

# Calm-Down Place



## SE03 Library

### Objective 1

Regulates own emotions and behaviors  
a. Manages feelings

Related Objectives: 2b, 3a, 8a, 9a

## What You Do

**Materials:** rocking chair, beanbag chair, or pillows; books; soothing music and headphones; other calming materials

See *The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool, Volume 1: The Foundation*, Chapter 4, for ideas about setting up a place where children can calm themselves in your classroom.

**Background:** When children experience strong emotions, they 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.

1. **During group time, lead a discussion with the children about ways to calm down when they are feeling upset or angry. Write any ideas they may have on the chart paper. Add your own ideas to the chart, such as counting to five, walking away, closing your eyes, etc. Show them the area of the room called the calm-down place and invite them to visit it whenever they want to cool off, relax, or take a break.**

“James, what helps you feel better when you get angry? Yes, taking a deep breath is a very good idea. Let’s all practice that now.”

2. **Encourage the children to talk about their feelings throughout the day in order to make them aware of what they are feeling when they are happy, anxious, frustrated, etc.**

“I can see you’re having a hard time waiting for your turn. It’s hard to wait. It makes you feel frustrated.”

“Let’s take a few minutes to calm down together.”

3. **Wait until the children are calm before addressing the conflict or social problem. Focus on helping the children recognize and manage any strong feelings they may be having. Use the calm-down place as a way to redirect children who may need to take a break in a quiet place.**

### English-Language Learners

- Ask children to repeat a simple phrase you have said and modeled. For example, when discussing how to calm down, say, “I want to take a break. Tell your friend, ‘I want to take a break.’”
- If children are beginning to speak in sentences, give them plenty of opportunities to talk. Be sure to model the correct use of English, but do not correct their grammar.
- Demonstrate the calm-down strategies as you and the children mention them.
- Provide a feelings chart where children can see facial expressions that demonstrate various emotions.

### Including All Children

- Follow up with the child who has acted inappropriately. Using simple words, discuss what happened and what he or she can do instead when upset or angry.
- Include materials and textures that you know to be particularly soothing for a child.
- Record various emotions in a child’s communication device. Include “I want to go to the calm-down place.”
- Provide words for the child to use to explain the problem.
- Work with specialists to identify positive strategies to help a child manage his or her behavior.

### Questions to Guide Your Observations

- How did the child calm down with and without your assistance? Was the child able to recognize his or her feelings before becoming distressed? (1a)
- Was the child able to balance the needs and rights of herself and others? (3a)
- How did the child verbalize his or her emotions? (9a)

## Teaching Sequence

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| YELLOW | <p><b>When the child expresses anger, frustration, or distress, hold the child and offer reassurance until she has settled down.</b></p> <p>“Marie, I know you are feeling angry because your sand pile got stepped on accidentally. Take a deep breath with me while we sit together.”</p>   |
| GREEN  | <p><b>Help the child to visit the calm-down place with you before she loses emotional control.</b></p> <p>“Lauren, it looks like you are getting anxious because there are so many children in this area. Would you like to take a break in the calm-down place and read a book together? Then, I can help you find another place to play in the classroom that is less crowded.”</p> |
| GREEN  | <p><b>Encourage the child to practice self-talk as she takes deep breaths and relaxes.</b></p> <p>“You can say to yourself, ‘I need to calm down. I’m mad, but I don’t want to hurt my friends.’”</p> <p><b>Stay with the child and offer assurance that she will feel better soon.</b></p>   |
| BLUE   | <p>“I see that you are working on calming down now. Those deep breaths will help relax your body and your mind.”</p> <p><b>Encourage the child to recognize her strong feelings and use the calm-down place before becoming upset.</b></p>  |
| PURPLE | <p>“Kara, I’m glad you rested by the fish tank for a few minutes. I can see that you are feeling relaxed now because you are playing quietly next to Marissa.”</p>  |