shaped nook, or use a canopy-style fabric above an area rug. The space should be inviting and furnished with chairs, pillows, beanbag chairs, peaceful pictures, and photos of emotions.

- Bring one or two children at a time to visit the calm-down place. You can model for the children how to sit quietly and relax there.

Reflection

- How do you envision using the calm-down place in your classroom?
- Can you identify children who might need additional support with using the calm-down place?
- How can you make the calm-down place welcoming and accessible to all children?

Throughout the Day

- To support children's understanding of how to use the calm-down place, identify moments during the day when children are having strong feelings and might wish to use the calm-down place.
- Post a feelings chart in the calm-down place that shows facial expressions of people experiencing various emotions.
- Make up stories about situations when a child wanted to go to the calm-down place to get calm or feel better.

Consider This

Including All Children

- Work with specialists to identify positive strategies to help a child manage her behavior.
- Provide specific examples of when and how to use the calm-down place. You might say, "I'm feeling very frustrated right now and need a little time in the calm-down place."
- Record feeling words like *lonely*, *sad*, *angry*, and *frustrated* on a child's communication device. Include the phrase, "I want to go to the calm-down place."

English-Language Learners

- Demonstrate calm-down strategies as you and the children mention them.
- Display the *Calm-Down Steps* poster in children's first languages.
- If children don't have the words to tell you what they would like to include in the area, invite them to draw pictures of the items, point to items, or gather items from the classroom.